DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY AND URBAN MALE CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR IN THE COSMETIC INDUSTRY IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and that it has not been presented in any other university or institution for academic credit.

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DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my husband and children for their unwavering support during my academic journey.

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ABSTRACT

The Cosmetic industry has long been targeting the female consumer segment; but in the last ten years, there has been a significant change as more men in the urban regions have started using grooming products. Social changes, the growing importance of personal health, and the growing effectiveness of digital platforms have been the driving force behind this transformation. In this research, the researcher was interested in the effect of digital marketing strategies on the urban male consumer buying behaviour in the Cosmetic industry in Nairobi County, Kenya. The digital marketing techniques discussed are search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing, influencer marketing and content marketing. Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), Social Influence Theory, and Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) are the guiding theories of the study, which offered a solid theoretical background to examine the influence of digital strategies on consumer perceptions, engagement, and purchase intent. The independent variables were the SEO, social media marketing, influencer marketing, and digital content marketing, whereas the dependent variable was the urban male consumer buying behaviour. The research was focused on 214 male consumers in the Nairobi County. A sample size of 139 consumers was used by simple random sampling since it was representative. The quantitative method and a causal research design were taken. The structured questionnaires were used to collect data in the form of Likert scale items that aimed at capturing the impact of each digital strategy. The data was analysed with the help of descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression, and the validity of the regression model was proved with the help of diagnostic tests. The research established that the four digital marketing strategies positively and significantly impacted urban male consumer buying behaviour. The search engine optimization helped in generating greater brand visibility and trust that was transferred to more purchases from the male consumers. Social media marketing is becoming an effective tool of engagement, trust, and conversion, which highlights the need to use interactive and personalized digital interactions. The most influential predictor of buying behaviour was influencer marketing, which shows the powerful nature of credible and relatable influencers in influencing male consumer decisions within the grooming and personal care market. Digital content marketing, being relatively moderate in its effect, was identified as playing a supporting role, as it educates consumers, reinforces brand power, and helps to build purchase confidence. The results support the fact that integrated digital marketing approaches are necessary to reach the urban male consumer segment, establish trust, and stimulate long-term purchasing behaviour. The research offers evidence-based ideas that can assist cosmetic brands to align their campaigns to the needs of this expanding population. In addition, the study helps to fill the gap in gender-inclusive marketing research and provides practical suggestions on how to use digital strategies in the Cosmetic industry of Kenya in a changing environment.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION....ii

DEDICATION iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS....iv

ABSTRACT....v

LIST OF TABLES xi

LIST OF FIGURES xii

DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL TERMS xiii

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS xv

CHAPTER ONE 1

INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 Introduction....1

1.2 Background to the Study....1

1.2.1 Urban Male Consumer Buying Behavior 3

1.2.2 Digital Marketing Strategy and Men Consumer Buying Behavior 5

1.2.3 Cosmetic Industry in Kenya....9

1.3 Statement of the Problem....10

1.3 Research objectives....13

1.3.1 General Objective 13

1.3.2 Specific Objectives 13

1.4 Research questions....13

1.5. Research Hypothesis 14

1.5 Significance of the Study 14

1.5.1 Cosmetic Brands Industry 14

1.5.2 Digital Marketing Agencies 15

1.5.3 Policy Makers and Industry Regulators 15

1.5.4 Academics and Researchers 16

1.5.5 Urban Male Consumers 16

1.6 Scope of the Study 16

1.7 Conceptual Framework 17

CHAPTER TWO 20

LITERATURE REVIEW 20

2.1 Introduction 20

2.2 Review of Theoretical literature 20

2.2.1 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) 20

2.2.2 Social Influence Theory 22

2.2.3 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) 24

2.3 Empirical Review 26

2.3.1 Search Engine Optimization (SEO) And Urban Male Consumer Buying Behaviour in The Cosmetic Industry 27

2.3.2 Social Media Marketing and Urban Male Consumer Buying Behaviour in The Cosmetic Industry 29

2.3.3 Influencer Marketing and Urban Male Consumer Buying Behaviour in the Cosmetic Industry 31

2.3.4 Content Marketing and Urban Male Consumer Buying Behaviour in the Cosmetic Industry 33

2.4 Knowledge Gaps 35

CHAPTER THREE 38

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 38

3.1 Introduction 38

3.2 Research Design 38

3.3 Target Population 38

3.4 Description of the Sample and Sampling Procedures 39

3.5 Research instrument 40

3.6 Pilot test 40

3.6.1 Validity of the Research Instrument 41

3.6.2 Reliability of the study 42

3.7 Data collection procedure 42

3.8 Data analysis and Presentation 42

3.9 Diagnostic Tests 44

3.9.1 Normality test 44

3.9.2 Multicollinearity test 45

3.9.3 Heteroscedasticity test 45

3.9.4 Linearity test 46

3.10 Ethical Considerations 46

CHAPTER FOUR 47

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS 47

4.1 Introduction 47

4.2 Response Rate 47

4.3 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents 48

4.3.1 Age bracket 48

4.3.2 Level of education 49

4.3.3 Years Purchased cosmetic products 50

4.4 Descriptive Findings 51

4.4.1 Search Engine Optimization 51

4.4.2 Social Media Marketing 55

4.4.3 Influencer Marketing 59

4.4.4 Digital Content Marketing 63

4.4.5 Urban Male Consumer Buying Behaviour 66

4.5 Diagnostic Tests 71

4.5.1 Normality Test 71

4.5.2 multi-collinearity 72

4.5.3 Heteroscedasticity Test Results 73

4.5.5 Test for Linearity 73

4.6 Inferential Statistics 74

4.6.1 Correlation Analysis.....75

4.5.2 Regression Analysis.....78

4.5.2 Hypothesis Testing.....81

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....85

5.1 Introduction.....85

5.2 Summary of Findings.....85

5.2.1 Effect of Search Engine Optimization on Urban Male Consumer Buying Behavior 85

5.2.2 Effect of Social Media Marketing on Urban Male Consumer Buying Behavior ...86

5.2.3 Effect of Influencer Marketing on Urban Male Consumer Buying Behavior 87

5.2.4 Effect of Digital Content Marketing on Urban Male Consumer Buying Behavior 87

5.3 Conclusions.....88

5.4 Recommendations.....89

5.4.1 Recommendation for Practice.....89

5.4.2 Recommendation for Policy 91

5.5 Recommendations for Future Studies.....92

REFERENCES 93

APPENDICES 99

Appendix I: Letter of Introduction.....99

Appendix II: Research Questionnaire.....100

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Response rate 488

Table 4.2: Age bracket of respondents 48

Table 4.3: Highest academic qualification 49

Table 4.4: Respondents' years purchased cosmetic products 50

Table 4.5: Descriptive statistics on Search engine optimization 511

Table 4.6: Descriptive Statistics on social media marketing 555

Table 4.7: Descriptive statistics on influencer marketing 59

Table 4.8: Descriptive Statistics on digital content marketing 633

Table 4.9: Descriptive statistics on urban male consumer buying behavior 677

Table 4.10: Normality Test 71

Table 4.11: Test for Multicollinearity 722

Table 4.12: Test for Heteroscedasticity 733

Table 4.13: ANOVA Results to Test Linearity 74

Table 4.14: Correlation analysis 755

Table 4.15: Model summary 79

Table 4.16: Anova 7979

Table 4.17: Regression coefficients 8080

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework 18

DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL TERMS

Digital Marketing Strategies:	Wide ranging plans used to engage consumers through online platforms, to achieve targeted marketing goals.
Consumer buying behaviour	Actions and decision-making processes individuals engage in when selecting, purchasing, using, and disposing of goods and services to satisfy their needs and want
Performance of the Cosmetic Industry:	A measure of success in the cosmetic industry in Kenya, typically assessed through sales growth, brand reach, customer engagement, and market share.
Search Engine Optimization (SEO):	A digital marketing strategy that improves the visibility of company brands on search engines to increase website traffic and enhance customer acquisition.
Social Media Marketing:	The use of social media platforms to promote company brands, engage consumers, build brand awareness, & drive website traffic.
Influencer Marketing:	Partnering with social media influencers to endorse cosmetic products, aiming to enhance brand trust, expand reach, and positively impact industry performance in Kenya
Cosmetic Industry:	The sector focused on the production, distribution, and marketing of skincare products.
Beauty and Skincare Products	Beauty products, focus on immediate cosmetic effects and enhancing appearance, while skincare products aim to improve skin health and target long-term skin health
Cosmetic Product	Any substance or mixture intended to be placed in contact with the various external parts of the human body or with the teeth and

	mucous membranes with a view to cleaning them, perfuming them, changing their appearance, correcting body odours, protecting them or keeping them in good condition
Personal care products	Goods or items used for maintaining personal hygiene and appearance by cleansing, moisturizing, and protecting the body and are applied to the skin, hair, nails, teeth, and other external areas to keep them clean, healthy, and in good condition

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full Form
SEO	Search Engine Optimization
MQL	Marketing Qualified Leads
PPC	Pay-Per-Click
SEM	Search Engine Marketing
CRO	Conversion Rate Optimization
DV	Dependent Variable
IV	Independent Variable
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model
TPB	Theory of Planned Behaviour
NACOSTE	National Council for Science and Technology
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
KPI	Key Performance Indicator

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter lays the foundation for the research by providing a detailed overview that includes the background of the study, clearly articulated research questions or objectives, the rationale behind conducting the investigation, defined scope and limitations, as well as key underlying assumptions. It sets the stage for a comprehensive exploration of how diverse digital marketing strategies influence the purchasing behaviour and decision-making patterns of urban male consumers within Nairobi County.

1.2 Background to the Study

Digital Marketing Strategies (DMS) have become a powerful trend in contemporary marketing, as they transform the way companies can reach their audiences via internet-based technologies (Cachero-Martinez et al., 2024). These strategies have a wide range of tools that include Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Social Media Marketing (SMM), Content Marketing, Influencer Marketing, and Email Marketing. Their emergence is closely connected to the increasing dependence on digital platforms, mobile devices, and real-time data analytics, which allow companies to send very personalized and interactive messages to customers. In 2022, the world spent USD 602 billion on digital advertising, and is expected to spend more than USD 836 billion by 2026 (Statista, 2023). Multinational companies like L'Oréal, Estee Lauder, and Unilever have completely adopted digital platforms and have adopted agile, data-driven marketing formats that are based on user-generated content, AI-driven personalization, and influencer-driven campaigns. As an example, L'Oréal has developed digital content labs that use machine learning algorithms to personalize messages and optimize campaigns in real-time, boosting customer engagement and loyalty (Deloitte, 2022). Such practices are especially

effective in the Cosmetic industry, where the appearance and social approval are the determinants of buying behaviour.

The main platforms where beauty brands are competing to attract the attention of consumers are now social media TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. DMS are not only promotional tools in this digital ecosystem but also strategic levers that can be used to acquire, retain and build long-term brand equity. These strategies are supported by theoretical frameworks like Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) which explain how consumers interact with digital platforms. TAM focuses on the perceived usefulness and ease of use as the main factors that drive the adoption of technology (Davis, 1989), whereas TPB is based on the importance of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control in the formation of intentions and behaviours (Ajzen, 1991). Collectively, these models offer a thorough perspective through which the influence of DMS on consumer decision-making can be evaluated.

In Sub -Saharan Africa Region, the digital marketing environment has enjoyed significant growth due to the high rate of mobile connectivity, the penetration of smartphones, and the low cost of internet services. The GSMA Mobile Economy Report (2023) showed that mobile internet penetration in Sub-Saharan Africa was 28 percent in 2022 and is projected to increase to 39 percent in 2025. This expansion is driving a change in the way businesses engage their customers, with most of them resorting to digital marketing to eliminate the infrastructural challenges that come with the use of traditional media. Nigeria and South Africa are among the countries spearheading this change, and fashion brands are increasingly turning to influencer marketing and social commerce. In Nigeria, male grooming brands are collaborating with lifestyle influencers to make self-care and skincare a normal part of the routine among young men. These local tendencies demonstrate the efficiency of DMS in the formation of consumer culture and buying behaviour, even in the traditionally under-served markets. The Diffusion of

Innovations Theory (Rogers, 2003) also contributes to the use of DMS in Africa because it is used to describe the spread of new technologies and ideas in a social system. Relative advantage, compatibility, and observability are attributes that define the adoption rate. In online marketing, platforms that have shown an obvious superiority in terms of engagement and reach-WhatsApp for Business, Facebook Ads, and Instagram Reels have become a must-have among African marketers. Nevertheless, there are still some challenges such as low levels of digital skills, regulatory restrictions, and disparities in high-speed internet access. Nonetheless, the African digital marketing ecosystem is growing at a fast pace, especially in the youth-driven urban markets where brand discovery and product evaluations are becoming increasingly digital (Kyule, 2017). In this regard, DMS are not just add-ons to the conventional advertising, but rather survival and growth tools in a hyperconnected consumer world.

1.2.1 Urban Male Consumer Buying Behaviour

Urban Male Consumer Buying Behaviour (UMCBB) refers to the distinct patterns, motivations, and decision-making processes exhibited by male consumers, particularly in urban settings, when purchasing goods and services (Krestyanpol, 2023). This behaviour is shaped by a blend of psychological, cultural, and sociological factors, which differ significantly from those influencing their female counterparts. Consumer behaviour, broadly defined, encompasses the activities individuals undertake when selecting, purchasing, using, and disposing of products and services (Krestyanpol, 2023). For urban male consumers, especially in the Cosmetic industry, behavioural tendencies are influenced by logic-driven decision-making, time efficiency, brand loyalty, and a utilitarian focus on product features and certifications (Neuendorf, 2018).

Urban men tend to approach shopping as a mission-oriented activity unlike women who might be more concerned with emotional appeal and variety in shopping. They like simple and clear information and appreciate products that are functional, reliable, and bring long-term

advantages (Neuendorf, 2018). This action is consistent with the results of the gendered consumer research, which emphasize that male customers do not want to spend too much time on the buying process, are not open to persuasive in-store experiences, and usually prefer to be guided by the opinions of trusted brands or reviews. In this respect, men have a higher brand loyalty especially when they feel that there is consistency and usefulness in the performance of a product.

Knowledge of UMCBB is critical to marketers who want to develop strategies that can reach and appeal to male audiences. Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) are some of the theoretical underpinnings that are necessary. TRA assumes that behavioural intentions are influenced by attitude to the behaviour and subjective norms (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). TPB goes further to include perceived behavioural control which takes into account the belief that an individual has in his or her capability to do a behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). These theories are especially applicable to the male grooming market, where social norms and the individual view on self-care may have a strong impact on the buying behaviour. To illustrate, when grooming is viewed as socially desirable and rewarding, then men will tend to spend on personal care products. Nonetheless, cultural beliefs that define grooming as a feminine act can inhibit this activity even when the person perceives the product as useful.

The Consumer Decision-Making Process Model is another important theory that includes five steps “including problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase behaviour” (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019). This process is linear and focused among the urban male consumers. They tend to bypass longer comparison processes and use brand familiarity or third-party recommendations, e.g. reviews or recommendations by influencers, particularly ones that match their identity or aspirations.

Studies also indicate that happy male consumers may turn into brand ambassadors, telling their good experiences to their social group or online groups. According to Cachero-Martinez et al. (2024), these peer-based recommendations have a great influence on the brand trust and credibility. Therefore, by developing loyalty among male customers with the help of specific messaging and product reliability, not only the retention is increased but also the word-of-mouth marketing, which is one of the most reliable types of promotion.

Moreover, the city environment tends to intensify media and cultural discourse exposure, which affects the perception of male customers about grooming and beauty products. The change in attitude is being driven by the growing normalization of self-care in men, instigated by global and local influencers. The Kenyan beauty industry has however been lagging and in most instances, it has failed to capture the subtle preferences and behavioural motivators of male consumers. This oversight leaves a huge marketing and product development vacuum, particularly when one considers the expanding purchasing power and online interaction of the urban male population aged between 18 to 35.

1.2.2 Digital Marketing Strategy and Men Consumer Buying Behaviour

The relationship between Digital Marketing Strategies (DMS) and Urban Male Consumer Buying Behaviour (UMCBB) in the Cosmetic industry is gaining more importance in the academic and business communities (Sithole, 2019). With the digital platforms redefining consumer interaction, male consumers who were regarded as a fringe in the beauty market are now becoming a profitable segment. Nevertheless, this trend has not prevented numerous brands to focus on female-oriented strategies, which results in the discrepancy between the potential of the male grooming market and the reality of marketing (Sithole, 2019). To comprehend and overcome this gap, it is important to examine the role of DMS tools in influencing the behaviours and perceptions of male consumers in urban areas, particularly in Nairobi County, through “Social Media Marketing (SMM), Influencer Marketing, Content

Marketing, and Search Engine Optimization (SEO)"' (Sithole, 2019).

The Cosmetic industry has traditionally been female-centric in its products and even marketing messages, and this is true all over the world. Grand View Research (2022) estimates that the industry was valued at 532 billion in 2022 and is expected to increase at the rate of 4.75 percent per year up to 2028. Nevertheless, there is a change, and male grooming products are becoming popular in the markets all over the world. Allied Market Research (2021) estimated the global male grooming market at 55.22 billion in 2020, and it is expected to reach 78.6 billion by 2027, a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.5%. This transformation is fuelled by the changing views of masculinity, the growing power of digital media, and the growing knowledge of skincare and grooming. The social media, such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, have been instrumental in breaking the stereotype according to which beauty is a female-only concept (Willett, 2020; Smith, 2021).

In Africa, the same trends are gaining roots. The increase in the demand of the male grooming products is attributed to urbanization, increasing disposable income and an expanding middle-class. Research and Markets (2020) forecasted the African male grooming market to increase at a CAGR of 7.4 percent between 2020 and 2025. The focus of this growth is digital marketing. As mobile internet and smartphones spread, African men are also resorting to online sources to find grooming information, suggestions and even make purchases. This audience is becoming an important target of brands via strategic SEO, tailored content marketing, and collaboration with influencers (Kumah, 2019). The availability of more products has been made possible through platforms such as Jumia and Kilimall, which have made the e-commerce experience more enjoyable among men in the continent (Nielsen, 2020).

