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The Influence Of Digital Content Creation Platforms On Young Women's Personal Security In Nairobi City County, Kenya

By

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of digital content creation platforms on the personal security of young women (ages 18–25) in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The contention of the study is that rapid proliferation of digital content creation platforms has revolutionized self-expression and economic empowerment for young women; however, it simultaneously exposes them to severe technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV). Despite rising TFGBV cases in Nairobi, limited empirical research examines how platform affordances influence young women's personal security. Guided by Radical Feminist and Securitization Theories, the study employed a cross-sectional mixed-methods design. A sample of 150 young women was selected using multistage and purposive sampling techniques, alongside key informants from security and legal sectors. Data was collected via questionnaires, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and document analysis, and analyzed using SPSS and thematic approaches. Findings revealed that content creation acts as a double-edged sword, where algorithmic and economic pressures force young women to trade physical safety for digital relevance. Specifically, geotagging and passive metadata exposure lead to severe doxxing and physical tracking, while intimate content formats foster parasocial obsessions that escalate into offline stalking, with 88.9% of respondents reporting unwanted physical encounters. Furthermore, deepfakes and digital extortion emerged as critical emerging threats. The study concludes that digital platforms function as patriarchal infrastructures that weaponize women's visibility. Despite legislative frameworks like the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act (2018), implementation gaps leave young women practically unprotected. The study recommends urgent systemic interventions, including enhanced legal enforcement, digital literacy among law enforcement, and strict platform accountability to safeguard young women in the digital creator economy.

key words: Kenya, Nairobi, Digital Content Creation, Young Women, Personal Security, Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV), Digital Doxxing

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Introduction

The rapid proliferation of digital content creation platforms has fundamentally transformed the landscape of modern communication, shifting users from passive consumers to active producers of digital text, images, and videos. While this democratization of content creation has opened unprecedented avenues for self-expression, economic empowerment, and social mobilization, it has simultaneously introduced complex vulnerabilities, particularly for young women. The intersection of gender, youth, and digital visibility creates a unique risk matrix where the very act of creating and distributing digital content becomes a precursor to severe personal security threats. Historically, personal security was conceptualized within physical boundaries, but the advent of interactive digital platforms has necessitated a paradigm shift in how safety is understood.

From a global perspective, this shift is heavily characterized by the weaponization of digital spaces against young women. Henry and Powell (2018) explored this phenomenon by mapping out the architecture of technology-facilitated sexual violence, arguing that digital platforms—including those specifically designed for image sharing and content creation—are routinely weaponized against young women. The central idea derived from their work is that the creation and distribution of digital content fundamentally redefine personal safety by facilitating severe breaches of security, such as non-consensual image sharing, cyberstalking, and online sexual harassment. Consequently, the global landscape of personal security for young women is no longer confined to their immediate physical environments but is continuously negotiated in borderless, algorithm-driven digital arenas where their content can be maliciously repurposed.

As the digital footprint of young women expands globally, the localized experiences within the African continent reveal a distinct set of systemic challenges that exacerbate these security threats. The African context is characterized by a rapid uptake of mobile technologies and social media, outpacing the development of corresponding legal and social protections. Within this environment, young women who create content or simply maintain an active digital presence face a disproportionate burden of cyber-violence. Highlighting this continental disparity, Mbambo (2020) argued that the personal security of African women on digital platforms is severely compromised by systemic cyber-violence, a crisis that is deeply compounded by the failure of existing African legal frameworks to adequately protect their digital privacy and physical security from online predators. The critical idea here is that the legal infrastructure across the continent has not evolved to shield young women from the unique dangers of content creation, leaving them exposed to systemic violations of their privacy and dignity. This continental legal lag means that when young women in Africa post content, they do so in a juridical vacuum, where the attacks they suffer online are rarely prosecuted, thereby emboldening perpetrators and continuously degrading the personal security of female digital citizens.

Narrowing the focus to the East African region, the threats to young women's personal security become increasingly localized and acute, particularly for those who use

digital platforms for professional or semi-professional content creation. In countries like Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, the rise of digital journalism and public commentary has seen a surge of young women entering the digital public sphere. However, their visibility as content creators often makes them targets for coordinated digital attacks that are inherently gendered. Opiyo and Ochieng (2020) examined this regional crisis, emphasizing the critical idea that platform-based attacks against female content producers—such as doxxing, death threats, and sexualized trolling blur the boundaries between the virtual and physical worlds, directly spilling over into real-world insecurities. Their work illustrates that in the East African context, an attack on a woman's digital content is rarely confined to the platform; rather, the digital threat translates into physical fear, as perpetrators use the information gleaned from the women's content to locate them, stalk them, or incite real-world violence. This regional reality underscores that digital content creation is not an abstract exercise, but an activity that physically locates and endangers young women in their immediate communities.

Within the specific national context of Kenya, the hostile nature of the digital environment for female content creators is highly pronounced, particularly among those who use platforms to disseminate news, political commentary, or social critiques. Kenya's highly polarized political landscape often spills over into social media, where women who create, contentious content are subjected to severe, organized harassment. Investigating this specific dynamic, Ogola and Mwaniki (2019) highlighted how female digital content creators, specifically journalists in Kenya, navigate an environment where their personal security is actively compromised through state-sponsored trolling and coordinated gendered cyber-harassment on platforms like X (formerly Twitter) and Facebook. The pivotal idea from their study is that the severity of these platform-based attacks forces a tragic trade-off: young women must choose between their digital presence and their physical safety, leading many to self-censor or completely withdraw from digital spaces. This self-imposed digital exile underscores the depth of the security crisis; the platforms meant to amplify their voices are instead utilized as tools of silencing through the infliction of profound psychological and physical insecurity.

Beyond professional content creators, the broader demographic of young Kenyan women particularly university students face pervasive security challenges tied to their everyday digital engagement. For these young women, creating content is often a casual, social endeavor, yet it exposes them to relentless cyberbullying that deeply impacts their sense of self and physical safety. The psychological toll of this harassment cannot be separated from the broader concept of personal security, as a persistent state of fear fundamentally destabilizes a young woman's well-being.

Wambua and Mulei (2020) established a direct and critical link between the active engagement of young Kenyan women on digital platforms as content creators and consumers, and their subsequent experiences of cyberbullying. Their central argument is that this platform usage engenders profound psychological insecurity, manifesting as severe anxiety and a persistent fear of physical harm among female university students in Kenya. By demonstrating that the digital violence experienced online actively cultivates a fear of offline violence, this research cements the idea that digital content creation platforms are direct conduits for psychological trauma that paralyzes young women's personal security in their daily academic and social lives.

Perhaps the most visceral threat to personal security arising from digital content creation is the non-consensual redistribution of intimate materials. The trusting nature of

private digital communication, often facilitated by mainstream content-sharing applications, is routinely exploited to devastating effect. Young women who create and share intimate digital content, even under the assumption of strict privacy, find their personal security shattered when that content is weaponized. Addressing this severe security risk, Kamau and Waithera (2021) analyzed the scourge of Non-Consensual Intimate Imagery (NCII) in Kenya, positing that young women who share intimate content on platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram are subsequently subjected to extreme breaches of their physical and psychological security through blackmail, stalking, and public humiliation. The core idea derived from their analysis is that the initial act of private content creation strips away the victim's security architecture, handing malicious actors the tools to orchestrate invasive, ongoing threats that dictate the victim's physical movements, social interactions, and mental health. This form of technology-facilitated abuse transforms personal, consensual content creation into a perpetual trap that entirely subverts the young woman's personal security.

