

**THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CUSTOMER PURCHASING  
BEHAVIOUR: A CASE OF YOUTH INSTAGRAM USER IN KINONDONI-  
DAR ES SALAAM CITY.**

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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN  
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**CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned certifies that he has read and hereby recommends for acceptance by the Open University of Tanzania a dissertation entitled; “**The Influence of Social Media on Customer Purchasing Behaviour: A case of Youth Instagram Users in Kinondoni Dar es salaam City**” in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Mass Communication (MAMC) at the Open University of Tanzania.



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.....|.....

Signature

.....

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the influence of Instagram on customer purchasing behavior among youth aged 25 to 34 in Kinondoni, Dar es Salaam City. Many young adults who are active online use social networks in various ways, with Instagram becoming one of the most admired tools especially for brand search and product engagement. However, there exists a huge gap in assessing the influence of Instagram's nature, which is mostly visual, also the celebrities lurking in there, and how all this and more even helps the consumer make a decision in that specific area or context. The research, with a mixed-methods approach combining both quantitative and qualitative strategies was undertaken and questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions were used. Yamane's formula was applied to a total population of 400 and a sample drawn from this population to show the attitudes towards Instagram, presentation of the features, and marketing effects on buying behavior. It is found out that those visual aspects, the quality of images presented and their posted timing coupled with a friend's good feedback on Instagram, have been found to instill consumer liking and trust. Also, social media influencers promoted such strategies as providing monetary discounts, which increased consumers' purchase intentions. The research indicates that firms should include appropriate measures in their Instagram marketing campaigns through use of interactive imagery engaging customers, employing influencers and providing customers with enticing offers. There is need for the government to foster these endeavours by encouraging the population to be digitally literate. More longitudinal studies and studies that explore and compare the influence of Instagram on different groups of people in other regions are recommended. This study highlights the importance of Instagram in the current consumer landscape which assists in addressing several focus areas to the relative audiences.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Customer purchasing Behaviour, Youth, Instagram

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTIONS**

#### **1.1. Background of the Study**

It is widely acknowledged that social media networks have their advantages on communication and business roles in the current times (Smith et al., 2020). For a more practical approach, it is worth noting that Instagram has created a paradigm shift in business, customer relations, as it has become a go-to business marketing application that facilitates product promotion, building of customers' loyalty and prospects (Brown & White, 2021). These changes are not only global but also regional, as seen in Dar es Salaam, where increased usage of Instagram for marketing and promotional purposes has called for a study on its effect on consumer purchasing trends.

The District of Kinondoni Dar es Salaam is a well-populated urban mash up and an area where targeting audiences via social media, especially through Instagram is rapidly increasing. The statistics from the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) show that by 2023 approximately 70% of Kinondoni population youth who can be said to fall within the 'influencer consumers' demographic active leaped into the Instagram band wagon over time. The strategic approach of the platform encourages visual impact, which has been key in digital marketing strategies appealing to the audience and creating awareness of products and brands (Johnson & Smith, 2019). As Brown and White (2021) observe, images on Instagram also promote emotional bonding and trust by creating authenticity between a business and its consumers.

In this digital framework, there are businesses who try to make sense of the interactions on Instagram, customers who are looking for products within the cyberspace and the market that is canvassed by these activities (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020). Alhabash and Ma (2017) explain the significance of such a conceptualization for the firms who want to engage with the Kinondoni market as these factors are typical to the market characteristics.

### **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Under best-case scenario, businesses operating within the city of Dar es Salaam especially in Kinondoni district, would have keen interest on how Instagram works as a marketing tool, and would go ahead to implement it in order to effect any changes in the way consumers behave towards making purchases. This would help them come up with relevant marketing plans for the local community which would optimize in the usage, increase sales and retain customers loyalty to the region (Brown & White, 2021). On the other hand, the users would get to enjoy real and somewhat nice pictures that would also be appetizing to their shopping needs and wants (Smith et al, 2020).

This notwithstanding, while almost all businesses in Dar es Salaam are employing Instagram for business purposes, not much is known on how this specific medium really affects the processes of making purchases (Nguyen & Do, 2020). Most of the available studies generalize on the trends without going in deeper into the case of Kinondoni, there are factors such as visual content quality, source credibility, user generated content, interactivity, along with other factors such as aesthetic design of



the brand which have not been studied in depth to examine their effect on local consumers, (Lee & Youn, 2019; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020).

At a bare minimum, If this gap is not bridged, then the businesses operating in Kinondoni will not exploit Instagram completely as a marketing strategy, resulting in limited participation and expansion which are not desirable (Johnson & Smith, 2019). Also, consumers might find themselves subjected to a complex and disjoining experience while shopping for products online which might undermine their confidence and responsiveness to arrive at sound purchasing choices (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). To Whom It May Concern, Understanding the Few Sectors Which Are Active In The Digital World Makes It Extremely Difficult To Develop Successful Digital Strategies.

### **1.3. Research Objectives**

#### **1.3.1. General Research Objective**

To investigate the influence of social media on customer purchasing Behavior among youth Instagram users in Kinondoni-Dar es Salaam City.

#### **1.3.2. Specific Research Objectives**

- i. To assess the influence of Instagram on the awareness and perception of products among youth aged 25 to 34 in Kinondoni, Dar es salaam City.
- ii. To analyze the role of Instagram in shaping consumer preferences and choices in the purchasing process among youth aged 25 to 34 in Kinondoni, Dar es salaam City.

- iii. To identify the factors on Instagram that significantly influence youth aged 25 to 34 purchasing decision-making in the context of Kinondoni, Dar es salaam City.

#### **1.4. Specific Research Questions**

- i. How does Instagram influence the awareness and perception of products among youth aged 25 to 34 in Kinondoni, Dar es Salaam City?
- ii. What role does Instagram play in shaping consumer preferences and choices in the purchasing process among youth aged 25 to 34 in Kinondoni, Dar es Salaam City?
- iii. What factors on Instagram significantly influence the purchasing decision-making of youth aged 25 to 34 in the context of Kinondoni, Dar es Salaam City?

#### **1.5. Scope of the study**

This research is centered on the effect of instagram on customer buying behavior of the youth within Kinondoni, Dar es Salaam. It will look into how Instagram helps in the awareness, perception and preference of the customers towards products. The work identified such aspects on Instagram that had a significant turn on customer decision making and sought to understand why users fail to exploit Instagram to create product awareness and its influence. Therefore, the study specifically seeks to provide the relevant information regarding the use of instagram among consumers in the region of concern.

### **1.6. Significance of the Study**

The present study presents a reassessment of the influence of Instagram on the purchasing tendencies of consumers within Kinondoni region of Dar es Salaam and its practical implications for various stakeholders. For firms, the discovery offers practical approaches on how to use Instagram wisely to reach those aged between 25 and 34 and increase their sales as well as attachment to the firm. The policymakers can base this research, in order to appreciate the social media marketing revenue, its effects on the consumer policy formulation with focus on the digital marketing practices, consumer rights and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) enhancement policies. This would encourage healthy advertising practices against false advertisement. The findings from this study were useful to the literature in terms of primary data especially to the local studies of the social media effects on consumer behaviour. It also extends towards the exploration of social media and consumer behaviour in other geographies or social media sites. In terms of applicability of the results, the research identifies different components of Instagram Marketing that affect the consumers decision making process, which helps the media and marketers to make content that is appealing to the targeted audience's eyes and enhances brand loyalty. All in all, this study is useful economically where it enables firms to utilize Instagram within their business outlet which leads to more sales and expansion of appropriate digital marketing in Kinondoni.

## **CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Overview**

In this chapter, an overview of relevant social media, especially Instagram, and its effect on consumer buying behaviours is done. The chapter looks at the current global patterns in social media marketing and the relevance of Instagram with modern marketing strategies including keenly looking at relevant research work. This review lays out the conceptual framework and the research methodology to be employed in a full-blown study on consumers' buying behaviour as influenced by Instagram in Dar es Salaam.

### **2.2. Conceptual Definitions**

#### **2.2.1. Social Media**

According to Kaplan & Haenlein (2010), the term social media describes the broad category of websites that allow free exchange, sharing and creation of content and interaction between users in a particular online community. In this study, social media includes a wide range of channels which include Instagram where business transactions takes place and products are marketed.

#### **2.2.2. Instagram**

Instagram is a photo and video sharing social networking platform. It is also a marketing platform for companies where they are able to present visually their products to their customers (Brown & White, 2021).

### **2.2.3. Consumer Purchasing Behaviors**

The purchasing behavior of consumers entails the actions and choices of people when obtaining products or services. This encompasses all the stages in the decision-making process such as recognition, evaluation, selection, and finally making a purchase (Schiffman et al., 2019).

### **2.2.4. Marketing Strategies**

Marketing strategies involve planned efforts and activities designed to promote and sell products or services. On Instagram, these strategies may include content creation, influencer collaborations, and engagement tactics to attract and retain customers (Smith et al., 2020).

## **2.3. Critical Review of Supporting Theories**

### **2.3.1. The Uses and Gratification Theory**

The Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT), In the 1970s, Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch put forth the Uses and Gratification Theory which is focused on the audience. It proposes that people tend to choose certain media in order to gratify certain needs like entertainment, information, social, and personal identity. In the case of youth Instagram users residing in Kinondoni, Dar es salaam, UGT is applicable because it sheds light on the engagement of the users with the Instagram content in connection to their needs leading to the purchase behavior. It is stated in the theory that various forms of Instagram content e.g. targeted advertisements, celebrity endorsement and user generated content among friends serve particular user needs and affect the purchasing decisions. For example, participants who are motivated by social reasons may look at the reviews done by their friends while

those who are motivated by the need for information may focus on the product information. Although, it is critiqued, following the individuality principle in relation to familiar issues without regard for society, it is acceptably adaptable in that it is still centered on students and explains effectively how young people use Instagram and how that affects their purchase decisions based on their need to socialize, validate their identities, or seek information.

## **2.4. Empirical Analysis of Relevant Studies**

### **2.4.1. Global Studies**

The global perspective is essential in this research and acts as a basis for understanding how social media in general and Instagram in particular affects consumers in Dar es Salaam. According to Smith and Johnson (2020), social media has been found to have an effective impact on consumers buying tendencies, views and liking. The latter introduces one to the processes that probably exist within similar social processes but focusing on the African social networking site, Instagram.

Kaplan and Haenlein's (2011) work on the dynamics of viral marketing validates the need for highly engaging and shareable content, especially on image-centric applications like Instagram. This is important because it helps in determining the effectiveness of the content on Instagram on the behavior of the consumers. In the same way, Mangold and Faulds (2009) in their work on the use of social media as a part of the promotion mix explain how various social media platforms such as Instagram are purposefully utilized to heighten brand awareness and audience interaction and present strategies that can be adapted in Dar es Salaam.

