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Implications of Economic Incentivization of User-Generated Content on Local Film and Television Production in Kenya

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to explore how economic incentivization through social media influence, endorsements and brand ambassadorship drives UGC as a disruptive force in local film and TV production in Kenya. It also examined how these incentives challenge traditional/legacy media norms are reshaping audio-visual content creation and distribution.

Methodology: The study employed a descriptive mixed-methods design that integrated both quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine the influence of economic incentivization on UGC in local film and TV production in Kenya. For the quantitative component, data was collected through structured questionnaires from a sample of 384 respondents, who were selected using a proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The target population comprised 2,716 local film and TV producers, as well as UGC creators on YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. Stratified sampling ensured that respondents were selected proportionally from these different subgroups, allowing for a representative sample. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentages) and inferential statistical methods (correlation, regression and ANOVA), through SPSS (Version 25). The results were presented in pie charts, graphs and tables. For the qualitative component, in-depth interviews were conducted with 24 key informants drawn from the local film and TV production industry, Kenya Film Commission (KFC), Kenya Film Classification Board (KFCB), Kenya Copyright Board (KECOBO), Department of Film Services (DFS) and the Communications Authority of Kenya (CA). These key informants were selected using purposive sampling, which ensured that individuals with relevant expertise and industry knowledge provided valuable and expert insights for the study. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically to complement the quantitative findings.

Findings: The study found that economic incentivization significantly influences the production of UGC and its effect on local film and TV production in Kenya. About 83.9% of respondents agreed that brand endorsements and ambassadorships provide meaningful rewards, enabling creators to produce relatable and culturally relevant content. Additionally, 79.9% acknowledged that brand ambassadors influence consumer purchasing decisions while 59.2% viewed social media influencing as an accessible opportunity. However, 22.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that existing monetization models were satisfactory but highlighted challenges in existing compensation structures. The findings demonstrate that economic incentives empower creators to improve content quality and audience engagement, reshaping local film and TV production in Kenya by challenging traditional/legacy media production financing models and norms. However, gaps in policy support and inconsistent funding remain present as barriers to maximizing the transformative potential of UGC.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The findings of this study contribute to Disruptive Innovation Theory (DIT) by applying it to UGC within film and TV production, showing how economic incentives such as social media influence, endorsements and brand ambassadorships drive UGC as a disruptive force that challenges traditional media. It provides a framework for understanding how financial motivations democratize content creation, enabling independent content creators to effectively engage audiences. These insights will guide film and TV producers, advertisers as well as audio-visual content creators in leveraging UGC for sustainable growth while emphasizing the need for traditional/legacy media to adapt. The study also highlights the importance of supportive policies that can ensure that there is fair compensation while encouraging collaborations between traditional/legacy film and TV producers and online digital creators, advocating for a more inclusive and diversified local media content production industry that will recognize digital creators as essential stakeholders.

Keywords: *User-Generated Content (UGC), Economic Incentivization, Disruptive Innovation Theory, Local Film, Television Production, Digital Content Creation.*

JEL Codes of Classification*:* *L82, D92, O31, L82, L86*

INTRODUCTION

Globally, the rise of UGC has profoundly transformed the media by introducing a decentralized and democratized approach to film and TV content production (Van Dijck, 2013; Babin & Hulland, 2019; Ugor, 2020; Flew, 2021; Dhiman, 2023). In Kenya, this transformation is increasingly visible as digital creators who often operate with minimal resources produce and distribute content that resonates with diverse and underserved audiences (Githaiga, 2016; Ochieng & Ndung'u, 2021). Leveraging social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram and TikTok, these creators are instrumental in shaping public opinion, popular culture and consumer behaviour by offering authentic alternatives to traditional media (Wang & Li, 2016; Burgess & Green, 2018; Mutua, 2021).

With UGC gaining mainstream attention, brands are recognizing its value and are actively investing in digital content creators through economic incentives such as social media influencing, brand ambassadorships and endorsement deals (Daugherty, Eastin & Bright, 2008; Mwangi, 2022; Paridar & Honka, 2023). These incentives support creators financially but and also enable UGC to compete with and at times disrupt, legacy/traditional media systems in the production of local films and TV content.

Economic incentivization has emerged as a catalyst for both the growth of creators and the evolution of Kenya's local film and TV production sector (Nyabuga, 2013; Kimani, 2022; Wekesa, 2023). Supported by brand partnerships and platform monetization, UGC has become a significant contributor to content innovation, diversity and accessibility within Kenya's creative economy. Recent initiatives by Kenyan governmental bodies underscore the growing recognition of the role of UGC in the creative/orange economy of Kenya.

The Kenya Film Commission (KFC) has been proactive in supporting local content creators. In 2024, KFC established fully equipped film resource centres across various counties that provide emerging filmmakers from underrepresented regions with access to essential film, TV and UGC production equipment and training opportunities. Such initiatives are designed to democratize content creation and promote regional storytelling, thereby enhancing the diversity and authenticity of the local films and TV productions in Kenya.

Furthermore, the Kenya Film Classification Board (KFCB) introduced the Creatives in Arts and Film Literacy (CAFIL) Program which focuses on empowering local creatives by providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge to produce content that aligns with national cultural values while also being commercially viable. The CAFIL initiative represents a concerted effort by the government to integrate UGC into the broader framework of the local film and TV production creative industry development.

In terms of market analysis, a 2024 report by 6Wresearch highlights the significant potential of growth for Kenya's UGC platforms market between 2024 and 2030. The report identifies key drivers such as increased internet penetration, the proliferation of smartphones as well as the rising demand for localized content. These factors collectively contribute to a favourable environment for UGC creators, indicating a positive trajectory for the sector's expansion of the sector and its influence on the local film and TV industry.

