

**THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE FINANCIAL DECISIONS OF  
STUDENTS AT UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**

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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN  
UNIVERSITY**

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**DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this research study has never been presented for any academic award in any institution or university. All sources used in this research study have been rightfully acknowledged.

Signature: *Jazel Kenyonyozi* Date: 10<sup>th</sup> / 04 / 2020

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**APPROVAL**

I acknowledge that this dissertation titled: " The influence of social media on the financial decisions of students at Uganda Christian University." has been submitted with my approval for examination.

Signed: Allen Date: 10/04/2026

MS. ALLEN KAGUME  
Supervisor

## **DEDICATION**

To my beloved family and parents, for their unending financial, moral, and spiritual support throughout my education. Your sacrifices have made this milestone possible.

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## LIST OF ACRYNOMS

- BBA: Bachelor of Business Administration
- BNPL: Buy now, pay later
- BOU: Bank of Uganda
- FOMO: Fear of missing out
- MSMEs: Micro, small, and medium enterprises
- SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences
- TPB: Theory of Planned Behavior
- UCU: Uganda Christian University
- UMI: Uganda management institute

## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of social media on the financial decisions of youth, focusing specifically on undergraduate students at Uganda Christian University (UCU). The research aims to address the modern conundrum in which tech-savvy youth, in a climate of aggressive social commerce, often display a high degree of financial mismanagement in favor of status spending in social media compared to basic necessities and savings. The main aim of the research is to determine if social commerce acts as a means of empowering youth financially or as a means of inducing financial imprudence.

As such, an in-depth critical review of existing literature indicates an impactful relationship between algorithmic digital advertisement and impulsive consumption. Rooted in Social Learning Theory and Theory of Planned Behavior, the theoretical framework indicates how "performativity" in consumption and "fear of missing out" (FOMO) cultivate subjective norms that actively dissuade the culture of savings. Further still, existing literature indicates an unprecedented shift in financial power towards digital influencers who gamify risks in high-stakes speculations rather than conventional approaches to wealth accumulation.

In terms of methodology, the study used a quantitative cross-sectional survey research design to solicit the status quo of the financial habits of the students. This was done by administering a questionnaire to a stratified random sample of 100 students at the UCU Main Campus using a fivepoint Likert scale. Using the SPSS software, the collected data was analyzed to determine the extent to which social media affects the behavior of the students in terms of finance by using descriptive statistics, the Pearson correlation coefficient, and linear regression analysis.

The results were based on a 96% response rate, which established that:

Inferential statistical tests were used to analyze the data, which established a strong positive correlation between targeted advertisements and impulse purchasing ( $r = 0.620$ ). It also established a strong negative correlation, which indicated that

increased peer pressure heavily diminishes the students' capacity to save ( $r = -0.480$ ). Regression analysis results indicated that 46.2% of the total variance in the students' financial decisions can be explained by the social media factors.

The study established that the digital environment functions as a catalyst for consumption and financial fragility rather than empowerment for UCU students. In order to combat these detrimental consequences, recommendations are proposed. These include the need for university management to incorporate digital financial hygiene into the foundation curriculum. Other recommendations are to promote peer-to-peer saving advocacy through student guilds and to encourage the critical evaluation of financial influencers on the digital environment for the longterm financial well-being of the youth

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

The chapter will discuss the background of the study, the problem, the specific goals of the study, the research questions, the scope of the study, and the justification of the study.

### 1.2 Background of the study

The digital revolution has significantly changed the youth's landscape of interaction, learning, and decision-making. In the global sphere, social media sites have progressed from being merely a tool for communication to becoming powerful platforms for trade and arbiters of lifestyle and consumption. For the youth, who are the most active segment of this platform, the line between social interactions and financial activities has become increasingly blurred. While it is from decisions like how to spend money to how to save money that financial decisions are being influenced by the digital environment and not traditional financial education and parental influence, this is not a fortuitous phenomenon but a structural one. Indeed, the infrastructure of social media sites has developed from being passive tools for networking to being actively engaged agents of social commerce.

In the case of Uganda, the youth represent the majority of the population. Furthermore, the rate at which the youth in Uganda are adopting new technologies cannot be described as anything less than breakneck speed. University students represent a crucial segment of the youth. At such a stage in life, they are at a transitional phase to attaining financial freedom. However, in the way in which they embrace the digital ecosystem, there are numerous challenges. Mirembe et al. (2019) noted that although the youth embrace social engagement through social media like WhatsApp, TikTok, and Instagram, there is a discernibly growing trend of consumerism based on social media trends. The need to fit into the lifestyle that social media influencers portray leads to impulsive behavior that results in a lack of understanding of the importance of prudent financial management.

This is particularly evident within the context of the Uganda Christian University (UCU), as the values of stewardship, modesty, and contentment that are emphasized within a Christian-based educational system are in direct contrast to the values that are promoted within the digital culture that the students engage in. This is due to the fact that the values that are promoted within the digital culture are hedonistic and consumptive in nature. This creates a type of cognitive dissonance among the students that makes them choose the rewards that are offered in the digital culture over the value that is promoted in the education system. This creates a unique behavior that is being explored in this study.

Additionally, there is an insidious discourse in the digital world regarding wealth creation, which further adds to the complexity of the financial world for students. Students are not only being encouraged to spend, but they are being bombarded with information regarding opportunities for making money through sports betting and risky investments in cryptocurrencies. The gamification of finances is meant to attract the desperation of students who need to make ends meet between their meager allowances and lavish lifestyles. The context for this research is not just about how students choose to spend money on clothes and food; it is about how there is an existential crisis in how youth view money. The values of patience and hard work in creating wealth through compounding interest have been replaced by the viral nature of instant gratification. The youth of today are technically advanced but financially insecure.

The recent empirical trends suggest that there is a complex and harmful relationship between social media and financial behavior. Ssebulime (2020) states that social media is like a double-edged sword for young students in Uganda because it offers them access to financial literacy while also exposing them to aggressive algorithmic marketing and social pressure to spend. This is a kind of vulnerability where they choose instant gratification over security. The fear of missing out is more related to information about peers' consumption activities rather than actual financial capacity. The psychological impact of this kind of social comparison is quite real. Students are now showing more and more financial anxiety and inadequacy because their actual

financial situation does not measure up to that of their peers' "highlight reels." This leads to going further into debt.