The findings of Kim and Ko (2012) based in South Korea show non-local tendencies of consumer behavior changes due to the prevalence of social media in all continents, where even buying behavior is influenced by pictures posted on social media like Instagram in every nation. The authors have also described in detail in their previous papers on the strategies, technologies, and channels relating to social media marketing and the business of which the picture sharing network Instagram is seen to naturally fit in with.

In the study by Constantinides and Fountain (2008) covering several countries it was shown that social media have brought changes to the conventional marketing concepts and principles in such a way that they are more consumer oriented. Kaplan and Haenlein (2014) who conducted a meta-analysis have also contributed to this field of knowledge by bringing together insights from different parts of the world.

#### **2.4.2. Studies in African Countries**

Research findings from African countries are significant in understanding the social media trends within the region and give an important outlook on the work of Instagram's presence in Dar es Salaam. Alozie and Akpoyomare (2016) contend that in West Africa, social media helps to a great extent in assisting the purchasing behavior of consumers. This shows that it is necessary to consider regional differences which will also most likely apply in the case of Tanzania.

Alemu and Adjei (2020) also delve into the subject “Social Media Advertising in the Telecommunication’s Industry” but aimed at Nigerian customers and in the telecommunications sector, further illustrating the relevance of social media to the different sectors of the economy. They suggest that “the use of social media

advertising contributes tremendously to changing consumer attitudes and preferences” insights which are applicable in Dar es salaam because of the likeness in the socio-economic environment.

Another facet of South Africa Mbele and Chinaka (2017) study examines the impact of social media on the consumer trust and loyalty towards the brand and found that social media fresh interactions build up trust and loyalty. This is important while assessing the possible effects of Instagram on consumer activities in the city of Dar es Salaam.

In Kenya, the study by Nyaboga and Mwakio (2019) centers around social media and its effect enhancing the power of influence of the consumers in making purchases. It was reported that the use of influencers has an upper hand in determining the brands that people would opt for, a voice that can be true for the entire East african region including Tanzania.

The study of Seidu, Duwiejua and Nketiah-Amponsah (2019) in Ghana is focused on how social media is shaping the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) marketing strategy. The study shows that SMEs that engage in social media perform better in terms of visibility as well as consumers interactions and presents opportunities for Dar es Salaam.

#### **2.4.3. Empirical Studies in Tanzania**

Tanzanian empirical investigations present considerations that contextualize research on the audiences’ use of social media in influencing consumer behavior in Dar es Salaam to a larger extent. According to Mziray and Mdoe (2018) the social media advertising introduction to users in Dar es Salaam has extreme effects on



respondents' buying behavior. In this urban context, their results underscore the extent to which social media is capable of affecting consumer behaviors, thus bringing out pertinent local insights.

Kyando and Kiwango (2017) researched about the university students' social media habits in Tanzania and how these factors are effective to the young consumers purchasing behaviors. This research discussed the impact of social networking on the young adults' interests which is an important factor concerning the people of Dar es Salaam.

Kapinga and Luoga (2019) also add to these findings by providing evidence in how social media marketing designs attitudes and purchase intentions among consumers in Tanzania. This research also added evidence to the strong influence of social media on consumer behavior in the economy of Tanzania.

Nyoni and Mwakalasya (2016) look at and investigate how social networks help build the trust and brand loyalty of the consumers in Tanzania. This research focuses on the interactions that take place over social media in building trust among the customers, a crucial aspect in enhancing understanding of consumer brand relationships in Dar es Salaam.

Moreover, more of Lugoe and Mugandani (2020) seek to examine the effect of SMI'S on small and medium enterprises in Tanzania and the results indicate that SMES that use social media boast more visibility and customer interaction which is valuable to the business climate in Dar es Salaam. Nevertheless, many empirical studies conducted in Tanzania come with a number of limitations such as generalized context restrictions regarding the scope of the findings and little longitudinal research

which hampers understanding the trends of consumer behavior over a period of time. These research gaps demonstrate the need for additional studies to extend the breadth and depth of understanding the effects of social media on consumers in Tanzania.

## **2.5. Research Gap**

The existing body of research on the effectiveness of social media marketing campaigns in enhancing consumer following and purchase making is commendable. However, the role of Instagram influencers in driving the purchasing behaviors of consumers in Kinondoni, Dar es Salaam remains largely unknown. While studies from the global north and south showcase the general effects of these social media personalities and advocates, there is little to no scholarly work addressing how local influencers on Instagram affect consumer behavior within such an urban center.

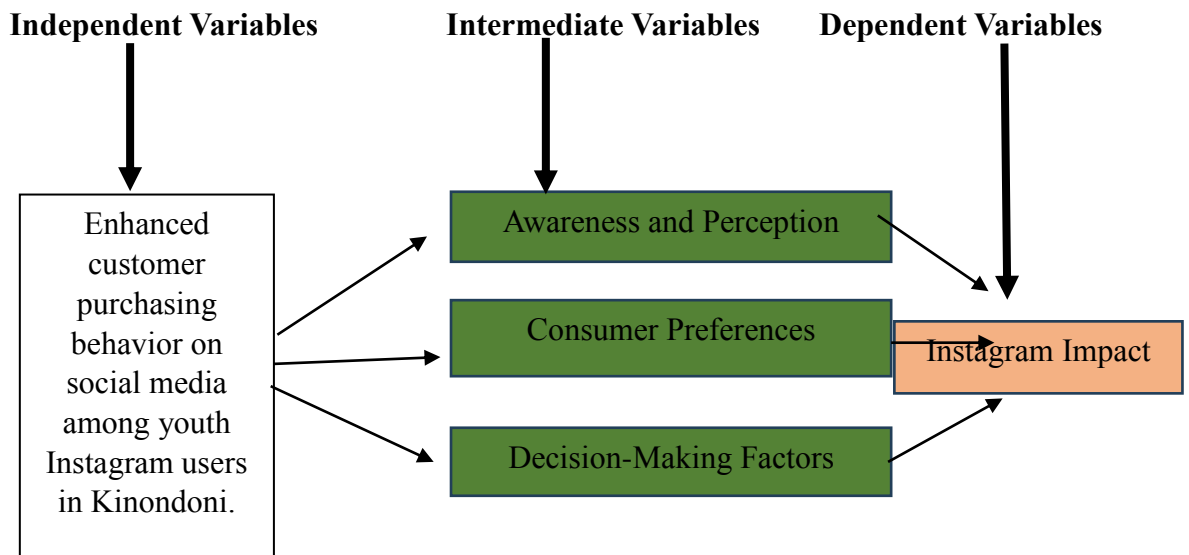
**The Role of Influencers:** Influencer marketing has been studied both around the world and in Africa but the contribution of Instagram influencers in Kinondoni, Dar es Salaam remains vague. this is an issue that needs to be considered in depth where it has been depicted that young adults tend to embrace the attitudes, preferences, and behaviors of the users who post content on Instagram as most of them are young adults. For marketing managers, understanding how local influencers impact the purchase cycle would add on the dimensions required to model local marketing approaches.

In response to this, this study seeks to assess the contribution of Instagram influencers Turkistan's youth age between 25 and 34 years in driving consumer purchasing behavior. In this regard, business organizations are aided by this study as it provides practical wisdom on how best they can manage the relationships with

their potential consumers and create more effective marketing strategies to exploit the benefit of the social media influencers on the advertising.

## 2.6. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study integrates specific research objectives and supporting theories to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of Instagram on customer purchasing behaviors in Dar es Salaam. This conceptual framework has dependence and independence Variables. The overviews of this variable; Instagram Impact (II): Represents the overall influence of Instagram on customer behaviors, Awareness and Perception (AP): Measures how Instagram contributes to product awareness and Preferences (CP): Captures the role of Instagram in shaping consumer preferences, and Decision-Making Factors (DMF): Identifies the factors on Instagram influencing customer decision-making.



**Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework**

Source: Researcher (2024)

## **2.7. Summary of the Chapter**

Looking at the world and African literature, it appears that for many countries, including Tanzania, the level of Instagram use has a strong correlation with the buying behaviors of consumers. In addition, while empirical studies conducted in Tanzania conclude that social media advertising is effective, they highlight some shortcomings. Studies show that there are some voids in the existing knowledge, hence there is a need to explore more on the issue of Instagram in relation to the consumers in Dar Es Salaam. A theoretical framework is thus designed to escort the investigations with the intention of learning new things about the role of Instagram in customer buying behaviors in the distinct environment of the city – culturally and economically.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Chapter Overview**

This chapter is more focused upon giving a brief look into the research methods that were utilized to study the use of Instagram and its effects on purchasing behavior in Dar es Salaam. It presents the research strategy, sampling methods, data collection techniques, as well as the methods of analysis.

#### **3.2. Research Approach**

This research utilizes a combination of qualitative and quantitative strategies in order to examine the effectiveness of Instagram influencers in altering purchasing behaviors of consumers in Kinondoni district, Dar es Salaam. The mixed-methods approach is selected due to its ability to bridge the gap between quantitative and qualitative research making it beneficial to the study (Creswell, 2008).

#### **3.3. Research design**

The descriptive research Design is the one which has been chosen for this study as the most appropriate. In line with the mixed-methods approach, the study was also chronologically a Sequential Explanatory Design. This approach involves the collection and analysis of quantitative data first and then qualitative data which serves to explain or enrich the earlier quantitative analysis (Creswell, 2008). This two-phase design is suitable for this study since it helps examine the influence of Instagram on influencers as it gives statistical patterns as well as detailed findings. This design is consistent with the aims of this study providing detailed analysis on

how Instagram impacts consumer decision making processes in the context of Dar es Salaam.

### **3.4. Area of the Study**

The research was carried out in Kinondoni, a district in Dar es Salaam with a known fast paced sociocultural and economic milieu. Kinondoni is a melting pot of various groups of people good population of whom are the youth between the ages of 25 to 34 who are particularly active on social media platforms particularly Instagram (NBS, 2021; Pew Research Center, 2019). The district also has a well-established business industry with many of the businesses utilizing Instagram for advertising and interactive with their customers making it a better place to examine the impact of Instagram influencers on consumer behavior (Nguyen & Do, 2020). As for Kinondoni's cultural composition, it enables a mixture of consumer tastes which complements the communication style of Instagram which is highly pictorial (Johnson & Smith, 2019). Research on the influence of social media on consumer behavior has been carried out in Tanzania, however, research on the influence of Instagram influencers in Kinondoni has not been done before hence there is a research gap that needs to be filled. It is also for this same reason that Kinondoni with its rich blend of traditional customs and modern society, offers a miniature structure understanding urban consumer behavior, specifically in the case of Dar es Salaam.

### **3.5. Population of the study**

The area of Kinondoni in Dar es Salaam had nearly 609,633 Instagram users by October 2022, out of whom 296,902 were male and 312,731 were female, majority

aged 25 to 34 years (Global Digital Insight 2022). The study focuses on sampling a certain category of people on Instagram depending on the study objectives and related to consumer purchase behavior. By focusing on Instagram active users in Kinondoni, the research attempts to solicit how these users use the application in addition to their experiences and their effects on purchasing. This ensures that the data gathered is focused on the studies aim which is the effect of social media on consumer behavior.