While substantial research has explored monetization of UGC in Global North contexts, there remains a gap in empirical studies that address how economic incentives shape UGC production in local film and TV production in Kenya. This study investigated the role of economic incentivization in advancing UGC in Kenya, with a focus on social media influencing, brand ambassadorship and endorsement arrangements. It explored how these incentives enable creators to challenge conventional production models by offering a cost-effective, relatable and accessible alternative. Specifically, the research examined the influence of economic incentives on the quality, quantity, diversity and budgets of locally produced films and TV productions. The findings offer valuable insights for digital creators, media organizations, brands and policymakers, providing a foundation for strategies that support a vibrant and sustainable UGC-driven creative economy in Kenya.

Problem Statement

The traditional local film and TV production industry in Kenya is experiencing disruption due to the rapid emergence and growth of UGC on digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. This rise in UGC has introduced transformative changes to legacy media systems, particularly in the ways in which content is produced, distributed and monetized. While UGC has the potential to democratize content creation and provide alternative narratives, traditional media structures continue to dominate, marginalizing the economic contributions of independent digital creators.

Economic incentivization through mechanisms such as social media influencing, brand ambassadorships and endorsements has emerged as a key driver of UGC production. However, its influence on the structure, sustainability and development of the local film and TV production industry in Kenya remains underexplored. This gap in knowledge limits the understanding of how financial incentives shape content creation, disrupt established production models and influence the broader creative economy. This study asked: How does economic incentivization influence the quality, quantity and sustainability of UGC in the local film and TV production in Kenya? By addressing this question, the research aimed to uncover how financial motivations are reshaping production strategies and contributing to the progression of the country's films and TV productions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies suggest that UGC has become an influential force in global media, reshaping traditional content creation and distribution methods (Lobato, 2016; Athique, 2021; Ochieng & Ndungu, 2021; Mwangi, 2022). The rise of UGC reflects the growing democratization of media production, where individuals can reach broad audiences through social media platforms with relatively low production costs and minimal gatekeeping (Ndinda, 2020; Waithaka, 2018). This transformation has been particularly significant in developing economies like Kenya, where digital access has enabled local content creators to engage with diverse audiences and contribute to cultural representation (Githaiga, 2016; Mbatha, 2019). However, for UGC to thrive, economic incentives are important since they provide creators with resources and motivation to produce high-quality content that competes with the traditional/legacy media offerings (Burgess & Green, 2018).

Economic incentives from engagements such as social media influencing, endorsements and brand ambassadorships have emerged as essential motivators for content creators (Mwangi, 2022). These incentives provide a financial base for creators and also elevate the quality and reach of their content (Omondi, 2021; Mwangi, 2022). Previous studies have revealed that financial support through brand collaborations enables creators to invest in better production tools, thus enhancing the appeal of their content allowing them to meet audience expectations for professional-quality media (Baym, 2015). This aligns with the notion of UGC as a disruptive force in media, as creators who are empowered by economic incentives challenge traditional production models by offering relatable, niche content that resonates with specific audiences (Christensen et al., 2015). In Kenya, this has allowed creators some who double up as citizen journalists to address local topics and interests that are often overlooked by mainstream media, expanding the scope of the media ecosystem.

The Disruptive Innovation Theory (DIT) by Clayton M. Christensen describes how simpler and more accessible innovations can disrupt established industries. Within the context of UGC, economic incentives act as drivers of disruption by enabling creators to bypass traditional/legacy media structures hence establishing direct connections with audiences (Hartley, 2019). DIT has traditionally focused on technology-driven changes in industries. However, recent literature expands this framework to include economic motivators as enablers of innovation in creative sectors (Nieborg & Poell, 2018). In Kenya, UGC creators who gain economic support compete with traditional/legacy local film and TV production, reshaping audience viewing habits and setting new standards for accessible and engaging content (Kariuki, 2020). This study built on these theoretical perspectives by examining how economic incentivization facilitates the growth of UGC as a disruptive force in local film and TV production in Kenya.

The influence of economic incentives on audience engagement has been a growing area of interest in media studies. Research suggests that financially supported UGC creators invest in strategies that increase engagement like high-quality visuals, interactive content and timely responses to audience feedback. Studies also show that audiences tend to trust and relate to content that is produced by independent creators more than corporate media, a phenomenon that is partly driven by the perceived authenticity of UGC (Holland, 2020; Mwangi, 2022). In Kenya, local brands and advertisers are capitalizing on partnering with content creators on YouTube, Instagram and TikTok to promote products and services through authentic and relatable content, making UGC effective for brand building and customer engagement.

Media policies play a key role in shaping the conditions under which UGC thrives. Research highlights that supportive policies like funding initiatives, tax incentives and digital infrastructure development, are essential for nurturing a sustainable UGC ecosystem (Napoli, 2019). However, studies on media policy in Kenya indicate that limited support and regulatory ambiguity hinders the potential of UGC in local film and TV production (Muiru, 2020; Kariuki, 2020). There is a need for policies that protect the rights of digital creators promoting fair compensation and encouraging meaningful collaborations between traditional media and digital creators. This study adds to the existing literature by exploring how economic incentives and policy frameworks intersect, influencing the sustainability and growth of UGC in Kenya.

In sum, the reviewed literature demonstrates that economic incentivization is central to the viability of UGC as it enables creators to produce competitive, high-quality content that can challenge traditional media. Additionally, theories like DIT provide a foundation for understanding how financial support can drive UGC to reshape the media subsector. However, gaps remain in understanding how these incentives interact with local policies and the unique media environment in Kenya. By addressing these areas, this study contributes to the literature on UGC and economic incentivization, offering insights that can inform both academic discourse and practical applications in local film and TV content production.