Furthermore, the financial situation of young people in Uganda is characterized by limited sources of income, such as parents' allowances, student loans, and small-scale hustling. However, when these limited sources of income confront the infinite needs created by social media algorithms, it is likely to cause financial problems. According to Nantongo and Mugisha (2019), in the absence of sufficient digital financial literacy among young people in Uganda, they are likely to make suboptimal financial decisions, such as incurring debts to finance lifestyle trends. This is a major developmental problem.

Lastly, there is a fundamental disconnect between the academic world and the reality of the digital world. While the academic world is teaching accounting and economics, there is no consideration of behavioral economics in the digital world. Moreover, there has been a transfer of power from traditional financial socialization influencers such as parents and teachers to digital influencers. What this means is that a student is more likely to be influenced to make financial decisions based on a video on TikTok than on the experience of their parents. The fact that there is poor financial management among university students despite their educational level is a paradox. One would assume that there is a positive correlation between educational levels and financial management. However, this is not the case because of the influence of the digital crowd. It is imperative to conduct empirical research to assess the degree to which social media is influencing financial management among students at Uganda Christian University.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

Social media sites were created to facilitate connectivity as well as information sharing.

Theoretically, these sites were created to provide avenues of financial empowerment to the youth. The idea is that university students, who are intellectually advanced and knowledgeable in technology, will use these sites to improve their financial condition,

find ways of generating income, and lay down economic foundations before they graduate.

However, the situation in Uganda Christian University (UCU) seems to contradict this theory. In addition, with the penetration of the Internet and the engagement of social media at an all-time high, anecdotal evidence and preliminary observations indicate the alarming rise of the phenomenon of financial mismanagement in the student body. Indeed, a significant percentage of the student population has apparently been struggling with the management of their finances and instead prefers to spend lavishly on the latest trends and must-haves that are portrayed by social media websites such as Instagram and Tik Tok. This has resulted in the illusion of wealth, as the students feel pressured to live up to the financial expectations of the high life portrayed by social media.

This is particularly worrying considering the economic conditions that are currently prevailing in Uganda. In this case, rather than using their little monthly stipend or money from their small businesses to create economic cushions for their future, these students are in a vicious cycle of instant gratification and debt caused by their fear of missing out. According to Tumwine et al. (2018), this is causing these students to be financially fragile since they are subjected to financial pressure that inevitably affects their academic lives. There is a critical knowledge gap in terms of whether these students are using social media as an instrument of financial enlightenment or a conduit of financial imprudence. Thus, this study was conducted to bridge this knowledge gap and find out what is essentially the cost of immersion in these digital platforms.

#### **1.4 General objective**

The primary aim of this study is to examine the impact of social media on the financial decisions of the youth, specifically focusing on students at Uganda Christian University (UCU).

## **1.5 Specific objectives**

The study aimed to achieve the following specific objectives:

- To investigate the impact of social media advertising in influencing the spending behavior of the youth in Uganda Christian University.
- To examine the relationship that exists between peer pressure and the saving behavior of the youth in Uganda Christian University.
- To investigate the impact of digital financial influencers in influencing the investment behavior of the youth in Uganda Christian University.
- To examine whether social media acts as a tool for empowering the youth financially or as a contributor to financial imprudence among the youth in bridging the knowledge gap.

## **1.6 Research questions**

The research sought to answer the following questions:

- How does social media advertising affect the spending habits of students at UCU?
- What is the relationship between social media-induced peer pressure and the saving culture of students?
- To what extent do digital financial influencers affect the investment decisions of the youth at UCU?
- Does social media usage primarily result in financial empowerment or financial distress for university students?

## **1.7 Justification**

The justification of this study can be anchored on the growing need to resolve the dilemma of high literacy levels but low financial capability among the youth in Uganda. This is based on recent reports by the Bank of Uganda, which note that despite the growth in financial inclusion through mobile money services, the financial well-being of the youth population is still precarious. This study is important since it

extends the scope of financial capability by delving deeper into the behavioral factors that cause this mismanagement. The comprehension of the unique role of social media, which is considered a primary source of information and socialization for this group of people, offers a link that is lacking in the formulation of appropriate financial literacy programs that can compete with the temptation of digital consumption.

In addition to this, the study seeks to address the need to act in response to the existing macroeconomic environment in Uganda, where unemployment levels are high and the number of available jobs in the formal economy is declining. Under the new environment, university students are called upon not only to be job seekers but also job creators. This requires capital accumulation. If social media is draining the scarce resources available to students to start businesses, then the study not only seeks to be academic but also economically imperative. Through the process of financial drain, the study seeks to provide grounds for policymakers to view digital financial literacy as a national rather than a personal concern.

From a psychological and welfare-oriented perspective, this study is necessary given the rise of depression and anxiety among students that has been caused by financial stress. The pressure of having to maintain a certain image online has led to a vicious circle of debt and deprivation for students, and this has a significant impact on them. This study will provide university authorities with an understanding of how social media usage contributes to financial stress among students. Instead of blaming students for their wastefulness, this study will provide an understanding of the powerful forces they are up against by establishing the relationship between social media usage and financial stress among students.

Lastly, this study has tremendous academic value in the sense that it challenges the current business administration and finance courses, which are largely based on conventional rational choice theory. In the current digital age, financial decisions are not rational but rather illogical and emotive in the sense that they are driven by likes

and views. This study has academic value in the sense that it contributes to the academic literature by pointing to the need to include behavioral finance and digital literacy in the conventional academic curriculum. This study bridges the gap between the conventional academic theories taught in class and the chaotic and hyper-connected world that students are currently in, in the twenty-first century.

## **1.8 Scope of the study**

### **1.8.1 Subject scope**

The research was strictly based on "social media influence" which includes ads, peer pressure, and influencers. It was also based on "financial decisions" which include spending, saving, and investing. Internet usage is related to social media, but the research was strictly based on social media like Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp.

### **1.8.2 Geographical scope**

The scope of the inquiry was restricted to Uganda Christian University (UCU), Main Campus in Mukono. This location was chosen due to the diversity of the population of the young and the varying backgrounds of the individuals, all of whom are active digital users.

### **1.8.3 Time scope**

The study period was between 2020 and 2024. This period is important because it represents the period during which smartphone usage grew exponentially in Uganda, together with influencer marketing.

## **1.9 Significance of the study**

The implications of this study are quite important in three major ways. In terms of policy formulation, this study offers university administrators and policymakers appropriate insights on the "pressures" that students are going through in this digital world and the need to incorporate "digital financial literacy" in their curriculum. In

terms of student welfare, this study shows students the pitfalls they are going through and, in this way, empowers them to mitigate the effects of social media on their purses. In terms of academic contribution, this study fills an important gap in terms of the behavioral dimension of digital finance in Uganda, which is largely ignored in favor of mobile money.