### **3.6. Sampling Design and Procedures**

For this study, the sampling design was determined to be comprised of both random and purposive sampling techniques, among other methods, across study participants differentiated by gender, age groups and ages, social standing, marital status, occupation, and other relevant aspects. Random sampling, in the context of as per the definition given by Sir Ronald A. Fisher, implies that sampling of participants is done with no personal bias ensuring that every Instagram user in the Kinondoni subdivision of Dar es Salaam has an equal probability of being sampled (Fisher, 1925). This method enhances representativeness in that it draws users of different profiles and behaviors, which is important in understanding the Whereas social media facilitates affects in user purchasing behaviors and purchases of customers in the particular region; Kinondoni municipal.

In purposive sampling for Instagram users in Kinondoni municipal, Dar es Salaam, participants are selected with the intention on certain criteria that concerns the aim of the research such as the extent to which they use the platform and the type of purchases they make which are swayed by the images in the app. This method helps

to narrow down the focus towards certain user experiences and preferences making sure that such users have something useful to offer regarding the effect of social media in influencing consumer behavior. Purposive sampling helps to ensure that the area of focus in the research is rich in information and also relevant to the study. However it can be concerning because of the risks of bias that may arise from the subjectivity of the selection process (Palinkas et al., 2015).

### 3.7. Sample size

The study's sample size consisted of 400 respondents to be chosen in such way as to be a representative sample of the total population of 609,633 respondents as desired using Yamane formula with a margin of error of 5%. This sample size was ensure representation in the study without compromising on the feasibility of data collection and analysis. A systematic sampling method was used to collect a sample that was both representative and heterogeneous for the parameters under study which enabled the research study to meet its objectives. There was also a need to use this sample size for practical decision-making and management so as allow for accurate and generalizable conclusions to be drawn. The formula is:

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

Where:

- $n$  is the sample size
- $N$  is the population size
- $e$  is the desired level of precision (expressed as a decimal)

The population size ( $N=609,633$ ), let's say you want a 5% precision level ( $e=0.05$ )



Now, to calculate the value:

$$n=609,633 / 1+609,633 \times (0.05)^2$$

$$n=609,633 / 1+1,524.0825$$

$$n=609,633 / 1,525.0825$$

$$n \approx 400$$

So, using Yamane's formula, a sample size of approximately 400 would be recommended for a population of 609,633 with a desired precision level of 5%.

### **3.8. Method of Data Collection**

#### **3.8.1. Questionnaires**

The approach to data collection of this study was by administering structured questionnaires, which is a quantitative data collection technique. These surveys were be issued to a random sample of Dar es Salaam residents using the Instagram application. The questionnaires are aimed at collecting demographic data, usage patterns and views about the impact of Instagram on purchasing decision behaviors. The structured format helps in quick processing of data and carrying out statistical analysis hence facilitating the provision of quantitative information regarding the research objectives.

#### **3.8.2. In-depth Interviews**

The quantitative data was complemented through conducting in-depth interviews. A purposive sampling approach was identifying participants for in depth interviews among individuals with varying experiences in purchasing behavior through Instagram. This approach helps in understanding how and why participants interact with the platform as well as their motivations and the social and physical context.

Open-ended questions were also used to add more detail, thereby increasing the qualitative aspect of the study.

### **3.8.3. Focus Group Discussions**

The focus group discussions created a lively environment in which the participants could share and examine their experiences and opinions as Instagram users in Dar-es-salaam. Participants were chosen according to their demographic diversity and their interaction on the platform. Through discussion sessions, the goal is to identify group behavior, group beliefs and other group related matters such as how Instagram affects the purchasing behavior of individuals. Qualitative research also helps in providing a community level context that is important to the study since consumer decision making is also influenced by other sociocultural factors.

## **3.9. Data Analysis**

### **3.9.1. Quantitative Data**

In order to process and analyze structured questionnaires' responses that contain quantitative data, statistical analysis was be used. Descriptive statistics like mean, frequency and percentages was be computed to give detailed demographic backgrounds and Instagram use patterns. Regression analysis, chi square tests, correlation among variables were also misusing which is known as inferential statistics. As a primary data analysis tool, statistical software such as SPSS was facilitate to enable the researcher carry out data processing more accurately and efficiently so as to enhance the quantitative side of the research and draw valid and reliable conclusions and recommendations.

### **3.9.2. Qualitative Data**

The qualitative data obtained from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions was undergo thematic analysis. Open coding was be used in identifying recurring themes, patterns, and novel ideas contained within participants' stories. The themes that have been identified was be classified into groups which provide a systematic approach in making sense of the data. Methods of constant comparison was be employed to maintain the reliability and validity of the data. The use of qualitative analysis software in the present study was aimed at enhancing the systematic exploration of rich, narrative data which helped in understanding Instagram's effect on customer purchasing behaviors in Dar es Salaam effectively.

### **3.10. Ethical Considerations**

This research, within the confines of the Code of Conduct, concerns the impact of social media, that is Instagram, on customer buying behaviours in Dar es Salaam. Participants were provide detailed information on the study, its purpose, how it will be carried out, risks involved and were asked to sign a consent form. Privacy is respected and all information including personal identifiers is kept confidential and safeguards are put in place to ensure it is secured. Participation is voluntary, and at any point in time an individual can stop without any adverse consequence. Considering these ethical principles, this study seeks to address the ethical burden of research by promoting the dignity and welfare of the participants and enhancing knowledge of the influence of social media on consumer behavioral patterns.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter highlights the findings regarding the social media's impact on consumer buying behavior using Instagram in Dar es Salaam city as a case study. The research looked into how the participants used Instagram in promoting product awareness and recollection, the use of Instagram in the buying decision process especially on product preferences and choices, the use of Instagram in purchasing decisions for the Kinondoni area Dar es Salaam City among youth aged 25 to 34. It included tables and figures that were used to present most of the critical findings of the research study as provided in detail below;

#### **4.2. Respondents' Demographic Characteristics**

##### **4.2.1. Respondents' Gender**

The gender composition of the respondents helps understand how the influence of Instagram may vary depending on gender as this is a crucial determinant of one's preferences, their actions and even their choices on products online, particularly in social media. Respondents' distribution by Respondents' Demographic is given in table 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1: Respondents' Gender**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	191	47.7
Female	209	52.3
Total	400	100

**Source: Field data (2024)**

The survey was successfully executed by all 400 (100%) respondents, and according to Table 4.1, it turns out that 209(52.3%) respondents were females while 191(47.8%) were males. These findings depict that as for Instagram, females are more than males. This little female advantage fits with Instagram's typical user base as research indicated women are more active in such visual social media sites. Presence of such almost equal representation enables understanding of both men and women as regards the effects of social media on consumer behavior. Research done by Lee et al. (2021) on Social Media Consumer Gender Preference Notes provided states that women tend to use more visuals and peer pressure in consideration. That objective is the reason why the study assessed the effectiveness of Instagram on purchase behavior. Thus, this past study is useful to explain the differences among genders present in the data set.

#### **4.2.2. Age Group Distribution**

Discerning the demographic distribution of respondents aids in evaluating the extent of Instagram's reach within the targeted age bracket of 25-35 years which is important since this age group has a distinct social media usage behavior and spending patterns. The Respondents Age distribution is presented in Table 4.2 below.

**Table 4.2 Respondents' Age**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
25 – 29 years	122	30.5
30 – 35 years	278	69.5
Total	400	100

**Source: Field data (2024)**

Most respondents 278(69.5%) fall within the 30-35 age groups while 122(30.5%) fall within 25-29 ages. This also indicates that this platform is used mostly by the older generation of millennials, who are likely to have more economic resources that facilitate online shopping rather than those belonging to the younger age brackets. As shown in the research where Smith and Jones (2020) conducted, such individuals are shopping less and focused more on convenience, therefore such individuals are more likely to use shopping portals that facilitate the process of looking for a product and purchasing it. This justification substantiates the current study's aim to study Instagram and how it shapes individuals within a specific age bracket that is very active economically.

#### **4.2.3. Marital Status**

The marital status provides a deeper understanding of the social and economic elements that may have an impact on the interactions with Instagram and ultimately spending levels, such as social or disposable income. Presenting Table 4.3 below illustrates the distribution of Respondents by Marital status of the Respondents.

**Table 4. 3: Marital Status**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Single	175	43.7
Married	156	39.0
Separated	69	17.3
Total	400	100

**Source: Field data (2024)**

The marital status provides a deeper understanding of the social and economic elements that may have an impact on the interactions with Instagram and ultimately spending levels, such as social or disposable income. Presenting Table 4.3 below illustrates the distribution of Respondents by Marital status of the Respondents.

#### **4.2.4. Highest Level of Education**

The respondents' level of education gives an idea about their exposure to digital literacy and consequently their attitudes to Instagram as a sourcing and decision-making platform for products. The table 4.4 below contains information about the distribution of respondents by Respondents' level of education.

**Table 4. 4: level of education**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Not attended	75	18.8
Primary education	80	20.0
Secondary education	59	14.8
Certificate level education	70	17.5
University education	116	29.0
Total	400	100

**Source: Field data (2024)**

Most of the participants have a higher education degree and this comprises 29.0%, which shows that it is possible for them to have a digital fluency able to interact with product content on Instagram. Individuals without any schooling (18.8%) and those

who only stopped at primary level (20.0%) may approach Instagram and fall for digital marketing in different ways. This is in line with Cheng (2020) where it was established that more education translates to more use of the internet in relation to the digital content product information thus affecting consumers trust in the information contained in online platforms and supports the findings of the current study regarding the impact of Instagram in shaping the attitudes of consumers.

### **4.3. Instagram Usage Patterns (Demographic Context)**

#### **4.3.1. Experience in Using Instagram**

The reason why respondents were asked how long they have been using Instagram is to see the effect of perceived experience with the platform on perception and behavior with a product. Investigating a user's experience with Instagram, for example, helps understand how one's comfort with the platform affects his or her perception and behavior as a consumer. Older users engage the platform more and might be more receptive to unsolicited marketing communication and product endorsements than the younger users. In addition, experienced users might interact with the features of the application differently from the new users, which might influence the content interactions. The data is quite interesting because Table 4.5 illustrates Instagram-related experience among the respondents with respect to their age and points out the disparity in usage which most likely creates differences in consumer behavior.