As the digital landscape evolves, so too do the specific platforms utilized by young women, with highly visual, short-form video applications representing the current frontier of content creation. Platforms like TikTok prioritize virality, personal branding, and visual appeal, requiring users to put their physical selves on display to a global audience. This specific format of content creation introduces unique security paradigms, as the pursuit of an audience often necessitates sharing personal details, routines, and locations. Evaluating this modern phenomenon, Kagwiria and Mureithi (2022) investigated the intersection of modern content creation and personal safety, arguing that the pursuit of digital clout on platforms like TikTok directly compromises the day-to-day personal security of young women in Nairobi County. Their primary idea is that the very mechanics of TikTok content creation which reward visibility and relatable, location-based content inherently attract scammers, stalkers, and sexual predators. Consequently, the algorithmic drive for views and the socio-economic desire for digital clout actively erode the creator's ability to maintain personal boundaries, making them highly vulnerable to real-world security breaches initiated through the app.

The pervasive insecurity experienced by young women on these platforms inevitably raises questions regarding systemic interventions, particularly the role of state legislation in deterring digital harm. In response to the rising tide of online gender-based violence, Kenya enacted the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act in 2018, a piece of legislation designed to criminalize various forms of cyber-harassment and unauthorized data distribution. However, the existence of a legal framework does not automatically translate to the restoration of personal security for digital content creators.

To understand the structural realities of protecting young women online, Gikundi and Njagi (2022) assessed the efficacy of this specific legislation, concluding that despite the legal existence of the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act (2018), the personal security of young women on digital platforms remains precarious due to severe gaps in the law's implementation and enforcement. The vital idea emerging from this evaluation is that legislative text alone is insufficient to secure young women; without proactive law enforcement, digital literacy among police, and accessible justice mechanisms, the law fails to act as a deterrent. Therefore, young women continue to create content in an environment where their security is theoretically protected by the state, but practically abandoned, leaving them to navigate the threats of digital platforms entirely on their own.

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Statement of the Problem

The rapid expansion of digital content creation platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, Facebook and other interactive online spaces has created new opportunities for young women in Nairobi City County to express themselves, build audiences, develop entrepreneurial activities and participate in public and economic life. However, the increased visibility and circulation of user-generated content may simultaneously expose young women to technology-facilitated threats, including cyberbullying, online harassment, stalking, impersonation, doxing, non-consensual sharing of intimate content, sexual exploitation and other forms of digital abuse. Evidence from Kenya indicates that technology-facilitated gender-based violence is a significant and emerging concern: a 2024 study involving young adults in three Nairobi tertiary institutions found that nearly 90% had witnessed such violence, while 39% had experienced it personally; female students were disproportionately affected, with 64.4% reporting at least one form of online violence compared with 35.5% of males (UN Women, 2024).

Furthermore, online defamation, cyberbullying and non-consensual pornography were among the most commonly reported forms, while social media platforms including X, WhatsApp, Facebook, Telegram, Instagram and TikTok featured prominently in the reported cases (UNFPA Kenya, 2024). Despite this growing evidence, limited empirical attention has specifically examined how the practices and affordances of digital content creation platforms influence young women's personal security in Nairobi City County, particularly how content visibility, audience interaction, personal information disclosure, platform algorithms, online engagement and reporting mechanisms may create or mitigate security risks. This knowledge gap limits the development of context-specific interventions capable of enabling young women to benefit from digital content creation while safeguarding their physical, psychological, social and economic security. The study therefore seeks to examine the influence of digital content creation platforms on young women's personal security in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Digital Content Creation and Young Women's Personal Security

The idea of digital content creating being empowering via visibility and/or monetization has been supported by numerous examples in platform labor and cultural studies; however, this concept of visibility is also shown to be structured exposure. Harassment, doxxing, impersonation, and coordinated abuse campaigns are common occupational hazards that many people in the "creator economy" experience due to platform incentives encouraging continuous engagement and self-disclosure, conditions that can significantly increase the personal security risks for women whose online presence is publicly searchable and continuously archived (Duffy et al., 2023). Notably, the security implications extend beyond what is generally considered "negative online behavior." A person's exposure can lead to damage to their reputation, financial loss via extortion or impersonation, and stalking behaviors where the perpetrator uses content-traces to determine a victim's routine and location.

Evidence from East Africa regarding online violence supports the notion that the consequences of online violence will not be confined to the digital environment: persistence and recirculation can lead to long-term victimization; discourage women from participating in public spaces; and create increased vulnerability due to continued exposure (DW Akademie, 2023). Policy-focused research on online violence against women in public life in

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Kenya illustrates how attackers utilize digital methods to silence and exclude women from public discourse thus creating a security concern as it alters one's ability to participate in society, one's perceived safety, and one's mobility (Westminster Foundation for Democracy, 2025).

In Nairobi, where content creation and micro-enterprise development often overlap (beauty/fashion/marketing/entertainment), young women may maintain their visibility as a means of sustaining their economic livelihoods; therefore, managing their exposure becomes a continuous security process rather than simply an occasional cautionary measure. This study builds upon previous research by considering content creation as both a means of achieving a livelihood and a path to exposure; examining how young women (ages 18 – 25) in Nairobi manage their exposure practices to create and maintain their lived security.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored in two interrelated theoretical perspectives. Radical Feminist Theory by Shulamith Firestone, Andrea Dworkin, Catharine A. MacKinnon (1979) and Securitization Theory by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde. (1998). When combined, they provided the intellectual framework required to examined the intricate relationship between digital technologies and gendered personal insecurity in Nairobi. These ideas made it possible to conduct a thorough analysis of how institutional silence perpetuates and conceals violence against young women in digital settings.

Radical Feminist Theory

Radical Feminist Theory

Radical Feminist Theory, with its four key assumptions, provided a powerful framework for analysing the digital space and young women's personal security in Nairobi. First, its foundational assumption that patriarchy is a system of social control allows the study to view digital platforms not as neutral tools but as new arenas where men assert dominance and punish female autonomy through technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV). Second, the tenet that the personal is political is crucial, as it reframes young women's use of digital platforms for dating, business, or socializing as political acts that challenge traditional gender roles, making them targets for violence intended to re-assert control. Third, the assumption that gender is a socially constructed hierarchy helps explain why women are specifically targeted based on perceived vulnerabilities and stereotypes reinforced online, rather than their actions being random. Finally, the radical feminist call for fundamental systemic change, not just reform, guides the study's critique of inadequate legal and institutional responses, arguing that only a profound restructuring of the digital and social systems holding platforms accountable and dismantling patriarchal norms can truly enhance young women's security in Nairobi.

The theory has key philosophical tenets, one of which is gender is the product of a socialization process (and not biology) and therefore can be changed, and that patriarchy is the root cause of women's inequality/oppression/discrimination, and hence to solve GBV and bring equality, patriarchy must be uprooted. It also advocates for key safe spaces for women, to recharge, regroup, lobby and chart a way out of this oppression.

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3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a cross-sectional research design using a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. A cross-sectional design allowed data to be collected from the study population at a single point in time, making it appropriate for examining patterns and relationships between digital platform use and young women's personal security in Nairobi City County. Although the data was collected at one point in time, participants reflected on past experiences with digital platforms, allowing the study to capture retrospective insights into incidents of tech-nology-facilitated gender-based violence and other digital security threats. This de sign was suitable because it enabled the study to assess the prevalence and nature of these experiences within the various digital platforms.

The study further employed a mixed-methods approach to ensure both breadth and depth of analysis. The quantitative component generated measurable data that identified patterns and relationships between digital platform engagement and personal security among young women, while the qualitative component provided deeper in-sights into the social, emotional, and institutional factors that shaped their experiences of digital safety and harm.