UGC has emerged as a transformative force in global media, reshaping how content is created, distributed and consumed (Ndinda, 2020; Ochieng & Ndung'u, 2021; Mwangi, 2022). With minimal barriers to entry, social media platforms enable individuals to produce and share content at scale, contributing to the democratization of media production (Lobato, 2016; Waithaka, 2018). In developing countries such as Kenya, this trend is particularly significant. Increased digital access has empowered local creators to engage with diverse audiences and augmented underrepresented cultural narratives (Githaiga, 2016; Mbatha, 2019). However, for UGC to thrive as a viable alternative to legacy media, economic incentivization is essential. Financial support sustains creators and enables them to produce content of a quality that can compete with traditional media offerings (Burgess & Green, 2018).

Incentives such as social media influencing, brand endorsements and ambassadorships have become critical to the success of digital content creators (Omondi, 2021; Mwangi, 2022). These forms of monetization help creators to acquire better production tools, invest in skill development and expand their reach (Baym, 2015). This aligns with the view of UGC as a disruptive force challenging conventional production norms by offering relatable, niche content to targeted audiences (Christensen et al., 2015). In Kenya, some digital creators are citizen journalists who fill in gaps left by mainstream media in covering local or socially sensitive issues.

The Disruptive Innovation Theory (DIT) by Christensen provides a useful lens for understanding these shifts. It explains how accessible and low-cost innovations can overturn established industries by catering to underserved markets (Hartley, 2019). In the context of UGC, economic incentives serve as enablers of this disruption by allowing content creators to bypass traditional media gatekeepers and directly engage audiences. However, while DIT offers valuable insights**,** it has its limitations particularly when applied to non-technological, socio-culturally embedded sectors like the local film and TV production industry in Kenya.

DIT tends to favour market-driven, technological explanations often overlooking structural challenges like limited internet access in rural areas, high data costs, inconsistent monetization frameworks and regulatory ambiguities (Muiru, 2020). Socio-political dynamics, infrastructural deficits and cultural expectations also mediate how UGC progresses in Kenya, making it necessary to critically adapt rather than directly apply Western-centric models. For instance, informal economies and kinship-based value systems influence collaboration and compensation practices in local content creators that are absent in traditional DIT applications.

Further, audience trust in UGC has been attributed to the authenticity and relatability of content produced by independent creators. Financially incentivized creators often reinvest in high-quality visuals, audience interaction, and storytelling that aligns with local realities (Holland, 2020; Mwangi, 2020). In Kenya, brands increasingly harness this authenticity through partnerships with creators on platforms like YouTube, Instagram and TikTok, using UGC as a tool for digital marketing and customer engagement.

Media policy plays an integral role in shaping the UGC ecosystem. International studies highlight the importance of supportive frameworks like funding, infrastructure investment as well as copyright protections to sustain creative economies (Napoli, 2019). However, in Kenya, the policy landscape remains fragmented. Regulatory uncertainty, limited access to funding, and weak enforcement of creator rights hinder the full potential of UGC in local film and TV production (Muiru, 2020; Kariuki, 2020). These challenges further underscore the limitations of applying generalized innovation theories without adapting them to local realities.

In sum, the reviewed literature affirms that economic incentivization is central to the growth and viability of UGC. It facilitates competitive content creation and provides a pathway for digital creators to challenge entrenched media systems. However, Western theories like DIT must be critically localized, taking into account the unique economic, infrastructural and cultural dynamics of local film and TV production in Kenya. This study contributes to closing this gap by examining how economic incentives alongside local contextual factors influence the development of UGC within the local film and TV production sector.

Theoretical Framework

Disruptive Innovation Theory (DIT)

This study was grounded in Disruptive Innovation Theory (DIT) that was developed by Clayton Christensen, which explains how smaller players with fewer resources successfully challenge and eventually displace established market leaders through innovation (Christensen, Raynor & McDonald, 2015; Hartley, 2019). While such innovations initially serve niche or overlooked markets, they improve over time, reshape consumer expectations and restructure industries.

DIT was selected due to its specific focus on how emerging practices transform industry hierarchies. DIT is uniquely suited to analyzing how economic incentives for UGC creators allow them to compete with and disrupt legacy/traditional media structures in local film and TV production sector in Kenya.

In this study, UGC was conceptualized as a disruptive innovation that is enabled by platforms such as YouTube, Instagram and TikTok, and accelerated by financial opportunities like social media influencing, brand ambassadorships and endorsements. These incentives empower creators to produce relatable, cost-effective content that challenges the dominance of traditional media by prompting legacy institutions to adapt or risk obsolescence (Hartley, 2019; Kariuki, 2020). By applying DIT, the research interrogated the extent to which economic incentivization fuels the disruptive influence of UGC on content quality, diversity, production budgets and long-term sustainability of audio-visual content in the form of local films and TV productions.

Research Gaps

While reviewed research addresses UGC in Global North and Western contexts, limited studies focus on settings in Africa and specifically Kenya. The unique socio-economic dynamics of the local film and TV production in Kenya like challenges related to digital infrastructure and market size, warrant localized research on how economic incentives influence UGC. This study aimed to fill this gap by focusing on local film and TV production in Kenya.

Although some literature touches on social media influencing, brand partnerships and endorsements as economic motivators for UGC, there is a lack of detailed analysis on specific incentivization mechanisms like brand ambassadorship, sponsorship models and monetization strategies as well as their distinct effects on content quality, quantity, diversity and budgets for production and sustainability.

This study addressed this gap by examining how these factors influence the growth and competitiveness of UGC in local film and TV production. Although DIT is widely applied to technological advancements, its application to economically motivated UGC as a disruptive force in media production industries remains underexplored. Few studies examine how financial support for UGC allows it to challenge traditional/legacy media structures, reshaping content creation and consumption patterns. This study contributes to DIT by exploring how economic incentives enable UGC to disrupt local film and TV production in Kenya.