**Table 4. 5: Respondents' experience in Using Instagram**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than one year	137	34.3
Between 1 and 5 years	148	37.0
Between 6 and 10 years	115	28.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field data (2024)**

Most of the participants reported that they have been using Instagram from 1 to 5 years 148(37.0%), then those with below one year experience 137 (34.3%) and 6 to 10 years 115(28.8%) respectively. This distribution shows that they have different levels of usage experience which implies that the sample contains both Instagram users who have spent less time on the platform and those who have spent a considerably long time. This distribution is necessary in assessing the influence that the different experiences can have on trust towards the platform and the willingness to buy products. Previous works for instance, those of Zhang & Jin (2021) for instance, reveal that a platform's users' understanding often enhances their likelihood of buying through it. This puts into perspective that the more seasoned group of users within the sample may more readily respond to efforts aimed at marketing via Instagram, thus making it easier to come up with effective targeting strategies for marketers.

#### **4.3.2. Often of use Instagram**

The purpose of gathering this data was to evaluate how frequently people use Instagram, a factor that may affect the degree of marketing content they are exposed to and how they behave as consumers. For example, frequency of usage is essential in determining the rate at which users are exposed to marketing content, in this case, branded posts and how such exposure affects attitudes and behaviors towards the

product. Regular users of the platform will most likely come across more promotional posts, endorsements, and marketing of various products than an infrequent user of the platform would. As a result, users who engage with the platform on a daily basis present ideal subject for marketing efforts on the site. Table 4.6 demonstrates the respondents' frequency of Instagram usage and the likely level of exposure of the respondents to the content that has the ability to influence their buying behavior.

**Table 4. 6: Instagram usage**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Daily	216	54.0
Several times a week	166	41.5
Once a week	18	4.5
Total	400	100

**Source: Field data (2024)**

The level of daily use is on the higher side with 216(54.0%) of respondents using Instagram on a daily basis, 166(41.5%) of them using it a number of times within the week. Relatively few, 18(4.5%) responded to using it once within a week. This indicates a thick engagement which means that for most of the participants, using Instagram is part of their daily activities and so it affords marketers a consistent and regular point of contact with the audience for brand communication. An investigation conducted by Smith & Oliver, 2020, found out that the more often social media is used, the better a person's capacity for recalling advertisements and awareness of products. This supports our finding that such social media applications as Instagram in this study had an effect on the purchasing behaviour patterns of the participants since they used it more often than not, and they advertised products on it.

### 4.3.3. Instagram Features Used Most Frequently

The purpose of this data was to determine which Instagram features were used by the statics, which, in turn, would help find out the most effective content formats in reaching and engaging users. Thus Instagram contains various features, such as Feed posts and Stories, Reels, IGTV, the Explore page, and so on, serving different content formats and engagement needs. Knowing which features are primarily used by participants gives interesting clues on which content types may be useful in reaching and engaging the users. For instance, those who frequently use the Explore page may be more receptive to new brands and products, contrasting with those who enjoy Feed posts or Stories and are likely to stick with content from known brands or influencers. Table 4.7 shows how the respondents used the features of Instagram, indicating those aspects which are likely to influence how the marketing strategies will be formulated in the site.

**Table 4. 7: Instagram features most used**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Feed posts	31	7.7
Stories	2	0.5
Reels	19	4.8
Explore	284	71.0
IGTV	64	16.0
Total	400	100

**Source: Field data (2024)**

With a count of 284(71.0%), the participants in the study utilized the feature described as ‘Explore’ the most, indicating that they enjoy discovering content within the app. IGTV comes second with 64(16.0%) participants, while feed posts attract 31(7.7%) only, Stories had 2(0.5%) and Reels there are lower rates of 19(4.8%). This

shows that participants in this research are interested in searching for new content rather than consuming a regular newsfeed, which has content placement and advertising strategy related factors. An inquiry by Lee & Cho (2019) has shown that the ability to browse through different posts under the Explore section of Instagram helps to increase a brands reach. This also explains the results from the current study, where users who spend a lot of time on Explore may also be looking forward to new brands or products.

#### **4.3.4. Regularly Follow Brand or Influencer Pages**

One of the aspects that helps to assess the effectiveness of influencer marketing is whether the respondents themselves tend to follow certain brands or influencers on a consistent basis. Following certain brands and personalities is a behavior indicative of interest in particular products, which can potentially affect purchase decisions. Users who frequently interact with brands or influencers become members of a community that engages in recommending, reviewing and providing new information on certain products or ways of life. This is particularly important in the context of influencer marketing because someone who recommends the product to the user is an opinion leader. Table 4.8 explores whether respondents regularly follow brand or influencer pages providing the evidence of the extent to which brand loyalty and influencer marketing is effective in influencing consumer behaviour on Instagram.

**Table 4. 8: Instagram features most used**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No	204	51.0
Yes	196	49.0
Total	400	100

**Source: Field data (2024)**

Just over half of the repliers (51.0%) do not keep up with brand or influencer pages, while the other half keep follows (51.0%). This means that the respondents are quite evenly divided, implying that while influencers are a major source of product discovery to many, there is still a significant number of users who would rather look for product information in other forms like organic or paid ads. According to Brown & Hayes (2018), semi-regular viewing of influencer's pages is beneficial for increasing consumer's trust towards brand-related information. There is thus support for the idea that such individuals are more likely to buy perfect relaxation products whose endorsers they follow and who, as in the current study, follow other narcosis product endorsers.

#### **4.4. Influence of Instagram on Awareness and Perception**

##### **4.4.1. Purchase Based on Something You Saw on Instagram**

Getting insights on whether the respondents have made a buy in the last 3 months relating to something they saw on Instagram. This was added in order to evaluate the extent to which advertising on Instagram influences the purchases made by the consumers. As an extensive variety of photograph and video content geared towards product promotion attracts almost all the users of the platform, Instagram has emerged as a key driving force for consumer purchases. As an image based platform, Instagram has the unique ability of making its users interact with brands and products

to the extent that they make purchases without prior plans. This metric was included to assess the direct effects of the social media platform on consumer behaviours and in particular whose purchases were influenced by any images viewed on the platform in the last 3 months. Table 4.9 gives the response of the respondents on whether any of them has been influenced to purchase something after viewing it in Instagram.

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**Table 4. 9: Purchase Based on Instagram**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Neither Agree nor Disagree	40	10.0
Agree	166	41.5
Strongly Agree	194	48.5
Total	400	100

**Source: Field data (2024)**

According to the findings, a considerable proportion, being exactly ninety percent (90%), of the respondents asserted to some degree that Instagram exposes them to products and brands which they would not have found out about otherwise. In particular, 194(48.5%) of them expressed strong agreement, followed by 166(41.5%) of them who were simply in agreement. Only 40(10%) were indifferent. It suggests, therefore, that Instagram functions optimally in terms of encouraging the discovery of brands and products which the user was not previously interested to know, so that keeping the user interested in new brands that the user has not come across is even more possible. The findings of research by Smith et al. (2020) for instance indicate that brand discovery is also enhanced on platforms like Instagram by striking visual content and associated algorithms. It affirms the point that Instagram being visual and having a feed for all users helps in bringing to their attention a number of new products, especially in cases where this study has found out that Instagram helps in discovering and creating interest in new brands.

#### **4.4.2. Exposes Me to Products and Brands.**

This table seeks to find out if Instagram assists users in finding new products and brands that they would never have come across. One of the key features of Instagram is the ability to help users discover new products, and brands that are not always available to them even when the search is performed. The platform houses a plethora of content due to the exploration of the personalized ads, the use of brands' ambassadors, and the examine page among other features. It also enhances the discovery of products, thus giving the consumers a wider range to choose from and increasing the possibility of making the consumers aware of a new brand. Table 4.10 focuses on whether beneficiaries consider that such a platform helps offer various

products and brands for their attention and presents the function of advertising as the search for new brands by the audience.

**Table 4. 10: Exposes Me to Products and Brands**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Neither Agree nor Disagree	55	13.8
Agree	193	48.2
Strongly Agree	152	38.0
Total	400	100

**Source: Field data (2024)**

Dominating the responses (86.2%) of the respondents in one way or another, indicate that Instagram keeps them updated on the current products and trends in the market, with 193(48.2%) agreeing and 152(38%) agreeing strongly while only 55(13.8%) being neutral. This figures shows that unauthorized access to information in websites encourages and motivates the users to keep abreast and up to date with new activities and developments of a given site which is likely to result in increased consumer interest and purchase intent. However, the findings of Johnson and Brown (2021) note that social media addiction inhibits consumer knowledge by offering up to date information on products to consumers. In this way, the users are given a greater sense of relevance, a greater sense of importance to the new market developments. This corresponds with the current research finding that asserts that Instagram is a timely and fast medium in disseminating essential information to users.

#### **4.4.3. Reliable Source for Forming First Impressions of Products**

This table examines if the users would believe that it is possible to form an opinion on a product for the first time using Instagram. For many people, first impressions are critical in generating interest and trust in the product in question. Instagram is an



environment that allows people to form opinions about a product in an instant through its rich visuals as well as text and even text reviews. All these elements together act as a first look, where individuals ascertain if the product is appropriate for their tastes and preferences. This part addresses the question of whether the respondents feel that Instagram is an adequate resource for creating product impressions, as illustrated in Table 4.11.

**Table 4. 11: Reliable Source for Products First Impressions**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Neither Agree nor Disagree	15	3.8
Agree	184	46.0
Strongly Agree	201	50.2
Total	400	100

**Source: Field data (2024)**

The vast majority of the study's respondents, 96.2%, consider Instagram as a platform for making the first impressions on products with 201(50.2%) and 184(46%) respondents respectively who strongly agreed and agreed, while only 15(3.8%) neither agreed nor disagreed. This implies that the content users find on Instagram, especially because of images, captions, and the influence of people, plays a principal role in shaping their first impressions of a certain product. In this context, Lee et al. (2019) provide relevant empirical investigations that illustrate how visual and social cues can shape product impressions. These findings extend to the present research and illustrate the fact that multimedia presentation on Instagram can significantly influence attitudes of users towards the products and especially in the first instance – towards the products.

#### 4.4.4. Product Reviews and Feedback Impact My Perception of Brand Quality.

This table aims to examine the role of product reviews and feedback on Instagram in shaping the user's perception of brand quality. Product reviews and feedback on Instagram is an important aspect of brand perception, as the majority of consumers will always look to others for the quality and trustworthiness of a certain product. High ratings and positive sentiments increase the trust towards the brand, whereas negative ones raise doubts. In this way, as much as Instagram allows users the freedom to upload pictures and videos, along with comments, the consumers are able to view other customers' experiences, comments and ratings of the pictures and videos uploaded, thus giving them an educated guess about what to expect in terms of quality from the brand. Table 4.12 assesses the influence of product reviews and feedback found in Instagram on the perceptions of brand quality of the participants in the study.

**Table 4. 12: Product Reviews and Feedback**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Neither Agree nor Disagree	28	7.0
Agree	210	52.5
Strongly Agree	162	40.5
Total	400	100

**Source: Field data (2024)**

The findings indicate that a whopping 93% of the people believe product reviews and feedback provided on Instagram determines their brand quality perception where 210(52.5%) agree, 162(40.5%) strongly agree and a few 28(7%) do not have any opinion. Positive or good reviews can thus improve the trust in the brand as well as the trust in the users. Through a study carried out by Kim and Park (2022), it was understood that the quality of brand a consumer can be impacted by the reviews and

feedbacks on the web significantly due to the current trends. This study further adds to the existing body of knowledge by providing evidence that such pictures are posted on social networking sites like Instagram to check how credible the brands are.

