

# The Influence of Instagram Marketing on Online Clothing Business Performance: A Case Study of Dodoma District Council

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**Abstract**— This study investigates the impact of Instagram marketing on the online sales of clothing within Dodoma Municipal Council. Employing a quantitative research design, data were collected from 82 clothing entrepreneurs using structured questionnaires. A combination of random and convenience sampling techniques was used to ensure a diverse sample. The data were analysed using multiple linear regression, and key assumptions, linearity, independence, homoscedasticity, and normality, were thoroughly tested to ensure the reliability of the results. The analysis focused on three core dimensions of Instagram marketing: average monthly engagement growth rate, average monthly conversion rate from Instagram leads, and average monthly follower growth rate. The findings revealed a generally positive and statistically significant relationship between Instagram marketing and online clothing sales. The results suggest that even modest improvements in Instagram marketing strategies can lead to substantial increases in online sales. Therefore, Instagram emerges as a highly effective platform for promoting clothing businesses in the digital marketplace

**Keywords:** Instagram marketing, Online Clothing Business.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Sales revenue is a cornerstone of business sustainability and growth, serving as the primary means by which companies cover essential operational costs such as salaries, rent, procurement of supplies, and other overhead expenses (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Without a steady and sufficient flow of sales, businesses face financial instability, threatening their capacity to operate effectively. Beyond sustaining day-to-day activities, strong sales performance generates surplus capital that can be reinvested into strategic areas including marketing, product innovation, workforce development, and business expansion. Thus, sales revenue functions not merely as a financial outcome but as a critical pillar supporting long-term resilience and competitiveness.

In addition, sales figures serve as a tangible indicator of market demand and consumer acceptance, reflecting the degree to which a business achieves product-market fit (De Veirman et al., 2017). Studies emphasize that product-market fit (the alignment between a product and the needs and preferences of its target market) is crucial, as it supports positive sales growth and validates the viability of business models (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019; Jin & Phua, 2014a; Smith & Anderson, 2018). Investors and stakeholders often interpret consistent sales growth as a sign of business health,

which enhances access to funding and partnership opportunities. Firms with reliable sales streams are better positioned to expand their market share, fortify brand reputation, and maintain strategic advantage in increasingly competitive environments (Teece et al., 1997)

In recent years, the landscape of sales and marketing has been transformed by the proliferation of digital technologies and social media platforms, which have created new avenues for customer engagement and brand visibility. This shift is particularly pronounced in the fashion industry, where platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok have become vital tools for online marketing and sales conversion. Instagram's unique appeal lies in its visually driven format, which resonates strongly with youth and fashion-conscious consumers a demographic critical for apparel brands (De Veirman et al., 2017). Unlike text-based platforms, Instagram's emphasis on images and videos aligns naturally with the aesthetic and style-driven nature of fashion, facilitating more engaging and persuasive product discovery and purchase decisions.

Empirical evidence supports Instagram's growing influence on consumer behavior, particularly among younger audiences. According to Smith & Anderson, (2018), more than 70% of Instagram users are under 35 years old, positioning the platform as a hub for youth culture and fashion trends. This demographic is notably responsive to influencer marketing and branded content that highlights lifestyle and apparel products in visually appealing contexts (Jin & Phua, 2014b). Other studies have further revealed that exposure to fashion influencers on Instagram significantly increases consumers' purchase intentions by fostering relatable and aspirational brand-consumer connections (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019). Additionally, Instagram's interactive features such as Stories, Reels, and Shopping tags have been empirically linked to increased conversion rates and enhanced sales performance (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016).

Beyond individual marketing tactics, social media facilitates direct communication between brands and consumers, the creation of online communities, and the amplification of social proof through user-generated content. These dynamics contribute to greater trust, authenticity, and expanded brand reach, which positively influence purchasing decisions (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). More broadly, digital

marketing strategies incorporating search engine optimization (SEO), targeted advertising, email campaigns, and data analytics empower businesses to personalize messaging, monitor consumer behavior, and adapt campaigns dynamically—factors associated with significant revenue growth (Dasser, 2019).

Despite the advantages, many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), especially in developing economies, struggle with the adoption of effective digital marketing due to limited skills, inadequate infrastructure, and resource constraints. Deloitte reported that 42% of SMEs lack the necessary digital competencies to leverage online marketing fully, a gap exacerbated by high internet costs and limited training opportunities (Deloitte, 2022). These barriers impede SMEs from harnessing the full potential of digital tools to grow their businesses.

However, in Tanzania and across Sub-Saharan Africa, the increasing penetration of internet and mobile technologies is gradually transforming the business environment. The World Bank has documented a 23% growth in internet usage in the region between 2015 and 2022, while highlighting mobile connectivity improvements that have stimulated e-commerce expansion (World Bank, 2025). In this context, social media platforms, particularly Instagram, have become essential marketing channels for SMEs in the fashion and clothing sectors aiming to engage younger consumers and expand market reach.