In Kenya, especially in the Nairobi County, the digital marketing activities in the grooming sector are growing at a high rate. The urban male population in Nairobi, particularly the 18-35 age bracket, is a digitally literate group that is brand-aware, with internet penetration of more

than 87 percent (Communications Authority of Kenya, 2023). One of the most effective ways of reaching this group has turned out to be influencer marketing. The local male influencers like Nick Mutuma and Dennis Ombachi have also managed to collaborate with brands to advertise grooming habits and products such as beard oils and moisturizers, thus making male cosmetic use normal (Gathaiya, 2023). Their presence on Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok has contributed to the establishment of trust and relatability in their male followers.

Social Media Marketing (SMM) is another crucial pillar of digital strategy. Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok allow brands to create visually appealing, interactive content tailored to specific audiences. For male consumers, this content often includes tutorials, reviews, testimonials, and before-and-after visuals that demystify grooming practices. According to Kyule (2017), such content is instrumental in breaking gender norms and encouraging men to engage with products previously deemed feminine. The availability of e-commerce features such as Instagram Shopping and Facebook Marketplace further simplifies the purchase process, making it more convenient for men to browse and buy products quickly and discreetly.

Influencer marketing works synergistically with SMM by leveraging the authority and reach of trusted individuals. For male grooming brands, partnerships with male influencers or lifestyle bloggers create authentic narratives around product use. These influencers act as opinion leaders, offering experiential insights that resonate with male consumers. Unlike traditional advertising, influencer endorsements are perceived as more genuine, particularly when the influencer aligns with the consumer's lifestyle or identity. This aligns with Social Influence Theory (Festinger, 1954), which posits that people are influenced by individuals they admire or see as similar to themselves.

Content Marketing and SEO also play significant roles in shaping male buying behaviour. Educational content such as blogs, product reviews, and "how-to" videos empowers male consumers to make informed decisions. Search engines serve as the first point of contact for many consumers researching products (Kyule, 2017). Using keywords like "best beard oil in Nairobi" or "men's skincare routine Kenya" helps brands appear in search results and drive organic traffic. When men find accurate, engaging, and relevant content, it increases brand credibility and conversion rates (Kyule, 2017).

Despite the growth in male consumer interest, digital marketing efforts targeting urban male consumers in Kenya remain limited. A 2023 report by Euromonitor showed that only 12% of beauty product marketing in Kenya is directed at men, indicating a significant strategic gap. This underrepresentation is not just a missed commercial opportunity; it reflects outdated marketing paradigms that overlook the evolving needs and behaviours of male consumers. According to Smith (2021), men are increasingly embracing grooming as part of their self-care and identity expression, but marketing practices have not evolved to match this change.

Additionally, cultural norms and stigmas around male grooming continue to influence consumer behaviour in Kenya. Many men may still feel hesitant about openly purchasing grooming products or discussing their skincare routines. Therefore, the success of DMS in this context depends on their ability to create safe, relatable spaces for men to explore and engage with grooming products (Kyule, 2017). This means brands must move beyond token campaigns and build sustained, inclusive narratives that validate male consumers.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) and the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) serve as useful theoretical lenses for understanding the link between DMS and UMCBB. TPB discusses how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control influence intentions and behaviour. If men believe grooming is socially acceptable and

desirable, they are more likely to engage in grooming rituals. Meanwhile, TAM emphasises the importance of perceived usefulness and simplicity of use—digital platforms that are user-friendly and deliver actual value are more likely to be adopted by male customers.

1.2.3 Cosmetic Industry in Kenya

The Cosmetic industry in Kenya is a dynamic and fast-growing sector within the broader Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) category. This industry, which includes cosmetics, skincare, haircare, and personal hygiene products, plays a significant role in the country's economic development and consumer culture (Grand View Research, 2022). Cosmetics represent a substantial portion of this industry, with the colour cosmetics segment alone valued at Kshs. 5.4 billion in 2014, as per Flame Tree Group LTD's annual report. The market was projected to reach Kshs. 6.6 billion by 2018, underscoring a consistent growth trajectory (Flame Tree Group, 2014). The same report highlighted that cosmetics manufacturing contributed 74% of Flame Tree Group's revenue, making it the dominant segment in the company's portfolio, with the trading division accounting for the remaining 26%. This data illustrates the strong market potential and profitability of cosmetic manufacturing in Kenya (KNBS, 2023).

Several macroeconomic and demographic factors are contributing to this expansion. The rapid urbanization of Kenya's major cities — particularly Nairobi — has led to the growth of an urban middle class with increasing disposable income (Euromonitor, 2023). This population segment exhibits a heightened awareness of global fashion and grooming trends, prompting a willingness to invest in personal care products. Nairobi, being the country's capital and commercial hub, reflects this trend most prominently. The city's cosmopolitan nature has exposed its residents to international beauty standards and lifestyle aspirations, which in turn fuel demand for quality, branded beauty products (Willett, 2020). Moreover, the proliferation

of beauty salons, spas, and cosmetic retail outlets in Nairobi County signifies the growing importance of appearance and grooming in social and professional life.

Digital marketing has emerged as a significant factor in the advancement of the cosmetic industry in Kenya. Direct and real-time interaction between brands and consumers has been facilitated by the high penetration of smartphones and improved internet connectivity (Communications Authority of Kenya, 2023). Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok have become essential marketing tools that enable companies to showcase their products through tutorials, testimonials, and endorsements from influencers. This type of content-based advertising is particularly effective in the cosmetics industry, where the visual image and the efficacy of the product are of paramount importance (De Veirman et al., 2017). Digital campaigns have made the urban male consumers who are traditionally ignored by the beauty industry to be a part of the target demographic. The aim of these campaigns is to break the old gender stereotypes and emphasize the fact that male grooming is a new, normal, and even desirable practice (Alenezi, 2024).

SEO and data analytics also play an instrumental role in ensuring that beauty brands in Kenya remain visible to potential buyers. With more male consumers searching for grooming solutions online, companies that invest in keyword-optimized content, targeted ads, and personalized email marketing are better positioned to capture this emerging market (Kyule, 2017; Sharma et al., 2024). Brands like Suzie Pauline Cosmetics are already leveraging these tools to broaden their reach. Additionally, partnerships with male influencers help foster trust and relatability, which are crucial in converting hesitant male consumers into loyal customers (Mutahi, 2022).

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The Kenyan Cosmetic industry is experiencing notable growth, yet a critical issue persists: the systemic exclusion of male consumers from targeted marketing efforts and brand engagement

strategies. While global trends show an expanding interest in male grooming — with the global male grooming market valued at USD 55.22 billion in 2020 and projected to reach USD 78.6 billion by 2027 (Allied Market Research, 2021) Kenya's beauty industry remains disproportionately focused on female consumers. According to Euromonitor International (2023), products targeted at men account for only 12% of the total beauty market in Kenya. This figure is quite low when compared to rising male grooming participation, signalling a considerable gap between consumer interest and industry responsiveness.

Despite a growing urban middle class, rising disposable incomes, and increased exposure to global grooming trends, urban male consumers in Kenya remain sidelined. Nairobi, the country's commercial and cultural capital, houses a significant population of tech-savvy men aged 18 – 35 who regularly engage with digital platforms. These consumers are increasingly interested in skincare, haircare, beard grooming, and fragrance products. However, they face a marketplace that offers limited male-specific products and virtually no digital marketing content tailored to their preferences. The Flame Tree Group's 2014 Annual Report underscored the dominance of the cosmetics manufacturing segment yet failed to distinguish product development and marketing strategies by gender. This illustrates the broader industry trend of prioritizing general or female-centric product lines while ignoring a growing male demographic.

Cultural perceptions continue to present barriers. Research by Izugbara and Egesa (2020) highlights that personal care is often socially coded as feminine, making many Kenyan men reluctant to be associated with grooming products. Consequently, men are less likely to engage in overt product trials or seek grooming advice, further limiting their inclusion in marketing campaigns. Alenezi (2024) emphasizes that without inclusive representation, beauty brands risk stagnating their market potential and alienating a valuable consumer segment.

Empirical evidence also supports the influence of digital marketing on consumer behaviour. Jamil et al. (2022) found that digital platforms, especially social media, significantly enhance consumer trust and brand awareness, driving purchase intent. Akayleh (2021) noted that digital connectivity is particularly high among young consumers, who increasingly rely on social media for product discovery and evaluation. In Kenya, internet penetration stands at over 87% (Communications Authority of Kenya, 2023), yet few beauty brands have adopted digital strategies specifically designed to reach male audiences. Gathaiya (2023) found that while influencer marketing is effective in Kenya's beauty sector, it predominantly features female influencers and content targeted at women. Mutahi (2022) corroborated the effectiveness of influencer marketing but did not differentiate its impact on male versus female consumer engagement.

The lack of empirical studies focusing on how digital marketing influences male consumer behaviour in Kenya presents a significant knowledge and practice gap. While marketing studies in Kenya have explored digital tools generally, few have examined the role of SEO, influencer marketing, and content personalization in affecting male grooming product adoption. The risk is that brands continue to operate with outdated marketing models, missing opportunities to connect with a digitally active and increasingly self-aware male demographic.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill a critical gap by exploring how digital marketing strategies influence the buying behaviour of urban male consumers in Nairobi County's Cosmetic industry. In doing so, it aims to generate insights that will enable beauty brands to realign their marketing frameworks, enhance engagement with male consumers, and ultimately build inclusive, responsive, and profitable digital campaigns. With men's grooming behaviour on the rise and digital platforms proving highly effective in influencing consumer choices, failing to address this market segment undermines both social relevance and business sustainability in Kenya's evolving beauty sector.

1.3 Research objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

The primary objective of the study was to determine the influence of digital marketing strategy on urban male buying behaviour in Cosmetic Industry in Nairobi County, Kenya

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

a) To assess the effect of search engine optimization (SEO) on urban male consumer buying behaviour in the Cosmetic industry in Nairobi County.
b) To examine the influence of social media marketing on urban male consumer buying behaviour in the Cosmetic industry in Nairobi County.
c) To evaluate the effect of influencer marketing on urban male consumer buying behaviour in the Cosmetic industry in Nairobi County.
d) To analyse the role of content marketing in shaping urban male consumer buying behaviour in the Cosmetic industry in Nairobi County.

1.4 Research questions

a) What is the effect of search engine optimization (SEO) on urban male consumer buying behaviour in the cosmetic industry in Nairobi County?
b) How does social media marketing influence urban male consumer buying behaviour in the Cosmetic industry in Nairobi County?
c) What is the effect of influencer marketing on urban male consumer buying behaviour in the Cosmetic industry in Nairobi County?
d) How does content marketing affect urban male consumer buying behaviour in the Cosmetic industry in Nairobi County?

1.5. Research Hypothesis

a) **H_{01}**: Search engine optimization (SEO) has no statistically significant effect on urban male consumer buying behaviour in the Cosmetic industry in Nairobi County.

b) **H_{02}**: Social media marketing has no statistically significant influence on urban male consumer buying behaviour in the Cosmetic industry in Nairobi County.

c) **H_{03}**: Influencer marketing has no statistically significant effect on urban male consumer buying behaviour in the Cosmetic industry in Nairobi County.

d) **H_{04}**: Content marketing has no statistically significant effect on urban male consumer buying behaviour in the Cosmetic industry in Nairobi County.

1.5 Significance of the Study

In general, this study on the effects of digital marketing strategies on the consumption behaviour of urban male consumers in the Kenyan cosmetic sector has implications for several stakeholders.

1.5.1 Cosmetic Brands Industry

The study will be helpful to cosmetic brands that will be able to get insights of how men can be targeted in the use of digital marketing tools. According to Allied Market Research (2021), the global male grooming sector is projected to reach USD 78.6 billion by 2027, indicating a strong commercial incentive for local brands to adapt. Euromonitor International (2023) reveals that only 12% of Kenya's beauty product market targets men. These statistics reflect an untapped market segment that, if strategically approached, could drive significant growth. The findings will assist those brands to market themselves appropriately to the male market thus increasing the company's market by unlocking untapped segment within the market. The

research findings will be of great value to brands to develop specific and strategic advertising strategies, refine products, and boost the male consumers' brand allegiance levels.

1.5.2 Digital Marketing Agencies

This study's implications might be valuable for digital marketing agencies focusing on the cosmetic product market, especially if the target audience is men. As noted by Jamil et al. (2022), digital marketing—particularly through social media and influencer collaborations—significantly enhances consumer trust and engagement. Yet, most campaigns in Kenya focus predominantly on women. Therefore, there is a need to examine the unique needs, wants and behaviours of these male target consumers in order to design and present compelling marketing messages. The research will also define how to increase conversion rates and overall client success through effective search engine marketing, social media marketing, and influencer marketing.

1.5.3 Policy Makers and Industry Regulators

I recommend the study to policy makers and industry regulators as it will enable them to come up with good policies and law that promotes the growth of cosmetic business in Kenya. As Izugbara and Egesa (2020) argue, current marketing practices often exclude male consumers, reinforcing gendered stereotypes. Understanding the principles of male consumer behaviour and the effectiveness of the digital marketing approaches will assist in the establishment of a favourable business environment, promoting equal competition and safeguarding customers' rights. Despite this, the study's results can be useful in efforts to promote better representation for people of colour in advertising campaigns and the industry as a whole.

1.5.4 Academics and Researchers

Hence, the study will add to the pool of knowledge in the field of digital marketing, consumer behaviour, and the beauty industry, creating a basis for other studies. It is therefore useful for academics and researchers to use this study as a starting point for further investigation of other facets of male consumption behaviour and digital marketing in other classified domains or other geographic locations. The study also forms a platform of comparison, given that the findings can be used to increase knowledge with regard to how various digital marketing practices affect consumer behaviour.

1.5.5 Urban Male Consumers

The study will benefit the sampled urban male consumers indirectly as cosmetic brands initiate efforts toward understanding their needs and demands. Sharma et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of personal grooming in improving self-confidence and well-being. The finding of the study will make their gender-stratified products more effectively targeted and appealing thus creating a better shopping experience for men. With brands responding to the key needs and wants of the male population, this demographic will be in a position to enjoy more solutions that improve their grooming and self-esteem.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This research focused on evaluating the impact of digital marketing techniques on the purchasing behaviour of urban male consumer as perceived by urban male consumers in Nairobi County's cosmetics industry. The study was geographically confined to Nairobi City County, which serves as Kenya's digital and commercial hub, offering a fertile ground for digital marketing practices due to its high internet penetration and concentration of cosmetic retailers. The key digital marketing practices explored included search engine optimization, social media marketing, and content marketing. The unit of analysis in this study was the urban

male consumers who have purchased cosmetic products. The objective was to assess how marketing professionals utilize strategies such as search engine marketing (SEM), social media marketing, influencer marketing, and content marketing to influence male consumer behaviour. The decision to focus exclusively on Nairobi was informed by its leading role in digital innovation and consumer engagement. Nairobi's urban landscape offered unique conditions, ranging from high smartphone usage to platform-specific marketing trends, that are ideal for examining how digital marketing strategies impact male consumption behaviour.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a conceptual map of relationships between variables in the study or research that is under consideration. It helps in classifying information, planning the lines of inquiry and showing how they relate to the overall framework of the study (Jabareen, 2009). The conceptual framework was adopted to analyse various Digital Marketing strategies to determine the impact on consumption behaviour of the male population within the cosmetic industry in Kenya. The independent variables in this research are as follows Digital marketing that consists of Search Engine Marketing (SEM), Social Media Marketing, Influencer and content marketing. The dependent variable was the buyer behaviour of male consumers living in urban areas, which is reflected in terms of purchase intention, brand interactions, and brand endorsement. These relationships showed how specific forms of digital marketing affect the purchasing behaviour of male consumers based in urban areas.

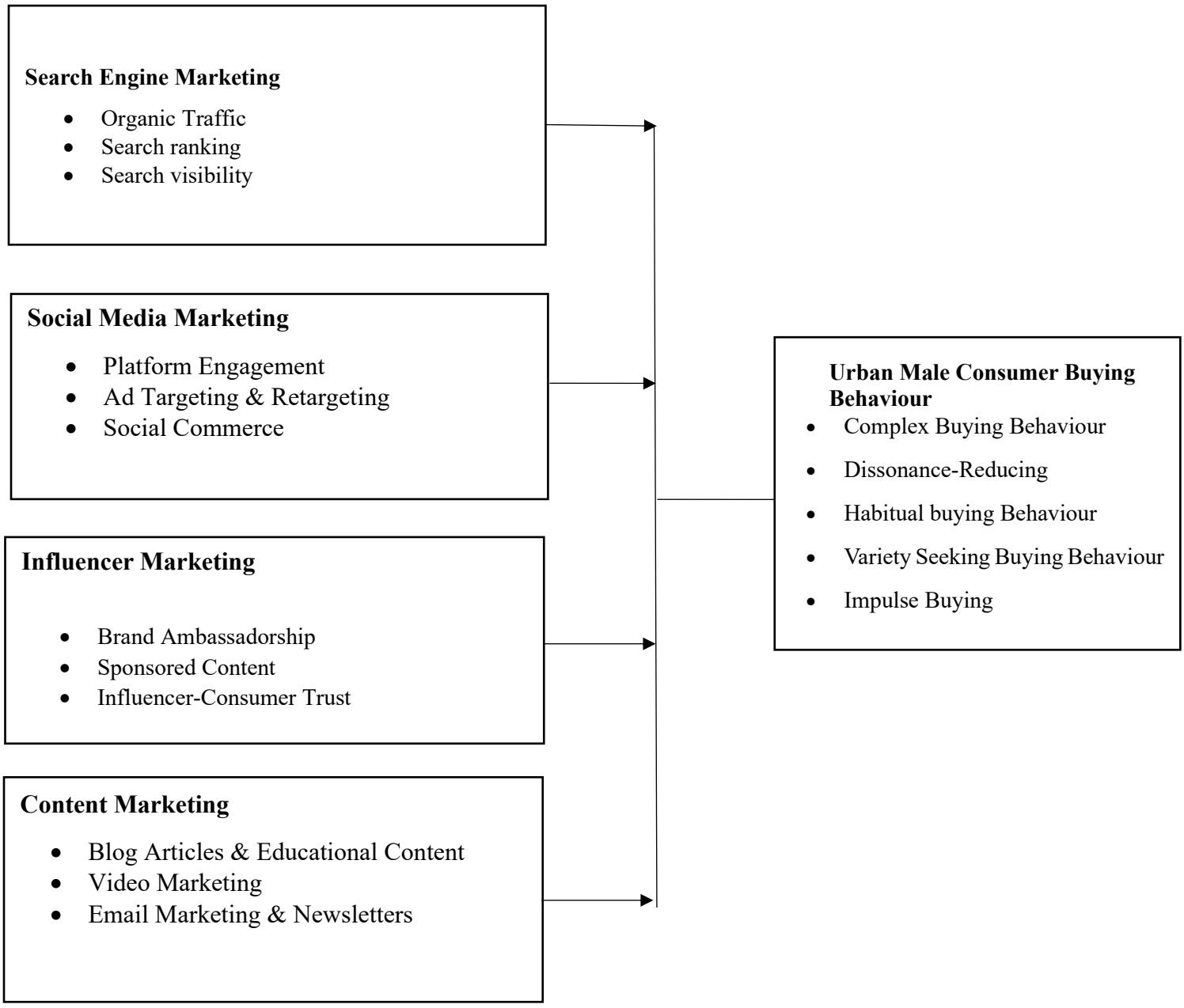

Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher (2025)

As shown in figure 1,1, this study examined the relationship between various digital marketing strategies—namely, search engine marketing, social media marketing, content marketing, and influencer marketing—and urban male consumer buying behaviour in the Cosmetic industry in Nairobi County. These digital marketing strategies represented the independent variables

(IVs), while urban male consumer buying behaviour represented the dependent variable (DV). Each independent variable was conceptualized as a marketing technique that can shape consumer perceptions, increase engagement, and influence purchasing decisions among male consumers.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter offers a comprehensive examination of the literature pertinent to the research. It involves a thorough analysis of relevant theories, including their strengths and limitations. In addition, the chapter includes an empirical review of previous studies, which helps to identify gaps in existing knowledge.