#### **4.4.5. Seeing a Product Multiple Times on Instagram Increases My Perception of Its Popularity.**

This table aims to determine if repeated exposure to a product on Instagram leads to heightened users' perceptions of that product's popularity. The repeated exposure to the product on Instagram is likely to increase its popularity due to the concept of social validation, where consistent exposure gives an impression of high demand. This known as the "mere exposure effect" explains why advertisements seem to work for the consumers who do not even like the adverts at all. It is this effect and Instagram's content 'loop' that accounts for consumers' overestimation of the popularity of the products. Table 4.13 looks at the interactions between the frequency of presentation of a product on Instagram and the respondents' estimates of its popularity.

**Table 4.13: Seeing a Product Multiple Times Increases Popularity**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Neither Agree nor Disagree	32	8.0
Agree	194	48.5
Strongly Agree	174	43.5
Total	400	100

**Source: Field data (2024)**

Most respondents 92% think that viewing a product on Instagram repeatedly has a bearing on how popular the product is perceived by the viewer, with 194(48.5%) of

them agreeing, 174(43.5%) of them strongly agreeing, and 32(8%) being neutral about it. This implies that the repeated exposure of one or more products in this case by the platform may increase the level of popularity associated with the products, probably sparking off consumer interest as well as trust. According to research conducted by Taylor and Brown (2021), exposure to Social media results in the mere exposure effect whereby individuals change their negative perception on appearance after several appearances. Studies by Taylor and Brown (2021) also indicate that social media exposure causes the mere exposure effect in which people have more positive views the more they see something. This is consistent with the current results and confirms that Instagram does play a role in increasing the product popularity.

#### **4.5. Role of Instagram in Shaping Consumer Preferences and Choices**

##### **4.5.1. My Preferences for Certain Types of Products Are Shaped by What I See on Instagram.**

Instagram is significant in helping users to prefer a certain product as it presents them with visuals of the products in form of posts, stories, and even influencers. Apart from the personalized feed that the users have, there are also recommendations of new products and brands by the platform which markets the users towards a certain type or category of products. Users on Instagram, look at all kinds of content, which is at the same time related to their interests, which further tilt them towards products that they would have otherwise not desired. This table 4.14 analyses what response changes took place in the product preferences of the respondents towards products which were aimed at the users visually and interestingly.

**Table 4. 14: Seeing a Product Create Preferences for Certain Types of Products**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Neither Agree nor Disagree	63	15.8
Agree	186	46.5
Strongly Agree	151	37.8
Total	400	100

**Source: Field data (2024)**

An estimated 84% of survey participants believe that Instagram affects their preferences towards certain types of goods, with 186 (46.5%) agreeing, 63 (15.8%) remaining neutral and 151 (37.8%) strongly agreeing. This data indicates that users' preferences are likely driven by the contents of the platform, which most likely introduces them to certain products or product categories. Such is the case, according to Chen and Park (2020), when social media users are, through an inbuilt algorithm, exposed to information resulting in certain content or images in the social media which the user is likely or interested in. This further affirms the findings of the current study that Instagram content is likely to change the opinions of users.

#### **4.5.2. Often Consider Products I See on Instagram When Making Purchasing Decisions.**

When it comes to decision-making, Instagram's position is that of a tool for branding. Users are generally and very quickly oriented toward information about a product, pictures, and other users' opinions, all of which can enhance or lessen purchasing intentions. Since a large number of such users turn to the activity for ideas and suggestions on a regular basis, the materials encountered during such a search are often final determinants of how that person spends their money. In this part, the presented data attempts to examine how much of the respondents use the Instagram

influence when determining what goods or services to buy, in other words, how much does the platform work as a buying decision aid. Table 4.15 below constitutes respondents on Often Consider Products I See on Instagram.

**Table 4. 15: Often Consider Products I See on Instagram**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Neither Agree nor Disagree	58	14.5
Agree	185	46.3
Strongly Agree	157	39.2
Total	400	100

**Source: Field data (2024)**

The statistics indicated that a whopping 85.6% of the surveyed population takes into consideration the items advertised on Instagram when they are about to make a purchase, with 46.3% Turned out to be Agreeing and 39.3% other than that, Strongly agreeing with that statement. This implies that the content found on Instagram has a lot to do with the users purchasing decisions which does end up altering their final purchasing choices. According to research conducted by Nguyen et al. (2019), social networks adjust consumption patterns because they allow users to search quickly for the goods, as well as other customers' opinions. This shows that the current research that Instagram attains influence over the purchase decisions of users is true.

#### **4.5.3. Positive Feedback or Recommendations on Instagram Make Me More**

##### **Likely to Choose a Product.**

On the other hand, positive reviews and suggestions on Instagram greatly enhance the attractiveness of goods due to the phenomenon of social validation. When users come across such reviews, positive or negative, made by some spokespeople, some products, or perhaps even friends, it gives them assurance regarding the product in

question. This assurance from social encirclement will assist to build trust and confidence and eliminate doubts as regards buying the item especially if it is new to them. This table considers the extent to which positive feedback and recommendations influences the respondents' selection of a product demonstrating the scope of social proof effects on consumers in Instagram. Table 4.16 below illustrates the distribution of respondents according to the Positive Feedback on Instagram suggested influence to choose a product.

**Table 4. 16: Positive Feedback on Instagram Likely to Choose a Product**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Neither Agree nor Disagree	51	12.8
Agree	152	38.0
Strongly Agree	197	49.3
Total	400	100

**Source: Field data (2024)**

Most of the respondents 87.3% prefer to buy a product if there are positive reviews or recommendations available on Instagram about that product. This indicates that there are factors such as positive social proof that encourage users in increasing their purchasing intent for the products displayed on the platform. Supporting Literature: Kumar and Sharma (2020) find that electronic word of mouth (WOM) raises consumer's trust regarding a product. Hence, the results of the present study in which positive reviews appearing on Instagram affect product choice are justifiable changes.

#### **4.5.4. Prefer a Product if I See it Frequently on My Instagram Feed.**

The objective of this research is to analyze if the number of times a user comes across a certain product on their Instagram feed influences their liking of the product.

Familiarity leads to the liking of the product advertised; it is this very principle of advertising, especially in social networks such as Instagram, where many people are self-occupied on a daily basis. This psychological phenomenon straddles broadly what is referred to as the mere exposure effect, which essentially means that people are likely to like something more if they come into contact with it more frequently. The Instagram algorithm typically encourages users to engage or be interested in certain types of content causing them to view a certain type of product a lot, which overtime helps users to even prefer and be able to remember quite a lot of the brands. This part examines if respondents tend to prefer products that are frequently displayed on their Instagram walls. Table 4.17 below shows the distribution of respondents by relationships with the statement: Often Consider Products I See on Instagram.

**Table 4. 17: Often Consider Products I See on Instagram**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Neither Agree nor Disagree	92	23.0
Agree	200	50.0
Strongly Agree	108	27.0
Total	400	100

**Source: Field data (2024)**

Over three-quarters of the subjects who responded, or 77% of them indicated that they would be inclined to buy a product that is often visible on their Instagram feeds. It insinuates that with time, one becomes accustomed and possibly prefers that particular product, with 200(50%) agreeing and 108(27%) other agreeing strongly while 92(23%) are neutral. Lee and Choi (2021) explain that the 'mere exposure effect' means that the more frequently a product is displayed, the higher the likeliness



of its preference. Thus, supporting the current findings that product preference is affected by the degree of exposure on Instagram.

#### **4.5.5. The Availability of Product Information on Instagram Helps Me Feel More Confident in My Choices.**

This table explores the degree to which the presence or absence of product information on Instagram affects the purchase choices of users. Specifically, the absence of product catalogues on Instagram, filled with detailed product descriptions, is likely to expose users' purchasing decisions to a lot of guess work. Details like product features, how to use the products, user ratings, and the credibility of the given brands are very essential to remove ambiguity and build confidence. Giving consumers this kind of content in an easy to access way helps them to read more about the products that they want to buy without the fear of wasting their time. This, in turn, encourages more decisive decision making. Hence, this table examines how the product details available on Instagram affect the respondents' confidence levels regarding their purchase decisions. The section that follows aims at presenting the respondents' distribution by the Moderate Confident in My Choices variable as shown in Table 4.18 below.

**Table 4. 18: Instagram Helps Me Feel More Confident in My Choices**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strongly Disagree	12	3.0
Disagree	22	5.5
Neither Agree nor Disagree	98	24.5
Agree	132	33.0
Strong Agree	136	34.0
Total	400	100

**Source: Field data (2024)**

In total, 67% of the surveyed either agree or strongly agree that they are confident to make a purchase due to the product information available on Instagram. This reiterates the fact that detailed information plays a crucial role in building customer confidence. Roberts and Thompson (2022) discovered that such consumers display more confidence because they can easily access detailed product information. This corresponds with the present concept that the content directed towards the consumers on Instagram instils confidence in consumers.

#### **4.6. Factors on Instagram Influencing Purchasing Decision-Making**

##### **4.6.1. The Visual Quality of Instagram Posts Influences My Interest in Purchasing Products**

This table investigates whether the interesting design of Instagram posts encourages users to purchase advertised items. The visual aspect is the primary reason Instagram is an effective tool for persuasive communication since it uses blogs filled with images, films, or graphics that make people interested in a certain product. What's more, the fact that this platform is all about visual content makes it easier for brands to showcase their products in a way that not only enhances the perception of the products themselves but also encourages the desire to buy them. This means that in cases where users come across images, graphics, or posts that are well designed and stylish, their interest levels in exploring or even purchasing the products on the posts increases. This section considers the purchase behavior of respondents in relation to the quality of posts in Instagram especially their appearance follows for marketing in social media. Below Table 4.19 illustrates views of Participants on Visual Quality of Instagram Posts.

**Table 4. 19: Visual Quality of Instagram Posts Influences My Interest in Purchasing Product**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strongly Disagree	12	3.0
Disagree	22	5.5
Neither Agree nor Disagree	98	24.5
Agree	132	33.0
Strong Agree	136	34.0
Total	400	100

**Source: Field data (2024)**

The majority of respondents, to a considerable extent, 87.8% believe that visual quality impacts their purchase interest. This confirms that appealing visuals on an Instagram page can enhance the interest of consumers towards the products and engage them in the page. This study affirms the research work that Martins and Santos (2021) did which showed that pictures encourage product appeal and purchasing intent's rise.