Yet, despite the growing importance of Instagram marketing, there remains a lack of localized empirical studies examining its impact on business performance within specific contexts such as Dodoma District Council. This knowledge gap constrains entrepreneurs' ability to make evidence-based decisions regarding digital investments and limits policymakers' capacity to design targeted support mechanisms to foster digital inclusion and economic empowerment.

Addressing this research gap, the present study investigates how Instagram marketing strategies influence the performance of online clothing businesses in Dodoma District. By examining key outcomes such as sales volume, customer engagement, and brand visibility, the study aims to generate practical insights for entrepreneurs, business support organizations, and policymakers. Ultimately, these findings will contribute to the strategic marketing decisions and digital transformation of SMEs, promoting enhanced competitiveness and sustainable economic development within the region.

The **Error! Reference source not found.** presents a conceptual framework that illustrates how strategic use of Instagram can shape the performance of online clothing businesses. It captures the dynamic interaction between key aspects of digital engagement such as user interaction, audience growth, and conversion efficiency and measurable business outcomes. This relationship reflects the increasingly pivotal role of social media platforms in reshaping consumer-brand interaction, particularly in fashion-related e-commerce. Grounded in contemporary marketing literature, the framework aligns with findings that platforms like Instagram have evolved into critical spaces for branding, consumer influence, and direct sales (De Veirman et al., 2017; Jin &

Phua, 2014b). The use of metrics such as engagement and conversion reflects an evidence-based approach to understanding how consumer attention and trust translate into purchasing behavior. As supported researches, effective digital presence not only amplifies visibility but also cultivates communities that drive repeat engagement and sales (De Veirman et al., 2017; Kim, 2018).

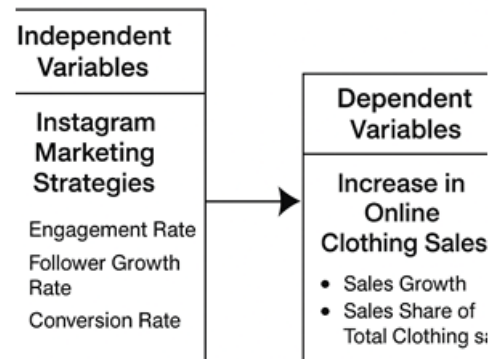


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

This model draws from broader theories of relationship marketing and digital consumer behavior, highlighting the shift from traditional advertising to interactive, user-driven promotion. It suggests that sustained performance in online clothing sales is increasingly dependent on how well brands leverage visual storytelling, influencer dynamics, and audience analytics on platforms like Instagram. By articulating these links visually, the diagram offers a concise yet powerful tool for both academic inquiry and strategic business decision-making

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes a quantitative research methodology to rigorously examine the effects of Instagram marketing strategies on the online sales performance within the apparel sector. A sample of 82 respondents was systematically surveyed using a structured questionnaire specifically developed to capture multidimensional constructs of Instagram marketing effectiveness. These constructs include the average monthly engagement growth rate, average monthly follower growth rate, and average monthly conversion rate from Instagram-generated leads. The dependent variable, online sales performance, was operationalized through two primary metrics: sales growth and sales share, the latter representing the proportion of total clothing sales accounted for by online transactions. Employing multiple linear regression analysis, this study assesses the extent to which variations in Instagram marketing dimensions predict fluctuations in online sales outcomes. This analytical approach enables a nuanced understanding of the relative contributions of different Instagram marketing indicators to the enhancement of online retail performance in the clothing industry.

### III. MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Relationship Between Instagram Engagement and Increase in Clothing Sales

The first objective of this study sought to explore the relationship between Instagram engagement and the increase in online clothing sales. Using data from 82 respondents, the analysis employed descriptive statistics and visualized the results through a bar-line chart. **Error! Reference source not found.** reveals that as Instagram engagement rates increased, so did the reported growth in clothing sales, particularly within the 2.1% to 6% engagement bracket, which accounted for the majority of the sales impact. This observed relationship aligns with a growing body of literature on social media marketing effectiveness. According to Copeland and Lyu engagement on platforms like Instagram, measured through likes, comments, shares, and story interactions serves as a proxy for consumer interest, trust, and emotional investment, which are critical precursors to purchase behavior (Copeland & Lyu, 2020).