2.2 Theoretical literature

A theoretical framework serves as the foundation that supports or has the potential to support research by presenting and describing the theory that explains the underlying causes of the research problem (Abend, 2008). This study was anchored in four key theories: the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which examines behavioural intentions; the Social Influence Theory, which explores peer and societal impact; the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which assesses user adoption of technology; and the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which examines how individuals actively seek media to fulfil specific needs.

2.2.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

Icek Ajzen suggested the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) in 1991 as a modification of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). This implies that there is a group of variables that determine the likelihood of an individual to engage in each behaviour and these variables include attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991). Ajzen tried to clarify behaviours over which people do not have complete control and thus he came up with the concept of perceived behavioural control (Ajzen & Schmidt, 2020). The purpose to execute a behaviour is founded on the basis of the planned theory of behaviour,

which considers attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen 1991). Attitude is a personal evaluation of doing the behaviour (Ajzen & Schmidt, 2020) and it may be positive or negative. Subjective Norms include the degree to which one feels pressured to do or not do something (personal perceptions of what others, most importantly people who are important to them, want them to do). Perceived behavioural control is the perception of the individual on whether he or she can do the behaviour in terms of resources, opportunities and barriers.

Often, these factors, in combination with others, explain the behavioural intentions, and the latter can predict the actual behaviour (Ajzen, & Schmidt, 2020). When people have positive subjective norms towards a behaviour, perceive normative pressure towards it from important people in their lives and/or believe they have the requisite capability and resources to perform the behaviour, they are likely to have the intentions of performing and eventual engage in that behaviour as postulated by the IAT (Ajzen & Schmidt, 2020).

The TPB is a useful theory in the cosmetic industry to refer to the behaviours of male consumers, especially in the aspect of Search Engine Marketing (SEM) (Riantini, 2019). The ease of using search engines and the perceived social pressure from reminders or suggestions by others or influencers to buy beauty products are also significant components of the male consumers' intention to purchase beauty products. For example, if a search engine is found to be a reliable provider of information about beauty products, consumers are more likely to conduct subsequent online searches to determine their shopping behaviour (Lee & Kim, 2020). TPB argued that Male consumer would search beauty products when they perceive search engine trustworthiness, pops up easily and positive reinforcement from social group (Riantini, 2019). Also, perceived behavioural control, as an example of the easy availability of relevant and trustful information by search engines, gives them extra push towards their

intention to buy. Therefore, TPB offers an all-encompassing model studying how digital marketing strategies (SEO) affect purchase behaviour of male consumers within the cosmetic sector.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) has been widely acknowledged for its comprehensive approach to predicting and understanding human behaviour, particularly in the context of marketing and consumer behaviour (Riantini, 2019). Nevertheless, substantial criticism has also been directed at it. One of the main criticisms is that the theory places too much emphasis on rational decision-making processes, equating people to rational actors who always weigh advantages and disadvantages before doing anything (Conner, 2020). For instance, at the cosmetics counter we can easily attribute too much weight to emotional factors. TPB fails to adequately explain, as an example, impulsive purchases brought about by emotions: buying a product only because it makes you feel good or helps build confidence (Conner, 2020).

Another criticism of TPB is its limited ability to account for the complications of real-life human behaviour. The theory takes into account perceived behavioural control (or one's sense that he or she may not always be able to control his or her own actions) but does not sufficiently take external factors into consideration. For example, it fails to concern itself much with socio-economic status, premise occupancy, unforeseen circumstances and so on. Within the context of male consumers in beauty industry, TPB may not fully explain how cultural taboos against male grooming and beauty products can affect their behaviour. This in spite of having a favourable attitude or receiving peer approval (Bosnjak et al., 2020).

2.2.2 Social Influence Theory

Social Influence Theory posits that people's behaviour is shaped through the behaviours, attitudes, and opinions of others in their social environment (Festinger, 1954). Social Influence Theory was proposed by Leon Festinger in 1954. Developing the foundations of the theories

of social comparison and cognitive dissonance, his work will shape future understanding of the influence of others in various contexts. According to the theory, many of people's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours are determined by what others in their social group say, do, and expect (Kahan, 2019). Concepts from social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) such as unity and acceptance suggest that people who are in the same social order may evaluate each other and determine that certain behaviours are aligned with their values, leading to conformity, compliance, or even internalization. Influencer: Influencers are important opinion shapers of consumer perceptions and preferences through authentic and relatable content (Brown & Hayes, 2008). Their close relations with their followers contribute to a feeling of community and trust and translates into higher engagement and purchase intentions by their audience (Hsu et al., 2016). In addition, it seems consumers are more likely to engage in behaviours endorsed by influencers they see as similar to themselves or aspirational (Goldsmith et al., 2000).

It also categorizes social influence into three types: informational influence, normative influence, and identification. This is when people take what they are being told by others as truth about the world and adjust their thoughts and actions accordingly. Social influence entails interacting with others with the aim of achieving positive perceptions from the society or avoiding negative perceptions (Bicchieri et al, 2018). Identification can be defined as the process by which individuals incorporate ideas, practices or behaviours that they feel positively towards or wish to emulate.

As mentioned earlier, Social Influence Theory can be more applicable to Influencer Marketing in the cosmetic industry. They tend to possess informational and normative power since followers trust them and perceive them as similar to themselves. If a particular influencer promotes a product, their followers consider it credible information (information influence), or they feel the need to follow the specific behaviour due to the group’s expectations (normative influence) (Bicchieri et al, 2018).

Also, influencers who are relatable, or with whom followers want to be like, foster identification. This identification can lead to increased commitment and perceived credibility which can ultimately affect the intended purchase behaviour. Thus, for male consumers using influencers as experts to guide them into a pink domain they do not belong to, the impact of male beauty influencers can be significant (Pérez & Mugny, 2018). By recognizing these dynamics, brands can choose the right influencers that appeal to the target market and use their influence to change consumer decisions.

Inspired by the work of Leon Festinger, Social Influence Theory has been critical in framing how individuals' attitudes, beliefs and behaviours naturally adjust to the social environment they are in. Movement of consumer behaviour has criticized the theory on multiple fronts. One of the major criticisms is that Social Influence Theory places too much emphasis on conformity and compliance, which in turn minimizes the importance of individual agency (Pérez & Mugny, 2018). Another gap present in Conspicuous Consumption Theory is how it presents consumers as passive recipients of social pressures; however, this overlooks that the decision-making process in the cosmetics industry is failed and that a growing number of (potential) consumers have become assertive and egocentric in their choices and opinions (Pérez & Mugny, 2018).

2.2.3 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Fred Davis in 1989, builds upon the Theory of Reasoned Action originally proposed by Ajzen and Fishbein. Unlike its predecessor, TAM specifically emphasizes the factors that influence individuals to begin using a particular technology. It posits that the likelihood of technology adoption is primarily determined by users' perceptions of its usefulness and the ease with which they believe it can be utilized (Al-Emran et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2021). Perceived usefulness means the extent to which an

individual believes that the use of a particular system or technology can positively impact their working efficiency or personal productivity (Abdullah & Ward, 2016). Perceived ease of use is the degree up to which an individual considers the application of technology to be effortless (Gupta et al., 2020).

According to Davis, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use significantly shape an individual's attitude toward a technology, ultimately influencing their likelihood of adopting it. Furthermore, research by Venkatesh et al. (2021) and Hussein (2019) confirmed that behavioural intention plays a critical role in predicting actual technology usage. The Technology Acceptance Model has since been extensively applied across numerous domains—such as e-commerce, mobile apps, and digital advertising—to analyse both usage behaviour and user intentions (Park et al., 2022; Al-Gahtani, 2020).

The current study has employed TAM to examine the aspects that affect male consumers within the framework of an online beauty platform and mobile application. The model suggests that when male consumers consider these digital tools helpful (e.g., useful information or convenient shopping) and accessible (e.g., simple interfaces), they will be more willing to use them. As an illustration, when an e-commerce platform offers personalized recommendations, convenient navigation, and secure payment system, the users can then perceive the platform as helpful and convenient to use, which prompts them to revisit and make more purchases (Lin et al., 2019). Marketers can use this model to identify potential barriers to adoption, like complex interfaces or lack of perceived value, and address them through design improvements and targeted communication strategies. When TAM is applied, brands will be able to optimize their digital platforms and improve user satisfaction and therefore they can drive more sale (Kim & Park, 2020).

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Fred Davis is very popular model for individual acceptance of technology. However, the model has also been subjected to considerable criticism, especially due to its simplicity and scope. A main criticism is that TAM oversimplifies the complexities of the adoption process down to two simple reasons: perceived utility and perceived ease of use. Indeed, these factors are also crucial, and the sort of model used here is hugely simplified and fails to account for others, like social influence, emotional appeal, or contextual elements that may have a big effect on technology adoption (Wang et al., 2021). As an example, in regard to digital marketing for beauty, a consumer's decision to use a beauty app may further depend on recommendations from peers, company reputation or even beauty itself that cannot be appropriately reflected in TAM (Zhu et al., 2020).

Criticisms to TAM include the fact that it is a deterministic model. It opines that if the innovation is perceived to be beneficial and easy to use, then it will be adopted by the consumers. This does not take into account the fact that technology adoption is a dynamic and random process, influenced by several factors that the model does not capture. For instance, even if a male consumer feels that a beauty app is relevant and easy to use, they may decide not to use it because of issues of privacy and data protection or because they are loyal to another platform (Venkatesh et al., 2021). TAM, as a result, provides a distorted portrayal of technology adoption due to its reliance on rational, utility-based decision-making.

2.3 Empirical Review

This section reviews empirical literature relevant to the key variables of digital marketing strategies and consumer buying behaviour. It aims to explore various approaches, insights, and findings from past studies while identifying existing gaps in knowledge that this research intends to address.

2.3.1 Search Engine Optimization (SEO) And Urban Male Consumer Buying Behaviour in The Cosmetic Industry

Recent studies on the relationship between Search Engine Marketing (SEM) and consumption behaviour have provided valuable empirical data that helps to understand how digital marketing strategies influence consumer actions. Torieh and ELGendy (2021) studied the Effect of Search Engine Optimization on industrial performance in Egypt. A descriptive research design was utilized. The target sample consisted of consumers segmented by age, gender, and educational level, with 158 participants selected. Data collection was conducted electronically through emails and social media platforms. Beyond utilizing descriptive statistical measures like frequency, mean, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation, the research incorporated confirmatory factor analysis alongside multiple regression techniques to rigorously evaluate the validity of the proposed hypotheses. The first hypothesis tested the effect of search engine optimization (SEO) on consumer response based on gender and revealed a significant result. The males responded more positively to SEO than females. The second hypothesis explored the impact of SEO on consumer response according to age and showed no significant differences between age groups. The third hypothesis assessed SEO's influence on consumer response based on educational level and found a significant difference. The findings thus indicated a significant difference in consumer response to search engine optimization based on gender and education level, while no significant difference was observed based on age. While the study offered useful insights, it was not conducted in the Kenyan context. Moreover, the study focused more digital market strategies effectiveness based on age, gender and education level and not on urban male consumption behaviours.

Additionally, Velayudham and Rose (2019) investigated how Search Engine Marketing influences customer purchasing behaviour. Their study involved the distribution of 180 questionnaires to both professionals and students, yielding 116 completed responses for

analysis. In order to systematically analyse the objectives that relate to the completion of brand recognition based on order of search results, correlation of the search capabilities of the respondents to their purchase decisions, as well as the identification of consumer preferred products for purchase through the internet, send tool which included chi-square test, correlation analysis and percentage analysis was used. The research established that whether a certain brand appears above or below a competitor did affect consumer decisions to purchase. However, there is positive relationship between internet searcher skills and purchase favourable behaviour. The findings also revealed that people tended to use search engines for detailed information but were less likely to make actual purchases of certain products, particularly electronic goods. The study was however not based on beauty care products. Moreover, the study focused on the whole population and not urban male consumers.

In their study, Ndung ‘u and Mutinda (2022) sought to determine the impact of SEM on the top one hundred medium firms in Kenya. The population was marketing managers of these medium size enterprises within Nairobi City County-Kenya based on a survey conducted by KPMG in collaboration with the nation media group year 2020 (Ndung’u & Mutinda, 2022). The respondents were selected by adopting the technique of stratified random sampling with reference to the company type. The data was collected through administering questionnaires which took a structured form. Reliability was used since content validity offers the ability to determine the extent to which particular set of a number of items represents the purpose of the instrument in question. In evaluating the reliability of the instruments used in the study Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was used. Qualitative data obtained was analysed using the content analysis method. The obtained quantitative information was analysed with the help of descriptive statistics, mean, and standard deviation. The inferential analysis was carried out by use of correlation and regression analysis to determine the level of relationship between the variables. The research proved that search engine marketing had a significant impact on the

performance of the 100 leading medium-sized enterprises in Kenya (Ndungu & Mutinda, 2022). However, the research was conducted in another company and was not related to beauty cosmetics, as well as to the male population of the city. The research study used quantitative method, which can limit the richness of the results.

2.3.2 Social Media Marketing and Urban Male Consumer Buying Behaviour in The Cosmetic Industry

There is little empirical study conducted regarding social media marketing and consumer behaviour. Kyule (2017) focused on the effects of social media marketing on consumer behaviour. This study used a descriptive research design. The sample frame was obtained with the consent of the management of Britam to have access to their customers who interact with the company via social media. The study used stratified sampling. At a 95 percent confidence level, a sample size of 95 respondents was calculated based on a target group of 2000 consumers (Kyule, 2017). Primary data was collected using questionnaires after a pilot test. The data was analysed using descriptive analysis. Means, frequency distributions, and percentages were used to characterise the data. Correlation analysis was used as inferential statistics to determine the relationship between two variables. The findings revealed that there was a significant linear relationship between the determinants of consumer behaviour and consumer behaviour (Kyule, 2017). The results of the study showed that there was no significant relationship between social media channels and customer targeting through social media. However, the research was conducted in another industry than the one the current research is being conducted in, and it was conducted in only one organisation. Urban male consumers were not specifically the target of the study.

Jamil et al. (2022) analysed how social media marketing activities influence client intentions. This study targeted active users of the social media sites Facebook and Instagram in Pakistan. In this study, the respondent(s) used a self-administered questionnaire as the data collection

tool. The authors recruited Facebook and Instagram users to fill in the questionnaire via the indicated online platform (Jamil et al., 2022). A questionnaire survey was administered to 353 respondents and the results were analysed using structural equation modelling (SEM). Studies show that SMMAs have a positive influence on user intentions. In this study, bootstrapping was used with 5,000 samples to test the significance of various correlations. The results indicate that there is a very strong correlation between Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMAs) and social identity. Additionally, Social Media Marketing (SMM) has a significant impact on satisfaction. Satisfaction is greatly increased by social identity. The study reveals that satisfaction has significant influence on continued intention. Moreover, the intention of the participants has a strong correlation with pleasure. However, the research was carried out in another country and industry and did not specifically focus on urban males.

Akayleh (2021) investigated how social media advertising influences customer behaviour. In order to achieve the purpose of the study, quantitative cross-sectional descriptive research design was used, and simple random sampling was used. The study surveyed 1,425 social media users through a designed and validated questionnaire (Akayleh, 2021). The dependent variable was the consumer buying choice, and the independent variable was social media advertising. The possible confounders were income, education level, gender, age, and culture. The statistics showed that social media advertising influenced the word of mouth as a purchasing factor among customers. The study showed that there was a strong relationship between customer behaviour and social media advertising. The study revealed that gender, age, and culture moderated the relationship between consumer purchasing decision and social media advertising, but money and education did not moderate the relationship. The issue of gender was addressed, which required concentrating on the study of metropolitan male adults only.

2.3.3 Influencer Marketing and Urban Male Consumer Buying Behaviour in the Cosmetic Industry

Several studies have been conducted on the effect of influencer marketing on consumption behaviour. Ali (2023) for instance studied the impact of influencer marketing on consumer behaviour. The research employed a descriptive convenience sampling approach. A variety of businesses, most of which conducted the majority of their operations digitally, reached out to a total of 75 business professionals, senior executives, and lead managers. These businesses primarily carried out their activities digitally. Both primary and secondary data were gathered from various online sources and through the use of a closed-ended questionnaire. The study was conducted with the aim of highlighting the impact of influencer marketing on consumer behaviour, and for this purpose, multiple tests were applied, including reliability tests, descriptive statistics, KMO tests, and correlation analysis. The correlation analysis (0.797, P= 0.000) indicated a strong and significant positive relationship between influencer marketing and consumer behaviour. This suggested that changes in influencer marketing strategies were likely to have a substantial impact on consumer behaviour. The research however examined different demographics and not specifically urban make consumers. The study also adopted quantitative methodology hence the need for a more comprehensive qualitative study.