3.3 Study Location

Nairobi City County was a county in Kenya that was the country's capital city as well as a devolved unit of government per the Constitution of Kenya (2010). The county was located in southern central Kenya and was bordered on the north and west by Kiambu County; east by Machakos County; and south by Kajiado County. As of the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census, Nairobi had a total of 4,397,073 residents, with approximately 35% of those residents being "youth" (ages 15-34) (KNBS, 2019). Nairobi County was administratively divided into 17 sub-counties and 85 wards which reflected a wide variety of socio-economically diverse settings ranging from affluent neighborhoods to large numbers of extensive informal settlements.

As of mid-2024, Kenya had a total of 67.7 million mobile subscriptions and 52.3 mil-lion mobile data subscriptions, with the majority of internet users in Kenya residing in Nairobi (Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK), 2024). With high levels of smartphone penetration and youth engaged in all aspects of digital life including ride-hailing services, e-commerce, and social media Nairobi provided a suitable urban context for research into digitally mediated personal security among young women.

3.4 Target Population

The target population for this study included women aged eighteen to twenty-five, residing in Nairobi City County, utilizing digital platforms, involving university students, young employees, digital content creators, freelance workers in the gig economy, and the unemployed, Directorate of Criminal Investigations Cybercrime Unit officers, National Police Service GBV/Gender Desk officers, Office of the Data Protection Commissioner (ODPC) officials, Communications Authority of Kenya consumer protection/cybersecurity officials, Nairobi County gender/GBV focal officers and relevant county directorates, and selected young men who were active in the digital space and used the Internet for social or economic purposes.

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3.5 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

3.5.1 Sampling Techniques

This study employed a combination of probability and non-probability sampling techniques in order to obtain respondents who could provide relevant and reliable information on digital platform use and young women's personal security in Nairobi City County. The use of multiple sampling techniques was necessary because the study involved both a large population of digitally active young women and a small-er group of institutional actors with specialized knowledge of digital safety and cybercrime.

For young women aged 18-25 years who actively used digital platforms, multistage sampling was used. In the first stage, purposive sampling was applied to identify locations within Nairobi City County where digitally active young women were likely to be found. These might include universities and colleges, workplaces, coworking spaces, digital entrepreneurship hubs, and residential areas with high youth populations. This approach ensured that the study focused on environments where digital platform use was common among the target population.

In the second stage, stratified sampling was used to categorize potential respondents into relevant groups such as university students, young employees, digital content creators, gig economy workers, and unemployed young women. Stratification ensured that the sample captured diverse experiences of digital platform engagement across different socio-economic groups within the youth population.

In the third stage, simple random sampling was used within each stratum to select individual respondents who participated in the study. This technique ensured that every eligible respondent within each category had an equal chance of being select-ed, thereby reducing selection bias and improving the representativeness of the sample. For institutional respondents, purposive sampling was used to select key inform-ants from organizations involved in digital security and gender-based violence response. These included officers from the Directorate of Criminal Investigations Cybercrime Unit, National Police Service Gender/GBV desks, officials from the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner, representatives from the Communications Authority of Kenya, and Nairobi County government officers responsible for gender and GBV programs. Purposive sampling was appropriate for this group because these respondents possessed specialized knowledge and experience related to digital safety, cybercrime investigations, and institutional responses to technology-facilitated gen-der-based violence.

3.5.2 Sample Size

For this study on the digital space and young women's personal security in Nairobi City County, the target population was estimated to be 451,650 women aged 18-25 years residing in Nairobi City County. To determine a statistically representative sample for a quantitative survey from this large population, Cochran's (1977) formula for sample size calculation was utilized. The calculation was based on a 95% confidence level, which corresponded to a Z-score of 1.96, a desired margin of error of 5% (e = 0.05), and an estimated proportion (p) of 0.5, which was the most conservative estimate used when the true proportion of an attribute was unknown, thereby maximizing the required sample size. The initial formula, $n_0 = Z^2 * p * q / e^2$, yielded a sample size of 150. Since the population was finite, a finite population correction was applied, though the result was negligible due to the large population size, con-firming that a final sample size of 150 respondents was sufficient to ensure the findings were generalizable to the broader target population with the stated confidence and precision.

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Qualitative respondents were selected through purposive and snowball sampling, targeting survivors, digital users, and key institutional informants across sub-counties.

3.7 Research Instruments

This study employed a combination of research instruments to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of young women's experiences of digital space and personal security in Nairobi City County. The instruments included a questionnaire, focus group discussion (FGD) guides, Key Inter-view Schedules, and a document analysis guide. Each instrument was carefully selected to capture data aligned with the study objectives.

Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from young women aged 18–25 years who actively used digital platforms. The questionnaire included structured, close-ended questions designed to measure the frequency, purpose, and types of digital platform usage, including ride-hailing, online dating, social media, and content creation. Questions also assessed participants' experiences of technology-facilitated gender-based violence, stalking, harassment, and other digital harms, as well as their perceptions of personal security. Likert-scale items, multiple-choice questions, and dichotomous (yes/no) questions were employed to facilitate statistical analysis and identification of patterns across the population. The questionnaire was pre-tested to ensure clarity, validity, and reliability.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guides were used to collect qualitative data from groups of young women in order to explore shared experiences, perceptions, and coping strategies regarding digital platform use and personal security. FGDs involved 6–10 participants per group and were conducted in various sub-counties to capture di-verse socio-economic and digital engagement contexts. The FGD guide included open-ended questions and prompts to facilitate discussion around online risks, offline security threats, and the perceived effectiveness of institutional responses. This instrument allowed for the emergence of insights that might not surface through individual questionnaires, capturing group dynamics and community-level perspectives.

Key Interview Schedules were employed to gather detailed data from key informants and selected young women who had experienced negative impacts from digital plat-form use. Participants were purposively selected based on lived experience or professional knowledge and included institutional actors such as officers from the Directorate of Criminal Investigations Cybercrime Unit, National Police Service Gen-der/GBV desks, the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner, Communications Authority of Kenya officials, and county gender/GBV officers. Interviews explored detailed experiences, institutional procedures, responses to digital threats, and gaps in digital safety enforcement. Open-ended questions allowed participants to narrate their experiences comprehensively, providing context for quantitative findings.

Document Analysis Guides were used to systematically examine relevant institution-al and policy documents, reports, and media sources related to digital platform usage, technology-facilitated gender-based violence, and institutional responses. Documents included legal frameworks such as the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act (2018), the Sexual Offences Act (2006), police reports, cybercrime records, policy briefs, and civil society monitoring reports. This instrument enabled the triangulation of data, verification of participant-reported experiences, and identification of institutional strengths and gaps in addressing digital harms.

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3.8 Pretesting

Before the main data collection, a pilot study was conducted to evaluate the applicability, clarity, and reliability of the research instruments, including questionnaires, in-depth interview schedules, and FGD guides. The pilot involved thirty young women aged 18–25 from Ruiru, Kiambu County, who shared similar socio-demographic and digital engagement characteristics with the target population in Nairobi City County but did not participate in the main study.

3.8.1 Validity

To ensure the validity of the research instruments, multiple strategies were employed. Face validity was established through expert review by professionals in digital safety, gender studies, criminology, and research methodology. Experts evaluated the clarity, cultural appropriateness, and relevance of the items. Content validity was ensured by aligning all questionnaire and interview items with the study objectives and operational definitions, ensuring that each question contributed meaningfully to the intended constructs. Construct validity was strengthened by grounding the instrument items in established theories of technology-facilitated gender-based violence, personal security, and institutional response. Finally, the pilot study provided practical evidence of clarity and comprehension, allowing the refinement of item wording and sequencing to improve both validity and reliability.