While the literature emphasizes the importance of supportive policies, there is limited research on the specific policy frameworks that can nurture and protect digital content creators, particularly in Kenya. Existing research rarely addresses how media policies can support economic incentivization models for UGC creators. This study highlights the role of policy in shaping the conditions for a viable UGC ecosystem in Kenya. Although studies suggest UGC has strong audience appeal due to its authenticity, few studies investigate how economic incentivization affects audience engagement and perceptions in Kenya. Understanding how incentives influence content relatability, trust and engagement among Kenyan audiences is essential for brands and media practitioners looking to collaborate with digital creators. Addressing these research gaps provides a broad understanding of the role of economic incentivization in enhancing UGC and its potential to transform local film and TV production industry in Kenya. The insight of this study aims to inform creators, brands, policymakers and media stakeholders to encourage a more inclusive and sustainable media ecosystem.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive cross-sectional research design to examine the influence of economic incentives on UGC and its effect on local film and TV production in Kenya. A sample of 384 respondents was selected using proportionate stratified random sampling from a target population of 2,716 local film and TV producers and UGC creators on YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. Additionally, 24 key informants from the film and TV industry, Kenya Film Commission (KFC), Kenya Film Classification Board (KFCB), Kenya Copyright Board (KECOBO), Department of Film Services (DFS) and Communications Authority of Kenya (CA) were purposively sampled for qualitative insights. Data was collected using structured questionnaires and interview guides, with pilot testing conducted to ensure validity and reliability. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentages) and inferential statistical methods (correlation, regression and ANOVA) in SPSS (Version 25), while qualitative data was thematically analyzed. Ethical considerations were upheld, including obtaining research approvals, informed consent from participants and confidentiality assurances throughout the study.

FINDINGS

Descriptive Statistics

Economic incentivization plays a key role in motivating content creators to produce and distribute UGC (Opanga & Maina, 2018). In the context of local film and TV production in Kenya, the ability of creators to leverage social media influencing, endorsements and brand ambassadorships as revenue streams has transformed content creation (Mungai. 2019). Social media platforms, which serve as the primary distribution channels for UGC, provide creators with direct access to vast audiences, enabling monetization through ad revenue, sponsored content as well as viewer support (Muiru, 2020). Additionally, endorsements and brand ambassadorships offer additional financial incentives by aligning creators with brands that seek to tap into their established followings (Mungai, 2015). These financial opportunities not only sustain content production, they also encourage innovation and creativity, thus enhancing the overall quality and quantity of local content (Wekesa, 2023). The analysis of this independent variable explored how economic incentives associated with UGC are influencing local film and TV production in Kenya. By examining the interplay between financial rewards and content creation, this analysis provides insights into the extent to which economic incentivization drives the growth and development of the local film and TV production. In

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order to achieve this, data from local film, TV and UGC producers was collected where they were asked about economic incentives that they receive through their work. The results are summarized in Figure 1 below.

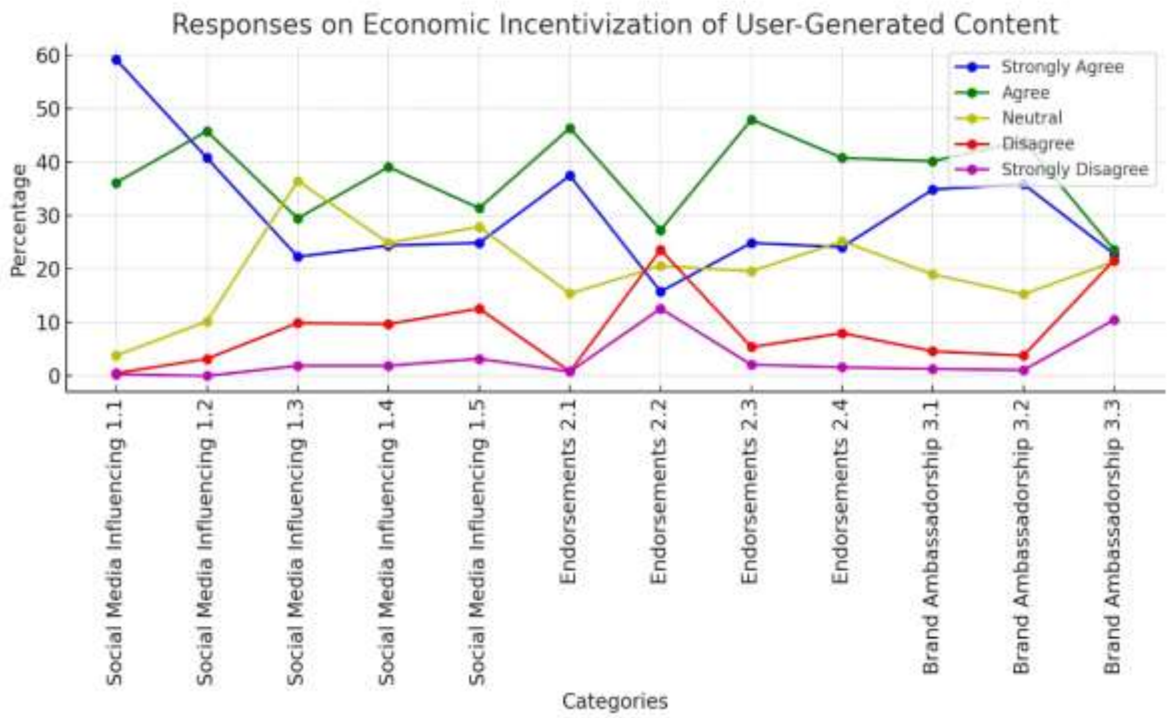

Figure 1: Responses on Economic Incentivization of UGC

The results in Figure 1 show the perceptions of the respondents of economic incentivization of UGC and specifically on social media influencing, endorsements and brand ambassadorship. Some of them noted that they earn a living from sharing their content. As a respondents stated:

"Platforms like Instagram and YouTube provide me with opportunities to monetize my content through brand partnerships and endorsements. However, the local market for influencers is still developing therefore many brands are still hesitant to invest in us creators. We have to constantly prove our value by building large online followings and showing engagement metrics to attract these deals." **-UGC Producer**

Others felt that the platforms are causing competition and that there is need for producers to engage with these digital platforms in making profits from their audio-visual content. As a producer stated:

"The traditional distribution formats like cinema and TV are still valuable, but the shift to digital platforms like streaming services (Netflix, Showmax) is where the future of profitability for us producers lies. These platforms provide access to a global audience and offer better revenue-sharing models for local film/TV producers. However, negotiating good deals is a challenge, with platforms such as YouTube preferring UGC due to its low production cost." **- Local Film/TV Producer**

Social Media Influencing and Endorsements

Social media influencing refers to the practice of individuals or entities using social media platforms to shape audience opinions, behaviours or purchasing decisions through engaging

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content that often leverages personal credibility or expertise in specific areas (Wang & Li, 2016; Cunningham & Craig, 2019). Social media influencers build relationships with their followers by sharing authentic or entertaining content, and this enables them to effectively promote brands, products or ideas. Endorsement on social media involves individuals leveraging their credibility to promote brands, products or ideas, influencing audience opinions and purchasing decisions (Mwangi, 2022; Holland, 2020). Endorsers on social media influencers build trust with their followers through authentic content, making their endorsements more persuasive and impactful. This strategic alignment between endorsers and brands enhances consumer engagement and purchasing decisions.

Economic incentivization has been recognized as a key driver of UGC and brand engagement in Kenya (Ochieng & Ndungu, 2021). This section presents descriptive findings on the economic incentivization of UGC in local film and TV production in Kenya, focusing on social media influencing and endorsements. It examines key aspects of social media influencing, including social media influencing opportunities, economic incentives motivations, monetization models and compensation, influence and monetization of UGC and the sustainability of social media influencing as a career (Mwangi, 2022; Ochieng & Ndungu, 2021). Additionally, it explores endorsements, specifically endorsement and purchase influence by content creators, financial relationships with brands, economic incentives and long-term partnerships as well as the role of economic incentives in authenticity and credibility (Holland, 2020; Billore et al., 2020). These insights highlight the economic factors that are shaping the participation of UGC and its effect on local film and TV production in Kenya. The findings are as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Social Media Influencing and Endorsements in UGC

	Social Media Influencing						
	1. Social Media Influencing						
		Frequency	**S. Agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**S. Disagree**
1.1	Social media influencing opportunities	221	59.2	36.2	3.8	0.5	0.3
1.2	Economic incentives motivations	152	40.8	45.8	10.2	3.2	-
1.3	Monetization models and compensation	83	22.3	29.5	36.5	9.9	1.9
1.4	Influence and monetization of UGC	91	24.4	39.1	24.9	9.7	1.9
1.5	Social media influencing sustainable careers	93	24.9	31.4	27.9	12.6	3.2
	Endorsements						
		Frequency	**S. Agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**S. Disagree**
2.1	Creators endorsement and purchase	140	37.5	46.4	15.45	0.9	0.8
2.2	Financial relationship with brands	59	15.8	27.3	20.6	23.6	12.6
2.3	Economic incentives & long partnerships	93	24.9	48.0	19.6	5.4	2.1
2.4	Economic incentives authentic & credibility	90	24.1	40.8	25.2	8.0	1.6

The data in Table 1 reveals that a substantial portion of respondents strongly agree (59.2%) or agree (36.2%) that social media platforms offer influential opportunities for creators, underscoring the popularity and accessibility of influencing roles. Economic motivations also play a significant role, with 40.8% strongly agreeing and 45.8% agreeing that financial incentives motivate individuals to produce content, suggesting that monetary gain is a key factor. However, awareness and satisfaction with monetization models are mixed; only 22.3% strongly agree, and 29.5% agree, while 36.5% remain neutral. This indicates a potential need for more transparent or appealing compensation structures. The connection between influence and monetization of UGC also garners support, with 24.4% strongly agreeing and 39.1% agreeing that influencing fosters income generation. While most respondents agree that social media influencing can be a sustainable career (24.9% strongly agree, 31.4% agree), the relatively high neutral (27.9%) and disagreement (12.6%) responses suggest some hesitation, perhaps due to perceived job insecurity or unpredictable earnings.

The data on endorsements further illustrates the economic potential in UGC production. A strong 37.5% of respondents strongly agree, and 46.4% agree, that creators' endorsements influence consumer purchases, showing the perceived effect of endorsements on brand success. However, financial relationships with brands seem limited, with only 15.8% strongly agreeing and 27.3% agreeing, while 20.6% remain neutral, and a significant portion disagrees (23.6%) or strongly disagrees (12.6%), indicating that partnerships may still be in developmental stages. Endorsements are, however, seen as a pathway for long-term partnerships, with 24.9% strongly agreeing and 48.0% agreeing. Additionally, a majority (24.1% strongly agree, 40.8% agree) believe that economic incentives contribute to credibility and authenticity in brand endorsements. Overall, the findings suggest that while social media influencing and endorsements offer promising economic benefits to UGC creators, challenges around sustainable compensation models and brand relationships highlight areas for potential growth and optimization of UGC in the local film and TV production in Kenya. A UGC creator stated;

"Social media has created real opportunities for creators like me, making influencing a viable career. While financial motivation drives many of us, monetization remains unclear and often unsatisfactory. Endorsements help with income and credibility, but brand partnerships are still uneven. With more transparent and rewarding compensation systems, UGC could truly transform local film and TV production in Kenya."-**UGC creator**

The findings on social media influencing highlight its growing significance as a career, with a majority of respondents recognizing its accessibility and economic potential. Financial incentives are a key motivator for content creation, though satisfaction with monetization models remains mixed, indicating a need for more transparent and appealing compensation structures. While many agree that influencing can generate income and be sustainable, concerns about job security persist. Endorsements are considered impactful in driving consumer purchases and fostering long-term brand partnerships, yet financial relationships with brands remain limited. Overall, social media influencing presents strong economic opportunities for UGC creators in Kenya, but challenges in monetization and brand collaborations need to be addressed for greater industry growth.