Verplancke and Gelati (2022) studied the effect of influencer marketing on the buying behaviour of young consumers. The qualitative study encompassed in-depth interviews with three influencers from the fashion and beauty sector, alongside discussions with representatives from two fashion and beauty brands. Additionally, insights were gathered from seven followers who actively engage with the aforementioned influencers. The study used three perspectives, as all the parts are linked together and in order to have more reliable findings thanks to the

triangulation of data (Verplancke & Gelati, 2022). The results revealed that social networks and influencers significantly amplified brands' ability to shape the purchasing behaviours of younger generations. Consumers developed a sense of identification and emotional connection with influencers, which in turn motivated them to trust and act upon the influencers' endorsements. This relationship impacted young consumers on different levels (Verplancke & Gelati, 2022). Brands became aware of consumer behaviour and knew that their sales would improve if an influencer posted any type of content featuring their products, especially if the influencer was not paid to do so (Verplancke & Gelati, 2022). Followers exhibited greater trust in an influencer's recommendations when no paid collaboration was involved. As a result, beyond formal partnerships that included financial compensation, brands also provided gifted products, anticipating that influencers would incorporate them into their content organically. The target population however included both male and female consumers.

Mutahi (2022) studied the Role of Social Media Influencers on Consumer Decision making Process in The Kenyan Cosmetics Industry. The objectives of this study is to determine what consumers search for in social media influencers for believability in product efficacy, to establish the techniques used by social media influencers on Instagram in persuading social media users to buy cosmetics in Kenya, and to establish the communication attributes that cause a social media influencer on Instagram to be persuasive among consumers (Mutahi, 2022). The research approach employed was a mixed research approach because it gave an all-rounded perspective of the subjects for a more in-depth conclusion (Mutahi, 2022). The study unveiled that from the buyer–perspective communication characteristics, influencer tactics and believability contributed significantly. Further in-depth interviews revealed that communication techniques such as announcements and recommendations/reviews influence customer decision-making (Mutahi, 2022). The study exposes the glaring need for

organizations to take feedback from the influencer and their audience to improve the product and increase its market reach. The study however did not target only urban male consumers.

2.3.4 Content Marketing and Urban Male Consumer Buying Behaviour in the Cosmetic Industry

Alzaanin (2020) conducted a conceptual review highlighting DCM as an effective practice for small business growth. The study emphasized that in an era where digital platforms, social media, and blogs are ubiquitous, small business owners must leverage these tools to reach consumers effectively. By creating engaging and valuable content, businesses can establish strong relationships with clients, thereby enhancing brand awareness and driving sales. The success of online platforms has continued to be influenced by their accessibility and often low-cost nature, but researchers stated, the right one must be chosen to maintain the target audience. As an example, Pinterest has a very female-centric user group, Instagram is centred around photography, and Snapchat skews toward younger users. So, understanding how users operate on specific platforms is crucial to getting the most out of DCM.
Li et al. (2022) examined the influence of DCM in a Mixed Reality (MR) training environment setting, targeting online purchase intentions (OPI). A Structural Equation Model has been suggested to analyse the impact of DCM on OPI in the short and long run through social networking media. Data from 374 online questionnaires were analysed to reveal that significant DCM stimulates OPI via the enhancement of perceived value through MR experiences. Finally, customers who are more engaged with DCM in MR environment lead to brand trust, which, in turn, has a significant effect on long-term OPI. It indicates the prospect of combining information technologies such as MR with DCM systems to increase consumer buying intentions. This research is very much centred around a broad consumer base and did not go pluralistic in terms of the audience it covered in the findings which might mean it could not

be generalized to individual sectors or demographics as such, which says more of an industry specific need for more in-depth studies.

Kariuki (2019) established the effectiveness of digital media marketing in increasing brand awareness and interaction in the case of Britam Holdings Limited, a firm in the financial services industry. The study discovered that marketing methods, including video marketing and influencer partnerships, affect brand experience and customer interactions in a positive manner. In addition, digital media marketing allows companies to respond to customer difficulties, communicate with people in other areas, and obtain information about their products. The study established that digital media marketing has a strong influence on brand recognition and suggested that firms set specific goals, hire specialists in digital marketing, and synchronize their activities across social media. Although it was detailed, it focused only on a financial services firm, which limited the understanding of DCM's applicability in other industries, including cosmetics.

In his study, Ndung'u (2022) sought to establish the impact of adopting digital marketing strategies among the 100 medium sized firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya: The research focused on search engine marketing, digital advertising, viral marketing, and social marketing as the main forms of digital marketing. Discoveries further revealed that these mechanisms have a large impact on organizational performance, with an R^2 value of 0.744, meaning that the examined digital marketing practices explain 74.4% of the success of firms. The research recommended that organizations publish relevant content, prioritize conversion over leads, and develop follower personas to guide social media strategies. However, the study encompassed a broad range of industries, not focusing specifically on the cosmetics sector, thereby limiting industry-specific insights.

Gathaiya (2023) focused on the cosmetics industry in Nairobi, Kenya, examining the influence of strategic marketing practices on firm performance. The study revealed a strong positive relationship between strategic marketing practices and firm performance, with an R^2 value of 0.819, indicating that approximately 81.9% of firm success is due to these practices. Notably, digital marketing innovations and personal selling were identified as the most significant strategies adopted. Companies that integrated digital marketing advancements alongside personalized selling strategies demonstrated superior performance compared to their competitors. The research underscored the importance of cosmetics firms in Nairobi adopting well-planned marketing approaches to maintain a competitive edge and drive long-term growth. However, while comprehensive, the study did not specifically address the role of DCM within these strategic marketing practices, suggesting an area for further research.

2.4 Knowledge Gaps

Despite the substantial empirical research on search engine marketing (SEM), social media marketing (SMM), and influencer marketing (IM) and their impact on performance of cosmetic industry, several critical knowledge gaps remain, especially regarding urban male consumers in the cosmetics industry. The majority of studies either focus on the population at large or some wider demographic group without accounting for urban male consumption patterns. In contrast, the approach used by Torieh and ELGendy (2021) emphasized gender differences in terms of responses toward search engine optimization (SEO), while not investigating the reaction of urban male consumers on search engine marketing (SEM) and advertising in the cosmetics industry. Likewise, the study by Velayudham and Rose (2019) on the effects of SEM on consumers in general does not provide actionable insights as it does not focus on segments such as urban males in the beauty segment, where behavioural patterns can differ significantly from general consumer behaviour.

Another gap which has been identified is that there has been insufficient research on SEM,

SMM, and IM in context with the cosmetics industry, especially for male consumers. While Ndung'u and Mutinda (2022) examined medium-sized businesses in Kenya regarding SEM, they failed to consider the beauty industry and the consumption practices of urban males. This matters as the motivations, triggers and decision-making in the beauty sector might very well be unlike any other sector, especially one with a population often underrepresented in marketing research.

Jamil et al (2022) and other studies demonstrate that in contrast to most studies that have studied the impact of social media marketing on consumer behaviour such as (2022) and (Akayleh, 2021), demographic profile is missing from their conclusions. Different populations or broader age groups that have not been effectively targeted would diminish the findings and be hard to glean actionable insights from, especially since urban male consumers could have different preferences or reactions to certain marketing strategies. Kyule (2017) shows no strong relationship between social media channels and consumer behaviour across one organization, yet this does not explain whether such dynamics would be more comparable if we investigated urban males in another context or industry.

Influencer marketing is another area where knowledge gaps persist. While Ali (2023) and Verplancke and Gelati (2022) have reviewed the wider effects of influencer marketing on consumer behaviour, it is critical to explore how male consumers, especially those in cities, engage with the influencers in the beauty industry. It means that the current research often uses samples of both men and women or young people without distinguishing the impact on male consumers. In the 2022 study, Mutahi explores how social media influencers influence the Kenyan cosmetics industry, but in this study, he does not differentiate the consumption patterns of urban male consumers.

Another gap lies with the methods used in these studies. Most studies use quantitative research methods which, despite their effectiveness in revealing relationships between certain variables, fail to incorporate qualitative data or perspectives needed to understand the behaviours of the targeted consumers peculiar to the male population in urban areas interested in beautification products. For instance, even as quantitative information gathered by Ali (2023) is strong, gathering qualitative data that explain why and how urban male consumers are responding to influencer marketing could be rewarding. Finally, one can identify temporal and regional differences as well as language. Most research has been carried out in different cultural contexts such as Egypt, Pakistan and Kenya but the cultural aspects informing the consumption behaviour of urban males in the Kenyan beauty industry have not received much research attention. This is important to appreciate given that consumer behaviour is influenced by cultural, economic and social factors within geographic locations.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology adopted for the study, detailing the research design, data collection methods, data preparation, and analysis techniques employed. The methodology was designed to rigorously explore the influence of digital marketing strategies on the consumption behaviour of male consumers in Kenya's cosmetic industry.

3.2 Research Design

A research design is the blueprint that outlines how data will be collected, measured, and analysed to answer specific research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This study adopted a quantitative research approach, which involved the systematic empirical investigation of observable phenomena through statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques (Bryman, 2016). This study specifically adopted a causal-comparative (explanatory) research design. A causal design was used to identify and evaluate the cause-and-effect relationship between independent and dependent variables (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). In this case, the study sought to establish the causal effect of digital marketing strategies—such as social media marketing, search engine marketing, content marketing, and influencer marketing on urban male consumer buying behaviour.

3.3 Target Population

A population is defined as a collection of individuals, objects, or elements from which a sample is drawn for analysis (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Similarly, Mugenda and Mugenda (2011) describe a population as the total group of entities that a researcher aims to study. In this research, the target population consisted of firms operating in the cosmetics industry in Nairobi City County, focusing specifically on urban male consumers. The study targeted only major

personal care retailer as listed by Business List Kenya (2024), which identifies 214 cosmetics retailers and operating in Nairobi as shown in Appendices. The research drew unit of observations consisting of one male urban male Cosmetic customer from each cosmetic retail outlet in Nairobi County totalling 214 respondents.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Procedures

According to Kombo and Tromp (2019), a sample can be defined as a group of units derived out of the population to portray it. Adequate sample size should therefore be determined (Orodho & Kombo, 2012). The selection of the sample should be carefully organized so that it would be sufficient to render the population, and the researcher should ensure that the subdivisions that are targeted in the research are given due attention (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2014). There are several approaches in determining the sample size. The sample size of the research was estimated by a formula provided by Yamane (1967) as explained below.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n is the sample size

N is the population size 214

E is the margin error – 5%.

Substituting the values.

$$n = \frac{214}{1 + 214(0.05)^2} = \frac{214}{1 + 0.535} = \frac{214}{1.535} \approx 139.48$$

The sample size was thus 139 urban male consumers.

3.5 Research instrument

The primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire that included close ended questions quantified with Likert scale. The urban male consumers were required to complete questionnaires. The primary advantage of questionnaires is that a large number of people can be sampled more efficiently and cheaply. According to Robson (2021) a questionnaire affords itemized responses for a given research theme. These responses are more readily analysable and interpretable than the rest. The questionnaire method was chosen for its capacity to pose identical questions to all respondents simultaneously, facilitating an efficient collection of responses from a larger sample size compared to alternative approaches like interviews (Saunders, 2018). As shown in the appendices, the questionnaire was organized into several sections. It begins with preliminary questions that gather general demographic information such as age, education level, income, job designation, and years of experience in marketing. This section was essential for understanding the background characteristics of the respondents and analysing their moderating effects on the relationships between variables. The main body of the questionnaire was divided into thematic sections corresponding to the study's independent variables: search engine marketing, social media marketing, content marketing, and influencer marketing. Each of these sections contained statements measured using the Likert scale to assess respondents' views on the relevance, application, and effectiveness of each strategy. The final section addressed the dependent variable—urban male consumer buying behaviour—capturing perspectives on brand awareness, trust, purchase intent, and loyalty.

3.6 Pilot test

A pilot study is an important initial phase in research that enables the evaluation of the validity, reliability and feasibility of the research tools prior to the actual data collection exercise (Zohrabi, 2013). A pilot study will help to eliminate any possible problems with the

questionnaire, including ambiguity of the wording, unclear instructions, and the inability to answer some of the questions (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2011). In the current study, a pilot test was done with 10 percent of the estimated sample size, which is equivalent to 14 consumers sampled out of the population of 214 retail firms in the City County of Nairobi. These pilot participants were randomly selected on the same population frame, and they were not included in the main study to prevent bias in response and contamination of the outcome. This approach ensured that the conditions under which the questionnaire was tested were identical to the actual research environment, thereby enhancing the instrument's contextual validity. The use of 10% of the study sample aligns with recommendations by Johanson and Brooks (2010), who argue that a pilot sample of 10% is sufficient for evaluating the adequacy of instruments in survey-based research. The insights gained from this pilot informed refinements to the questionnaire and improved the overall reliability and clarity of the research tool prior to the primary data collection phase.

3.6.1 Validity of the Research Instrument

Validity measures how well an instrument accurately captures what it intends to measure. Three essential types of validity; content, construct, and criterion, were considered (Zohrabi, 2024). Content validity assesses the extent to which items comprehensively represent the property or trait being measured, which, in this study, will be validated through expert review. Construct validity evaluates how well a measurement method represents a construct (e.g., a latent variable like attitude or belief that cannot be measured directly) without overlap with measures of other constructs (Zohrabi, 2024). Correlation tests were employed to verify construct validity. Criterion-related validity examines how well an instrument's scores align with an external criterion, measured either concurrently or predictively. In this study, criterion validity was tested by calculating the correlation coefficient between two different measures.

3.6.2 Reliability of the study

The study utilized Cronbach's Alpha to assess the reliability of each construct and item included. The threshold for item-total correlation was set at no less than 0.30, following Cristobal, Flavian, & Guinaliu's (2007) guidelines. To evaluate internal consistency across all latent constructs in the model, composite reliability was applied, aiming for values exceeding 0.7 to ensure high reliability (Hatcher, 2024). Items not meeting this criterial were either modified or eliminated.

3.7 Data collection procedure

The procedure of collecting primary data started with obtaining introduction letter from the Catholic University and National Government Ministries and the National Council for Science and Technology (NACOSTI). The data was collected with the help of research assistants who worked under the supervision of the researcher. The two assistants distributed the questionnaires with the guidance of the researcher. The study employed drop-and-pick method for data collection. This approach involved delivering questionnaires to the selected participants and allowing them sufficient time to complete them before collecting the responses later. The assistants provided the participants with contact details of the researcher to provide any clarification. The assistants were equipped with training to help them on their roles. Any clarification that cannot be answered directly by the assistants was directed to the researcher.

3.8 Data analysis and Presentation

A statistical examination of the data acquired by questionnaires was initially conducted to assess accuracy and response dependability. The data was subsequently encoded and copied to Excel spreadsheets. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarise the questionnaire data across all variables and to delineate the demographic features of the respondents. These encompassed frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Descriptive statistics

effectively summarise and convey the fundamental characteristics of data in an organised manner.

Inferential statistics were employed to evaluate the specific research objectives and associated hypotheses. Pearson correlation was employed to evaluate the strength and direction of linear correlations between variables. This statistical metric, spanning from -1 to +1, signifies the type of correlation: -1 indicates a perfect negative linear correlation, +1 denotes a perfect positive linear correlation, and 0 represents the absence of a linear correlation (Maheshwarkar & Sohani, 2013). A correlation was deemed statistically significant if the P value was below 0.05. A multiple linear regression model was utilised to analyse the link between the independent variables—search engine marketing, social media marketing, content marketing, and influencer marketing—and the dependent variable, urban male consumer purchasing behaviour.

The fitted regression equation is displayed below:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

$Y =$ Consumer Buying Behavior

β_0 =Constant

X_1 =search engine marketing

X_2 = social media marketing

X_3 = Influencer marketing

X_4 = Content marketing

β_0 = the intercept

ε = error term

3.9 Diagnostic Tests

Diagnostic tests were carried out prior to the actual analysis of data to establish that the data set of all the variables and the hypothesis is sufficient to satisfy the statistical requirements of validity and reliability of results. Such tests helped in detecting any breaches that might interfere with the validity and the interpretability of the results. Through diagnostic tests, the study guaranteed that the data acquired is suitable to regression analysis and other inferential statistical methods (Gujarati & Porter, 2020).

3.9.1 Normality test

Normality tests are applied in the process of determining the extent to which a data set is well-modelled by a normal distribution as well as in the process of calculating the degree of probability that a random variable underlying the data set is normally distributed (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). Normality tests are used to determine whether the sample data was a result of normally distributed population. This can be determined graphically or numerically. Among the numerical methods, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test can be applied to the samples of more than 2,000, and the Shapiro-Wilk test can be used to the samples between 50 and 2,000. Since this study received a response rate of 121, the Shapiro Wilk test was used because it is effective in identifying the deviations of the normality based on skewness or kurtosis or both (Razali & Wah, 2011). Shapiro-Wilk test works on the following hypothesis:

H_0: The sample follows a normal distribution.

The null hypothesis is rejected if the p-value is less than 0.05, which would indicate that the data is not normally distributed.

3.9.2 Multicollinearity test

Multicollinearity is a state of very high inter-correlations or inter-associations among the independent variables. It is therefore a type of disturbance in the data and if present in the data, the statistical inferences made about the data may not be reliable (Cohen, 2013). To assess multicollinearity among the independent variables, the study utilized the Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) method, as recommended by Cooper and Schindler (2011). According to O'Brien (2007), multicollinearity is considered problematic if the tolerance value is below 0.20 or the VIF exceeds 5.

3.9.3 Heteroscedasticity test

Heteroscedasticity, also known as heteroscedasticity or heteroskedasticity, is defined as the randomness of a variable that is not constant for a variety of values of some predicting variable. As with simple linear regression, simple linear regression assumes homoscedasticity or the equal variance of the dependent-variable (Saleh & Rosli, 2024). In homoscedasticity the variance of the error term (that is the noise or disturbance term in the model that relates the independent variables and the dependent variable) does not vary over the range of the independent variables (Saleh & Rosli, 2024). This is a violation of homoscedasticity. In this study, heteroscedasticity was tested using Levene's Statistic, a method used to assess the assumption of homogeneity of variance—a key requirement in linear regression models to ensure that the variance of the error terms is constant. To determine whether heteroscedasticity was present, the null hypothesis tested was that the variances of the error terms are equal across groups (i.e., homoscedasticity exists). The threshold used to evaluate this test was a significance level of 0.05. If the p-value obtained from the Levene's test is greater than 0.05, it indicates no significant difference in variances, and therefore, the null hypothesis of equal variances is not rejected (Saleh & Rosli, 2024).