3.8.2 Reliability

The reliability of the instruments was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, which measured internal consistency of the items. The study used an acceptable reliability threshold of 0.7 or higher, indicating that the items consistently measured the intend-ed constructs (Bryman, 2022). Data from the pilot study were analyzed to identify any items that reduced overall consistency, allowing adjustments to enhance reliability before the main data collection.

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

Data for this study was collected using a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, where quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews and focus groups were con-ducted concurrently over a period of six to eight weeks. This approach allowed for the simultaneous gathering of broad, generalizable patterns from surveys and in-depth, context-rich insights from interviews and focus groups, enabling comprehensive analysis of young women's experiences in digital spaces.

Before data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the relevant University Ethics Committee, and a Research Permit was secured from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). Participants were recruit-ed across all selected sub-counties to ensure diverse representation of young women aged 18–25, including students, employees, freelancers, and unemployed individuals, as well as relevant institutional stakeholders.

3.10 Data Analysis

In this study, the quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed separately, yet interpreted simultaneously, in line with the convergent parallel mixed-methods design. This approach allowed for the integration of statistical patterns with rich, contextual insights to develop a comprehensive understanding of the influence of digital platforms on young women's personal security.

Quantitative data collected through structured questionnaires was first cleaned, coded, and entered into SPSS software. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, per-centages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondent characteristics, patterns of platform use, and exposure to technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV). Inferential analyses, such as correlational analysis, were conducted to examine the relationships between independent variables (social media platforms, online dating platforms, and digital content creation platforms) and the dependent variable (young women's personal security).

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Before the commencement of data collection, the researcher obtained ethical approval from the University Ethics Committee and subsequently secured a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI), in compliance with national regulations. All participants were fully in-formed about the purpose, objectives, scope, methods, potential risks, and voluntary nature of the study before participation. Informed consent was sought, allowing respondents to provide either written or verbal consent. Participants retained the right to withdraw from the study at any point without facing any negative consequences.

4.0 Results and Discussions

4.1Influence of Digital Content Creation Platforms on Young Women's Personal Security in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

The findings show that rapid proliferation of digital content creation platforms has radically transformed the social and economic landscape for young women in Nairobi City County, Kenya. While platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram offer unprecedented opportunities for financial independence, brand building, and self-expression, they simultaneously expose creators to unique and severe security vulnerabilities. The data shows that by necessity, content creation demands a high degree of public visibility, requiring young women to actively blur the boundaries between their private lives and public personas. This constant digital exposure renders them highly susceptible to targeted harassment, doxxing, stalking, and physical security breaches, making the creator economy a double-edged sword that significantly impacts their overall personal safety and mental well-being.

4.1.1: Location Exposure and Doxxing through Geotagging

The findings reveal that digital content creation platforms significantly compromise young women's personal security in Nairobi City County by structurally incentivizing the dangerous exposure of their physical locations. Specifically, the pervasive use of geotagging features on these platforms has emerged as a primary vector for doxxing, where a creator's private movements are maliciously uncovered and broadcasted. Because platform algorithms heavily favor localized content to boost engagement, and local businesses require verifiable foot traffic to justify influencer marketing budgets, young women are essentially economically coerced into tagging their exact whereabouts whether reviewing a cafe in Kileleshwa, dining in Westlands, or attending a brand launch in the Nairobi CBD. This inescapable trade-off between digital relevance and personal safety strips away their anonymity, providing malicious followers and stalkers with real-time coordinates that frequently escalate beyond digital harassment into severe real-world physical security breaches.

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The Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) provided profound qualitative insights into how the economic and algorithmic pressures of digital content creation directly erode young women's personal security in Nairobi. Participants highlighted a pervasive Catch-22: to maintain visibility, secure brand deals, and appease platform algorithms, they are essentially forced to broadcast their physical movements across the city. This routine use of geotagging, intended to boost engagement and prove lifestyle authenticity, systematically strips away their anonymity. The FGD findings revealed that young women creators view this location exposure not as a voluntary choice, but as an inescapable occupational hazard. By turning their daily routines into searchable, location-pinned content, these digital platforms inadvertently provide a real-time map for overzealous fans and malicious stalkers to bypass digital boundaries and invade their physical spaces, transforming Nairobi's trendy social spots into landscapes of unpredictability and fear.

The distressing real-world consequences of this geotagging culture were frequently echoed across the focus groups, with creators recounting harrowing experiences of being ambushed at the very locations they tagged for professional growth.

Illustrating this severe breach of physical security, one participant shared a deeply unsettling ordeal, stating,

> If you want brands in Nairobi to take you seriously, you have to show you are active. I did a skincare review and tagged a popular cafe in Westlands. The next weekend, a guy who recognized me from the video walked right up to my table and refused to leave. I had to involve the cafe security. I felt so exposed (FGD, Participant, Lifestyle Creator Nairobi 17th June 2026).

This narrative starkly demonstrates how the structural demands of content creation platforms weaponize a woman's digital presence against her. A geotag, meant to serve as a harmless marketing tool, instantly compromised her physical safety, forcing her into a confrontational offline encounter. It underscores the harsh reality that for young female creators in Nairobi, achieving digital relevance frequently requires sacrificing their fundamental right to personal security and bodily autonomy in public spaces.

The profound influence of digital content creation platforms on young women's personal security, specifically regarding location exposure and doxxing through geotagging, is poignantly captured by a participant. This experience highlights a dangerous paradox within the digital creator economy. Duffy and Pruchniewska (2017) argue that female content creators face intense economic pressures to cultivate an "always-on" visibility to secure brand sponsorships, which frequently compels them to disclose personal, spatial details such as geotagging specific venues as proof of their lifestyle and influence. However, this required digital visibility directly compromises their physical safety by weaponizing their location data. As Frith (2015) notes, geosocial technologies fundamentally disrupt traditional spatial boundaries by allowing digital audiences to seamlessly cross over into physical environments, effectively transforming a public cafe into an uncontrolled, porous extension of the digital sphere. Consequently, the participant's ordeal of being physically cornered by a digital stranger demonstrates that content creation platforms structurally endanger young women by tying their professional legitimacy to the very geotagging features that facilitate physical doxxing and real-world harassment.

To further contextualize the severe implications of location exposure, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted with digital forensics and cybersecurity experts who

offered a technical perspective on the vulnerabilities inherent to content creation. These experts confirmed that the threat to young women's personal security in Nairobi extends far beyond the explicit use of location tags or check-in features. From a forensic standpoint, the very nature of digital content creation particularly video production requires the constant capture and upload of rich environmental data. Digital content creation platforms act as massive, easily accessible repositories of this unintentional spatial information. Experts noted that while young women focus on the aesthetic and engagement value of their content, the underlying digital architecture of these platforms preserves critical metadata and visual cues, inadvertently providing malicious actors with the precise tools needed to execute sophisticated doxxing and systematically bypass a creator's physical security.

The alarming ease with which followers exploit this passive data to track creators was starkly detailed by a digital forensics' expert operating in Nairobi.
Highlighting the hidden dangers of Nairobi's competitive influencer landscape, the expert warned,

> What young women don't realize is that when they film in estates like Kileleshwa or Runda to show a 'luxury lifestyle', or even just walking in the CBD, they leave digital footprints. Obsessive followers can easily map out their daily routines using metadata and background landmarks (KII Digital Forensics Expert, Nairobi 15th June 2026).