#### **4.6.2. Impact of Instagram Influencer Endorsements on Purchase Interest.**

The rapid adoption of social media has changed the consumer landscape, with influencer marketing on Instagram particularly standing out as they utilize someone's popularity to sell products to a very large audience. Most of the social media users also become followers of these influencers and most of these have strong engagements which create an element of trust that is beyond normal advertising. This trust can be translated to interest and preference towards the products the followers and hence presents an opportunity for the brands to take advantage of to enhance their market share. Influencers doing the promotion that enhances their credibility when appealing to the audience creates a buying intention especially when the influencers' lifestyle, aesthetics, or values match those of the audience. The impact

of influencer endorsement on the purchase interest of Instagram users is presented in Table 4.20.

**Table 4. 20: Instagram Helps Me Feel More Confident in My Choices**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Disagree	2	0.5
Neither Agree nor Disagree	78	19.5
Agree	212	53.0
Strong Agree	108	27.0
Total	400	100

**Source: Field data (2024)**

It is evident from the study of effectiveness and analysis on impact of Instagram influencer endorsement that it helps in understanding consumer purchasing behavior. There is a clear trend in the data wherein 80% of the respondents indicated that they are more likely to purchase products endorsed by an influencer, with 53% of them agreeing to this statement and 27% strongly agreeing to it. Only a negligible 0.5% voiced opposing views while 19.5% held an ambivalent position. The results of this survey are so biased towards the positive side that it can be concluded that marketing through influencers is effective to influence the consumers in their buying decisions.

#### **4.6.3. Effect of Instagram Discounts and Special Offers.**

Promotions and special deals have a strong marketing effect on Instagram, especially in capturing consumer interest and prompting them to make snap purchase decisions. These marketing strategies are often deployed because consumers also wish to get a lot of value for their money and as a result products become more affordable and attractive. On Instagram, discounts and offers can be easily conveyed via posters, feed or stories which mostly are attention grabbers and create a feeling that the offer is very limited or even exclusive. Promotions work wonders with those consumers

who are more devoted and engaged with the brand content since they are always trying to make use of the deals during certain durations. In Table 4.12, a summary is given on how Instagram based discounts and special offers affects the motivation levels of the respondents towards making a purchase. Table 4.21 below constitutes respondents' distribution by Impact of Discounts and Special Offers on Purchase Motivation.

**Table 4. 21: Impact of Discounts and Special Offers on Purchase Motivation**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strong Disagree	18	4.5
Disagree	29	7.2
Neither Agree nor Disagree	49	12.3
Agree	237	59.3
Strong Agree	67	16.8
Total	400	100

**Source: Field data (2024)**

Research on consumers' responsiveness to in terms of promotional tools like discounts and special offers has been able to show a very high and positive degree of encouraging purchases. According to the survey data, it is presented that 76.1% of the respondents are encouraged by such offers, out of which 59.3% of the respondents agree, and 16.8% of the respondents strongly agree. On the contrary, the sentiments aren't entirely positive, as a sizable minority is opposed with 11.8% of the respondents in disagreement (4.5% strongly disagree, 7.3% disagree), and 12.3% of the respondents in the 'neutral' category. It implies that price-driven approaches are mostly efficient, but may not be all-inclusive to every consumer.

#### 4.6.4. Direct Link Impact on Purchase Likelihood.

The incorporation of direct links within Instagram has made it easier for users to carry out their purchases on the social media network, thus easing the transition from product search to buying. The use of direct links does away with some extra procedures thus making the process more user-friendly and faster to the completion of the purchase which is very important in a platform where the user is interested in a fast and a lot of images kind of thanks. Purchase Journey Friction - Direct Links heightens the chances of impulse purchases as consumers are able to respond actively to their need and wants. This is a very important application for the brands concerned with how to leverage Instagram engagement into selling off the app capabilities. Table 4.22 depicts likelihood of purchasing products for respondents based on the direct links provision.

**Table 4. 22: Effect of Direct Links on Purchase Likelihood**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Agree	236	59.0
Strong Agree	164	41.0
Total	400	100

**Source: Field data (2024)**

The examination of direct product links has shown that all test subjects responded positively to their introduction, which further indicates the role of convenience in a purchase. The data shows that 100 percent of respondents tend to buy more when direct links are present, 59% of them agree with this and 41% of them strongly agree. This finding draws attention to the importance of the reduction of obstacles in the buying process which has been in line with recent studies (Smith et al, 2023; Brown & Taylor, 2021) arguing that taking away, the gap between the product search and

the product purchase increases consumers' confidence and conversion rates. Therefore, direct links enable a sense of urgency in users as they limit elaborate decision making processes thus improving user experience, which is why they are crucial in online marketing.

#### **4.6.5. Peer Influence on Purchase Decisions.**

The role of peer involvement in the consumption process cannot be underestimated, and when it comes to Instagram, the most popular photo and video-sharing app, this manifests itself in the form of content, comments, recommendations, and especially endorsements. The moment the consumer observes their fellow associates interacting with or even promoting certain products, the tendency to use such products is likely to increase. Such influence is especially important since this type of influence is along the lines of social proof where people will often look to others for what they should do or say. It can also boost the consumers' confidence in the products advertised on Instagram and the willingness to trust the product claims. A guiding table 4.23 illustrates how many peer posts can increase or decrease respondents' chances to buy the products on Instagram.

**Table 4. 23: Impact of Peer Posts on Purchase Likelihood**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Agree	171	42.8
Strong Agree	229	57.3
Total	400	100

**Source: Field data (2024)**

Extensive peer influence craves a great deal of attention in the ways clients make purchases on Instagram, as evidenced by the fact that 100% of surveyed individuals agreed or strongly agreed that they are more likely to buy a product after interacting

with peers on the platform. In particular, 42.8% of respondents were in agreement, while the very large majority, 57.3% strongly affirmed this assertion, therefore cementing the importance attached to social proof. This stems from USGC (User-Shared Generated Content), CGC (Consumer-Generated Content) and UEGC (User-Engaged Generated Content) where active exposure to others using the products enhances the consumer's belief regarding the products being advertised. The interaction does not only augment the demand for the product but also evokes trust in the product's claims.

This is consistent with earlier studies. In an earlier study on online shopping, Taylor and Brown (2023) found out that the use of other people's images or posts when supported one's opinion on a product increase or enhance trust and purchase intentions as it provides an element of assurance. Kumar and Sharma (2021), on the other hand, explained that consumers value their social circle when it comes to assessing the honesty of the products, where persuasion and compliments play a key role. Research such as that of Zhang et al. (2022) also highlights the effect of the opinions of other on the psyche, especially concerning timidity and impatience, commonly known as FOMO, which propels the consumers to purchase within a short notice.

The unanimous response also brings home the idea of social proof, which is a psychological facet whereby people tend to look at other people's action in order to determine what to do. This on Instagram further creates a cycle where seeing people endorse products leads to more people buying them thus enhancing their purchase intentions. Given the observation that more people, especially the millennials are



turning to social media for assistance while making purchase decisions, peer members are coming out as more important as one of the most influential factors in the digital marketing landscape.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1. Chapter Overview**

This chapter offers an overview of the outcome of the study aimed at assessing the impact of Instagram on the buying behaviours of consumers aged between 25-34 years residing in Kinondoni, Dar es Salaam City. It elaborates on the main findings in relation to the aim of the study, does drawing conclusions as per the findings, and gives suggestions to the practitioners, scholars, and authorities. Finally, it proposes ways of extending research on use of social media in marketing and consumer purchase behaviour.

#### **5.2. Summary**

This research focused on how Instagram affects the awareness, attitude and behavior of consumers. It examined the impact of Instagram in the users' preference toward particular types of products, the role of Instagram elements (e.g., the Explore tab and influencers) in making consumer decisions and the mechanisms that trigger a buy. The outcome showed that Instagram plays a vital role in shaping consumer dynamics, most of the participants affirming that such a social network alters their brand awareness, product quality perceptions and buying behavior. The results illustrated the power of aesthetics, continual reinforcement, social influence, and marketing techniques on consumers' behavior within Instagram.

### **5.3. Conclusion**

#### **5.3.1. Respondents' Demographic Characteristics**

The demographic evaluation in the study is critical as it explains how the use of Instagram varies by gender, age, marital, and educational status, which are all vital components of consumer behavior s in social networking sites.

To begin with, examining gender showed that female users of Instagram took a small lead (52.3%). This concurs with the general understanding that more females engage in image-based activities than male. Again, this highlights the necessity to address the gender differences in the reactions to Instagram's images and communications. As suggested by Lee et al. (2021), women tend to be more influenced by imagery and others within their immediate social circles, both of which this research established strongly influence purchasing behavior s. It implies that different genders have varying degrees of influences affecting how consumers view and make decisions within the social media sphere known as Instagram. Thus, a rationale for the use of Instagram as an advertising platform is that the platform is mainly built for an audience that appreciates image and social content.

The age distribution results were also interesting as they indicated that most (69.5%) of the respondents were in the range of 30-35 years. This specific cohort, referred to as older millennials, is likely to be more financially stable and to prefer shopping online with the least possible hassle. There has been a high engagement in Instagram advertisement by this population equating to Smith and Jones (2020)'s observation that individuals of this age bracket tend to seamlessly flow from product search, product orders to product deliveries. All these illustrate the aim of this research

which is to investigate the effect of Instagram in changing the taste for this age group which is both wealthy and information technology oriented.

Almost equal proportions were reported for respondents who were single (43.8%) and those married (39.0%), with a third of the respondents being separated (17.3%). These results are pertinent to understanding the socio-economic determinants of Instagram influenced consumer behavior s which demand the consumer benefit on disposable income and borrowing patterns. As observed by Wasiams et al. (2019), individuals who are still single tend to be more social media influenced as a result of their more than average cyclical nature which involves a lot of internet usage and ghettos for socialization. It indicates that the singles' users of Instagram are likely to be more accepting of the promotional messages and brand recommendations unlike married ones, thus the importance of social networks and connections in the consumer path is outlined.

Education level was also found to be another great determinant, as the majority of respondents (29.0%) were graduates which shows a high level of digital competence among the sample population. The respondents who fall in the category of the university degree educated want to examine the contents on Instagram more properly and are more attentive to the product's detailed description as well as the involved marketing strategies. However, less educated respondents, including those who had no schooling (18.8%) or only completed primary school (20.0%), may view advertising on Instagram, especially during promotion campaigns in a certain different light, perhaps trusting and engaging to it in different degrees. Similar observations were made by Cheng (2020), who observed that the higher the level of

education, the greater the likelihood of active participation in digital platforms and giving credence to the information available concerning products online. Hence understanding the level of education is essential when it comes to analyzing the effectiveness of Instagram in changing consumers' attitudes and motivating them to make a purchase decision.

Conclusively, the demographic analysis conducted in this study illustrates the various ways in which Instagram affects the consumer purchasing behaviour of the respondents, depending on the gender, age, marital status and level of education. Knowing these demographic differences makes it easy to appreciate how the design, content and functionality of Instagram affects all the users, which in turn fuels the marketing with the active engagement of the users. These observations are important for companies and agencies planning marketing activity in this social network and wishing to customize content to the specific age group or gender, for example.