3.9.4 Linearity test

Linearity testing seeks to establish whether the relationship linking independent and dependent variables is linear or non-linear. The chief tests for determining linearity are correlation and linear regression analysis. To carry out sound regression research, the independent and dependent variables must exhibit a linear relationship (Baek, Cho & Phillips, 2015). SPSS software version 27 was employed to carry out the linearity tests directly. If the significance probability of the deviation from linearity surpasses 0.05, the association between the independent variables was regarded as linearly dependent.

3.10 Ethical Issues

Ethical considerations played a critical role in guiding the conduct of this research on digital marketing strategies and urban male consumer buying behaviour in Nairobi County's beauty care market. The researcher first sought informed consent from all participants. Each respondent was informed of the study's purpose, their role, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any point without any negative consequences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Data anonymization and the use of the collected data solely to academic purposes guaranteed confidentiality and privacy. No reports or publications made as a result of the study revealed the identity of participants. This guaranteed the adherence to ethical research practices and encourage trust among the respondents (Bryman, 2016). The research was also transparent, and objective and it was not aimed at misrepresentation or manipulation of data. The participants would not be forced, and their answers would be respected irrespective of their opinions. The ethical integrity was ensured by voluntary participation and lack of any pressure or inducement (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019).

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The chapter shows the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered to investigate the effect of digital marketing strategies on the urban male consumer buying behaviour in the Cosmetic industry in the Nairobi County. The results were organized according to the objectives of the study, which were search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing, influencer marketing, and content marketing. The analysis will combine the descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis to evaluate the correlation between the variables of digital marketing and consumer behaviour. The findings were empirical evidence to test the research hypotheses and provide an insight into the improvement of marketing strategies targeting male consumers.

4.2 Response Rate

Response rate is the percentage of questionnaires that have been completed and returned back to the total number of questionnaires distributed. It is one of the most important indicators of the efficiency of data collection and the possibility of its representativeness of the sample (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The current study used 139 questionnaires to the targeted respondents who are the urban male consumers of cosmetics brands in Nairobi County. Of these, 121 were properly filled and returned and the response rate was 87.05% as shown in Table 4.1. Such a high response rate signifies great participation of the participants and implies that the data obtained is likely to be both reliable and representative of the target population. Baruch and Holtom (2023) argue that response rates of more than 80 percent are usually deemed as excellent in organizational and social science research. Thus, the level of response

rate in this research exceeds the recommended standards, which increases the validity of the results and allows making strong conclusions.

Table 4.1: Response rate

Category	Frequency	Percent
Response	121	87.05
Nonresponse	18	12.95
Total	**139**	**100**

Source: Researcher (2025)

4.3 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Understanding the demographic profile of the respondents is vital for contextualizing the findings of this study. The following subsections discuss the age, educational qualifications, and professional experience of urban male consumers. These characteristics help in assessing the reliability, depth, and relevance of the insights shared.

4.3.1 Age bracket

The study sought to establish the distribution of respondents by age in order to understand the dominant age groups engaging with cosmetic products, particularly among urban male consumers. Age is a critical demographic variable that can influence consumer preferences, responsiveness to digital marketing strategies, and purchasing behaviour.

Table 4.2: Age bracket of respondents

Age in years	Frequency	Percent
21-30	45	37.19
31-40	41	33.88
41 - 50	22	18.18

Over 50	13	10.75
Total	**121**	**100.00%**

Source: Researcher (2025)

The results of the study analysis shown on Table 4.2 above shows that the largest proportion of respondents (37.19%) fell within the 21–30 age bracket, followed closely by those aged 31–40 years (33.88%). This indicates that younger adults are more active participants in the male cosmetic market. Respondents aged 41–50 comprised 18.18% of the sample, while those over 50 accounted for only 10.75%. These results suggest that digital marketing efforts are most likely to resonate with younger demographics, particularly those aged 21–40, who are both digitally engaged and more open to grooming trends.

4.3.2 Level of education

The study sought to establish the level of education among respondents to assess their capacity to understand and engage with digital marketing content. Education level often influences consumer awareness, brand perception, and responsiveness to marketing messages delivered through digital platforms.

Table 4.3: ***Highest academic qualification***

Category	Frequency	Percent
Certificate	29	23.97%
Diploma	34	28.10%
Undergraduate Degree	47	38.84%
Post graduate degree	11	9.09%
Total	**121**	**100%**

Source: Researcher (2025)

As shown in table 4.3 above, he majority of respondents (38.84%) held undergraduate degrees, followed by 28.10% with diplomas and 23.97% with certificates. A smaller proportion (9.09%)

had attained postgraduate qualifications. These findings suggest that most respondents had at least a post-secondary education, implying that digital marketing campaigns targeting this demographic can effectively utilize well-structured, informative, and persuasive content. The relatively high level of education among respondents also indicates a likelihood of critical evaluation of digital content before making purchase decisions.

4.3.3 Years Purchased cosmetic products

The analysis presented in Table 4.4 sought to determine the duration respondents had been purchasing and using cosmetic products. Understanding consumer experience in this area helps reveal their level of brand familiarity, loyalty, and responsiveness to long-term digital marketing efforts.

Table 4.4: Respondents' years purchased cosmetic products

Category	Frequency	Percent
Less than one year	14	11.57%
Between 1 and 3 years	27	22.31%
Between 4 and 6 years	49	40.50%
Between 7 and 10 years	18	14.88%
Above 10 years	13	10.74%
Total	**121**	**100.00%**

Source: Researcher (2025)

The results in table 4.4 above shows that the largest proportion of respondents (40.50%) had been purchasing cosmetic products for between 4 and 6 years. This is followed by 22.31% who had done so for 1 to 3 years, and 14.88% for 7 to 10 years. A smaller group (11.57%) were relatively new users with less than one year of experience, while only 10.74% had been purchasing cosmetic products for more than 10 years. These results suggest that most respondents have moderate experience with cosmetic products, which positions them as informed and receptive to new trends or innovations introduced through digital marketing.

Their extended use indicates a developed understanding of product performance, making them valuable targets for brand differentiation and loyalty-focused campaigns.

4.4 Descriptive Findings

This part gives descriptive statistics of the perceptions of the respondents about the effects of digital marketing strategies on the urban male consumer buying behaviour in the Cosmetic industry in Nairobi County. The four major independent variables that are analysed include search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing, influencer marketing, and content marketing and their effects on the dependent variable, which is the urban male consumer buying behaviour. The results are displayed in the form of percentages of the distribution of responses, mean of the level of agreement and standard deviation of the responses using a 5-point Likert scale that ranges between strongly disagree and strongly agree.

4.4.1 Search Engine Optimization

The study sought to explore the extent to which search engine optimization (SEO) practices influence the buying behaviour of urban male consumers in the Cosmetic industry within Nairobi County. The findings are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Descriptive statistics on Search engine optimization

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
I am more likely to consider a cosmetic brand if it appears at the top of search results.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	57.85%	42.15%	4.42	.496
I trust cosmetic brands that are easy to find through search engines.	0.00%	1.65%	2.48%	38.02%	57.85%	4.52	.634
Seeing a brand frequently in search results makes me more confident in trying it.	2.48%	0.00%	15.70%	26.45%	55.37%	4.32	.915
I often read customer reviews from search results before buying a product.	1.65%	13.22%	11.57%	32.23%	41.32%	3.98	1.103

Search ads (like Google ads) have influenced my choice of a grooming or cosmetic product.	4.96%	4.96%	17.36%	28.93%	43.80%	4.02	1.125
I discover new grooming or skincare products through online searches.	1.65%	0.83%	13.22%	38.02%	46.28%	4.26	.844
Search engine visibility affects how I perceive a brand's credibility.	0.00%	0.00%	16.53%	19.83%	63.64%	4.47	.765
Well-ranked search results make me more likely to explore a brand's website.	0.00%	8.26%	8.26%	31.40%	52.07%	4.27	.931
I have bought grooming products after finding useful search results or tutorials.	4.96%	2.48%	4.13%	33.06%	55.37%	4.31	1.025

Source: Researcher (2025)

As shown in table 4.5 above, the first statement assessed whether urban male consumers are more inclined to consider a cosmetic brand that appears at the top of search results. The data revealed high level of agreement, with 57.85% agreeing and 42.15% strongly agreeing, resulting in a high mean of 4.42 (SD = 0.496). This strong consensus affirms the influence of search rankings on consumer attention and brand consideration. It suggests that SEO is not just a visibility tool but a credibility signal for male consumers, particularly in a market where grooming products are often associated with quality and identity.

When asked whether they trust brands that are easy to find through search engines, a striking 57.85% strongly agreed and 38.02% agreed (mean = 4.52, SD = 0.634), the highest in this category. This indicates that ease of online discovery directly contributes to consumer confidence. For urban male shoppers—who may seek efficiency in decision-making—accessibility is equated with brand legitimacy. These results underscore the necessity for cosmetic brands targeting men to invest in SEO as a trust-building mechanism.

Respondents also affirmed that frequent brand appearances in search results boost their confidence in trying new products, with 55.37% strongly agreeing and 26.45% agreeing (mean = 4.32, SD = 0.915). Although 15.70% were neutral and 2.48% strongly disagreed, the data suggested that regular exposure positively reinforces brand familiarity and perceived reliability.

This supports the psychological principle of the mere-exposure effect—frequent visibility breeds acceptance, a critical insight for marketers.

On the role of search engines in influencing buying decisions through customer reviews, responses were more varied. While 41.32% strongly agreed and 32.23% agreed, a notable 13.22% disagreed and 11.57% remained neutral (mean = 3.98, SD = 1.103). This variation implies that while online reviews matter to many male consumers, others may either rely on different cues (e.g., influencer content, peer recommendations) or view online reviews with scepticism. For brands, this signals an opportunity to integrate authentic review strategies—like user-generated content and verified feedback—into their digital presence.

The influence of paid search advertisements (e.g., Google Ads) on purchase behaviour also showed strong support. A combined 72.73% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that such ads had impacted their grooming product choices (mean = 4.02, SD = 1.125). However, the presence of 9.92% disagreement or uncertainty reveals that ad fatigue or distrust in paid content may still exist among some consumers. Brands should therefore balance paid campaigns with organic visibility to maintain authenticity and credibility in their outreach.

On whether consumers discover new grooming products through search, 46.28% strongly agreed and 38.02% agreed, while 13.22% were undecided (mean = 4.26, SD = 0.844). This confirms that SEO is not only a tool for reinforcing known brands but also a channel for discovery. For emerging cosmetic brands targeting urban males, this insight is especially valuable—smart keyword targeting and educational content can serve as cost-effective ways to capture interest from curious, experience-driven consumers.

The idea that search visibility enhances brand credibility also received strong affirmation. A majority (63.64%) strongly agreed, while 19.83% agreed (mean = 4.47, SD = 0.765). The absence of disagreement signals that search engine presence is a non-negotiable credibility

marker for many men in the grooming space. For cosmetic brands, this reinforces the importance of maintaining high-quality, optimized web content that signals authority, professionalism, and trustworthiness to this target audience.

A similarly strong pattern emerged regarding the influence of well-ranked search results in prompting further exploration. With 52.07% strongly agreeing and 31.40% agreeing (mean = 4.27, SD = 0.931), the data show that strong SEO encourages deeper engagement with the brand—whether through browsing websites, following social pages, or reading product details. However, the 8.26% who disagreed or remained neutral suggest that strong search visibility alone may not always compel action; landing page quality and overall user experience must also be optimized.

Finally, consumers were asked whether they had made purchases after finding useful search results or tutorials. Here, 55.37% strongly agreed and 33.06% agreed (mean = 4.31, SD = 1.025), indicating that SEO not only drives awareness but also conversions. Nonetheless, 4.96% strongly disagreed and 2.48% disagreed—this minority may reflect consumers who are less influenced by digital content or who prioritize in-person experiences. These insights highlight the importance of complementing SEO efforts with engaging tutorials, testimonials, and visual content to capture the attention of more hesitant buyers.

The data thus clearly established that SEO has a powerful and multidimensional influence on urban male cosmetic consumers in Nairobi. From trust and discovery to confidence and purchase intent, SEO serves as a crucial enabler of digital engagement and brand choice. These findings align with previous studies. Velayudham and Rose (2019) emphasized the role of top search positioning in shaping customer behaviour—paralleling the current finding that visibility at the top of search results boosts brand preference. Torieh and ELGendy (2021) found that male consumers respond more positively to SEO efforts than females, which

supports this study's consumer profile. Similarly, Ndung'u and Mutinda (2022) confirmed that SEO drives improved performance among Kenyan firms, underscoring the commercial value of optimized search strategies.

However, while the benefits of SEO are evident, the study also uncovers areas of inconsistency—particularly with regard to search-generated traffic and the perceived influence of reviews. This suggests that SEO must be approached holistically, combining technical visibility with high-quality content, user trust signals, and seamless web experiences. For cosmetic brands seeking to win over the urban male segment, SEO is not just a tool for digital placement—it is a strategic asset in building lasting brand relationships.

4.4.2 Social Media Marketing

This research sought to determine how social media marketing influences the buying behaviour of urban male consumers in Nairobi's cosmetic industry. The findings are summarized in Table 4.6 below;

Table 4.6: Descriptive Statistics on social media marketing

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
I regularly see cosmetic or grooming product ads on my social media feeds.	0.83%	0.83%	14.88%	26.45%	57.02%	4.38	.829
Social media content influences my decision to try new grooming or skincare products.	1.65%	1.65%	4.13%	30.58%	61.98%	4.50	.797
I trust brands that are active and engaging on social media platforms.	4.13%	1.65%	4.96%	31.40%	57.85%	4.37	.967
I have followed or purchased a product because of a social media post or ad.	0.83%	0.00%	7.44%	35.54%	56.20%	4.46	.708
I am more likely to try a product if it has positive	0.00%	6.61%	6.61%	22.31%	64.46%	4.45	.885

comments and reactions on social media.							
Targeted ads on Instagram or Facebook have introduced me to new grooming brands.	0.83%	4.96%	8.26%	36.36%	49.59%	4.29	.880
I feel more connected to brands that interact with users on social platforms.	4.13%	1.65%	14.88%	29.75%	49.59%	4.19	1.027
Social media gives me useful tips and product recommendations for men's grooming.	0.00%	11.57%	11.57%	43.80%	33.06%	3.98	.957
Seeing a brand on multiple social media platforms builds my confidence in that brand.	0.00%	1.65%	3.31%	38.02%	57.02%	4.50	.647

Source: Researcher (2025)

As shown in table 4.6, the first statement assessed the visibility of cosmetic or grooming ads on social media feeds. A majority of respondents either agreed (26.45%) or strongly agreed (57.02%), with only 1.66% expressing disagreement and 14.88% undecided. The mean score was 4.38 (SD = 0.829), indicating widespread exposure to digital marketing within social environments. This affirms the effectiveness of social platforms as advertising spaces that reach urban male consumers where they are most active.

Respondents were next asked whether social media content influences their decision to try new grooming products. An overwhelming 61.98% strongly agreed and 30.58% agreed (mean = 4.50, SD = 0.797). This high level of agreement demonstrates the persuasive role of curated content in shaping experimentation and purchase behaviour. Grooming decisions among men, once considered private or utilitarian, are increasingly being shaped by what they see and learn online, particularly through peer-driven and lifestyle-oriented narratives.

Trust in brands with an active social media presence was also reported as significant, with 57.85% strongly agreeing and 31.40% agreeing (mean = 4.37, SD = 0.967). A small portion of respondents were neutral or disagreed, suggesting that while engagement is generally

appreciated, it must be authentic and consistent to build real trust. For urban male consumers, who may be newer to the beauty space, seeing brands interact meaningfully online boosts credibility and signals professionalism.

The influence of social media ads in prompting product purchases was supported by a strong mean of 4.46 (SD = 0.708), with 56.20% strongly agreeing and 35.54% agreeing. This points to the high conversion potential of well-placed social media content. Urban males—particularly younger, digital-native consumers—are responding not just with interest but with action, purchasing products based on visually appealing and socially endorsed posts.

Positive comments and reactions on social media also impacted product trial decisions, with 64.46% strongly agreeing and 22.31% agreeing (mean = 4.45, SD = 0.885). This reflects the strong effect of social proof on consumer confidence. In the grooming sector, where trust and relatability matter, endorsements by peers and influencers alike validate choices for male consumers who may be navigating grooming decisions more cautiously than their female counterparts.

The introduction of new brands via targeted ads on Instagram or Facebook was acknowledged by a majority, with 49.59% strongly agreeing and 36.36% agreeing (mean = 4.29, SD = 0.880). Although 8.26% were undecided and 5.79% disagreed, the data still affirm the reach and effectiveness of algorithm-driven targeting. These ads help reduce discovery barriers and streamline the decision process for consumers who may be unfamiliar with the category or overwhelmed by choices.

When asked whether brand interaction on social platforms fosters connection, 49.59% strongly agreed and 29.75% agreed (mean = 4.19, SD = 1.027). However, a notable 14.88% were neutral, and 5.78% expressed disagreement. This suggests that while many consumers appreciate active engagement, its impact varies depending on the quality and personalization

of interaction. Urban male consumers may prefer concise, visually driven engagement over traditional comment threads or corporate-style communication.

Regarding whether social media provides useful grooming tips and recommendations, agreement was still strong (43.80% agreed, 33.06% strongly agreed), but 11.57% were neutral and 11.57% disagreed (mean = 3.98, SD = 0.957). This reveals a moderate gap in perceived content value, hinting at the need for more tailored and practical content aimed specifically at male grooming needs. Educational content that blends function with style may resonate more with this audience.

Lastly, the perception that a multi-platform presence increases consumer confidence received overwhelming support, with 57.02% strongly agreeing and 38.02% agreeing (mean = 4.50, SD = 0.647). This reflects a growing expectation among male consumers that brands be accessible across platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube. Multi-channel visibility not only reinforces brand recognition but also builds perceived professionalism and relevance in a crowded digital space.

These findings echo broader research trends. Jamil et al. (2022) found that social media marketing enhances customer trust, satisfaction, and intention to purchase—particularly when users feel socially identified with the content, a trend clearly mirrored in this study. Kyule (2017) observed that social media positively affects consumer behaviour, though his study found weaker links between specific strategies and outcomes. In contrast, this study reveals strong alignment between targeted content, influencer partnerships, and buying intent. Mutahi (2022) further emphasized the effectiveness of influencer marketing in Kenya's cosmetic industry, supporting this study’s evidence of influencer-driven consumer behaviour.