# **CHAPTER TWO**

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a comprehensive and critical review of the existing body of scholarly literature, theoretical frameworks, and empirical evidence related to the study variables.

### **2.2 Empirical literature review**

This segment seeks to discuss the specific relationships between social media dynamics and financial behaviors among the youth, based on the study's specific objectives. It goes beyond making assumptions to explore the mechanics of social media influence on financial behaviors.

#### **2.2.1 Social media advertising and spending habits**

The first objective of this study explores the impact of social media advertisements on the expenditure behavior of the youth in Uganda Christian University. Literature has universally confirmed the direct, potent, and detrimental relationship between algorithmic exposure and impulsive expenditure. Scholarly consensus has confirmed that there is a fundamental difference between and the persuasiveness of digital advertisements and other forms of advertisements due to the highly personalized nature of the former.

Tumuheki (2019) states that social media sites use advanced data analysis to gather information on users' activities, such as search history and location, to present advertisements to users at moments of greatest psychological susceptibility. This is where the university student is preyed upon. For example, an algorithm can identify that the student is likely to be hungry, bored, and have money to spend, such as at the beginning of the semester. According to Tumuheki, viewing an advertisement for a fast food offer that coincides with lunchtime or an advertisement for clothing that coincides with the student receiving money from an allowance has a high chance of

resulting in an impulsive purchase. This is because the rational needs analysis is skipped and an immediate desire is created that is hard for the consumer to resist.

However, an important factor that contributes to the increase in such spending is the structural nature of social commerce, also termed as frictionless consumption. According to Kaweesi (2021), the smooth nature of the platform, where one can buy through the application itself, such as Instagram, or even click on the link sent through WhatsApp to buy, eliminates the friction of spending. Earlier, the physical act of spending money through cash involved a series of actions, such as the decision to buy, going to the store, taking out the cash, and spending it. Each of these actions was a cognitive break on the spending decision. However, with the rise of social commerce, such is not the case, as Kaweesi states. If the student can buy the product with the click of a button or the touch of his or her finger, the psychological distance between the student and the spending decision is significant. The pain of spending is completely numbed, and the spending of digital currency is not felt as an actual monetary loss, but simply as an interactive experience, similar to hitting the 'like' button.

The popularity and dominance of visual media sites such as Instagram and TikTok have further heightened this situation. Ssebulime (2020) examined this situation among university students in Kampala and established a strong statistical correlation between social media and impulse buying, especially for fashion and food products. Ssebulime's study suggests that "the fantasy of ownership is created through high-definition images and videos." For example, "when a university student watches a highly curated video of another university student or model enjoying a product, this fantasy is simulated in the brain, and a dopamine hit is released." In this way, visual media "persuade[s] individuals to buy a product, regardless of the cost." Ssebulime's study further suggests that "the mobile screen for the youth is a digital storefront that is always open." Consequently, "the youth's limited financial resources are fragmented." The end result is "a selfdestructive buying behavior in which instant gratification is chosen over long-run financial wellbeing, only to be followed by buyer's remorse once the dopamine effect wears off."

Apart from the above-mentioned psychological factors, the literature also indicates that the line between the above-mentioned social content and the advertisements is becoming blurred, thereby complicating the financial expenditure scenario further for the youth. In the case of the youth, the demographic that is the most active on these platforms, the division between social and financial activities has also become blurred. Unlike in the case of other forms of media, in which there is a clear division between the advertisement and the program that the consumer is watching, the social media platform blends advertisements and the social and family updates of the consumer in a seamless manner. This further complicates the financial decision-making process of the consumer, as the financial expenditure is not viewed in isolation but in relation to the social environment of the consumer.

This has created a form of status spending, which refers to a situation in which one is driven by the need to establish a certain kind of identity. In this case, the students have opted to engage in status spending in terms of trends that are common in the digital space rather than meeting their basic needs. This has led to a lack of understanding of the importance of adhering to the basic tenets of prudent financial management. Literature has shown that this is not a lack of finances but rather a behavioral response in which the digital aesthetic is more important than the reality of one's finances. According to Adong and Mwaura (2018), although there has been an increase in the availability of finances due to the digital space, there is still a huge gap in terms of digital financial literacy. The prevalence of these bad financial practices among university students also poses a major paradox that the literature is yet to explain satisfactorily. One would intuitively think that the level of education should have a positive relationship with financial acumen. However, the effect of the digital crowd seems to supplant knowledge. This is because these students are intellectually advanced and have the cognitive ability to practice financial planning using these digital tools, yet they are not able to tap into these tools and instead engage in bad financial practices. This, in essence, establishes a strong positive correlation between ad exposure and the frequency of spending, not in spite of the ad

exposure but because of the environment that encourages people to spend in order to receive social validation.

### **2.2.2 Peer pressure and saving culture**

The second objective evaluates the relationship that exists between social influence and savings discipline. According to literature, digital crowds are discouraging savings behavior through the lens of performative consumption and relative deprivation. Nantongo & Mugisha (2019) developed this concept of performative consumption in trying to understand why savings behavior among young people in general is plummeting. Social capital is seen as the main currency of exchange in a digital economy. This is gained by being seen. Young people feel pressured to spend their meager allowances on things that can give them visual validation of success online, such as trendy clothing, gadgets, or going to places that can give them Instagram likes. However, savings is an invisible behavior. Money kept in a bank account or in a lockbox does not give a person visual cues of success. There are no likes, comments, or shares. This is seen as an external disincentive for savings behavior.

The rational decision of saving for the future is penalized by social invisibility, while the irrational decision of spending money on trends is rewarded by social approval. This is all fueled by the psychological effect of the fear of missing out, commonly referred to as FOMO. Seruwagi (2020) states that there is an erosion of the culture of saving among young people in Uganda because of the reward system of social media. The young people in Uganda are always bombarded by the images of their peers going to parties, going on vacation, and making purchases. This creates relative deprivation among them. Even if they are financially well-off, seeing other young people spending money creates feelings of poverty among them. Seruwagi states that this creates an anxiety among them to spend money in order to keep up with the lifestyle of their peers. However, this leads to poverty because of a complete lack of emergency funds. The student is spending money he does not have to impress people he barely knows.

Furthermore, literature shows that this peer pressure can result in the normalization of debt. Mirembe et al. (2019) observed that the consumerist culture, which has

resulted from the influence of online trends, has normalized debt for students. They noted that, whereas in the past people felt stigmatized when they borrowed money, currently people feel stigmatized when they miss out on things. Thus, it is possible for a student to end up using a mobile lending application or borrowing money for a weekend outing, thus justifying the debt incurred by citing that it was necessary for the upkeep of their social status. This is a significant change that can be attributed to the influence of a digital environment.