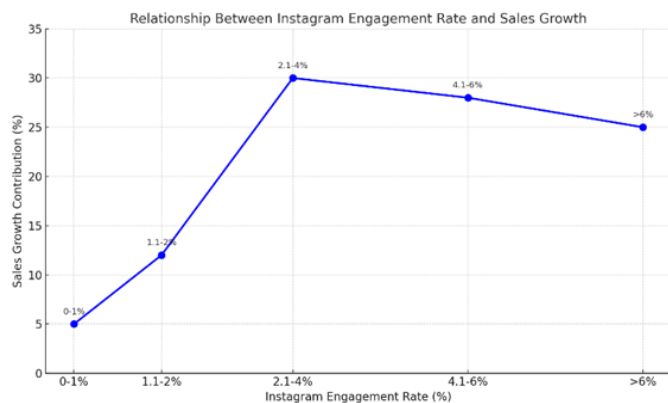


Figure 2: Insta gram engagement and Increase in Clothes Sales

When consumers actively interact with a brand’s content, they are more likely to internalize its messaging and proceed to conversion. Furthermore, De Veirman, Cauberghe, and Hudders (2017) assert that user engagement is not just a metric of popularity but a driver of social proof, which enhances the perceived value and trustworthiness of a product. This is especially pertinent in the fashion and clothing sector, where visual appeal and social validation are key determinants of buying decisions. Instagram, being a visually rich platform, allows fashion brands to leverage aesthetic appeal, peer influence, and immediacy, all of which fuel the sales funnel from interest to action.

The findings of this study also corroborate insights from Kumar, who emphasize that engagement-driven marketing strategies outperform reach-based strategies in converting followers into buyers (“Kumar et Al.,” 2020). This is because engaged audiences are already primed for action, having invested time and attention in the brand’s content. In the present study, the sharp increase in sales growth among respondents with engagement rates between 2.1% and 6% confirms this theory. However, it is important to note the plateauing trend observed beyond the 6% engagement

threshold, where the contribution to sales growth slightly declined. This nuance resonates with the findings of Lou and Yuan, who argue that excessively high engagement levels may not always correspond with higher conversion rates (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Such engagement could stem from viral or entertainment-focused content that attracts broad attention but lacks a clear link to purchase intent. In such cases, engagement becomes a vanity metric, disconnected from tangible business outcomes. This reinforces the argument by Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick that effective digital marketing requires more than high interaction, it must be strategically aligned with conversion pathways, such as shoppable posts, direct links, and personalized promotions (Amir & Mustikawati, 2019; Chaffey et al., 2024). Simply put, engagement must be meaningful and intentional, not just plentiful. In sum, the analysis of Objective One reveals a positive, though non-linear, relationship between Instagram engagement and online clothing sales. The engagement sweet spot—moderate to high interaction levels drives the most significant sales growth, validating existing theories that place customer engagement at the heart of digital conversion strategies. These findings call for brands to prioritize quality over quantity in engagement, ensuring that their Instagram activities are authentic, strategic, and conversion-oriented, rather than superficial or entertainment-based.

#### 3.2 Followers Growth Rate and Increase in Clothing Sales

In the digital economy, social media platforms have become pivotal in shaping consumer behavior and driving business performance, particularly in visually oriented sectors such as fashion. Instagram, with its emphasis on visual storytelling and audience interaction, offers unique opportunities for brands to build engagement and convert followers into buyers. This study investigates the relationship between Instagram follower growth and clothing sales, exploring how follower expansion, engagement, and lead conversion interact to influence sales performance. The research employs multiple linear regression to determine the predictive strength of key Instagram marketing metrics Engagement Rate, Follower Growth Rate, and Conversion Rate on online clothing sales.

Table 1 presents the distribution of average monthly follower growth rates among 82 respondents.

TABLE 1: Average Monthly Followers Growth Rate

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 20%	9	11%	11%
Between 20-40%	30	37%	48%
Between 40-60%	33	40%	88%
Over 80%	0	0%	100%
Total	82	100%	

The majority (88%) reported growth rates of up to 60%, with 11% recording rates below 20%, 37% between 20% and 40%, and 40% between 40% and 60%. Only 12% reported growth between 60% and 80%, and none exceeded 80%.

This suggests a trend of moderate and incremental audience expansion, which is vital for long-term brand building.

Conversion rates showed relatively higher performance. Specifically, 10% of respondents reported conversion rates below 20%, 12% between 20–40%, and 48%—the largest segment—between 40–60%. An additional 22% fell within the 60–80% range, and 9% reported rates above 80%. Notably, 70% of respondents recorded conversion rates between 40–60%, indicating that a substantial portion of Instagram users are able to convert a moderate follower base into tangible sales outcomes.