Descriptive Analysis of Brand Ambassadorship through User-Generated Content (UGC)

The researcher sought to find out whether through brand ambassadorship the monetization of UGC adequately rewards content creators for their roles in promoting brands. Brand ambassadorship through UGC involves content creators establishing long-term relationships with brands, consistently promoting their products, services or values within their content. By leveraging their personal authenticity, creators enhance audience trust and engagement, making brand messaging more relatable compared to traditional advertising. The findings present

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descriptive insights on brand ambassadorship as a key indicator of economic incentivization through UGC. It examined the perspectives of the respondents on monetization through promoting brands, brand ambassadors' influence on purchasing decisions, the sustainability of long-term brand partnerships as well as the attitudes toward financial disclosure in brand collaborations. The findings in Table 2 presents the views of respondents on whether brand ambassadorship and the monetization of UGC adequately reward content creators for their roles in promoting brands.

Table 2: Brand Ambassadorship

	Brand ambassadorship through UGC						
	Brand Ambassadorship of UGC	**Frequency**	**S. Agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**S. Disagree**
3.1	Monetization through promoting brands	130	34.9	40.2	4.6	4.6	1.3
3.2	Brand ambassadors & purchasing decisions	134	35.9	44.0	3.8	3.8	1.1
3.3	Brand ambassadors & financial disclosure	85	22.8	23.6	21.7	21.7	10.5

From the data in Table 2, a significant majority (75.1%) of respondents (34.9% strongly agree, 40.2% agree) affirm that monetization through promoting brands provides a viable revenue stream, reinforcing the economic significance of brand partnerships in UGC. Similarly, 79.9% of respondents (35.9% strongly agree, 44.0% agree) believe that brand ambassadors influence consumer purchasing decisions, indicating that audiences view these creators as key drivers of market trends. However, opinions on financial disclosure in brand ambassadorship are more divided. While 46.4% (22.8% strongly agree, 23.6% agree) recognize the importance of transparency, a notable 43.4% (21.7% neutral, 21.7% disagree) express uncertainty or resistance toward financial disclosure requirements. This suggests varying perspectives on the necessity of openly sharing financial arrangements in brand collaborations. As a creator stated:

*"Brand ambassadorships are now a major income source for creators, with audiences increasingly trusting our recommendations. It's more than promotion it's influence. Yet, financial transparency remains a debated issue, with differing views on disclosure. What's clear is that UGC-driven brand partnerships are shaping the digital economy, and creators must balance authenticity with earning opportunities."***-UGC Creator**

The findings on brand ambassadorship highlight its strong economic role in UGC, with a majority of respondents recognizing brand partnerships as a key revenue source for creators. Most respondents agree that brand ambassadors significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions, reinforcing the power of UGC in shaping market trends. However, financial transparency in these partnerships remains a debated issue, with nearly half supporting disclosure while a notable portion remains neutral or opposed. Overall, while brand ambassadorship is a valuable monetization avenue for creators, differing opinions on transparency suggest the need for clearer guidelines on financial disclosure in influencer marketing.

Descriptive Analysis of Brand Ambassador Partnerships through UGC

Brand ambassadorship of UGC entails creators establishing an ongoing relationship with a brand, consistently promoting its values, products or services through their content over an extended period. The descriptive analysis of brand ambassador partnership in UGC examined the characteristics, practices and effect of brand-creator partnerships within local film and TV

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production in Kenya. By detailing the demographics, types of content and engagement strategies used by brand ambassadors, the analysis provides insights of how these partnerships function and influence the reach and effectiveness of UGC. This examination also illuminates the qualities and strategies that make certain content creators valuable as brand ambassadors and the factors that affect the success of these collaborations. Ultimately, this descriptive analysis provides stakeholders with a clearer understanding of the role of brand ambassadorship in UGC, offering actionable insights for brands, content creators and media practitioners seeking to maximize the influence of their engagements. The researcher sought to find out the number of brand ambassador partnerships that the respondents have with sponsors or brands and how many they had concluded in the last one year. Table 3 displays the findings.

Table 3: Brand Ambassador Partnerships

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative Percentage
0-5 Partnerships	343	92.0	92.0	**92.0**
6-10 Partnerships	28	7.5	7.5	**99.5**
11-15 Partnerships	1	0.3	0.3	**99.7**
16-20 Partnerships	1	0.3	0.3	**100.0**
Total	**373**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

These findings in Table 3 indicate that most content creators in the study had relatively few sponsorship or brand partnerships in the last year. The vast majority, 92.0%, had between 0-5 partnerships, while 7.5% reported having 6-10 partnerships. Only a very small number of respondents had between 11-15 partnerships (0.3%) or 16-20 partnerships (0.3%). The data suggests that most content creators had minimal involvement in brand partnerships, indicating a limited scope of brand ambassadorship in their UGC. These findings are consistent with the findings of Kim & Ko (2019) that partnerships with content creators grow over time and there are instances where the creators experience increased revenue earnings. This is because brand ambassadorships provide a source of income for content creators by paying creators to promote their products or services, which can be a lucrative revenue stream. As one respondent stated:

"My brand ambassadorship with brands has enhanced my online reach and visibility and I have occasionally collaborated with brands that have helped me to expand my audience." - **Local Film/TV Producer**

Some brand partnerships enhance the professional credibility and legitimacy of content creators. Being associated with reputable brands can help build a creator's reputation and open up further opportunities. Other brands provide content creators with resources such as new products, equipment and financial support for content creation improving the quality and frequency of their content. The interview findings confirmed that brand ambassadorship had a positive influence on some of the producers. An interviewee said that:

"I have been able to upgrade my filming equipment and therefore I am able to make better quality content on top of being able to take care of my own personal bills from the brand ambassadorship engagements with my content." -**Local Film/TV Producer**

Overall, the data suggests that most content creators had minimal involvement in brand partnerships, indicating a limited scope of brand ambassadorship in their UGC. Economic incentivization shows a positive effect but is not statistically significant suggesting that higher economic incentivization has the potential to increase local film and TV production in Kenya.