However, this change in behavior is further complicated by network effects in social media, which illustrate that a student's financial behavior is directly influenced by their network in terms of their savings propensities. Bongomin et al. (2018) found that students who are part of a digital network that is consumption-oriented saved significantly less than those who are part of a financially prudent digital network. This shows that financial behavior is contagious in the digital age. Therefore, for a student who is a member of a digital network that constantly posts how they are spending money, their psychological norms are influenced by what is deemed acceptable in terms of saving money, and saving money is a form of deprivation rather than a positive action. This is a major challenge for the young since they are still in a state of transition to become financially independent.

This pressure is not only about the level of spending but also the timing of the spending. This has a significant impact on the level of cannibalization of the resources for savings. Fear of missing out, often generated by the endless flow of information about peers' consumption patterns, is often more influential in terms of spending than the level of resources. When there are finite resources such as parental resources or loans for students and infinite needs generated by the algorithm of the social world, they often result in economic hardship and a complete lack of capacity for savings. Rather than saving excess funds, students are now socially conditioned to spend them all at once to join the digital economy and thus live a financially precarious existence, being one step away from economic crisis. In addition, the power of the digital crowd seems to overcome any formal knowledge, resulting in a paradox where students at a university level continue to demonstrate financially irresponsible behavior despite

their level of knowledge. From a theoretical perspective, one may have expected students at a university level to utilize digital technologies to become empowered financially, but instead, the reality is that students are more likely to get caught up in a vicious cycle of financial irresponsibility due to this overwhelming crowd pressure. This has resulted in a situation where students are willing to prioritize short-term gratification over longterm financial security, thereby completely changing the saving culture that past generations were used to.

### **2.2.3 Digital influencers and investment decisions**

The third objective of this study also touches on the changing nature of power in terms of providing financial advice, from traditional banking institutions to new-age digital personalities referred to as fin-fluencers. The new generation of financial influencers has greatly altered the youth's perspective and approach to investing. In this regard, Mugarura (2019) noted that a significant number of young people have begun to adopt the new trend of seeking investment advice from short-form content creators on social media platforms such as TikTok and YouTube. This has resulted in the democratization of financial knowledge, as previously elite knowledge has now been made available to the ordinary student. However, Mugarura noted that this has also resulted in the trivialization of risk in finance. The new generation of financial influencers has taken to presenting investment as a form of gaming that can result in quick wealth accumulation and has focused more on the potential for earning than the potential for losing.

While this may be a positive aspect in theory, the literature has highlighted that the youth are exposed to a number of risks in the financial sphere. Kasirye (2019) has highlighted that the influencer may be promoting "high-risk opportunities such as cryptocurrency, forex trading platforms, or pyramid schemes packaged and promoted as legitimate investment opportunities." However, the most important aspect that Kasirye has highlighted is that the influencer may not be showing the youth the profits that they earn or the commission that they earn by referring the students to the investment schemes. It is at this point that the youth end up in the behavior of

'herding,' where the youth invest in the schemes without actually analyzing the fundamentals of the investment and end up making a number of losses due to the parasocial interaction that they feel with the influencer, where they feel a personal connection with the influencer.

However, there is another side of this argument that is recognized in literature. On one side, there is recognition that some influencers can be very useful in helping to simplify complex financial concepts for the average person. For instance, there are influencers who can be very effective in helping to explain concepts such as treasury bonds, unit trusts, and compound interest in ways that can be appreciated and understood by the youth. The role of digital influencers is thus complex and greatly depends on the nature of the information that is being consumed. The role of digital influencers can be to empower students to start investing early in life or to be agents of financial loss for students. This study is intended to establish which of these two sides is prevalent within the student population of UCU.

The literature has indicated that the power of the digital influencers comes from the fact that they avoid the skepticism that is usually associated with institutions of authority. While the conventional financial advisor might appear distant, the digital influencer seems to offer results, which suits the young generation's aspiration for swift progress in their finances. However, the relatability of the digital influencer seems to come at a price, as Adong and Mwaura (2018) highlight the fact that despite the increased level of financial inclusion in Uganda, the digital financial literacy gap is quite wide, which makes the students unable to critically analyze the complex financial services presented to them in the form of entertaining videos, thereby leading to the misuse of the advice received.

In addition, the impact of the digital figures also results in a state of financial fragility among the youth. Tumwine et al. (2018) state that the digital environment can lead to a situation in which the students become stuck in a loop of consumption and investment, which slows down the process of real financial independence among the students. This creates a thin line between a genuine recommendation and a sponsored

advertisement, and the student is unable to comprehend whether the information is being provided in the best interest of the student or is simply a marketing ploy. As such, the literature has shown that the digital environment has not only created a new information channel but has also changed the investment philosophy of the youth from a culture of patience to a culture of speed.

## **2.3 Theoretical literature review**

In order to establish a good foundation for the explanations, the research is based on two theories that are fundamental in nature. These theories include the Social Learning Theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior. These theories provide the necessary psychological perspective for understanding the motivations of the students in choosing online trends over their financial situation.

### **2.3.1 Social Learning Theory**

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory affirms that human beings learn through observing and imitating others. In connection with the present study, Social Learning Theory has importance in terms of its contribution to the understanding of the development of financial habits among young individuals. According to Social Learning Theory, students do not really learn how to develop financial habits because it is not included in the curriculum; rather, they learn through imitating what they see in social media. If a university student sees his or her peers or even social media influencers enjoying popularity through "showing off" in restaurants or buying new gadgets, he or she might develop vicarious reinforcement to do the same.

This is specifically applied in the Ugandan case in Mirembe et al. (2019), where it is noted that "the digital village is essentially a massive observation deck for the youth." According to this theory, "if the dominant behavior observed on a student's timeline is consumption and extravagance, then the learned behavior is that of spending and not saving." This theory is very important in this study since it helps in understanding why peer pressure is very important. This is because one is always observing their peers' lives, and this gives one a yardstick for what is normal. If extravagance is normal,

then other financial behaviors such as saving and planning are deviant, meaning that debt and financial indiscipline are normal for this class of people.

