



project facts

Key words

Content creators, social norms, agents of change, girl child, social change

Behavioral themes

Social norms, messenger effects, informational source, online diffusion

Research design

Qualitative phenomenological research
- In-depth interviews

Scope

- **Research participants** - 45 content creators (15 in each country)
- **Breakdown of participants by gender:**
 - 9 females, 6 males in Kenya
 - 14 females in India
 - 11 females, 4 males in Nigeria
- **Study period:** 27/03/2023-20/06/2023

Location

Kenya - Nairobi
Nigeria - Lagos, Abuja, South West
India - Mumbai, New Delhi, Ranchi, Pune, Bangalore

Partner

Khengarue Media

Ethics approval

NA

Content creators can influence the change we want to see.

In the world of emerging media, content creators continue to gain influence over audiences globally. This study looks at whether they can be agents of change, enabling social norm change, specifically around gender norms

Background: Can content creators be agents of change around gender norms?

We primarily explored how the scope and scale of social norm interventions could be expanded.

We did so by exploring the motivation of creators to develop content for the broader developmental objective of gender equality and partake in shifting social norms. We also looked at how their content might support behavior change, with respect to the content, how it's framed, the source of the message, and social media practices that shift beliefs about whether others in the community share the same knowledge.

Conducting the research

We recruited and interviewed 15 content creators from each country who target their content at adolescent girls. We then conducted country-specific and comparative analysis using thematic coding, extracting themes for each country and then broadening the analysis towards comparison between countries.

We learned a number of crucial things:

- » **Crafting effective content** - To make gender-related content more impactful, it should be more concise, entertaining, and include; considering factors like age, gender and cultural sensitivities.
- » **The power of collaboration** - Collaborating with peers, content experts or established organizations can be a powerful driving force in motivating creators interested in gender relation content. By working together creators can exchange knowledge, develop a sense of collective confidence, and amplify the impact of their content.
- » **Empowering change catalysts** - Content creators recognize the potential of their work to influence social and gender norms. However, not all see themselves as direct agents of transformative change. Empowering them to embrace this identity role as a change agent can enhance their motivation to do so.
- » **Overcoming psychological barriers** - Content creators in all three countries encounter similar cognitive challenges when talking about gender related issues. These include worrying about losing clients or viewers, being afraid of negative reactions, and feeling insecure about their abilities.

Implications

For young women and adolescent girls: This research helps create a world where young women and adolescent girls can organically engage with the content they enjoy without feeling the need to experience this as an explicit teaching space.

For content creators: Some content creators might sit on the fence about wanting to change gender norms and are unclear how it might influence their

aim to increase reach. Insights on effective content might support content creators in understanding how they can achieve both.

For social norms changers:

- If social norms changers can use the reach and established trust of content creators, content can support social norms change.
- Understanding the motivations and preferences of content creators will help implementers to collaborate better with content creators to incorporate social norms messaging into their content.
- There are content creators who are interested in gender social norms change, but they do not use their content to pursue this activist side because the content creation is incentivised by a business interest.

Recommendations for future research

Four key areas stood out for further research following our study:

- What works to motivate content creators to engage with and share more gender equality content?
- What should content creators do - before, during, and after posting on social media - that helps change the way people think about gendered social norms? What are the conditions under which social norm change via content creators occurs?
- What strategies can we develop to ensure that content aimed at social change provides financial incentives for creators, past the duration of a partnership or campaign?

Further reading

Arias, E. (2019). How Does Media Influence Social Norms? Experimental Evidence on the Role of Common Knowledge. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 7(3), 561–578. <https://gap.hks.harvard.edu/how-does-media-influence-social-norms-field-experiment-role-common-knowledge>

Margaret E. Tankard & Elizabeth Levy. (2015). Norm Perception as a Vehicle for Social Change. Princeton University. In press, *Social Issues and Policy Review*. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5186d08fe4b065e39b45b91e/t/550a18b8e4b0d34e8f584d3d/1426725048339/Tankard_Paluck_2015_SIPR.pdf

Study team

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