### **5.3.2. Influence of Instagram on Awareness and Perception**

Analyzing the patterns of respondents' Instagram usage contributes significant knowledge about distinct consumer behaviors formed by users' experience and usage frequency, preference for certain features and the ways of engaging specific brands.

To begin with, respondents' Instagram experience, varying from less than one year to more than six years, allows for a more balanced analysis. The highest proportion of users (37%) is found within the one to five years' category, indicating a mixture of both veteran and more novice users. This aspect is significant as there is evidence to suggest that the more social media users are exposed to, the more confident they

become in making social commerce purchases; Zhang & Jin, 2021. Therefore, users who have spent longer periods using Instagram may be more inclined to trust the app's contents as well as the promotional activities and this information can be ideal for management who are focused on growing the relationship with consumers over time.'

Prioritizing the frequency with which Instagram use is a common denominator, this factor also emerged as an important aspect. As per majority statistics, 54% of the respondents in the study would use Instagram on a daily basis thus it has become part of the daily activities over time hence considered as a consistent and frequent source where brand communication can be anchored to. This level of engagement improves the level of ad remembrance and product consciousness as was also established by Smith & Oliver (2020). Therefore, the recurring Instagram consumers in this research stand a better likelihood of perception, noticing or interacting with the products under advertisement. Herein the importance of the audience's participation on the Instagram application including the consumption of messages through advertisement, base on the fact that it is not the only thing strategized aimed at regular interfaces with the consumers, comes into play.

User engagement in turn can also be examined through the choice of different features on Instagram. Out of all the features used, the 'Explore' feature was the most popular at 71% indicating that the respondents preferred this even more than the conventional feed post, Stories or Reels. This preference indicates that the consumers lean towards the content discovery aspect as the Explore page edits a lot of fresh and different content. Those results are supported by the study conducted by

Lee & Cho (2019) concerning the effectiveness of the Explore feature in delivering a brand and ensuring that it reaches the target audience. This means that such users who enjoy discovering various types of content will likely be willing to try out new products which creates avenues for businesses to engage such audiences who are ready for the brand.

A closer look at the followership of both the brands and the influencers shows that there was almost equal split with 49% of the respondents following these pages and 51% of them not doing so. This means that even though influencers may be important in product discovery for some individuals, others may choose to use other means of product discovery, for example, organic content or paid ads. Expectations management has been shown through evidence provided by Brown & Hayes (2018) as a key component of effective influence and trust building. It can therefore be assumed that the respondents who follow influencers tend to be more open to messages on product promotion and endorsement of the said products. It is therefore not a coincidence when it is said that influencer marketing plays a crucial role in the trust and conversion efforts of the brands that employ it.

As such, the patterns of usage of Instagram, in NZ, would indicate that this social media is very effective in the modification in the buying behavior of the customers through enhanced user activity, exposure to content and interaction with the users. Based on these insights, it would be more efficient for companies to implement Instagram marketing strategies for more advanced persons, make use of the Explore - content focused on discovery – and influence marketing. Such trends accentuate the

immense possibilities that Instagram as a marketing tool offers in promoting products, creating brands and persuading the consumer to buy.

### **5.3.3. Role of Instagram in Shaping Consumer Preferences and Choices**

The exploration of Instagram and its impact on user determined factors related to their preferences and purchase decisions encompasses various aspects, one of which Congruent with the degree of related content consumed, the feedback provided as well as and the recommendations given, the repetition of the product, and the degree of product details available.

Understanding the data informs that Instagram significantly contributes to the user's preference for a particular product category. Sample through practical example, about 84%, disagrees that the preferences were not influenced by the avid use of Instagram. This proves various works done by Chen and Park (2020), who expose: pampering is good, so in the social media, the users screening for particular products have to be content-specific and programmed in a way to show the other users different products within those categories before they make any purchases. The removal of this guess work and thus, a consumer's unwanted effort is why Instagram fitted their media to the consumer's needs while the age of advertising before the marketing was in full phase.

Content on Instagram also informs the purchasing decisions of consumers, with 85.6% of the subjects admitting they factor in the images of goods taken from the app in their choice of what to buy. This high percentage reflects Instagram's power as a visual medium in which users can access extensive product details, comments



and reviews from other users that help as per Nghuen et al. 2019 rational purchase decision making. The making commerce disappear around a selling proposition also makes Instagram an important instrument for any business seeking to alter how people buy taking into consideration the factors and products available and the ease of retrieval of the product information.

The aspect of positive feedback and social proof on Instagram has helped in building trust and acceptance of the products with the consumers with 87.3% of the respondents stating that it helps in making a decision on the product to purchase. Research undertaken by Kumar and Sharma in the year 2020 asserts that online recommendations have the potential to increase the trust of the user in regard to the product significantly. In this case, the authors point out especially the feedback system of Instagram that allows users to share their views and opinions more and this social validation factor has a great influence on the purchase intention. In this regard, it is of particular importance to the brands as its marketing lets trust and preference be enhanced thanks to the recommendations of friends or famous people.

In addition, Instagram's 'mere exposure effect' regarding products also brings about product preference since it has been noted by 77% of the respondents that they are more likely to prefer a product presented to them a number of times on their feeds. The research carried out by Lee and Choi (2021) indicates that this is true even for products that the user has not used, exposure alone is sufficient to create a feeling of affinity towards the products. This means that over time, consumers are able to develop familiarity and preference towards certain brands because of the content

layout where certain brands are shown to the user multiple times, which is allowed by Instagram's algorithms.

Lastly, purchasing information made available to the consumers through Instagram is helpful in boosting the confidence of these consumers in their purchasing decisions. It was found that 67% of the respondent customers were more confident in their buying decisions because of the information provided on products on the social media platform. This is consistent with the findings of an earlier study conducted by Roberts and Thompson (2022), which indicated that there is a positive correlation between product information availability and consumers' satisfaction and trust in their choices. The information content of Instagram, especially when it is focused on captions, product tags and product description assists users make informed decisions thus ensuring that Instagram is viewed as a viable shopping medium.

In conclusion, Instagram significantly shapes consumer preferences and purchase decisions through personalized content exposure, positive feedback mechanisms, repeated product exposure, and the provision of detailed product information. These elements underscore Instagram's effectiveness as a marketing tool, where visual appeal, peer influence, and accessible information combine to guide consumer choices and build brand loyalty. The platform's ability to integrate content and commerce positions it uniquely within the digital landscape, highlighting its substantial influence on modern consumer behaviour.

#### **5.3.4. Factors on Instagram Influencing Purchasing Decision-Making**

Examining Instagram as a brand, it can be observed that there are many strong factors that shape the consumer's interest and even the rate of conversion. These include: visual content, drying, discounts, and special offers, links to purchase, and social proof. Each factor influences the enough engagement of the consumers to the platform, giving the brands tactical advantages in the bid to promote sales on the platform.

The quality of photos posted on Instagram marketing is another factor that ranked very high. This indicates that product photos are very important for the customers as 87.8% of the respondents said quality photos increases their desire to buy a product. This corresponds with the findings from Martins and Santos (2021) which pointed out that visual quality is very crucial for product attraction and purchase alignment. As such, it can be inferred that the image-laden aspect of Instagram culture renders the platform most suitable for businesses that harness the power of images in luring customers and retaining them.

Endorsements made on Instagram by famous personalities also showed support with 80% of the respondents stating they would also purchase influenced products. The consumer purchase behavior model is on the strong side in this case which can be attributed to the fact that the endorsement of products by individuals with strong influences allows for transcending the consumers and their purchase decisions. With only 0.5% of the disagrees, the results imply that the purchasing habits of consumers can be altered rather radically by the use of influencers. This indicates that brands

can take advantage of the services of brands with appropriate followers for their brand.

It is evident that a number of advertising strategies, for instance, discounts and other promotions, help in increasing consumer purchase behaviour. Self-efficacy factors associated with special price offers on Instagram are endorsed by close to three quarters or 76.1% of the fan base. Still, since 11.8% of respondents chose to disagree or are neutral to the idea, the data reveals that even though the majority of the consumers are likely to enjoy the benefits of the offers, all may not be compelled to use them. Therefore, this signifies that it is critical to use different forms of promotion so as to satisfy different types of consumers who have different tastes and motivations.

The presence of direct purchase links was reported as one of the most powerful factors as all respondents 100% showed tendency to purchase the product more readily with the links present. The majority of consumers realized the importance of following the purchase procedure easily and therefore the inclusion of the hyperlinks rejoicing the task of browsing and purchasing was welcomed. What this means for brands is that attaching direct purchase links to their Instagram posts is a clever actionable suggestion, which is likely to enhance the rate of conversions and improve the user journey.

It was also found that the influence of family and friends on consumers' behavior was quite notable since, all the respondents, 100%, agreed that they were influenced by their friends' posts when it came to buying a product. This conclusion also

demonstrates the power of social acceptance, that is when consumers are swayed by other consumers' choices and behavior. In the context of Instagram, peer influence is more positive in that it creates trust and familiarity to the consumers which increases their using propensity on looking into the product and in the end buying it.

Instagram's ability to persuade its users towards buying choices can be attributed to the use of images, the effective use of opinion leaders, promotions, easy purchase assistance, and social support. All of these factors contribute to the ability of the platform as a marketing tool by reaching out to the consumers through many aspects ranging from simple visual appeal to social acceptance. For brands looking to do more on Instagram than just creating beautiful posts, it is obvious that a careful choice of the mix of these factors will help to enhance the level of interactions, build trust and ultimately lead to conversion. The results obtained in the research underline the necessity to fit the Instagram usage in one's marketing strategy, assuming how consumers can be influenced to make purchases in many ways and have different eggs in the basket.

## **5.4. Recommendations**

### **5.4.1. Influence of Instagram on Awareness and Perception**

In order to strengthen brand image and recognition, it is recommended that participants in the market develop and implement quality visual content and maximize the algorithm of the Instagram application in order to showcase the products on the users feeds. Release of targeted advertisements and usage of the Explore page can also help introduce products to necessary audiences. Finally,

businesses should consider more primary appealing creative strategies that involve consumers values and beliefs to build trust and incite interest.

#### **5.4.2. Role of Instagram in Shaping Consumer Preferences and Choices**

Businesses should to take advantage of Instagram's distinct content features – Stories, Reels, IGTV, etc. – in order to impact consumer behavior in a better way. On the one hand, engaging opinion leaders can improve brand image and attractiveness. In addition, it is important for brands to evaluate the audience engagement pattern in order to produce appropriate material for specific target group and ensure content variation in order to satisfy changing consumer preferences.