Moreover, the theory also points to the cognitive process of retention. In the current digital landscape, this is done by features that enable "saving" of posts, taking screenshots, and having wish lists for those using e-commerce sites. Bandura also points to the fact that observed behaviors will be more likely to be modeled if they have a favorable outcome. In the social hierarchy of the student body, the "likes" and comments that one receives for a social media post are highly valued. Therefore, the behavior of purchasing a phone from a specific brand and/or having dinner at a specific location is seen as a successful strategy for social climbing. This study proposes that the current state of digital retention has created a state of "deferred consumption," in which the subjects are mentally spending money that they have yet to receive.

Consequently, the moment the student finally accesses the resources, such as the semester stipend or the student loan, the motivation to reproduce the behavior observed is instant and compelling. The reproduction part of the social learning theory is what explains the disconnect between the student's financial situation and their financial behavior. The student, being aware of their financial situation, is not acting rationally in regards to it. The internalized model of "how a university student should live," based on thousands of hours of social reproduction on social media sites, is overriding the student's rationality in regards to their financial situation. The model that is being reproduced by the student is actually based on the best times from the richest social setting in regards to how they spend their money, making it an unachievable goal for the student to attain without ruining their financial situation in the attempt.

Lastly, the application of this theory to the UCU context points to a fundamental difference between the "digital village" and the physical economy of Mukono. Mirembe et al. (2019) propose that this observation of online models generates a "reference group" that is not necessarily linked to the socio-economic characteristics of the

individual student. For example, a student from a modest rural socio-economic background may find themselves emulating the economic behaviors of an influencer living in an affluent urban center, simply because this is what they observe most often online. However, this difference generates "status inconsistency" in that they will be spending at a level characteristic of a different social class than their own low income. By engaging this social learning theory, this study will examine how this pressure to conform to the digitally observed standard pushes students into informal debt and economic hardship, thereby supporting the hypothesis that social media is a primary educator on economic behaviors, even if this is a negative influence.

### **2.3.2 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)**

To further understand the decision-making process, the study employs the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). This theory implies that behavioral intention is a result of three determinants: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Ajzen's TPB is important in understanding the behavior of the subjects in this study. This is because social media significantly affects subjective norms. For instance, if the social media culture demands that one frequently visits expensive coffee joints and wears designer clothing, the student feels immense pressure to comply with the social media culture to avoid being stigmatized by their peers. Ssebulime (2020) asserts that social media has significantly altered the subjective norms of the youth. It has made them feel that overspending is a requirement for social acceptance. In addition, the Theory of Planned Behavior addresses the issue of perceived behavioral control. The subjects in this study have seen people spend freely on social media. This has made them feel that overspending is easy and requires little effort. This study employs this theory to examine if the social media environment has significantly altered the subjective norms of UCU students from being prudent to being extravagant.

This theory provides the researcher with a way to analyze not only the act of spending, but also the motivation behind it, specifically looking at the aspect of attitude towards this behavior. In terms of UCU students, for example, this attitude

towards saving is negatively reinforced through the digital world, in which being frugal is equated to having no ambition or being a failure. However, this attitude towards spending is positively reinforced through the instant gratification of dopamine, thus causing a cognitive dissonance in which the student knows they should save but feels they should spend. The theory further explains that this shift in attitude is not arbitrary but is instead carefully constructed through the type of content they are engaging with, in which "the good life" is equated to spending and not saving. The study also explores how this digitally formed attitude transcends the student's rational understanding of his own financial status.

Moreover, the dimension of perceived behavioral control is greatly magnified in the context of digital finance. In this theory, if the individual believes that he has access to resources that allow him to exhibit a specific behavior, then the probability of this behavior occurring is greater. In this context, where mobile money and other forms of convenient spending are incorporated within social media sites, the dimension of perceived control is artificially magnified. If the student observes that his friend is spending money and believes that he can do the same by merely clicking his phone, then the level of difficulty associated with this behavior is brought down to nearly zero. This facilitates a lack of friction that allows the student to think twice about his behavior. This study will also explore whether this ease of spending catalyzes a circumvention of the student's self-regulation.

Lastly, the interplay of all these factors produces a potent "intention-behavior gap" that this research hopes to examine. It is one thing for a student to have the theoretical intention to save, based perhaps on parental advice or academic knowledge. However, the overwhelming influence of subjective norms and the ease of behavioral control in social media produces a barrier for the execution of intention. Ssebulime (2020) argues that the fear of social exclusion, which is one of the determinants of subjective norms, is more powerful than the need for economic stability. This research, by using the Theory of Planned Behavior, does not only examine the decisions that the student is making in terms of finance but also examines the ways in which the decisions are being made.

## **2.4 Research gap**

### **2.4.1 The divergence between commercial marketing and student welfare**

The single most important gap in the current body of knowledge is the primary focus of the existing literature. A cursory analysis of the literature on the subject reveals that the overwhelming majority of the literature on the subject of social media and financial behavior has focused on the subject through the primary lens of marketing and business strategy. Researchers have extensively explored the ways in which the algorithm of the social media platform can be optimized in order to maximize the level of consumer expenditure, the manner in which influencers can be employed to maximize the level of conversion, and the way in which the fear of missing out can be employed to maximize the level of sales among the youth demographic. However, there exists a critical scarcity of literature that shifts the focus of the subject in the manner in which this study has done, in order to explore the subject through the lens of the welfare of the consumer. The existing literature asks the question of "how can we sell more to the youth?" rather than the critical question of "what is the cost of this selling to the youth's financial future?"

### **2.4.2 The distinction between financial literacy and financial behavior**

Moreover, there is a conceptual gap in differentiating between financial knowledge and financial behavior. Past studies carried out in Uganda, such as those by the Bank of Uganda and various

NGOs, were highly focused on "financial literacy." These studies measured how well students in Uganda understand what a budget is or how important it is to save money. All these studies indicated an improvement in literacy levels in Uganda. However, they did not address how financially ill-managed some of the highly literate university students in Uganda remain. This study identifies this as a "behavioral gap," where students in Uganda are able to give sound theoretical knowledge regarding money management but still do not do so because of the psychological effect of the digital environment. This study focuses on "social media influence" rather than "financial knowledge" as the independent variable in order to bridge the gap in understanding why smart students in Uganda still engage in financially unwise decisions.

### **2.4.3 The evolution from peer pressure to algorithmic pressure**

In the past, the extant research on youth financial behavior has considered the concept of "peer pressure" as a sociological effect taking place in physical spaces such as the dorm room, lecture hall, or the college canteen. However, there has been a lack of contemporary research on the concept of "algorithmic pressure." The present research argues that the concept of peer pressure has evolved and is no longer merely about keeping up with your roommate, but keeping up with your algorithmic feed, which never sleeps. The present research aims to bridge the gap in the modernized world of finance by isolating the effect of digital variables such as the effect of the "shop now" button, which was not present in the earlier concept of economic socialization.