The testimony from the Digital Forensics Expert profoundly expands our understanding of the research objective by illustrating that digital content creation platforms inherently compromise young women's personal security well beyond the explicit use of geotagging features. The expert's warning that filming in affluent Nairobi estates like Kileleshwa or Runda, or even just walking in the CBD, leaves "digital footprints" highlights a hidden, pervasive layer of location exposure. In Nairobi's competitive influencer landscape, where projecting a certain lifestyle is often an economic necessity for securing brand partnerships, female creators inadvertently arm obsessive followers with the forensic puzzle pieces needed to pinpoint their physical locations. By utilizing embedded metadata and recognizable background landmarks, malicious actors can easily doxx these women, mapping out their daily trajectories and residential areas. This elevates the security threat from isolated incidents of physical recognition to a form of systemic digital surveillance, demonstrating that the very nature of visual content creation documenting one's life and environment transforms these platforms into unintentional tracking devices, rendering young women profoundly vulnerable without them ever actively sharing a location tag.

Analysed through the lens of Radical Feminist Theory, particularly its central tenet that patriarchy enforces control over women by policing their bodies and restricting their spatial autonomy, this systemic digital surveillance takes on a deeply sinister dimension. Radical feminism posits that the "male gaze" is not merely an act of looking, but a mechanism of power and discipline; in the digital age, this gaze evolves into a weaponized, obsessive surveillance tool used to track and hunt women. When young female creators' step into public spaces like the Nairobi CBD or affluent estates to build their economic independence through content creation, patriarchal forces weaponize their visual output to punish this very visibility.

The obsessive follower's ability to decode metadata and landmarks to stalk a woman's routine is a modern manifestation of spatial control, designed to instil fear, curtail their

mobility, and ultimately force them back into the private, hidden sphere. Thus, content creation platforms do not just passively host media; they actively facilitate a patriarchal infrastructure where women's professional labour is turned against them, allowing male predators to systematically breach their physical boundaries and assert dominance through the persistent, terrifying threat of real-world doxxing.

The profound influence of digital content creation platforms on young women's personal security, particularly regarding the theme of location exposure and doxxing, is critically highlighted by a Digital Forensics Expert in Nairobi. This inadvertent exposure is fundamentally driven by the structural demands of the influencer economy; as Duffy and Pruchniewska (2017) establish, female content creators face intense pressures to perform an "authentic" self-brand, which frequently compels them to visually document their lifestyles in aspirational, geographically identifiable spaces to secure brand legitimacy.

Consequently, the professional necessity to project success leads these women to unintentionally broadcast their physical environments without relying on explicit geotags. This vulnerability is then weaponized through what Trottier (2012) conceptualizes as "interpersonal surveillance," wherein obsessive followers bypass platform check-ins by acting as amateur digital forensics experts. By extracting locational intelligence from embedded video metadata and recognizable background cues, these perpetrators seamlessly bridge the digital-physical divide, proving that content creation platforms inherently compromise young women's personal security by turning their professional self-branding content into a veritable road map for real-world stalking and doxxing.

4.1.2: Parasocial Obsession and Physical Stalking

The findings reveal that digital content creation platforms significantly influence young women's personal security in Nairobi City County by fostering dangerous parasocial obsessions that readily escalate into offline physical stalking. Content formats such as intimate vlogs, get ready with me videos, and candid Q&A sessions are specifically designed to build audience loyalty, but they simultaneously manufacture a powerful illusion of friendship and emotional closeness between the creator and the viewer. This engineered intimacy cultivates a profound sense of entitlement among certain followers, who erroneously believe they share a reciprocal, personal relationship with the young woman on screen.

Consequently, when this digital delusion is challenged by the creator establishing boundaries, these obsessed fans frequently transition from passive consumers to physical stalkers, showing up uninvited at the creators' homes, workplaces, or frequent social spots across Nairobi to enforce their perceived "rights" to her time and attention. Ultimately, the very content formats required for algorithmic success on these platforms act as psychological catalysts that blur the line between a supportive audience and a physical threat, directly compromising the bodily autonomy and safety of young female creators.

The respondents were asked to indicate the nature of offline encounters they had experienced with followers or viewers after creating and sharing digital content on online platforms. The findings sought to establish whether parasocial relationships formed online translated into physical encounters that could compromise the personal security of young women content creators. The responses are presented in Table 4.1.

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Table 4.1: Nature of Offline Encounters with Followers/Viewers

Nature of Offline Encounter	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Followed in public places without prior arrangement	42	31.1
Unwanted physical approaches after online interactions	36	26.7
Repeated visits to residence, workplace or study location	18	13.3
Persistent requests for physical meetings despite refusal	24	17.8
No offline encounter experienced	15	11.1
Total	**135**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data 2026

Distribution of reported offline encounters among 135 young women digital content creators.

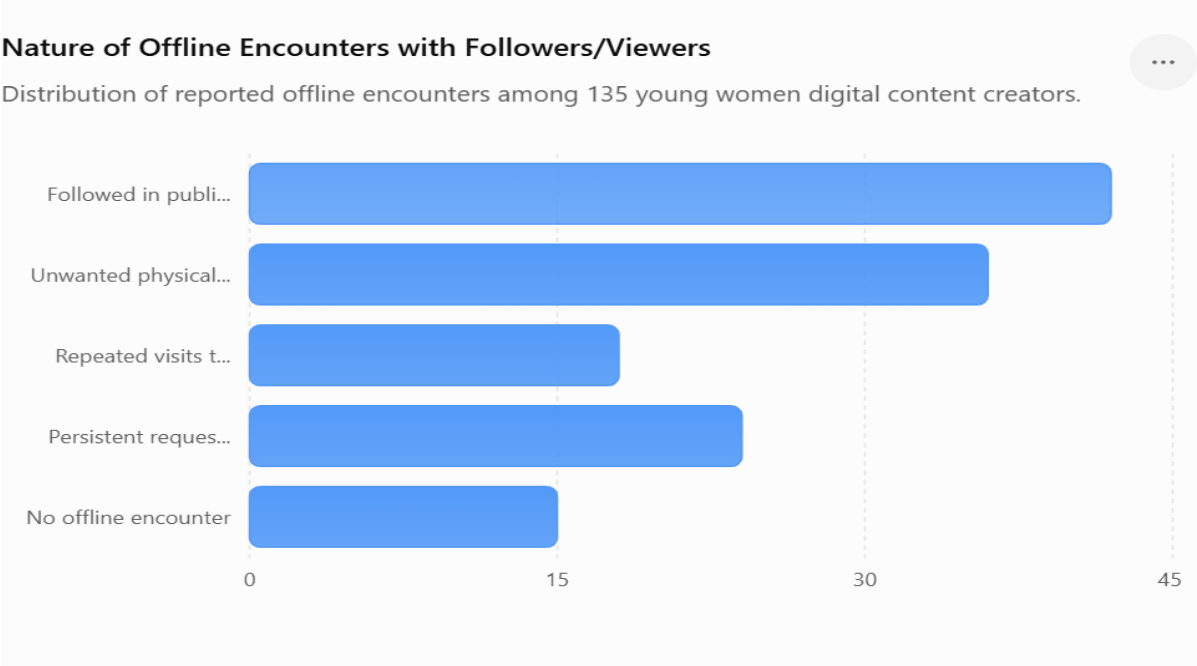


Figure 4.1: Nature of Offline Encounters with Followers/Viewers
Source: Field Data 2026

The findings in Table 4.10 indicate that being followed in public places without prior arrangement was the most commonly reported offline encounter, accounting for 42 respondents (31.1%), followed by unwanted physical approaches after online interactions reported by 36 respondents (26.7%). Additionally, 24 respondents (17.8%) indicated experiencing persistent requests for physical meetings despite declining such requests, while 18 respondents (13.3%) reported repeated visits by followers to their residences, workplaces, or study locations. Only 15 respondents (11.1%) stated that they had never experienced any offline encounter with followers or viewers. These findings suggest that parasocial obsession frequently extends beyond digital interactions into the physical environment, exposing young women content creators to varying forms of unwanted contact and stalking. The results demonstrate that digital content creation platforms can inadvertently facilitate offline security risks through excessive follower attachment, thereby influencing the personal security of young women in Nairobi City County.