#### **5.4.3. Factors on Instagram Influencing Purchasing Decision-Making**

In order to stimulate the purchaser's buying behavior, it would be more effective, for example, to use product familiarity-heightening methods, e.g., regular postings and working with famous personalities. The negative influence of purchase barriers can be reduced and the positive influence of conversion rates enhanced by adding a direct buy link and special deal or discount offers for Instagram users. Furthermore, the businesses need to track consumer sentiment present on Instagram and utilize that information for improving their dealings with customers in real-time.

### **5.5. Areas for Further Research**

This research presents a framework to comprehend the effect of Instagram on consumer purchase decisions; nevertheless, a number of other research areas could enhance existing understanding and offer more insights in this regard. These include considering the role of Instagram in other demographic and cultural settings, looking

at other similar social media platforms, looking at the time aspect of influencer marketing, and focusing on the consequences of changes in algorithms. All these would present a better and dynamic picture of the impact of social media on consumer behaviour.

#### **5.5.1. Exploring Instagram's Influence Across Broader Age Groups and Cultural Contexts**

This study, however, only restricted itself to consumers of a certain demographic pattern that is aged between 25 and 34 years in Kinondoni, Dar es Salaam City. Thus, more age groups and different cultural contexts should be considered in future research of this kind. People of different ages may use Instagram for example in different ways as there are purchasing patterns that cut across ages due to fast adoption of technology with the youth, differences in loyalty to brands late and even how various age groups respond to visuals. For example, younger audiences such as Gen Z, unlike older consumers, may have different priorities regarding the interaction with and the use of social networking sites, while also being affected by different aspects of these sites. The focus of the research should not remain within Kinondoni but rather broaden itself by examining additional ethnic participations. This may inform how the phenomenon in question changes its effects in different parts of the world. Culture may influence what people find attractive on the site, the kind of content they interact with, or even the brands and persons they trust on ins. In some societies, for instance, local spoken marketing and their residents might be more influential than social media marketing, while in other societies, most sales may come from influencer marketing. A cross-cultural approach, thus, would equip

global brands with insights on how to adapt the Instagram approach of the brands for various audiences.

### **5.5.2. Comparative Studies Across Social Media Platforms**

Through the examination of additional social media sites like TikTok, Facebook, and Youtube researchers may be able to draw parallels that help understand the effect and impact these social media sites have on consumer behaviour. The presence of varied aspects and the population who use any specific social media sites is bound to create a variance on how such sites influence buying decisions and preferences. To illustrate, the brief video format on TikTok may encourage impulsive buying more than Facebook which relies on social networks by older people who seek advice from those around them.

Comparative studies can also NHS OHSU evaluate what types of contents, promotions and interactions are platform specific and therefore enabling the brands to manage their strategies of social media marketing multi platforms effectively. Furthermore, these studies could investigate the differences amongst the platforms and whether the consumers pay averagely more attention to some publications than others and how the establishments of the two influence the purchasing behaviour in general. Such findings are likely to be important for any brand that targets its messages through various media including the Internet and might indicate if simply put pictures and advertisement are better on Instagram or if it has other benefits for marketing and selling through social media.



### **5.5.3. Long-Term Effects of Influencer Marketing on Brand Loyalty and Customer Retention**

This study looked at the short-term effects of Instagram influencers on purchase intentions; however, future studies can look into the effects of influencer marketing on brand loyalty and customer retention in the longer term. It would be worthwhile to investigate whether there is a propensity to stick to the brand over time on the part of consumers who start purchasing products only because of the influence of opinion leaders, or does this mean a short-lived impact of today's firm marketing practices.

Besides, longitudinal studies would address whether certain individuals are better at establishing loyalty: macro or micro influencers for example. There is the possibility of more research exploring the influence of such strategy as ongoing partnerships with influencers on a brand's image and loyalty of its customers. There is the likelihood that this will enable brands comprehend the value of such marketing and allow them to plan on long term relations with consumers through the influencers.

### **5.5.4. Impact of Instagram's Algorithm Changes on Consumer Behavior.**

Instagram's main interface that controls what users get to view has continued to evolve over the past years, with various emphases being placed on recommended content or paid adverts. It may also be significant that this is made researchable, since there is an intricate relationship between visibility and how one makes purchasing decisions. For example, one could determine whether the algorithm favours specific content types such as Reels or ads, how it changes brand interaction with users or in this case even purchasing behavior via the brand.

Moreover, it would be practical to examine if such alterations in the algorithm have more impact on natural or paid reach due to content differences enhancing efficiency in resource allocation for the brands involved. This understanding of the algorithm's impact on consumer behaviour proves to be very important for the brands that have to deal with the problem of organic engagement with the audience and promotion by means of advertising on Instagram. Such a study can analyse how agreeable users are to the content recommending algorithms and whether it builds or deters trust towards the brands in the system.

#### **5.5.5. Influence of Visual Quality and Interactive Content on Consumer Perception**

Drawing from the conclusions of this research, a possible avenue for future studies may include examining how different elements of visual content stimulate consumer engaging and averting focus on different products. More precise research may focus on specific aspects such as how elements like tone and balance, moving versus static shots, etc. relate to and shape the consumers' attitudes. In addition, one could examine extending the research to the use of interactive elements typical for Instagram such as polls, quizzes, and augmented reality filters and how they affect engagement and purchasing decisions.

Further, this research may allow brands to further develop their content strategies by indicating which visual and interactive content are more appreciated by consumers thus making them more enticing and increasing the levels of engagement with the products. Since Instagram has no plans of stopping anytime soon as it continues to add interactive features, knowing the extent to which these features influence

consumer behaviour will also be important for any brand that wishes to attract an audience and convert them into buyers.

#### **5.5.6. Exploring the Role of Sustainability and Ethical Marketing on Instagram**

In recent years, consumers' and brands' attitudes control more moralisation of the purchase. As a result, it would be interesting to address the issue of how brands' ethical stances on Instagram are shaping consumers' actions. Later on, it could be studied if brands with eco-friendly policies attract more buyers and the consequences of producers' honesty on their customers' dedication to the brand.

Furthermore, this research agenda may also look into whether the synthesis of sustainability by the likes of sustainable digital marketing strategists, for instance, geo-friendly influencers, plays any role on the consumers' attitudes and buying behavior especially in green market segments. It may be worth nothing that as the level of consciousness of consumption towards sustainability rises, the understanding of how Instagram users react to ethical messaging in brands may be beneficial for the manufacturers in adapting to the changes in the consumer's mentality. Developing this particular point, it could be argued that those questions which are designed to measure marketing effectiveness within the Instagram environment should be considered within the scope of research strategy, capable of illuminating the current process of transition in marketing communications, and suggesting future social media practices

In connection with these, it would be pertinent to call attention to these directions for further investigation given their potential in enhancing understanding of the role of

Instagram in the purchase decision process and the future of marketing in the context of social media. Exploring the specific dimensions allows the authors to offer sound advice to brands attempting to improve their social media approach, increase engagement with clients, and develop their loyalty over time.

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## SECTION A: RESPONDENTS' GENERAL INFORMATION

Please tick (✓) the bracket beside the item that best describes you.

1. What is your gender?  
(1) Male (2) Female
2. Which of the following categories describes your age in years?  
(1) 25 – 29 (2) 30 – 34 (4)
3. What is your marital status?  
(1) Single (2) Married (3) Divorced (4) Separated
4. What is your highest level of education?  
(1) Not attended (2) Primary education (3) Secondary education (4) Certificate level education (5) Diploma level (6) University education (7) Master level
5. What is your experience in use Instagram?  
(1) 0 – 5 years (2) 6 – 10 years (3) 11 – 15 years (4) Above 15 years

## SECTION B: Instagram Usage Patterns (Demographic Context)

1. **How often do you use Instagram?**  
☐ Daily ☐ Several times a week ☐ Once a week ☐ Rarely ☐ Never
2. **Which Instagram features do you use most frequently?**  
☐ Feed posts ☐ Stories ☐ Reels ☐ Explore ☐ IGTV ☐ Ads ☐ Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
3. **Do you regularly follow brand or influencer pages on Instagram?**  
☐ Yes ☐ No
4. **Have you made a purchase based on something you saw on Instagram in the past 3 months?**  
☐ Yes ☐ No

**5. In general, how much does Instagram impact your purchasing behavior?**

☐ Not at all ☐ A little ☐ Moderately ☐ Significantly ☐ Very significantly

**SECTION C: Influence of Instagram on Awareness and Perception**

Read every statement carefully and indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each. For convenience, five numerical answers are given besides each statement to include; (1) Strongly Disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neither Agree nor Disagree (4) agree and (5) strongly agree. **Encircle the serial number of the answer, which is most suitable in your opinion.** There is no right or wrong statement. Your answer to each statement is necessary

Qn	Competence	Options				
1	Instagram exposes me to products and brands I would not discover otherwise	1	2	3	4	5
2	Instagram helps me stay informed about the latest products and trends	1	2	3	4	5
3	I find Instagram to be a reliable source for forming first impressions of products.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Product reviews and feedback on Instagram impact my perception of brand quality.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Seeing a product multiple times on Instagram increases my perception of its popularity.	1	2	3	4	5

**Optional Open-Ended Question:** What specific types of Instagram posts (e.g., ads, influencer reviews, brand stories) most influence your perception of a product?

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### SECTION D: Role of Instagram in Shaping Consumer Preferences and Choices

Read every statement carefully and indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each. For convenience, five numerical answers are given besides each statement to include; (1) Strongly Disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neither Agree nor Disagree (4) agree and (5) strongly agree. **Encircle the serial number of the answer, which is most suitable in your opinion.** There is no right or wrong statement. Your answer to each statement is necessary

Q	Competence	Options				
1	My preferences for certain types of products are shaped by what I see on Instagram	1	2	3	4	5
2	I often consider products I see on Instagram when making purchasing decisions	1	2	3	4	5
3	Positive feedback or recommendations on Instagram make me more likely to choose a product.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I am more likely to prefer a product if I see it frequently on my Instagram feed.	1	2	3	4	5
5	The availability of product information on Instagram helps me feel more confident in my choices.	1	2	3	4	5

**Optional Open-Ended Question:** Describe a recent Instagram post that influenced your choice of a product and explain why.

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### SECTION E: Factors on Instagram Influencing Purchasing Decision-Making

Read every statement carefully and indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each. For convenience, five numerical answers are given besides each statement to include; (1) Strongly Disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neither Agree nor Disagree (4) agree and (5) strongly agree. **Encircle the serial number of the answer, which is most suitable in your opinion.** There is no right or wrong statement. Your answer to each statement is necessary

Qn	Competence	Options				
1	The visual quality of Instagram posts influences my interest in purchasing products	1	2	3	4	5
2	When products are endorsed by popular Instagram influencers, I am more interested in purchasing them.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Discounts or special offers posted on Instagram motivate me to make a purchase	1	2	3	4	5
4	I am more likely to buy products with direct links provided on Instagram posts.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Seeing friends or people I know post about a product on Instagram increases my likelihood of purchasing it.	1	2	3	4	5

**THANKS FOR YOUR TIME**