However, this research adds depth by focusing specifically on urban male consumers—a group often overlooked in digital campaigns. The findings show that while men are highly responsive

to social media marketing, their expectations differ from other groups: they value authenticity, useful content, and seamless brand interaction. Where engagement or educational value is lacking, trust may waver. This calls for more strategic and inclusive digital content that reflects male consumers' identities, preferences, and evolving grooming routines in Nairobi's urban market.

4.4.3 Influencer Marketing

The research sought to examine how influencer marketing affects the purchasing behaviour of urban male consumers in Nairobi's cosmetic industry. The findings shown in Table 4.7 summarize respondents' perceptions based on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

Table 4.7: Descriptive statistics on influencer marketing

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
I am more likely to trust a product if it's recommended by an influencer I follow.	0.00%	6.61%	12.40%	18.18%	62.81%	4.37	.941
Influencers help me discover new grooming or skincare brands for men.	2.48%	4.96%	13.22%	23.14%	56.20%	4.26	1.029
I have tried a product because it was endorsed by an influencer I relate to.	3.31%	3.31%	9.09%	32.23%	52.07%	4.26	.990
I consider influencer reviews more honest than brand advertisements.	0.83%	0.00%	18.18%	23.97%	57.02%	4.36	.837
Sponsored posts by influencers affect my opinion about the quality of a product.	0.00%	2.48%	8.26%	36.36%	52.89%	4.40	.747
I watch tutorials or reviews by influencers before purchasing grooming products.	0.83%	4.13%	6.61%	29.75%	58.68%	4.41	.853
When multiple influencers talk about the same product, I'm more likely to try it.	7.44%	4.96%	10.74%	28.10%	48.76%	4.06	1.213
I believe influencer content provides real-life experiences with products.	4.96%	8.26%	5.79%	33.88%	47.11%	4.10	1.143

I feel confident buying grooming products recommended by influencers I admire.	3.31%	3.31%	9.09%	32.23%	52.07%	4.26	.990

Source: Researcher (2025)

The first statement assessed whether respondents are more likely to trust a product recommended by an influencer they follow. A strong majority either strongly agreed (62.81%) or agreed (18.18%), with only 6.61% disagreeing and 12.40% undecided. The mean score was 4.37 (SD = 0.941), highlighting the significant role trust plays when influencers endorse grooming products. For urban male consumers—many of whom are increasingly turning to social platforms for product advice—this trust in influencer recommendations is a powerful driver of brand preference.

Regarding the discovery of new grooming brands through influencers, 56.20% strongly agreed and 23.14% agreed, with 13.22% undecided and a small minority (7.44%) expressing disagreement. The mean of 4.26 (SD = 1.029) indicates that influencers are key intermediaries in introducing consumers to emerging products. This suggests that brands targeting the male grooming market in Nairobi can leverage influencers as discovery agents to overcome brand unfamiliarity and encourage product trial.

When asked if they had tried a product because it was endorsed by a relatable influencer, 52.07% strongly agreed and 32.23% agreed. A small share was undecided (9.09%), and 6.62% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The mean of 4.26 (SD = 0.990) reflects the tangible impact influencers have on actual purchasing behaviour, particularly when consumers feel a personal connection or alignment with the influencer's image, lifestyle, or grooming routine.

The fourth statement examined perceptions of honesty in influencer reviews versus traditional brand advertisements. A notable 57.02% strongly agreed and 23.97% agreed, while 18.18% were undecided. Only 0.83% expressed strong disagreement. The mean of 4.36 (SD = 0.837)

suggests that urban male consumers place high value on perceived authenticity in influencer content—viewing it as more relatable and trustworthy than corporate messaging. This insight reinforces the strategic need for influencer campaigns to maintain transparency and a non-promotional tone.

Sponsored content by influencers was also seen as influential, with 52.89% strongly agreeing and 36.36% agreeing. The mean stood at 4.40 (SD = 0.747), with very few respondents disagreeing or remaining undecided. This strong consensus indicates that paid partnerships—when executed well—can enhance perceptions of quality and credibility, effectively bridging the gap between promotion and authenticity in the male grooming market.

Watching influencer tutorials or reviews before purchasing grooming produ cts was affirmed by most respondents: 58.68% strongly agreed and 29.75% agreed (mean = 4.41, SD = 0.853). Minimal disagreement (4.96%) reinforces the idea that male consumers are not only inspired by influencer content but actively use it for decision-making. Grooming routines and product usage are often best conveyed visually, and influencers offer relatable demonstrations that build confidence before purchase.

The seventh statement assessed whether seeing multiple influencers promoting the same product increases the likelihood of trying it. Although 48.76% strongly agreed and 28.10% agreed, 10.74% were undecided, and 12.40% disagreed (7.44% strongly). The mean was 4.06 (SD = 1.213), indicating general agreement, but also revealing hesitancy. This could reflect consumer fatigue or scepticism when multiple endorsements appear overly coordinated or inauthentic. It highlights the importance of strategic diversity and subtlety in influencer campaigns.

Respondents were also asked whether influencer content offers real-life experiences with products. A combined 80.99% agreed or strongly agreed (mean = 4.10, SD = 1.143), although

14.05% expressed disagreement and 5.79% remained neutral. These figures suggest that while most respondents view influencer content as authentic, there is a segment that questions its reliability. Brands should consider partnering with influencers who are known for transparency and unbiased reviews to enhance credibility among more discerning consumers.

Finally, the statement on confidence in buying influencer-endorsed grooming products was supported by 52.07% strongly agreeing and 32.23% agreeing (mean = 4.26, SD = 0.990). A small proportion of respondents disagreed or were neutral, pointing to varying degrees of consumer reliance on influencer guidance. Nonetheless, the high mean affirms that influencer endorsements play a significant role in building product confidence—particularly when influencers are admired or aspirational figures for their followers.

These findings align closely with existing literature. For instance, Mutahi (2022) highlighted influencer marketing as a major driver of brand preference and purchase intent in Kenya's cosmetic industry—paralleling this study's results showing strong influence on trust, visibility, and decision-making among male consumers. Similarly, Jamil et al. (2022) emphasized the effectiveness of influencer collaborations in fostering social identification and credibility, echoing the current findings. However, this study adds a fresh perspective by focusing specifically on urban male consumers—a demographic increasingly engaged yet still underrepresented in grooming-focused campaigns. Notably, areas of mixed perception—such as multi-influencer messaging and content reliability—point to the need for more personalized, strategic influencer management. Brands should not only align with influencers who resonate with male audiences but also emphasize authenticity and consistency to fully leverage this powerful marketing approach in Nairobi's growing male grooming market.

4.4.4 Digital Content Marketing

The study aimed at determining the impact of digital content marketing on the buying behaviour of the urban male consumers in the cosmetic industry in Nairobi. This type of marketing involves blogging, videos, tutorials, newsletters, and other informative materials that aim at educating consumers, establishing brand credibility, and making decisions. Table 4.8 below shows the findings;

Table 4.8: Descriptive Statistics on digital content marketing

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
I often read online articles or blogs about male grooming and skincare.	0.83%	0.00%	18.18%	23.97%	57.02%	4.36	.837
Informative content (e.g., how-to guides) helps me decide which grooming products to buy.	0.00%	2.48%	8.26%	36.36%	52.89%	4.40	.747
Product tutorials or demonstrations on YouTube or Instagram influence my buying decisions.	0.83%	4.13%	6.61%	29.75%	58.68%	4.41	.853
I find value in receiving emails or newsletters with product tips and promotions.	7.44%	4.96%	10.74%	28.10%	48.76%	4.06	1.213
High-quality content makes a brand look more trustworthy and professional.	4.96%	8.26%	5.79%	33.88%	47.11%	4.10	1.143
I prefer buying from brands that educate me about proper grooming or skincare routines.	7.44%	7.44%	7.44%	22.31%	55.37%	4.11	1.264
I'm more likely to share useful grooming content with my friends or followers.	0.83%	4.96%	7.44%	25.62%	61.16%	4.41	.891
I have discovered better grooming practices through branded content online.	1.65%	3.31%	8.26%	28.93%	57.85%	4.38	.897
Comparing product reviews and content helps me choose between different grooming brands.	7.50%	5.00%	7.50%	30.83%	49.17%	4.09	1.202

Source: Researcher (2025)

The findings shown in Table 4.8 reflect how respondents rated their agreement with various related statements using a five-point Likert scale. The first statement explored whether respondents often read online articles or blogs about male grooming and skincare. A majority strongly agreed (57.02%) or agreed (23.97%), while 18.18% were undecided and only 0.83% strongly disagreed. The mean of 4.36 (SD = 0.837) indicates strong engagement with written digital content, reinforcing the idea that male consumers actively seek grooming knowledge online. This highlights the relevance of blog-style content in positioning brands as thought leaders within the male grooming space.

On whether informative content such as how-to guides helps guide product choices, 52.89% strongly agreed and 36.36% agreed, with only 2.48% disagreeing. A small share (8.26%) was undecided. The mean score of 4.40 (SD = 0.747) reflects strong endorsement of educational material as a decision-making tool. This suggests that urban male consumers appreciate content that breaks down product use and benefits, helping them navigate choices with greater confidence and clarity.

The third statement focused on the role of product tutorials or demonstrations on platforms like YouTube or Instagram. Most respondents either strongly agreed (58.68%) or agreed (29.75%), while a small minority (4.96%) expressed disagreement or uncertainty. The mean of 4.41 (SD = 0.853) emphasizes the importance of visual learning in the grooming category. Tutorials and influencer-led demonstrations offer tangible examples of product application and effectiveness, particularly valued by male consumers newer to skincare and grooming routines.

In contrast, responses regarding the value of email newsletters and promotional emails were more varied. While 48.76% strongly agreed and 28.10% agreed, 10.74% were undecided, and a combined 12.40% disagreed. The mean of 4.06 (SD = 1.213) suggests moderate effectiveness. This variability could point to inconsistent quality or relevance of email content across brands.

For cosmetic marketers targeting men, there is potential to refine email strategies by delivering more personalized, benefit-focused content aligned with user interests.

Respondents also reacted positively to the idea that high-quality content enhances a brand's trustworthiness. With 47.11% strongly agreeing and 33.88% agreeing, the mean score reached 4.10 (SD = 1.143). Nonetheless, a combined 13.22% disagreed or strongly disagreed, suggesting that not all brands are perceived to deliver professional-grade content. This signals a need for improved content aesthetics, clarity, and tone to elevate brand perception, especially among visually and value-driven male audiences.

Educational resources that explain grooming routines were similarly well received. A total of 55.37% strongly agreed and 22.31% agreed, while 14.88% disagreed or were undecided. The resulting mean of 4.11 (SD = 1.264) confirms the utility of educational content but also indicates room to improve its effectiveness in reinforcing customer loyalty. For brands, this means not only producing informative material but ensuring it resonates with male consumer needs and lifestyle expectations.

Content that provides product usage tips showed especially strong results: 61.16% strongly agreed and 25.62% agreed, with minimal disagreement or neutrality. The high mean of 4.41 (SD = 0.891) illustrates the value of actionable advice in supporting confident purchases. In a product category where effectiveness and ease-of-use matter, content that simplifies routines or offers grooming hacks resonates well with urban male consumers. Similarly, the role of branded content in helping consumers discover better grooming practices was widely acknowledged. A total of 57.85% strongly agreed and 28.93% agreed, resulting in a mean of 4.38 (SD = 0.897). This affirms that male consumers are actively learning and improving their routines through branded education. It also positions content not just as a sales tool but as a value-added service that strengthens brand loyalty.

Finally, the statement on comparing reviews and content to distinguish between brands was positively rated. With 49.17% strongly agreeing and 30.83% agreeing (mean = 4.09, SD = 1.202), respondents demonstrated that comparative content is important for decision-making. However, the presence of 12.50% disagreement or neutrality indicates that not all brands are effectively differentiating themselves through content. Crafting distinct, benefit-driven messaging and side-by-side comparisons could improve consumer clarity and choice.

These findings reinforce existing academic literature on the role of digital content in shaping consumer behaviour. Kyule (2017) reported that content marketing significantly influenced loyalty and brand perception among cosmetic consumers in Nairobi, consistent with this study's high ratings for educational and comparative content. Likewise, Jamil et al. (2022) found that valuable, engaging content enhances both purchase intent and peer sharing behaviour; paralleling the strong mean scores for tutorials, product tips, and online discovery. However, this study also uncovers meaningful variability in how content is received; especially through email and generalized educational messaging, highlighting the importance of tailoring formats, tone, and delivery channels to male consumer preferences. For brands targeting this segment, content must go beyond aesthetics and serve as a practical, trustworthy guide in the male grooming journey.

4.4.5 Urban Male Consumer Buying Behaviour

The research sought to evaluate how digital marketing strategies influence the buying behaviour of urban male consumers in Nairobi's cosmetic sector. The findings shown in Table 4.9 summarize respondents' levels of agreement with key statements using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

Table 4.9: Descriptive statistics on urban male consumer buying behaviour

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
I often seek expert opinions or detailed reviews from digital platforms when considering purchasing expensive cosmetic brands	6.61%	5.79%	9.92%	14.88%	62.81%	4.21	1.233
After purchasing an expensive item with similar alternatives, I often look for information from digital marketing sources to confirm I made the right choice.	0.83%	4.96%	4.13%	25.62%	64.46%	4.48	.857
I feel relieved when I receive positive online feedback about a cosmetic product I've just purchased, especially if it was a major investment."	8.26%	9.92%	6.61%	18.18%	57.02%	4.06	1.337
I regularly compare different options for cosmetic products across multiple digital marketing platforms before making a purchase.	7.44%	5.79%	1.65%	25.62%	59.50%	4.24	1.211
My purchasing decision for low-cost, frequently bought cosmetic items is not automatic as I still look for novel alternatives online	5.79%	4.13%	3.31%	20.66%	66.12%	4.37	1.119
I am always influenced by social media in my switching between different cosmetic brands for variety and new experience	1.65%	8.26%	19.01%	18.18%	52.89%	4.12	1.092
I am open to experimenting with new cosmetic products especially if I have heard much about them online	4.13%	12.40%	6.61%	16.53%	60.33%	4.17	1.234
Seeing an attractive display or promotion of cosmetic brand on digital platforms often leads me to make an unplanned purchase.	3.31%	0.83%	7.44%	19.83%	68.60%	4.50	.923

Source: Researcher (2025)

As shown in table 3.9 above, the first statement assessed whether consumers seek expert opinions or detailed reviews from digital platforms before purchasing expensive cosmetic brands. A significant majority strongly agreed (62.81%) or agreed (14.88%), though 9.92% were undecided and a combined 12.4% disagreed. The mean of 4.21 (SD = 1.233) suggests that digital marketing is viewed as a critical enabler of brand awareness and informed decision-making. However, the relatively high variability in responses reflects differences in content availability or consumer confidence in online sources, pointing to a need for brands to invest in expert-driven, review-rich platforms to guide buyer trust.

On post-purchase behaviour, 64.46% strongly agreed and 25.62% agreed that they seek digital confirmation after buying high-cost products, such as endorsements or follow-up content. The high mean score of 4.48 (SD = 0.857) reinforces the idea that reassurance through digital touchpoints plays a key role in validating purchase decisions. This highlights the importance of post-purchase engagement strategies, such as follow-up emails, care guides, and social proof, in reinforcing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Respondents were then asked whether they feel relieved when encountering positive online feedback after a significant purchase. A total of 57.02% strongly agreed and 18.18% agreed, while 6.61% were undecided and a combined 18.18% disagreed. The mean of 4.06 (SD = 1.337) indicates that reassurance via digital content contributes to emotional post-purchase security for male consumers, especially with premium products. However, the higher standard deviation suggests that not all consumers actively seek this feedback, emphasizing the value of making reassuring content more visible and timelier.

Regular comparison of cosmetic product options across digital platforms was widely affirmed, with 59.50% strongly agreeing and 25.62% agreeing. Only 1.65% were undecided and 13.23% disagreed. The mean score of 4.24 (SD = 1.211) supports the idea that digital environments

play a central role in product evaluation. These findings underline the importance of well-organized, comparative content (e.g., feature charts, ratings) to help male consumers make informed choices in a crowded market.

Interestingly, even low-cost and frequently purchased cosmetic items were subject to consideration online, with 66.12% strongly agreeing and 20.66% agreeing that they still explore novel alternatives. The high mean of 4.37 (SD = 1.119) suggests that habitual purchasing is not entirely automatic—urban male consumers remain open to new options, driven by curiosity or perceived innovation. This highlights the potential of digital marketing to disrupt routine behaviours and introduce variety through engaging and relevant content.

Social media influence on brand switching was evident, as 52.89% strongly agreed and 18.18% agreed that it prompts them to explore new experiences. However, 19.01% remained undecided and 9.91% disagreed. The mean of 4.12 (SD = 1.092) indicates that while social media plays a strong role in variety-seeking, its influence may vary by individual preferences, suggesting brands should differentiate their content strategies to cater to both loyalists and switchers.

The statement regarding openness to experimentation, especially for well-promoted products online, received a strong mean of 4.17 (SD = 1.234), with 60.33% strongly agreeing and 16.53% agreeing. This reinforces the effectiveness of digital visibility in lowering barriers to trial. However, 22.14% expressed disagreement or uncertainty, pointing to the importance of strong first impressions and credible promotions in encouraging experimentation among more cautious buyers.

Digital displays and promotions were also seen to trigger impulse buying, with 68.60% strongly agreeing and 19.83% agreeing. The mean score of 4.50 (SD = 0.923) reflects strong consensus on the persuasive power of digital visual marketing. This highlights a major opportunity for

brands to use strategic design, limited time offers, and placement to convert casual browsers into active buyers.

Lastly, the study explored whether consumers would recommend brands based on positive digital interactions. A combined 79.34% agreed or strongly agreed, with a mean of 4.02 (SD = 1.041). However, nearly 20% were undecided or disagreed, suggesting that while advocacy is generally supported, it may not occur automatically without standout customer experiences or incentives. To address this, brands might consider integrating referral programs or shareable content designed for peer influence.