The focus group discussions (FGDs) explored participants lived experiences regarding how digital content creation platforms influence the personal security of young women in Nairobi City County, with particular emphasis on the research theme of parasocial obsession and physical stalking. Participants consistently observed that the interactive nature of platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook encourages followers to develop one-sided emotional attachments that blur the boundaries between online familiarity and real-life relationships. Many discussants explained that frequent sharing of personal routines, favourite locations, daily activities, and lifestyle content creates an illusion of intimacy, leading some followers to believe they have a personal relationship with the content creator. Consequently, these perceived relationships often motivate followers to initiate unsolicited physical encounters, persistent requests for personal contact, and confrontational behaviour when their expectations of reciprocity are not met. The discussions therefore reinforced the quantitative findings that digital content creation platforms, while enhancing visibility and audience engagement, can inadvertently increase young women's exposure to personal security threats arising from parasocial obsession.

> One participant vividly illustrated this emerging security concern by stating: "Because I do 'day in my life' vlogs on YouTube, my followers think they know me personally. I was shopping at The Mall in Westlands, and a guy started grabbing my arm, calling me by my first name, saying he 'supports my channel' so I should give him my personal number. When I refused, he became aggressive" (FGD, Participant, Vlogger Nairobi 16th June 2026).

This testimony demonstrates how digital familiarity can evolve into physical stalking and harassment when followers develop unrealistic expectations of personal access to content creators. Other participants in the discussion acknowledged experiencing similar situations in shopping malls, cafés, university environments, and public transport terminals, where followers approached them as though they shared an existing friendship established through online interactions. The participants emphasized that such incidents often generated feelings of fear, anxiety, and vulnerability, prompting them to modify their content-sharing habits by avoiding real-time location updates, limiting disclosure of personal routines, and strengthening privacy settings. Overall, the FGD findings indicate that parasocial obsession represents a significant pathway through which digital content creation platforms influence the personal security of young women in Nairobi City County by facilitating unwanted offline encounters and increasing the risk of physical stalking

The influence of digital content creation platforms on young women's personal security, specifically regarding the theme of parasocial obsession escalating into physical stalking, is vividly captured by a participant. The participant's observation that followers "think they know me personally" directly reflects Dibble, Hartmann, and Rosaen's (2016) concept of the "illusion of intimacy" inherent in parasocial interactions. By inviting audiences into their private routines through vlogs, young women creators inadvertently foster a psychological one-sided bond that obsessive viewers misinterpret as a reciprocal, real-world friendship. However, this perceived intimacy becomes a severe physical security liability when it crosses into the real world, a trajectory explained by Menz (2021), who notes that intense parasocial attachments frequently escalate into stalking and harassment when perpetrators feel entitled to access the creator. The follower's justification that he "supports my channel" demonstrates a dangerous transactional entitlement, wherein the digital act of

consuming content is viewed as currency owed physical and private access. Ultimately, this demonstrates that content creation platforms compromise young women's personal security by systematically blurring the boundary between public digital performance and private physical space, transforming digital fandom into tangible, inescapable physical threats.

The key informant interviews (KIIs) provided expert perspectives on how digital content creation platforms influence the personal security of young women in Nairobi City County, particularly through the development of parasocial obsession and physical stalking. Security practitioners and digital safety experts observed that the growing popularity of social media platforms has increased public accessibility to content creators, making it easier for followers to monitor their movements and daily routines. The informants explained that the continuous sharing of lifestyle content, live streams, and location-based posts often creates a false sense of personal familiarity among followers, encouraging some individuals to believe they have a legitimate personal relationship with the creator. According to the key informants, this perceived intimacy frequently progresses beyond online engagement into unwanted offline interactions, including surveillance, persistent attempts to initiate physical contact, and stalking. These expert views corroborate the quantitative and FGD findings by demonstrating that digital content creation platforms can unintentionally expose young women to heightened personal security risks arising from excessive follower attachment. One key informant emphasized the seriousness of the problem by stating:

> We have handled cases where a fan feels they have a relationship with the creator because they watch her every day. They show up at matatu stages she frequents or outside her gated community in Ruaka. The line between being a fan and a stalker is very thin in Nairobi's content creation space, and the law is not yet catching up fast enough (KII, Private Security Consultant, Nairobi 16th June 2026).

The testimony from the private security consultant vividly illustrates the severe influence of digital content creation platforms on young women's personal security by demonstrating how parasocial obsession seamlessly escalates into physical stalking. The consultant's account of fans showing up at matatu stages and outside gated communities in Ruaka highlights how the intimate, daily nature of content creation fosters unhealthy psychological attachments, leading followers to falsely believe they share a reciprocal relationship with the creator.

Analyzed through the lens of Radical Feminist Theory, specifically its tenet that patriarchy operates by asserting male entitlement and control over women's bodies and spatial autonomy, this behavior is not merely an extreme form of fandom, but a digital-age manifestation of spatial policing. The perpetrator's belief that his online viewership entitles him to physical access to the creator demonstrated by invading her real-world spaces without consent reflects a patriarchal logic that views women's bodies and lives as public commodities. In this context, the digital platform acts as the initial hunting ground, providing the obsessive follower with the psychological justification needed to cross physical boundaries and restrict the young woman's mobility in the city.

This spatial violation is profoundly exacerbated by a systemic failure to recognize and address the severity of the threat, as the consultant noted that "the law is not yet catching up fast enough." Radical Feminism further posits that state institutions and legal frameworks are frequently complicit in upholding patriarchal violence, often by minimizing women's

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experiences or failing to adapt to new forms of gendered harm. By allowing perpetrators to justify their stalking as mere "expressions of admiration" rather than recognizing it as deliberate, technology-facilitated criminal intent, the current legal system inadvertently shields abusers and invalidates the victim's trauma. Consequently, as the interviews highlight, mitigating the physical security threats faced by young female content creators in Nairobi cannot rely on individual vigilance alone. It requires a systemic intervention: enacting stronger legal frameworks that explicitly criminalize parasocial-based stalking, enhancing digital safety awareness among creators, and fostering rigorous collaboration between law enforcement, private security providers, and digital platforms to actively dismantle the patriarchal impunity that currently endangers women's lives.

The severe influence of digital content creation platforms on young women's personal security, particularly regarding the transition from parasocial obsession to physical stalking, is starkly illustrated by a private security consultant. This perceived intimacy, where daily digital viewership translates into an unearned sense of relational entitlement, aligns with Menz and Delfabbro (2016), who found that intense parasocial attachments inherently blur interpersonal boundaries, leading obsessed individuals to believe that physical proximity and real-world access are justified extensions of their digital devotion. Consequently, the creator's private residential estate or local transit hubs are transformed into sites of physical vulnerability. Furthermore, the consultant's assertion that the legal system is failing to address this phenomenon underscores a critical systemic gap identified by Short. (2015), who argue that the rapid evolution of technology-facilitated stalking has drastically outpaced legislative responses. Together, these perspectives demonstrate that digital content creation platforms actively endanger young women by providing the psychological breeding ground for obsessive fandom, while systemic legal inadequacies leave them defenceless when these digital fixations physically manifest in their daily environments.