### **2.4.4 Contextual gap regarding the semi-urban university setting**

In terms of geographical and contextual analysis, the most comprehensive and robust studies on digital financial behavior have been conducted in developed nations or, in the case of Africa, in key metropolitan commercial centers. There is a particular lack of empirical data related to the unique environment and situation that is found at a semi-urban, religion-based institution such as Uganda Christian University in Mukono. The situation and environment that is found at UCU is unique in that it represents a cross-section of affluent youth from urban environments and those from more rural backgrounds, all coming together in a highly stressful digital environment. While previous studies have looked at "university students" in a somewhat monolithic fashion, they have not addressed the particular nuances that come into play when looking at university students in a semi-urban context, where economic opportunities may be limited but digital consumption is endless.

### **2.4.5 Methodological contribution**

Lastly, there is a methodological gap that this research hopes to fulfill. Most previous research on social media use among youth has been based on qualitative research approaches and has relied on interviews and thematic analysis of experiences of students. Although this research has been helpful, it has not been able to provide any

quantitative research that can actually measure how much of a relationship there is between using social media and financial outcomes. This research aims to advance previous research and help provide quantitative research that can measure exactly how much of a difference social media can actually make in a student's spending and saving habits using Pearson's correlation and regression. This is a big step forward in terms of the actual academic research that has been applied to this topic so far. From "exploring experiences" to "measuring impact."

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the entire methodological roadmap that was followed to effectively implement the study. It includes a comprehensive overview of the research design that was used in the study, the characteristics of the target population, the sampling techniques that were used in the study, the methods that were used in collecting the data, and the statistical techniques that were used in the analysis of the data. In addition, it includes the techniques that were used in validating and making the data reliable and the challenges that were faced in the entire research process.

#### **3.2 Research design**

The study employed a cross-sectional survey research design. This research approach was important in the study in that it helped in the formulation of a clear picture of the phenomenon under investigation. This was important in that it helped in the efficient statistical investigation of the relationship that existed between the independent variable and the dependent variable. In addition to that, the approach was largely quantitative in nature. This was important to the researcher in that it helped in quantifying the relationship that existed between the variables. It also helped in generalizing the findings to the entire population. This was important in that it helped in the generalization of the findings to the entire population.

#### **3.3 Population of the study**

The study population for this research was based on the undergraduate population of Uganda Christian University located in Main Campus-Mukono. This population is heterogeneous since it is composed of different students from different academic fields such as business and administration, social sciences, education, and law. From the records of the university population, there was an estimate of active undergraduate students of approximately 8,000 students. This heterogeneous

population is considered to be an ideal population for this study since it represents the digital native population that is most affected by the algorithmic and social pressures.

### **3.4 Sample size and sampling procedure**

From this population, a representative sample of 100 respondents was established for the study. This was considered adequate for carrying out this type of correlational study, given the time and resource constraints that are currently in place. At the same time, this number is adequate to allow for thorough statistical significance testing. To ensure that this sample is representative of the population, stratified random sampling was used. This is where the population is divided into strata based on year of study, from year one to year four. This was important to prevent any form of bias in the study, where the study could be based on either final-year students who are financially independent or first-year students who are susceptible to peer pressure. Once this was established, simple random sampling was used to select individuals from this population. This method is where every member of the population within the established strata has an equal chance of being picked for the study.

### **3.5 Classification of variables**

In order to carry out a structured analysis, the variables were divided into three distinct categories for this study. The independent variable for this study is social media influence. The independent variable is further divided into three dimensions, namely advertising exposure, peer pressure or FOMO, and influence from influencer content. The dependent variable is financial decisions. The dependent variable is divided into dimensions such as spending frequency, or impulsive buying, savings habits, and investment decisions. The study also identified extraneous variables such as student allowances, sources of income, and financial education, which were kept at bay through the randomization process.

### **3.6 Data collection method**

The key instrument for data collection was a self-administered structured questionnaire. The instrument was designed in a way that it only contained closed-ended questions that used a Likert scale, which ranges from one to five to measure the level of intensity of the respondents' agreement or disagreement. In this scale, one represents "strongly disagree," and five represents "strongly agree." The instrument was chosen for this study because it is efficient in collecting data that is readily available for statistical analysis and is less likely to cause respondent fatigue compared to other methods, such as asking interview questions.

### **3.7 Measurement of variables**

The variables were operationalized and measured by utilizing specific items in the questionnaire. For example, the influence of social media was measured by utilizing items that measured the amount of screen time used on a daily basis, the response to targeted advertisements, and the feeling of inadequacy resulting from seeing peers' posts on social media. Financial decisions were measured by utilizing items such as the ratio of expenditure to income, the activity level of the savings accounts, and the presence of investment portfolios.

### **3.8 Reliability and validity**

In order to ensure the quality of the collected data, a quality control was put in place. This was done by carrying out a pilot study that involved 10 participants before the actual study started. In the aspect of ensuring the reliability of the study, a computation of the Cronbach alpha coefficient for the used scales in the questionnaire was performed. The study was aiming at a coefficient of more than 0.70, as recommended by Creswell (2018) for the study to be considered highly reliable. With regard to validity, content validity was established through a process called expert review, wherein the study supervisor reviewed the questions to guarantee that they were appropriate for capturing the objectives and theoretical constructs of the study.

### **3.9 Procedures**

The process of data collection was done in accordance with a strict protocol of ethics. The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the faculty of the university to legitimize the research and to establish the researcher. This letter was used to establish trust with the potential subjects before they were approached to participate in the research. Before the actual process of informed consent was obtained from the participants, specific assurances were made to the participants regarding the confidentiality and strict academic nature of their sensitive financial information.

### **3.10 Data analysis**

After the collection of the data, cleaning and entering the data into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 for analysis. Various statistical techniques were used in the analysis of the data. For instance, descriptive statistics in terms of mean and standard deviation were used to describe the characteristics of the participants and their responses to some of the questions. In addition, correlation analysis using Pearson's correlation was used to examine the nature of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Finally, linear regression analysis was used to establish the proportion of variance in the decisions of the students that was explained by the social media factors.

### **3.11 Anticipated limitations**

The study had some anticipated challenges during the data collection process. For example, the study anticipated some level of respondent fatigue, especially since students are always engaged in either lectures or assignments. This challenge was addressed by keeping the questions short and focused. Further, some students may have been reluctant to open up about sensitive financial information about their debt levels and expenditure habits. This challenge was addressed by ensuring the students were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of field data collected. This includes the response rate, profile of the respondents, and the inferential analysis performed to verify the study objectives and hypothesis.