These findings correspond closely with existing research. Kyule (2017) emphasized digital platforms' role in enhancing brand awareness and loyalty in Nairobi's cosmetic market—findings echoed in the strong means for visibility, engagement, and brand preference here. Mutahi (2022) noted the influence of digital marketing on consumer decisions, which this study extends by showing its impact on both high- and low-involvement purchases among men. Jamil et al. (2022) similarly identified digital strategies as key in building trust and advocacy, aligning with the positive perception of digital reassurance and peer influence observed in this data.

Importantly, this study contributes a more focused lens on urban male consumers—a segment that is digitally active, brand-aware, but also selective in how they engage. The variation in perceptions of post-purchase reassurance, customer service responsiveness, and referral behaviour suggests that success in digital marketing among this group depends on personalization, credibility, and emotionally resonant messaging. Brands aiming to capture and retain urban male buyers in Nairobi must ensure their digital strategies not only attract attention but foster trust, validation, and loyalty throughout the buying journey.

4.5 Diagnostic Tests

Prior to undertaking inferential analysis, diagnostic tests were conducted so as to provide appropriate analysis, meaningful and robust conclusions. This section presents the results from the diagnostic tests conducted. The section discusses results from test for normality test, multi-collinearity, heteroscedasticity, and linearity.

4.5.1 Normality Test

Normality tests serve to ascertain whether a data set is satisfactorily fit by a normal distribution and to estimate the probability that the random variable underlying the data set is itself normally distributed (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). Normality tests determine whether the sample data stem from a normally distributed population. Assessment of this criterion may be carried out through graphical or numerical techniques. Of the numerical options, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is most appropriate for samples exceeding 2,000, whereas the Shapiro-Wilk test is preferred for sets ranging from 50 to 2,000. Since the present study secured a response rate of 121, the Shapiro-Wilk test was applied, as it is highly sensitive to departures from normality induced by skewness, kurtosis, or a combination of the two (Razali & Wah, 2011). The results are shown in table 4.10 below;

Table 4.10: Normality Tests

Variable	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Search engine optimization	0.317	120	0.522
Social media marketing	0.526	120	0.314
Influencer marketing	0.265	120	0.537
Digital content marketing	0.708	120	0.143
Urban Male consumption behaviour	0.907	120	0.451

Source: Researcher (2025)

The Shapiro-Wilk test operates under the following hypothesis:

H_0: The sample follows a normal distribution.

The null hypothesis is rejected if the p-value is less than 0.05, which would indicate that the data is not normally distributed. However, as presented in Table 4.10, the p-values for Search Engine Optimization (0.522 > 0.05), Social Media Marketing (0.314 > 0.05), Influencer

Marketing (0.537 > 0.05), Digital Content Marketing (0.143 > 0.05), and Urban Male Consumer Buying Behaviour (0.451 > 0.05) all exceed the 0.05 threshold. Since each variable's p-value is greater than 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. This indicates that the data for all five variables is normally distributed, meeting the assumption of normality required for further parametric statistical analyses.

4.5.2 Multi-Collinearity

In multiple regression analysis, as the correlation between independent variables increases, the estimated regression coefficients become highly variable and less reliable (Kothari, 2004). This results in sample coefficients deviating significantly from the actual population parameters. When these coefficients are tested, the t-statistics become smaller, leading to the false inference that no linear relationship exists between the affected independent variables and the dependent variable (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). Additionally, multicollinearity raises the standard errors of the β coefficients, causing greater variability across samples, which makes it challenging to determine the individual contribution of each predictor. To assess multicollinearity among the independent variables, the study utilized the Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) method, as recommended by Cooper and Schindler (2011). The results are shown in table 4.11 below;

Table 4.10: Test for Multicollinearity

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Search engine optimization	0.606	1.614
Social Media Marketing	0.497	1.963
Influencer Marketing	0.641	1.526
Digital Content Marketing	0.538	1.815
Urban male Consumer behaviour	0.644	1.520

Source: Researcher (2025)

According to O'Brien (2007), multicollinearity is considered problematic if the tolerance value is below 0.20 or the VIF exceeds 5. As shown in Table 4.11, all variables recorded VIF values well below the critical threshold: Search Engine Optimization (1.614), Social Media Marketing (1.963), Influencer Marketing (1.526), Digital Content Marketing (1.815), and Urban Male Consumer Buying Behaviour (1.520). Corresponding tolerance values were all comfortably

above 0.20. These results indicate that multicollinearity is not a concern in this study. Therefore, all independent variables were retained for regression analysis, as they do not exhibit any harmful levels of interdependence that would distort the model's accuracy.

4.5.3 Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Heteroscedasticity occurs when the variability of a dependent variable is inconsistent across the range of an independent variable (William, 2020). In linear regression models, homoscedasticity is assumed, meaning that the error term (random disturbance in the relationship between independent and dependent variables) remains constant across all values of the independent variables. When this assumption is violated, heteroscedasticity is present, indicating that the size of the error term varies at different levels of an independent variable. In this study, Levene's Statistic was used to test the hypothesis of variance homogeneity, which assumes that error variances remain equal across observations.

Table 4.11: Test for Heteroscedasticity

Levene Statistic	Df	P-value
8.916	120	.108

Source: Researcher (2025)

As shown in Table 4.12, the Levene Statistic was 8.876 with a corresponding p-value of 0.108, which is greater than the 0.05 significance level. Since the p-value exceeded 0.05, we failed to reject the null hypothesis and concluded that the variance of the dependent variable was homogeneous, indicating no significant heteroscedasticity.

4.5.5 Test for Linearity

Linearity tests are aimed at the determination of whether relationship between independent and dependent variables are linear or non-linear. The tests to test for linearity are the correlation and linear regression analysis. For good research in regression model, there need to be a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables (Baek, Cho & Phillips, 2015). In this study, Computation of ANOVA statistics was used to test for the linearity assumption.

Table 4.12: ANOVA Results to Test Linearity

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1930.704	4	482.676	68.915	.000[b]
	Residual	812.453	116	7.004		
	Total	2743.157	120			

a. Dependent Variable: Male consumer buying behaviour

b. Predictors: (Constant), Search engine Optimization, Social media marketing, Influencer marketing, Digital Content marketing

Source: Researcher (2025)

The study hypothesized that:

H0: the dependent variable has no linear relationship with the independent variables.

As Table 4.13 demonstrates, the F-statistic equals 68.915 and its p-value is less than 0.05. The ANOVA results reveal that the model is significant, and consequently we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the dependent variable exhibits a linear relationship with the independent variables.

4.6 Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics involve techniques used to draw conclusions about relationships between variables and generalize findings from a sample to a population (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This section presents the results of correlation and regression analyses conducted to examine the strength and direction of relationships between digital marketing strategies—search engine optimization, social media marketing, influencer marketing, and content marketing—and urban male consumer buying behaviour. These analyses provide empirical evidence for testing the study's hypotheses and evaluating the predictive power of the independent variables.

4.6.1 Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis is a statistical method that measures the direction and magnitude of the linear association between two variables (Bryman, 2016). It assists in establishing the extent and the degree to which a change in one variable is related to a change in another. Pearson correlation coefficient was applied in this work, and it is suitable to work with interval data and evaluates linear relationships (Field, 2018). As can be seen in Table 4.14, the results indicate the correlations between digital marketing strategies, such as search engine marketing, social media marketing, influencer marketing, and digital content marketing, and the urban male consumer buying behaviour.

Table 4.13: Correlation analysis

		Search engine marketing	Social media marketing	Influencer marketing	Digital content marketing	Urban male Consumer buying behaviour
Search engine marketing	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	121				
Social media marketing	Pearson Correlation	.529**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	121	121			
Influencer marketing	Pearson Correlation	.413**	.559**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
	N	121	121	121		
Digital content marketing	Pearson Correlation	.356**	.449**	.694**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
	N	121	121	121	121	
Urban male Consumer buying behaviour	Pearson Correlation	.440**	.578**	.528**	.364**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	121	121	121	121	121

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

Source: Researcher (2025)

As shown in the table, all the independent variables had a positive and significant relationship with the dependent variable. Search engine marketing showed a positive and significant correlation with urban male consumer buying behaviour ($r = 0.440$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests a moderate relationship where increased investment in search engine visibility is associated with stronger consumer buying patterns among urban males in Nairobi. The findings support Ndung'u and Mutinda (2022), who reported that search visibility enhances customer acquisition and purchase intent in Kenya's SME sector. Similarly, Velayudham and Rose (2019) found that higher search rankings increased brand trust and conversion rates in digital retail. The findings are congruent with this literature, and they prove that SEO and paid search strategies play a significant role in male consumer involvement and purchasing behaviour. The level of correlation, however, also indicates that search marketing is not the only factor affecting the male buying behaviour, as they can be affected by other variables, like brand positioning or price competitiveness, and thus integrated marketing strategies are necessary. The urban male consumer buying behaviour was most correlated with social media marketing ($r = 0.578$, $p < 0.01$). It means that there is a strong positive correlation, and the higher the social media activity, the higher the engagement, trust, and buying behaviour among male customers. The robustness of this correlation highlights the critical importance of the social platforms in contemporary consumer paths, especially in younger, urban populations that are very active on social networks. This is in line with Jamil et al. (2022) who showed that social media marketing leads to consumer trust and purchase intention, and Kyule (2017) who noted that social media has an impact on brand preference and loyalty in the Kenyan cosmetic industry. The results confirm that Cosmetic companies in Nairobi are successfully using social media to target and convert male consumers, in favour of targeted campaigns, influencer marketing, and interactive engagement plans. The close relation also indicates the strategic significance of ensuring consistent, authentic and engaging social media presence to develop

long-term consumer relations.

The urban male consumer buying behaviour was greatly and positively associated with influencer marketing ($r = 0.528$, $p < 0.01$). This close relationship shows that collaborations with influencers can play a significant role in the purchasing behaviour, as trusted voices can assist brands in reaching out to male consumers and influencing their buying behaviour. This relationship is strong, which supports the role of the influencers as reliable intermediaries that can individualize brand messaging and establish trust among men in the Nairobi beauty market. These results are consistent with Mutahi (2022), who found that the influencer marketing had a significant effect on purchase decisions in the cosmetic market in Kenya, and with Jamil et al. (2022), who found similar results in more general digital settings. The findings indicate that the collaboration with influencers, in the form of endorsements, tutorials, or reviews, is especially efficient in reaching urban male consumers. Nevertheless, the correlation also suggests the necessity to select and match influencers carefully to guarantee authenticity and maximize effectiveness because differences in the credibility of influencers and the fit between them and the audience can moderate the effects of marketing.

Digital content marketing showed a positive and significant correlation with urban male consumer buying behaviour ($r = 0.364$, $p < 0.01$). While the relationship is moderate compared to other digital strategies, it still indicates that well-developed content—such as blogs, videos, and comparative articles—plays a valuable role in influencing male consumer decisions. This finding is consistent with Kyule (2017), who found that content marketing contributes to brand loyalty and purchase intent in Nairobi's cosmetic sector. It also reflects Jamil et al. (2022), who noted the importance of informative and engaging content in enhancing consumer trust and willingness to buy. The relatively weaker correlation, compared to social media and influencer marketing, may suggest that content marketing's impact is often indirect, supporting other digital channels or reinforcing messages delivered through influencers and social platforms.

These results point to the need for brands to ensure content is not only high quality but also strategically integrated across channels to fully leverage its potential in driving male consumer engagement and purchases.

4.5.2 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is a statistical technique used to examine the strength, direction, and significance of relationships between one dependent variable and multiple independent variables (Field, 2018). It helps determine how well a set of predictors explains variations in an outcome of interest. In this study, multiple linear regression was employed to evaluate the influence of four digital marketing strategies; search engine optimization, social media marketing, influencer marketing, and digital content marketing on urban male consumer buying behaviour in Nairobi's Cosmetic industry. This analysis tests the combined and individual contributions of these predictors, providing empirical evidence for hypothesis testing. The regression was conducted using IBM SPSS (version 27), and the results include the model summary (Table 4.15), ANOVA (Table 4.16), and regression coefficients (Table 4.17).

The model summary in Table 4.15 shows that the regression model explains a substantial portion of the variance in urban male consumer buying behaviour. The R value of 0.839 indicates a strong positive correlation between the combined digital marketing strategies and consumer behaviour. The R Square value of 0.704 suggests that approximately 70.4% of the variability in male consumer buying behaviour can be explained by the four digital marketing strategies. The Adjusted R Square of 0.694, which accounts for the number of predictors, reinforces the robustness and generalizability of the model across similar populations.

Table 4.14: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.839[a]	.704	.694	2.64649

a. Predictors: (Constant), Search engine Optimization, Social media marketing, Influencer marketing, Digital Content marketing

Source: Researcher (2025)

The ANOVA results in Table 4.16 confirm the overall significance of the regression model. The F-statistic of 68.915 and p-value of .000 ($p < 0.05$) indicate that the model is statistically significant. This means that, collectively, the four digital marketing strategies significantly explain variations in urban male consumer buying behaviour. The model is thus appropriate for hypothesis testing and further interpretation.

Table 4.15: Anova

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1930.704	4	482.676	68.915	.000[b]
	Residual	812.453	116	7.004		
	Total	2743.157	120			

a. Dependent Variable: Male consumer buying behaviour

b. Predictors: (Constant), Search engine Optimization, Social media marketing, Influencer marketing, Digital Content marketing

Source: Researcher (2025)

The regression coefficients in Table 4.17 provide detailed insights into the individual contribution of each predictor variable.

Table 4.16: Regression coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	10.648	5.069		2.101	.038
	Search Engine Optimization	.277	.114	.215	2.437	.001
	Social Media Marketing	.342	.110	.337	3.111	.000
	Influencer Marketing	.338	.086	.429	3.953	.000
	Digital Content Marketing	.230	.104	.180	2.220	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Urban Male consumer buying behaviour

Source: Researcher (2025)

These coefficients can be fitted into the multiple linear regression model as:

$$\boldsymbol{Y = 10.648 + 0.277X_1 + 0.342X_2 + 0.338X_3 + 0.230X_4 + \varepsilon}$$

Where:

Y = Urban male consumer buying behaviour

X_1 = Search engine optimization

X_2 = Social media marketing

X_3 = Influencer marketing

X_4 = Digital content marketing

ε = Error term

Each predictor shows a positive and statistically significant relationship with urban male consumer buying behaviour at the 0.05 level. The p-values (all ≤ .001) confirm that the impact

of these digital marketing strategies is not due to random chance. This model indicates that, holding all other variables constant, a one-unit increase in search engine optimization is associated with a 0.277 unit increase in urban male consumer buying behaviour. Similarly, a one-unit increase in social media marketing, influencer marketing, and digital content marketing would result in increases of 0.342, 0.338, and 0.230 units, respectively, in consumer buying behaviour. These results highlight the combined and individual significance of digital marketing strategies in shaping purchasing decisions among urban male consumers in Nairobi's Cosmetic sector.

4.5.2 Hypothesis Testing

This section interprets the regression coefficients and evaluates the statistical significance of the four independent variables—search engine optimization, social media marketing, influencer marketing, and digital content marketing—in relation to urban male consumer buying behaviour in Nairobi. Each independent variable is assessed against its corresponding null hypothesis, with significance judged at the 0.05 level. The findings provide evidence for rejecting or failing to reject each null hypothesis based on the regression outputs in Table 4.13.

$H_0$1: Search engine optimization has no statistically significant effect on urban male consumer buying behaviour.

The regression results indicate an unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.277 for search engine optimization, with a t-value of 2.437 and a p-value of .001. The positive coefficient suggests that improvements in search engine optimization—such as enhancing brand visibility, improving search rankings, and using paid search ads—are associated with increased buying behaviour among urban male consumers. The low p-value ($P<0.05$) indicates that this relationship is statistically significant, and thus the null hypothesis ($H_0$1) is rejected. These results align with empirical evidence from Ndung'u and Mutinda (2022), who reported that

search visibility and ranking significantly influence purchase decisions and brand trust in Kenya's SME sector. Similarly, Velayudham and Rose (2019) emphasized that higher search engine rankings boost consumer credibility perceptions and drive conversions. Although these studies focus on broader contexts, the current findings affirm that search engine marketing is an essential tool in influencing male buying patterns within the Cosmetic sector in Nairobi. Firms that invest in SEO are likely to experience gains in brand recognition, trust, and consumer action among male audiences.

H_o2: Social media marketing has no statistically significant effect on urban male consumer buying behaviour.

Social media marketing produced a positive unstandardized coefficient of 0.342, with a t-value of 3.111 and a p-value of .000. The standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.337$) highlights its strong contribution to the regression model. The p-value ($P<0.05$) indicates that this relationship is statistically significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_o2). The results suggest that social media platforms are key drivers of male consumer engagement, brand interaction, and purchasing decisions in the Nairobi beauty sector. These findings are consistent with Jamil et al. (2022), who demonstrated that social media marketing significantly affects consumer trust, brand attachment, and purchase intent. Kyule (2017) similarly found that social media activities in Kenya's cosmetic industry enhance brand preference and loyalty. The current study extends these insights by focusing on urban male consumers, revealing that social media marketing remains a powerful tool for engaging this demographic. The results point to the importance of maintaining active, interactive, and targeted social media campaigns that appeal to the specific preferences and expectations of male consumers. Firms leveraging social media to foster real-time communication, personalized promotions, and community engagement can expect to see stronger purchasing outcomes.

H_o3: Influencer marketing has no statistically significant effect on urban male consumer buying behaviour.

Influencer marketing emerged as a key predictor in the model, with an unstandardized coefficient of 0.338, a t-value of 3.953, and a p-value less than 0.05. The standardized beta (β = 0.429) underscores its dominant role in shaping male consumer buying behaviour. The null hypothesis (H_o3) is therefore rejected. These results demonstrate that influencer marketing—through endorsements, product reviews, demonstrations, and collaborations—significantly impacts male consumer decisions in the Cosmetic industry. This aligns with Mutahi (2022), who found that influencer marketing strategies had a marked effect on brand preference and purchase frequency within Kenya's cosmetic sector. Similarly, Jamil et al. (2022) highlighted the role of influencer authenticity and relatability in enhancing purchase intent across various digital retail contexts. The strength of this relationship in the present study confirms that urban male consumers in Nairobi place high value on influencer endorsements, using these trusted voices as guides in their purchasing journeys. The findings suggest that brands seeking to effectively engage this segment should prioritize partnerships with credible, relatable influencers who resonate with male grooming values and aspirations.