4.6.3: Deepfakes, Character Assassination, and Digital Extortion

In addressing the research objective of establishing the influence of digital content creation platforms on young women's personal security in Nairobi City County, the findings identified deepfakes, character assassination, and digital extortion as emerging threats associated with the public visibility of online content creators. The study found that the widespread sharing of photographs, videos, and livestreams on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook provides malicious actors with readily accessible digital material that can be manipulated using artificial intelligence and other editing technologies. Participants indicated that publicly available content was sometimes altered to create sexually explicit deepfakes, fabricated compromising images, or misleading videos intended to damage their personal and professional reputations. In several instances, perpetrators allegedly used the manipulated content to blackmail victims by demanding money, continued communication, or other favors under the threat of releasing the falsified material to family members, employers, sponsors, or the public. These experiences generated significant psychological distress, fear of reputational harm, and concerns about career sustainability, leading many young women to restrict the type of content they shared, reduce audience engagement, or strengthen their digital privacy practices.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that while digital content creation platforms offer valuable opportunities for self-expression and economic empowerment, their public nature simultaneously increases young women's vulnerability to technologically enabled abuses

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such as deepfake production, online defamation, and digital extortion, thereby posing a substantial threat to their personal security in Nairobi City County.

The respondents were asked to indicate whether they had experienced different forms of content manipulation and digitally enabled extortion associated with their online content creation activities. The findings sought to establish the extent to which malicious actors exploit publicly available digital content to create deepfakes, blackmail creators, or conduct coordinated campaigns aimed at damaging their personal and professional reputations.

Table 4.2: Experiences with Content Manipulation and Digital Extortion (n = 135)

Experience	Yes n (%)	No n (%)	Total
Face or images used in explicit deepfake content	24 (17.8%)	111 (82.2%)	135
Blackmailed using personal photos/videos or digital content	39 (28.9%)	96 (71.1%)	135
Targeted by coordinated online "exposé" or smear campaigns	48 (35.6%)	87 (64.4%)	135

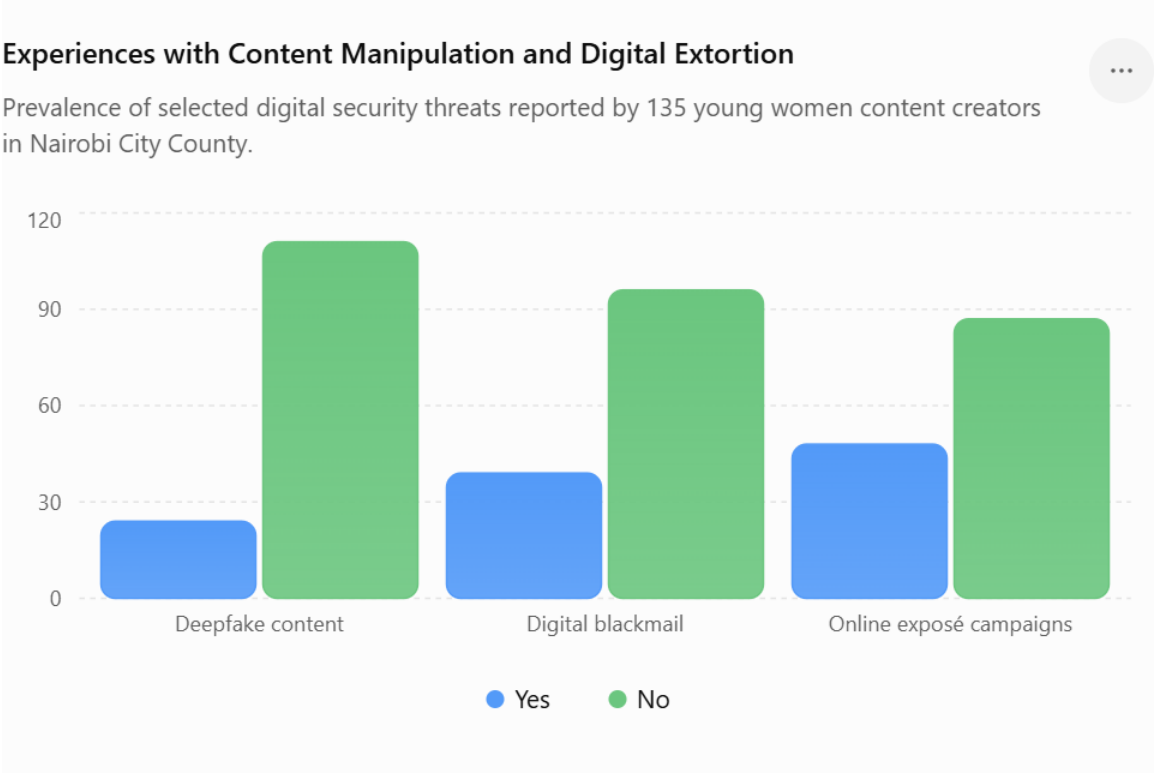


Figure 4.2 Experiences with Content Manipulation and Digital

The findings presented in Table 4.11 indicate that 48 respondents (35.6%) had experienced coordinated online "exposé" or smear campaigns intended to damage their reputation, making this the most prevalent form of digital abuse reported in the study. Additionally, 39 respondents (28.9%) indicated that they had been blackmailed using personal photographs, videos, or other digital content, while 24 respondents (17.8%) reported that their faces or images had been manipulated and used in explicit deepfake content without their consent. Although the majority of respondents had not directly experienced these threats, the proportion reporting such incidents demonstrates that technologically enabled

abuse is an emerging personal security concern among young women content creators. There is also a worrying and emerging trend from this data that it is actually increasing and has reached levels where over a third of the women interviewed were affected (35.6%). These findings suggest that the public visibility provided by digital content creation platforms exposes creators to sophisticated forms of cyber-enabled victimization, including identity manipulation, reputational attacks, and digital extortion, thereby reinforcing the influence of digital content creation platforms on the personal security of young women in Nairobi City County.

The focus group discussions (FGDs) provided rich insights into how deepfakes, character assassination, and digital extortion influence the personal security of young women content creators in Nairobi City County, thereby addressing the research objective of establishing the influence of digital content creation platforms on their personal security. Participants explained that increased online visibility and audience growth often attracted malicious actors who downloaded their publicly available photographs and videos for manipulation and misuse. The discussants observed that advances in image-editing software and artificial intelligence have made it easier for perpetrators to create convincing fake explicit images and videos, which are then used to tarnish the reputation of content creators or coerce them into complying with financial and personal demands. Many participants expressed concern that such attacks not only threaten their digital identity but also undermine their credibility with family members, employers, sponsors, and followers. The discussions further revealed that the fear of reputational damage often compelled victims to limit their online engagement, remove content, or avoid pursuing lucrative brand partnerships, demonstrating that digital abuse has significant implications for both personal safety and economic opportunities.

One participant (Participant 2) recounted a particularly distressing experience, stating:

> My TikTok account was growing, and I started getting brand deals. Suddenly, a channel on Telegram started posting my photos photoshopped onto naked bodies. They then DM'd me demanding KSh 50,000 to take them down, or they would send the links to the brands I work with in Nairobi. It is psychological torture (FGD, Fashion Creator Nairobi 17th June 2026).

This testimony illustrates how deepfake technology and manipulated digital content are increasingly being weaponized for extortion and character assassination against young women content creators. Other discussants similarly reported receiving anonymous threats to publish fabricated or altered content unless they paid money, complied with personal demands, or remained silent about the abuse. Participants emphasized that beyond the financial implications, such incidents caused anxiety, emotional distress, loss of confidence, and persistent fear that false information could permanently damage their public image and professional relationships. Collectively, the FGD findings demonstrate that the public nature of digital content creation platforms exposes young women to sophisticated cyber-enabled crimes that extend beyond the online environment, significantly undermining their personal security and psychological well-being in Nairobi City County.