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Inferential Analysis of Economic Incentivization of UGC

This study conducted an inferential analysis to assess the extent and nature of the influence of economic incentivization on UGC in local film and TV production in Kenya. The inferential statistical techniques provide insights into the relationships between economic motivators and content quality, audience engagement as well as overall media production practices in local film and TV production in Kenya. Through this exploration, the study uncovered how financial incentives sustain individual creators and also contribute to the broader progression of audio-visual content production in Kenya. This approach quantified the influence of economic incentivization on UGC production, setting a foundation for strategic recommendations towards an economically viable media ecosystem.

Correlation Analysis for Economic Incentivization and Local Film and TV Production

A Correlation analysis for economic incentivization and local film/TV production reveals how economic incentives affect local film and TV production in Kenya as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Correlation for Economic Incentivization

		Local Film/TV Production	Technological Factors
Local Film/TV Production	Pearson Correlation	1	.278**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	373	373
Economic Incentivization	Pearson Correlation	.278**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	373	373

****. Correlation is significant at the 0.15 level (2-tailed).**

The findings in Table 4 reveal a significant positive relationship between economic incentivisation of UGC and local film and TV production since the correlation coefficient is 0.278 ($r=0.278$, $p=0.000<0.05$). However, the relationship is relatively moderate since the value of $r=0.278$ hence no correlation. Therefore, there is a moderate positive relationship between the economic incentivization of UGC and local film and TV production.

Regression Results for Economic Incentivization of UGC

A linear regression analysis was used to test the level of influence that economic incentivization of UGC has on local film and TV production in Kenya and the findings are in Table 5.

Table 5: Regression Analysis Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.278[a]	.077	.075	**.61922**

a. Predictors: (Constant), Economic Incentivization

The findings in Table 5 show that since the adjusted R^2 is 0.075, only 7.5% of local film and TV Production would be explained by economic incentivisation of UGC. The remaining 92.5% of local film and TV Production was due to other factors that were not included in this model. The findings indicate that economic incentivization of UGC explains only 7.5% of local film and TV production in Kenya, with 92.5% being attributed to other factors not covered by this model. The regression analysis shows that the economic incentivization of UGC has some influence on local film and TV production in Kenya, however it accounts for only a small portion of the variation, with the majority being influenced by other unidentified factors.

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ANOVA Analysis for Economic Incentivization and Local Film/TV Production

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine the influence of economic incentivization on local film and TV production.

Table 6: ANOVA Analysis for Economic Incentivization

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.929	1	11.929	31.111	.000[b]
	Residual	142.254	371	.383		
	Total	**154.183**	**372**			

a. Dependent Variable: Film and TV Production

b. Predictors: (Constant), Economic Incentivization

The findings in Table 6 show that the regression model was significantly fit to predict the dependent variable since $F_{1,371;0.05}=3.85<31.11$ with $p=0.000<0.05$. Hence, economic incentivisation of UGC has an influence on local film and TV Production in Kenya. The inferential analysis (correlation, regression and ANOVA) confirmed that there is a relationship between economic incentivization and local film and TV Production. Hence, it can be concluded that economic incentivisation of UGC has an influence on local film and TV Production. These findings were also confirmed by the qualitative findings with responses revealing that without economic incentives many producers would not be in the business of content creation and sharing. The interviewees confirmed that it helps them to earn money, to gain more followers and to get validation especially when they work with known brands. A respondent said:

"Some of the brands that I work with have given me a year's supply of the product that I featured in my content making it possible for me to divert the budget for that product to personal use. I can't complain." **-UGC Producer**

As a result, some of the UGC producers who are involved with brands through partnerships end up improving the delivery of their content in terms of both quantity and quality. Therefore, economic incentivization of UGC plays a role in local film and TV production in Kenya. Some content creators however noted that it is not always straight forward. A respondent said:

"There are instances where a content creator works with a brand that fails to honour their side of the bargain and that leads to losses on the side of the creator." **-UGC Producer**

In summary, economic incentives from brand partnerships boost the quantity, quality, diversity and budgets of UGC, contributing to local film and TV production. However, some creators suffer financial losses like unfulfilled brand commitments. This supports Mwangi's (2022) view that while brand ambassadorship is growing, it poses challenges for digital creators.

Moderating Effect of Media Policy on Economic Incentivization of UGC

Social media influencing, endorsements and brand ambassadorship are instrumental in shaping local content creation. However, the influence of media policy on these economic factors is significant, as it bolsters and also hinders the ability of content creators to monetize their work, ultimately affecting the quality, quantity, diversity and budgets of local film and TV productions (Ochieng & Ndung'u, 2021). This analysis offers insights into how policy decisions enhance or constrain the economic potential of UGC, thereby influencing the growth and development of local film and TV production in Kenya. The correlation model summary is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Moderation of Media Policy on Economic Incentivization of UGC

Model Summary							
1	**R**	**R-Sq**	**MSE**	**F**	**df1**	**Df2**	**P**
	.488	.239	.318	38.538	3.000	369.000	.000
Model							
	Coeff	**Se**	**t**	**p**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**	
Constant	1.260	.394	3.195	.002	.484	2.035	
Treatment	.222	.198	1.120	.263	-.168	.612	
Media Policy	2.456	.966	2.542	.011	.556	4.356	
Int_1	-.141	.463	-.305	.761	-1.053	.770	
Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction							
	R2-chng	**F**	**df1**	**df2**	**p**		
X*W	.000	.093	1.000	369.000	.761		