H_o4: Digital content marketing has no statistically significant effect on urban male consumer buying behaviour.

Digital content marketing recorded a positive coefficient of 0.230, a t-value of 2.220, and a p-value of .001. The standardized beta (β = 0.180) reflects a moderate but meaningful contribution to the regression model. The p-value confirms that the relationship is statistically significant, resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_o4). This indicates that content marketing—through informative blogs, educational articles, video tutorials, and comparative product content—positively influences male consumer buying behaviour. The findings align with Kyule (2017), who reported that content marketing enhances brand loyalty and purchase

decisions in the Kenyan cosmetic market, and Jamil et al. (2022), who found that valuable and engaging content fosters consumer trust and advocacy. While digital content marketing's effect is somewhat smaller compared to social media and influencer marketing, it plays an important supporting role by educating consumers, reinforcing brand positioning, and aiding purchase decisions. The results highlight the need for brands to invest in high-quality, relevant, and accessible content that addresses the specific interests and concerns of male consumers, thereby complementing other digital marketing efforts.

In summary, the regression analysis provides strong evidence that all four digital marketing strategies significantly and positively influence urban male consumer buying behaviour in Nairobi's Cosmetic sector. Each of the null hypotheses (H_o1 through H_o4) is rejected based on the statistically significant p-values for each predictor. Influencer marketing emerged as the most impactful predictor, followed by social media marketing, search engine optimization, and digital content marketing. These findings provide empirical support for the study's conceptual framework, affirming the theoretical proposition that digital marketing strategies are key determinants of consumer behaviour in the contemporary marketplace. Furthermore, the results emphasize the need for integrated, multi-channel digital marketing approaches that leverage the strengths of each strategy to engage male consumers effectively, build trust, and drive purchasing behaviour. Firms that align their digital marketing investments with these insights are well-positioned to enhance competitiveness and market share within Nairobi's dynamic male grooming and personal care segment.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of the main findings, conclusions, and recommendations of this research on the impact of digital marketing strategies on the urban male consumer buying behaviour in the Cosmetic sector in Nairobi County. The paper discussed four fundamental digital strategies that include search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing, influencer marketing, and digital content marketing and evaluated their influence on the purchasing behaviour, engagement, and loyalty of male customers. Evidence-based insights were drawn using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods such as correlation and regression analysis. This chapter summarises these results and gives conclusions and practical recommendations to marketers, brand managers and policymakers. Future research directions have also been indicated to fill the gaps that were identified in the course of the study.

5.2 Summary of Findings

5.2.1 Effect of Search Engine Optimization on Urban Male Consumer Buying Behaviour

The first research objective sought to explore the influence of search engine optimization (SEO) on the buying patterns of urban male consumers. Descriptive data revealed widespread agreement that search engine visibility plays a significant role in attracting and engaging male consumers, enhancing brand credibility, and encouraging purchase intent. Respondents gave high ratings to statements involving search result rankings, online discoverability, and customer reviews, with mean values consistently exceeding 4.2.

The Pearson correlation analysis indicated a moderate, positive, and statistically significant relationship between SEO practices and consumer buying behaviour ($r = 0.440$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that better implementation of SEO strategies is associated with improved engagement levels and higher purchasing activity among male consumers in the cosmetic sector.

Further analysis using regression techniques confirmed this relationship. SEO was found to significantly predict buying behaviour, with an unstandardized coefficient (B) = 0.277, standardized beta (β) = 0.215, t = 2.437, and a p-value of .001. These results indicate that for every unit increase in SEO effectiveness, there is a corresponding 0.277 unit increase in consumer buying behaviour, when all other variables are held constant. This confirms SEO's strategic value as a visibility and credibility tool, particularly in influencing the grooming and skincare choices of the modern urban male consumer.

5.2.2 Effect of Social Media Marketing on Urban Male Consumer Buying Behaviour

The second objective evaluated the role of social media marketing in shaping the buying decisions of urban male cosmetic consumers. Descriptive findings pointed to strong agreement that social platforms—such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok—are essential tools for consumer interaction, targeted advertising, and influencer engagement. Respondents highlighted the impact of engaging content, real-time communication, and targeted promotions in influencing their grooming choices.

The Pearson correlation results established a strong, positive, and statistically significant association between social media marketing and consumer behaviour ($r = 0.578$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that brands with robust and strategic social media presence tend to experience higher consumer interest and stronger purchasing responses. Regression results further supported this link, showing that social media marketing had a predictive influence on male consumer buying behaviour with an unstandardized coefficient (B) = 0.342, standardized beta (β) = 0.337, t = 3.111, and p-value of .000. Social media marketing emerged as the second strongest predictor in the model. These findings confirm that digital platforms are not merely promotional channels but serve as interactive ecosystems that build loyalty, drive brand-consumer relationships, and directly influence male grooming purchases.

5.2.3 Effect of Influencer Marketing on Urban Male Consumer Buying Behaviour

The third objective focused on assessing the impact of influencer marketing on male consumer behaviour in the cosmetic industry. Descriptive statistics showed that strategies involving influencers—such as product endorsements, demonstration videos, tutorials, and paid content—were viewed as highly effective in increasing visibility, boosting consumer trust, and converting interest into sales. Many respondents considered influencer partnerships among the most effective digital marketing tactics for this demographic.

Correlation analysis confirmed a strong and statistically significant relationship between influencer marketing and buying behaviour ($r = 0.528$, $p < 0.01$). Brands that partnered with influencers who align with male audiences were more likely to generate engagement and influence purchasing behaviour. Regression analysis further validated these findings. Influencer marketing was the strongest predictor among all variables tested, with an unstandardized coefficient (B) = 0.338, standardized beta (β) = 0.429, $t = 3.953$, and a p-value of .000. This indicates that influencer marketing accounts for the highest variance in urban male consumer buying behaviour. These results underscore the power of relatability, authenticity, and digital social proof in shaping the attitudes and buying choices of male consumers in Nairobi's cosmetic market.

5.2.4 Effect of Digital Content Marketing on Urban Male Consumer Buying Behaviour

The fourth objective investigated how digital content marketing impacts consumer decision-making among urban males. Descriptive data confirmed that content such as grooming blogs, comparison guides, tutorial videos, and product descriptions play an important role in supporting purchasing decisions, enhancing brand credibility, and fostering long-term loyalty. While its influence was not rated as immediately impactful as other strategies, content marketing was widely acknowledged as foundational in brand-consumer relationships.

Pearson correlation analysis showed a moderate but significant positive relationship between content marketing and buying behaviour ($r = 0.364$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that informative and well-targeted content increases consumer interest and purchase likelihood.

Regression analysis supported this relationship with an unstandardized coefficient (B) = 0.230, standardized beta (β) = 0.180, $t = 2.220$, and a p-value of .001. Although the predictive strength was relatively lower than that of influencer and social media marketing, the effect remains significant. These results suggest that consistent delivery of valuable, audience-aligned content can deepen consumer trust and subtly shape purchasing decisions over time. For male grooming brands, content marketing serves as a crucial reinforcement mechanism that enhances brand authority, encourages trial, and nurtures consumer confidence in a competitive digital landscape.

5.3 Conclusions

This study set out to explore how digital marketing strategies influence urban male consumer buying behaviour within Nairobi's Cosmetic industry. Anchored on four key objectives search engine optimization, social media marketing, influencer marketing, and digital content marketing, the research revealed that each strategy plays a distinct yet complementary role in shaping how male consumers engage with brands, make purchasing decisions, and develop long-term loyalty. It was revealed that search engine optimization was not just a visibility tool, but it enhances credibility and guides consumers to act when used in conjunction with larger strategic objectives. The use of social media marketing became an important source of engagement, providing the means to personalize interaction, receive real-time feedback, and emotional connection elements that are especially useful in reaching male grooming audiences that require relevance and authenticity. One of the most effective strategies was influencer marketing, which was able to close the trust gaps by humanizing brands with credible and

relatable voices. In the meantime, content marketing was used as a basis to inform and direct consumers, enabling them to make informed choices and build brand control in the long term. All these findings confirm that digital marketing approaches are vital in shaping the behaviour, preferences, and loyalty of urban male consumers in a more competitive market. The paper arrives at the conclusion that no strategy can work in isolation, but their combination produces the best results. These strategies can result in increased conversion rates, brand attachment, and long-term engagement when applied carefully and in accordance with the individual preferences and values of male consumers. Notably, the success of digital marketing is directly related to the strategic consistency, genuineness and a subtle awareness of the urban male audience. Therefore, digital marketing must not be viewed as a list of strategies but rather as an integrated, evidence-based field that will change with the demands of consumers. The brands that adopt this holistic and audience-driven strategy will be in a better place to develop meaningful connections and achieve long-term relevance in the male personal care market.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in influencing urban male consumer buying behaviour in the Cosmetic sector.

5.4.1 Recommendation for Practice

Organizations ought to embrace a systematic and analytics-based Search Engine Optimization (SEO). Other than just enhancing the rankings of the websites, companies must make their websites mobile-friendly, content-rich, and always up to date. The keywords to be used in the SEO activities must be related to the male grooming interests and should be able to generate visibility and qualified traffic. Also, the SEO and content marketing and social media will be integrated to assist consumers through the product discovery to conversion.

Companies ought to come up with customized social media campaigns in line with the male grooming, aesthetics, and lifestyles. Engagement can be enhanced through interactive content like polls, tutorials, behind the scenes and user generated content. In order to stay relevant, brands ought to leverage platform analytics and social listening platforms that can give real-time feedback on trends, audience sentiments, and campaign effectiveness. Since the impact of influencer marketing on the urban male population is quite high, companies are advised to focus on strategic and long-term partnerships with influencers that match their brand image and appeal to the target audience. The creation of genuine content like lifestyle integration, grooming tips or unboxing videos will help build relatability and build trust. These campaigns must be backed with a clear goal, planned timeline and post-campaign analysis to monitor engagements and conversions.

Another thing that brands need to consider is the creation of value-adding digital content of high quality, which specifically targets male grooming interests. These are also the contents on how to use the product, grooming, comparison and other lifestyle tips. The content must be Search Engine Optimized and readable and shared on various platforms such as blogs, video channels, social media and email newsletters. The use of varied content types can expand the reach, accessibility, and general engagement, such as text, video, infographics. Notably, these online marketing strategies are not supposed to be implemented in a vacuum. The brands are advised to use a synchronized, multi-channel strategy in which SEO, social media, influencer marketing, and content strategies are aligned. Integrated digital strategy will provide a smooth consumer experience between awareness and advocacy. Marketers are also advised to invest in digital analytics tools to track the effectiveness of individual strategies as well as their cumulative effect so that they can keep on improving and making decisions based on data.

5.4.2 Recommendation for Policy

SEO needs to be institutionalized by companies in the form of formal policies that set clear benchmarks (e.g., organic traffic growth, bounce rate, average session duration), dedicated budgets to paid and organic search efforts, and internal roles and responsibilities in the implementation of SEO. Such policies must also have continuous training programs to upgrade marketing teams to make them sustainable and consistent over time and across departments. In the case of social media marketing, companies are advised to create internal policies that will inform platform-specific approaches, the frequency of posting content, the tone of voice, visual standards, and brand communication guidelines. The approval process of the content, the protocols of the community management, and the ways of dealing with the negative feedback should be clearly outlined in these policies. Also, there should be performance measures like reach, engagement rate, and click through rate to make sure that activities are geared towards organizational goals and accountability is achieved.

A well-organized influencer marketing policy should guide influencer engagement. This must provide guidelines on how to select and vet influencers, content review and approval process, brand alignment guidelines, compensation structure, and compliance (e.g. transparency about paid partnerships). The policy must also indicate how the performance of the influencers will be measured in terms of impressions, engagement rates, conversions and sentiment analysis. With regard to content marketing, organizations are advised to use a holistic content governance system. This policy is to include content planning, thematic alignment, editorial calendars, approval processes, and performance monitoring. Tone, style, formatting, and publishing frequency should be well outlined to maintain brand consistency. The policy must also focus on the efficient use of resources and the content that appeals to the information needs and preferences of the male consumers.

Finally, on a sector-wide basis, regulatory agencies and professional organizations should be urged to come up with best practice recommendations on digital marketing in the cosmetics and personal care industry. These structures might facilitate ethical marketing practices, disclosure of sponsored material and consumer safety. Such actions would assist in making sure that digital marketing activities are not only efficient but also reasonable and serve the interest of the masses.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Studies

Although this research gave useful information on how digital marketing strategies influence the urban male consumer buying behaviour, there are a few areas that need to be explored. In the future, a qualitative approach can be used to understand better the way male consumers perceive and react to various digital marketing messages and platforms. The influence of new strategies, including gamification, augmented reality experiences, and personalization based on artificial intelligence, could also be a subject of research that would help understand how male consumers change their behaviour. In addition, the comparative analysis of various cities or countries would allow putting these results into perspective and determining the cultural or regional peculiarities of digital marketing performance. Lastly, additional studies may examine how digital marketing tactics may be used to reach out to male consumers in new product segments, like eco-friendly or organic personal care products, as new market trends emerge.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Letter of Introduction

Dear Respondent

Re: Request to Participate in Data Collection

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Anne Mali Kitheka, a student at Catholic University of East Africa, pursuing Master of Business Administration. I am currently conducting a research study titled "*digital marketing strategy and urban male consumer buying behaviour in the cosmetic care products in Nairobi County, Kenya"* as part of my academic requirements.

I am reaching out to request your participation in this study. Your insights and perspectives as a stakeholder involved in the Cosmetic Industry would be invaluable for enriching the findings of my research. Participation in this study will involve filling in questionnaires and taking part in a short interview which will not take more than 1 hour of your time. Rest assured that all information provided will be treated with the utmost confidentiality, and your anonymity will be maintained in any reports or publications arising from this research. I am sincerely grateful for your consideration of this request.

Warm regards,

Anne Mali Kitheka

Catholic University of East Africa

Appendix II: Research Questionnaire

The purpose of this survey is solely to gather information for academic reasons. The study seeks to examine the digital marketing strategy and urban male consumer buying behaviour in buying beauty care products in Nairobi county, Kenya

Kindly tick (√) appropriately.

Section A: Demographic Information

1) Age Bracket

   21 - 30 yrs [ ]

   31 - 40 yrs [ ]

   41 - 50 yrs [ ]

   Above 50 yrs [ ]

2) Highest academic qualifications

   Certificate [ ]

   Diploma [ ]

   Degree [ ]

   Post graduate [ ]

3) Years have purchased cosmetic products

Less than 1 year [ ]

1-3 years [ ]

4-6 years [ ]

7-10 years [ ]

More than 10 years [ ]

Section B: Search Engine Marketing

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about how online search engines influence your cosmetic product choices. Use the scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1. I am more likely to consider a cosmetic brand if it appears at the top of search results.					
2. I trust cosmetic brands that are easy to find through search engines.					
3. Seeing a brand frequently in search results makes me more confident in trying it.					
4. I often read customer reviews from search results before buying a product.					
5. Search ads (like Google ads) have influenced my choice of a grooming or cosmetic product.					
6. I discover new grooming or skincare products through online searches.					
7. Search engine visibility affects how I perceive a brand's credibility.					
8. Well-ranked search results make me more likely to explore a brand's website.					
9. I have bought grooming products after finding useful search results or tutorials.					

Section C: Social Media Marketing

Please indicate how social media influences your opinions and decisions about male grooming and cosmetic products.

Statement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. I regularly see cosmetic or grooming product ads on my social media feeds.					
2. Social media content influences my decision to try new grooming or skincare products.					
3. I trust brands that are active and engaging on social media platforms.					
4. I have followed or purchased a product because of a social media post or ad.					
5. I am more likely to try a product if it has positive comments and reactions on social media.					
6. Targeted ads on Instagram or Facebook have introduced me to new grooming brands.					
7. I feel more connected to brands that interact with users on social platforms.					
8. Social media gives me useful tips and product recommendations for men's grooming.					
9. Seeing a brand on multiple social media platforms builds my confidence in that brand.					

Section D: Influencer Marketing

Please indicate how influencers (e.g., content creators or public figures on social media) affect your views and buying behaviour related to grooming and cosmetic products.

Statement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. I am more likely to trust a product if it's recommended by a male influencer I follow.					
2. Influencers help me discover new grooming or skincare brands for men.					
3. I have tried a product because it was endorsed by an influencer I relate to.					
4. I consider influencer reviews more honest than brand advertisements.					
5. Sponsored posts by influencers affect my opinion about the quality of a product.					
6. I watch tutorials or reviews by influencers before purchasing grooming products.					
7. When multiple influencers talk about the same product, I'm more likely to try it.					
8. I believe influencer content provides real-life experiences with products.					
9. I feel confident buying grooming products recommended by influencers I admire.					

Section E: Digital Content Marketing

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding online content such as blogs, videos, or newsletters and how they influence your buying behaviour.

Statement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. I often read online articles or blogs about male grooming and skincare.					
2. Informative content (e.g., how-to guides) helps me decide which grooming products to buy.					
3. Product tutorials or demonstrations on YouTube or Instagram influence my buying decisions.					
4. I find value in receiving emails or newsletters with product tips and promotions.					
5. High-quality content makes a brand look more trustworthy and professional.					
6. I prefer buying from brands that educate me about proper grooming or skincare routines.					
7. I'm more likely to share useful grooming content with my friends or followers.					
8. I have discovered better grooming practices through branded content online.					
9. Comparing product reviews and content helps me choose between different grooming brands.					

Section F: Urban Male Consumer Buying Behaviour

Please answer the questions provided to the best of your knowledge. Use the scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Statement					
1. I often seek expert opinions or detailed reviews from digital platforms when considering purchasing expensive cosmetic brands					
2. After purchasing an expensive item with similar alternatives, I often look for information from digital marketing sources to confirm I made the right choice.					
3. I feel relieved when I receive positive online feedback about a cosmetic product I've just purchased, especially if it was a major investment."					
4. I regularly compare different options for cosmetic products across multiple digital marketing platforms before making a purchase.					
5. My purchasing decision for low-cost, frequently bought cosmetic items is not automatic as I still look for novel alternatives online					
6. I am always influenced by social media in my switching between different cosmetic brands for variety and new experience					
7. I am open to experimenting with new cosmetic products especially if I have heard much about them online					
8. Seeing an attractive display or promotion of cosmetic brand on digital platforms often leads me to make an unplanned purchase.					

Thank you for your Participation