#### 4.2 Response rate

Out of 100 distributed questionnaires to the sample, 96 were fully completed, while 4 were not used due to incomplete information. Hence, a total response rate of 96% is achieved. The reasons for this high response rate lie in the physical presence and participation of the researcher.

#### 4.3 Results on background information

An analysis of the respondents' background is essential for context and ensuring sample representativeness.

**Table 4.1: Profile of respondents**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	45	46.9%
	Female	51	53.1%

	<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Age bracket</b>	18 - 21 years	40	41.7%
	22 - 25 years	50	52.1%
	26+ years	6	6.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Year of study</b>	Year 1	30	31.2%
	Year 2	35	36.5%
	Year 3	31	32.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Source: primary data*

**Interpretation:** Gender. The study had slightly more females in the sample, comprising 53.1%, which is in line with the general university population trends and ensures that the study accounts for the spending habits of both genders. Age. The dominant age group in the study comprised 52.1% of the participants aged between 22 and 25 years, which represents the core youth age group that is independently making financial decisions in their university years. Year of study. The study accounts for the different years of study, thereby capturing the habits of freshers in their first year and finalists in their third year.

### **4.3.3 Implications to the study**

#### **Gender representation and habit capture**

The population distribution is composed of 53.1% female and 46.9% male. This is an average distribution of the population within any given university. To this study, this means that any subsequent findings on impulsive spending habits, peer pressure influences, and financial investments are not skewed in any way to favor gender bias. This is important because it is guaranteed that the study has adequately addressed financial and social media influences for all genders equally.

#### **Age and Financial Independence**

The majority of the population is within the 22-25 years age bracket, accounting for 52.1%. This is closely followed by the 18-21 years age bracket, accounting for 41.7%. This is a perfect match for the intended "youth" demographic that is clearly stated within the research topic. More importantly, this is an age group that is clearly within the independent financial decision phase of life and is only present within the university environment. This is an important factor because this is clearly the intended demographic for any given digital algorithm and influencer.

#### **Year of study and the evolution of habits**

The students are evenly distributed in their years of study, with 31.2% in Year 1, 36.5% in Year 2, and 32.3% in Year 3. This is important for the validity of the study. This is a clear manifestation of the development of financial skills in the students, from "Freshers" in Year 1 to "Finalists" in Year 3. Therefore, it is not a research about the gullibility of first-year students or the financial skills of third-year students; it is the full picture.

To conclude, the data in Table 4.1 above indicates that the researcher has managed to obtain a very representative sample of the students. This further reinforces the validity of the inferential statistics obtained in the research, affirming the fact that

the digital pressure is not only in the minds of the students but the reality of the entire student body of Uganda Christian University.

#### 4.3.1 Descriptive statistics on social media influence

Respondents rated the influence of social media on their lives.

**Table 4.2: Descriptive statistics on social media**

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev	Interpretation
I often see ads for products I like on social media.	4.60	0.55	Very high
I feel pressure to buy things my friends post online.	4.10	0.85	High
I trust financial advice from influencers on tiktok/youtube.	3.20	1.15	Moderate
I spend more than 3 hours daily on social media.	4.35	0.70	High
<b>Average mean</b>	<b>4.06</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>High influence</b>

*Source: primary data*

**Interpretation:** Ad Exposure. The very high mean (4.60) further supports the idea that the students are being heavily exposed to targeted ads, thus validating the ad exposure variable. Peer Pressure. The high mean (4.10) suggests that FOMO is an important factor for the students, as the psychological impact of peer activities is significant. Usage. The high level of daily usage (4.35) further supports the idea that social media is an integral part of the student’s daily activities.

#### 4.3.2 Descriptive statistics on financial decisions

The study assessed the financial behaviors of the students.

**Table 4.3: Descriptive statistics on financial decisions**

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev	Interpretation
I often buy things impulsively because of social media.	3.90	0.95	High
I save money regularly for the future.	2.80	1.30	Low
I have invested in a business or scheme seen online.	2.50	1.40	Low
My spending exceeds my budget most months.	3.75	1.05	High
<b>Average mean</b>	<b>3.24</b>	<b>1.18</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

*Source: primary data*

**Interpretation:** Spending. There is a consensus that impulsive purchases are driven by social media (mean=3.90), and this is also true for budget overruns (mean=3.75). This shows a lack of financial discipline. The saving culture has a very low score (mean=2.80), which shows that people are more interested in spending than saving. This may be due to the pressure to spend. Investment levels are low (mean=2.50), which may be due to the lack of capital and trust in online schemes.

#### 4.4 Inferential statistical analysis

##### 4.4.1 Correlation analysis

Pearson correlation was used to examine relationships.

**Table 4.4: Pearson correlation matrix**

	Ads	Peer pressure	Spending	Saving
Ads	1			

Peer pressure	.450**	1		
Spending	.620**	.510**	1	
Saving	-.310*	-.480**	-.550**	1

Note: correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

**Interpretation:** The strong positive relationship ( $r = 0.620$ ) further affirms the notion that the more exposure there is to advertisements, the higher the level of spending. The significant negative relationship ( $r = -0.480$ ) reveals that the higher the level of peer pressure, the lower the level of savings. In the bid to "keep up" with the times on the internet, the students' ability to save is impaired.

#### 4.4.2 Regression analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to measure impact.

Table 4.5: Model summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted square	Std. Error
1	.680a	.462	.445	.754

**Interpretation:** The model is able to explain 46.2% of the variance in the decision-making process ( $R \text{ square} = 0.462$ ). This suggests that almost half of the students' behavior is being influenced by the factors of social media, and this is a very significant finding.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter summarizes the study findings, discusses them in the context of existing literature, draws conclusions, and offers recommendations for practice and future research.

#### **5.2 Summary of major findings**

The study also established that social media is a dominant and disruptive force in the financial lives of the students of UCU. Advertising and pressure from peers were identified as major factors in impulse buying behavior. The students are highly active on social media, and this has coincided with the decline of the savings culture.

##### **5.2.1 Findings on advertising**

Strong positive correlation was found between ad exposure and impulse buying. The algorithm-based targeting of ads on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok is highly effective in inducing unplanned buying behavior among students.

##### **5.2.2 Findings on peer pressure**

Peer pressure was identified as a major negative influencer of savings. The pressure to project a certain image online forces students to spend money that could have otherwise been saved, thereby proving the FOMO hypothesis true.