Focal predict: EcoIncLg(X)

Mod var: MedPoLg(W)

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:95.0000

The multi-correlation model in Table 7 indicates a significant positive relationship between economic incentivisation of UGC, media policy and local film and TV production. The analysis indicates that media policy does not significantly moderate the relationship between economic incentivization and local film and TV production. The model summary shows a moderate positive relationship (R = .488) between economic incentivization and media policy and their interaction and film/TV production with 23.9% of the variance in film/video production explained by these factors (R-squared = .239). The model is statistically significant overall (F = 38.538, p = .000), suggesting that the predictors together significantly influence film/TV production. However, while media policy is a significant predictor with a coeff = 2.456, p = .011, economic incentivization alone is not (coeff = .222, p = .263). The interaction term (Int_1) between economic incentivization and media policy is also not significant (coeff = -.141, p = .761), indicating that media policy does not significantly alter the influence of economic incentives on local film and TV production. The interaction test supports this, with a negligible change in R-squared (R2-chng = .000) and a non-significant F-statistic (F = .093, p = .761). In sum, while economic incentivization alone does not significantly predict local film and TV production, media policy does, although it does not moderate the relationship between economic incentivization of UGC and local film and TV production.

Influence of Media Policy on Economic Incentivization on Local Film and TV Production

The researcher conducted a regression analysis for economic incentivization of UGC to understand how financial rewards like endorsements and brand ambassadorships, affect local film and TV production. This allowed the researcher to quantify the relationship between economic incentives and local film/TV production levels. The findings are shown in Table 8.

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Table 8: Regression Coefficients for Economic Incentivization of UGC

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**	**t**	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.781	.150		11.902	.000
	Economic Incentivization	.378	.068	.278	5.578	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Film/TV Production

The findings in Table 8 show that the regression model is statistically significant since $p=0.000<0.05$. Thus, the model was fit to predict the dependent variable. The model was expressed as $Y=1.781+0.378X$, where Y= local film and TV Production and X= economic incentivisation of UGC, implying that for any change in the eeconomic incentivisation of UGC, there will be a change of 0.378 in local film and TV Production.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that financial opportunities such as social media influencing, brand ambassadorships and endorsements have significantly empowered independent creators especially in urban centres like Nairobi and Mombasa, to produce content that challenges the dominance of legacy films and TV productions. However, this empowerment is unevenly distributed. Urban creators benefit from better infrastructure, access to brands, digital skills and knowledge of monetization models. In contrast, rural creators face limitations including unreliable electricity, poor internet connectivity and fewer commercial partnerships, constraining their capacity to scale and sustain production. Thus, while UGC in urban areas shows strong disruptive potential, its influence in rural contexts remains limited.

Platform dynamics further shape incentivization outcomes. YouTube offers the most reliable monetization through ad revenue and long-form content support, making it ideal for serialized productions. TikTok encourages virality but provides minimal direct income, pushing creators to rely on brand deals. Instagram serves more as a visibility tool than a revenue platform due to its weak monetization framework. These disparities compel creators to adopt platform-specific strategies, navigating an uneven digital economy.

At the policy level, Kenya lags behind in supporting digital creators. Regulatory efforts by the Kenya Film Classification Board (KFCB) focus largely on censorship rather than development. Unlike South Africa's NFVF, which offers grants and training, Kenya lacks structured funding, tax incentives or formal digital skills programs for content creators. This regulatory gap undermines the scalability and sustainability of UGC in the creative economy.

Comparative insights reveal similar trends across the Global South. Nigeria's informal Nollywood-inspired creators and India's regional-language influencers have disrupted traditional media despite limited state support. These cases illustrate how UGC can thrive with the right infrastructural and policy backing. Survey data reinforces these findings with over 70% of respondents reporting that they have no formal training in monetization and 65% have never been approached by brands despite their notable engagement online. This underscores the informal, trial-and-error nature of the UGC backdrop in Kenya and highlights the absence of support systems such as unions, digital rights education or revenue-sharing mechanisms.

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Ultimately, economic incentivization is a key driver of the UGC-led disruption in local film and TV production in Kenya. However, its effect is mediated by geography, platform affordances, media policy frameworks as well as creator capacity. To unlock the full potential of UGC as a sustainable force in the creative/orange economy, Kenya must invest in rural infrastructure, training and inclusive media policies that support and protect independent creators. Without these interventions, the disruptive power of UGC will remain concentrated in a privileged few.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the findings of this study highlight the fundamental role of economic incentivization in shaping the growth and influence of UGC in local film and TV production in Kenya. Financial incentives such as social media influencing, brand ambassadorships and endorsements and have empowered creators, positioning UGC as a disruptive force that challenges traditional/legacy media within local film and TV production. However, despite its transformative potential, UGC faces challenges, including inadequate monetization models, regulatory gaps and inconsistent industry standards, limiting its sustainability and broader bearing. Addressing these barriers is essential for UGC to evolve from a niche sector into a mainstream component of the creative/orange economy in Kenya.

The study recommends that in order to maximize the potential of UGC, stakeholders should enhance collaborations between brands, media companies and digital creators through structured partnerships like brand ambassadorships and sponsorships. Training programs on content monetization, production quality and digital marketing should be developed to equip creators with essential skills. Additionally, policymakers must establish clear regulatory frameworks that will ensure fair compensation, protect intellectual property rights and help to standardize industry practices. Investments in digital infrastructure, including affordable internet access and production resources, will further support the growth of UGC, particularly in underserved areas. Encouraging synergy between traditional/legacy media and UGC creators can enhance audience engagement and support innovation within the audio-visual content production industry, ensuring that UGC continues to thrive as a sustainable and competitive force in local film and TV production sector in Kenya.

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