The severe impact of digital content creation platforms on young women's personal security, particularly regarding the theme of deepfakes, character assassination, and digital extortion, is devastatingly illustrated by a participant. The malicious photoshopping of the participant's images represents a severe violation of digital security, directly aligning with

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Chesney and Citron (2019), who argue that the primary and most immediate threat of deepfake and modification technologies is their weaponization to exploit and sexually objectify women for financial extortion. However, the perpetrator's specific threat to send the fabricated content to her brand partners elevates this from a standard privacy breach to a targeted form of character assassination. This tactic exploits the precise economic vulnerabilities of the creator economy, a dynamic extensively documented by Duffy and Pruchniewska (2017), who note that female content creators operate within a precarious gig economy where their professional survival is deeply intertwined with maintaining a brand-safe, morally respectable image. By cross-platform weaponizing her TikTok success into a Telegram-based extortion ring, the perpetrators effectively demonstrate how digital content creation platforms can compromise young women's comprehensive security merging the psychological torture of image manipulation with the existential threat of professional and financial ruin.

The key informant interviews (KIIs) provided expert perspectives on how deepfakes, character assassination, and digital extortion influence the personal security of young women content creators in Nairobi City County, thereby addressing the research objective of establishing the influence of digital content creation platforms on their personal security. The informants observed that the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence and digital editing technologies has significantly increased the vulnerability of female content creators to technology-facilitated abuse. According to the experts, the public accessibility of photographs, videos, and livestreams posted on social media platforms enables malicious actors to harvest digital content, manipulate it into fabricated explicit material, and disseminate it across multiple online channels with the intention of humiliating victims, extorting money, or damaging their personal and professional reputations. The key informants further noted that such attacks often have consequences that extend beyond cyberspace, including psychological trauma, reputational harm, loss of commercial opportunities, and withdrawal from digital platforms due to fear of continued victimization. These observations reinforce the quantitative and FGD findings that digital content creation platforms, while providing economic and social opportunities, also expose young women to sophisticated forms of cyber-enabled violence that undermine their personal security.

One key informant (Key Informant KII) emphasized the seriousness of this emerging threat by stating:

> Female creators are highly vulnerable to digital sexual violence. Because their faces are public, criminals scrape their videos using AI to generate non-consensual explicit content. We see these circulated on local 'leaks' Telegram groups. This destroys their personal security, leading to severe depression, anxiety, and forcing many talented women to delete their accounts and lose their income (KII, Program Officer, Women's Digital Rights NGO, Nairobi 17th June 2026).

The testimony from the key informant starkly illustrates the severe influence of digital content creation platforms on young women's personal security, particularly regarding the emerging threats of deepfakes, character assassination, and digital extortion. By requiring creators to make their faces and lives highly public to build an audience, these platforms inadvertently supply the raw materials for digital sexual violence, where AI is weaponized to generate non-consensual explicit content. Viewed through the lens of Radical Feminist

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Theory specifically its central tenet that violence against women is not an isolated anomaly but a systemic tool used by patriarchy to control, objectify, and police women's bodies this phenomenon represents a modern, digitized form of gendered terror. When female creators have their images scraped and manipulated into deepfakes circulated on local "leaks" Telegram groups, it is not merely a random cybercrime, but a targeted patriarchal punishment. It serves to sexually objectify women who are gaining economic independence and public visibility, thereby attempting to forcibly expel them from the professional public sphere through profound character assassination and the complete destruction of their personal security.

The devastating consequences of this digital extortion are further illuminated by the informant's observation that this targeted violence forces talented women into severe depression, anxiety, and ultimately pushes them to delete their accounts and lose their primary sources of income. This economic disenfranchisement highlights how deepfakes transcend digital harassment to become a mechanism for real-world financial ruin, fundamentally compromising a woman's livelihood and autonomy. Crucially, the patriarchal nature of this abuse is compounded by societal and institutional responses; Radical Feminism posits those patriarchal systems routinely silence survivors by shifting the blame onto them.

The fact that women hesitate to report these AI-enabled crimes due to fear of public stigma, victim-blaming, and a lack of confidence in existing legal mechanisms reveals a systemic failure that protects perpetrators and isolates victims. Consequently, addressing this profound insecurity requires a structural intervention that disrupts this cycle of impunity. As the interviews underscore, there is an urgent need for stronger cybercrime legislation specifically targeting AI-facilitated abuse, mandatory digital platform accountability, and accessible psychosocial support to ensure that young women in Nairobi can participate in the digital economy without the perpetual threat of digitally facilitated sexual sabotage.

The deep effect of digital content creation platforms on young women's personal security, particularly regarding the themes of deepfakes, character assassination, and digital extortion, is alarmingly illustrated by a key informant finding that reveal how the foundational requirement of the creator economy public visibility inherently exposes women to technological exploitation. Dobson (2021) argues that deepfake technology functions as a distinctly gendered form of digital violence, wherein the public digital presence of women is weaponized through face-swapping to sexually objectify and degrade them; the scraping of these creators' videos perfectly exemplifies how their professional digital lab or is forcibly converted into raw material for automated sexual exploitation.

Furthermore, the cross-platform circulation of these fabricated images on unregulated spaces like Telegram, and the resulting psychological and economic devastation, aligns with Powell and Henry's (2020) framework of technology-facilitated image-based sexual abuse. They emphasize that such abuse is not merely a digital nuisance but a profound violation that inflicts severe psychological trauma and professional sabotage. Ultimately, by driving talented women to delete their accounts and forfeit their incomes to escape this orchestrated character assassination and extortion, digital content creation platforms fundamentally fail to protect their users, proving that the very architecture of the creator economy directly compromises young women's comprehensive personal security.

5.0 Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings reveal that digital content creation platforms significantly compromise young women's personal security by weaponizing the very public visibility required for economic

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success in the creator economy. Algorithmic and brand pressures force creators to geotag their locations, inadvertently providing malicious followers with the real-time coordinates and background metadata needed to execute doxxing and physical surveillance. Furthermore, intimate content formats, such as "day in my life" vlogs, cultivate dangerous parasocial obsessions; obsessed viewers develop a false sense of relational entitlement that frequently escalates into physical stalking at malls, transit stages, and private residences. Most alarmingly, the public accessibility of creators' faces and videos makes them prime targets for AI-generated deepfakes and non-consensual explicit content, which are then weaponized by local syndicates for character assassination and digital extortion, explicitly threatening to sabotage their brand partnerships and resulting in profound psychological trauma and economic disenfranchisement.

Conclusion

The digital content creation platforms in Nairobi City County function as a double-edged sword that severely endangers young women under the guise of empowering them. Analyzed through a Radical Feminist lens, the doxxing, physical stalking, and deepfake extortion experienced by female creators represent a modern, digitized manifestation of patriarchal control designed to punish women for their public visibility and financial independence. By structurally incentivizing the erosion of personal boundaries through geotagging, algorithmic intimacy, and unprotected data hosting these platforms provide the infrastructure for the traditional "male gaze" to evolve into weaponized surveillance and sexual sabotage. Ultimately, without robust structural interventions, the current architecture of the digital creator economy actively colludes with patriarchal violence, forcing young women to choose between their physical safety and their right to participate in the digital public sphere.

Recommendations

Enforcement of Mandatory Metadata Stripping and Proactive AI-Deepfake Detection by Tech Platforms:

The study's findings that embedded location data and publicly scraped images are routinely weaponized for physical doxxing and AI-generated sexual extortion, the Kenyan government must enforce strict compliance with the Data Protection Act by compelling digital content platforms (such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube) to automatically strip all geospatial metadata from user uploads. Furthermore, to combat character assassination, these platforms must be legally mandated to deploy and maintain advanced AI-detection algorithms that proactively identify, block, and remove non-consensual deepfake content before it can be downloaded and circulated by malicious local syndicates, thereby shifting the burden of digital safety from the individual creator onto the tech corporations.

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