##### **5.2.3 Findings on influencers**

The influence of influencers had both positive and negative effects. While there are students who are inspired by the advice of the influencers on investments, the majority of the students see the influencers as sources of entertainment and not finance, hence the low level of investment.

### **5.3 Discussion of major findings**

The results are also in line with the theory of planned behavior, which asserts that "subjective norms" (i.e., what others are doing online) have a strong influence on intention to behave in certain ways. The prevalence of impulse buying also lends support to Kaweesi's (2021) claim that social media makes spending easy and seamless.

The results, however, also point to a rather alarming situation in the context of social learning theory. The students are learning to "consume" rather than "invest" behaviors online. This resonates with Seruwagi's (2020) claim that the online environment encourages "performative wealth" rather than actual financial well-being, thereby creating a generation of individuals who are financially vulnerable despite appearances to the contrary.

### **5.4 Conclusion**

The conclusion drawn from the study is that social media has greatly affected the financial environment of the youth in Uganda Christian University. Though social media has the potential to be used in education, the most prominent use of social media is as a consumer catalyst. The "fear of missing out" and advertisements are affecting the savings habit of the youth. This could pose a threat to the future of the youth.

### **5.5 Recommendations**

With this in mind, the following recommendations are made;

The university could consider including digital financial hygiene in the foundation course so that students can acquire skills to resist algorithmic manipulation and distinguish needs from wants.

Guilds could encourage saving challenges on social media so that it becomes a trend for people to save, thus employing social learning for positive reinforcement.

Students could be encouraged to scrutinize financial influencers before investing so that they do not get scammed.

Students could be encouraged to curate their social media feeds so that they change the norms they are exposed to on a daily basis.

### **5.6 Areas for further study**

The impact of 'buy now, pay later' offers on student debt could be a topic for further research, or a comparative study could be made to see if the social media effect is similar for university students in urban and rural areas.

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Uganda management institute (UMI).

# APPENDIX

## Questionnaire

**Topic:** the impact of social media on financial decisions of the youth **case study:** uganda christian university (ucu) **target respondents:** bba students

**Dear respondent,** I am a student at uganda christian university pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA). I am conducting a study to examine the impact of social media on the financial decisions of youth. As a BBA student, your participation is key to this study. All information provided will be treated with strict confidentiality and used for academic purposes only.

### Section a: background information

*Please tick the box that corresponds to your details.*

#### 1. Gender:

male

female

#### 2. Age bracket:

18 - 21 years

22 - 25 years

26 years and above

#### 3. Year of study:

year 1

year 2

year 3

### Section b: social media advertising & spending habits

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding social media advertisements. (Key: 5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=neutral, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree)

No.	Statement	5	4	3	2	1
1	I often see ads for products I like on social media.					
2	I often buy things impulsively because of social media.					
3	I spend more than 3 hours daily on social media platforms.					
4	Targeted ads on instagram/tiktok make me want to buy things I didn't plan for.					
5	The ease of buying online (e.G., "Shop now" buttons) leads me to spend more.					
6	I find social media advertisements more convincing than TV or radio ads.					

### Section c: peer pressure & saving culture

Please indicate your level of agreement regarding the influence of peers on your saving habits.

(Key: 5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=neutral, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree)

No.	Statement	5	4	3	2	1
1	I feel pressure to buy things my friends post online.					
2	I save money regularly for the future.					
3	My spending exceeds my budget most months.					
4	Seeing my peers' lifestyle online gives me a "fear of missing out" (FOMO).					
5	I often spend my savings to maintain a certain image or standard online.					
6	Social media trends make it difficult for me to prioritize saving money.					

### Section d: influencers & investment decisions

Please indicate your level of agreement regarding the influence of digital influencers on your investment choices. (Key: 5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=neutral, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree)

No.	Statement	5	4	3	2	1
1	I trust financial advice from influencers on tiktok/youtube.					

2	I have invested in a business or scheme seen online.						
3	I follow influencers primarily for entertainment rather than serious financial advice.						
4	I have considered high-risk investments (e.G., Crypto/betting) because an influencer recommended them.						
5	I verify the qualifications of influencers before taking their financial advice.						
6	Most financial influencers on social media promote "get rich quick" schemes.						

**Thank you for your participation.**

**The proposed research budget.**

Internet data for research and literature review	Three months	6,000
Printing of questionnaires	One hundred copies	10,000
Typesetting, printing, and binding final copies	2 copies	100,000

Miscellaneous expenses	Contingency	20,000
Hard copies for the supervisor	Two months	30,000
Total estimated budget	Full project	166,000

**The proposed time schedule.**

This schedule outlines the typical timeframe required to complete all the chapters.

<b>Research activity</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Topic formulation and approval	Week one to two
Writing chapter one and two	Week three to five
Developing methodology and questionnaire	Week six to seven
Data collection at the campus	Week eight to nine
Data analysis and data entry	Week ten to eleven
Writing chapter four and five	Week twelve to thirteen
Final review, editing, and submission	Week fourteen



**UGANDA CHRISTIAN  
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School of Business

17th February 2026

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Introduction of Nduhura Jazel Kenyonyozi, S23B05/113 for Data Collection Permission


I am writing to introduce Ms. Nduhura Jazel kenyonyozi, S23B05/113 , a student of Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and Management at Uganda Christian University. Nduhura Jazel Kenyonyozi, S23B05/113, is currently in the advanced stage of her academic journey and is conducting a dissertation on "THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE FINANCIAL DECISION OF STUDENTS AT UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY "

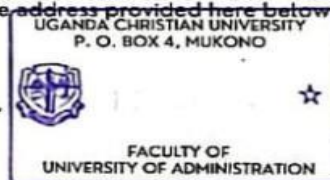
I assure you that Ms.Nduhura Jazel Kenyonyozi, S23B05/113 will adhere to all ethical guidelines and treat any data collected with the utmost confidentiality. She is a responsible student dedicated to conducting a thorough and rigorous study.

We kindly request your support in granting Ms. Nduhura Jazel Kenyonyozi S23B05/113 access to relevant data and personnel within any department and as well as any personnel with objective knowledge regarding her topic. Your valuable insights will significantly contribute to the success and quality of her research.

Thank you for considering her request. Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me on the address provided here below

Sincerely,

  
Mukisa Simon Peter  
Lecturer and undergraduate



Research coordinator UCU School of Latin Arts  
Email smukisa@ucu.ac.ug Mob: 0732938600

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