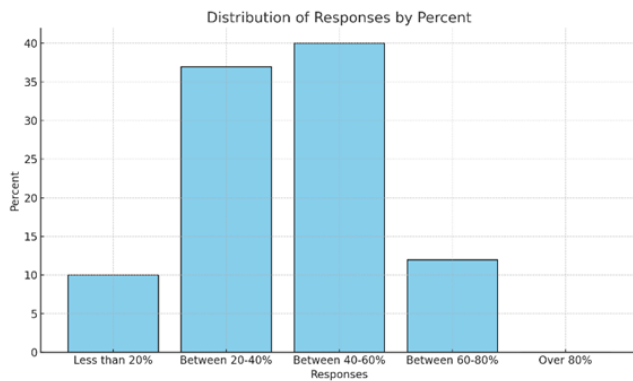


Figure 1: Distribution of Monthly Followers Growth Rate

As noted in **Error! Reference source not found.** in the bar chart presentation, the distribution of responses based on percentage categories, highlighting varying levels of participation or agreement. The highest concentration of responses falls between 40–60%, accounting for 40% of the total, followed closely by the 20–40% range at 37%. A smaller portion, 12%, is found in the 60–80% range, while only 10% of responses are below 20%. Notably, no responses were recorded in the over 80% category. This distribution suggests that most respondents fall within moderate ranges, indicating a balanced but cautious level of engagement or agreement among participants. These patterns highlight the strategic value of Instagram not only for audience development but also for lead conversion, reinforcing findings from Salhab, who argues that visual platforms enhance purchase decisions, particularly for consumer goods (Salhab et al., 2023).

To test the strength of the relationship between Instagram activity and online sales, a multiple linear regression was conducted. The model included three predictors: Engagement Rate, Follower Growth Rate, and Conversion Rate. Assumptions for regression analysis were met:

- Linearity confirmed via scatterplots
- Normality of residuals: Shapiro-Wilk  $W = 0.995, p = 0.21$
- Homoscedasticity: Breusch-Pagan  $BP = 1.98, p = 0.516$
- No autocorrelation: Durbin-Watson  $= 1.99, p = 0.430$

The model explained 77.6% of the variance in online clothing sales ( $R^2 = 0.776$ ), with an F-statistic of 35.7 ( $p < 0.05$ ), confirming strong model significance. A residual standard error of 0.068 indicates a good fit. These results validate the model’s robustness and predictive power. The regression results in TABLE 2 underscore the statistically significant and positive effects of all three Instagram metrics on clothing sales:

- Engagement Rate ( $\beta = 0.19$ ) was the most influential predictor, consistent with Kumar & Gupta (2016) and Homburg et al. (2016), who argue that digital engagement boosts customer loyalty and impacts consumer purchasing behavior.
- Follower Growth Rate ( $\beta = 0.17$ ) also contributed meaningfully to sales. This supports Rabbani et al. (2020), who found that follower growth is a proxy for brand reach and market penetration, especially in visually-driven industries like fashion.
- Conversion Rate ( $\beta = 0.13$ ), while slightly less predictive than the other two, remained a statistically significant contributor to sales performance. This aligns with Awasthi & Sharma (2020), who emphasize Instagram’s ability to convert passive audiences into buyers through curated, visually compelling content.

Despite these positive findings, the caveat raised by Menon must be noted: high engagement or follower growth alone does not guarantee conversions (Menon, 2022). The platform’s effectiveness is contingent on strategic targeting, content personalization, and consistent interaction. Therefore, practitioners must move beyond superficial metrics (e.g., likes and followers) and adopt data-driven strategies for content planning, ad placement, and customer relationship management.

TABLE 2: Relationship Between Instagram activity and Online Sales

Predictor	$\beta$ Coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Intercept	0.30	0.04	7.50	<0.001
Engagement Rate	0.19	0.027	7.10	<0.001
Follower Growth Rate	0.17	0.028	6.10	<0.001
Conversion Rate	0.13	0.028	4.60	<0.001

Furthermore, while Instagram marketing proves valuable, Bennett and Rundle caution against over-reliance on digital platforms (R. Bennett & Rundel-Thiele, 2005). For certain demographics less active online, traditional marketing methods may still be necessary. A hybrid strategy integrating both online and offline channels can optimize brand visibility and conversion outcomes.

This study affirms the positive and statistically significant role of Instagram marketing in enhancing online clothing sales. Moderate but consistent follower growth, when combined with effective engagement and lead conversion tactics, can generate meaningful sales performance. The regression model supports the argument that Instagram is not merely a branding tool, but a viable sales-generating platform when leveraged strategically. However, marketing success on Instagram demands more than increasing follower count; it requires intentional efforts in content development, audience segmentation, and conversion optimization. The findings also suggest that integrating Instagram strategies within a broader, multichannel marketing framework will yield the most sustainable and inclusive outcomes.

Future research may explore platform-specific behaviors across diverse industries and test causality through experimental or longitudinal designs. Nonetheless, the current

results offer robust evidence for the practical utility of Instagram in driving fashion retail growth.

### 3.3 Conversion Rate and Total Clothing Sales

The objective of this study is to examine the correlation between conversion rates and total clothing sales on Instagram. The line chart illustrates the distribution of Instagram conversion rates and their correlation with online clothing sales performance.

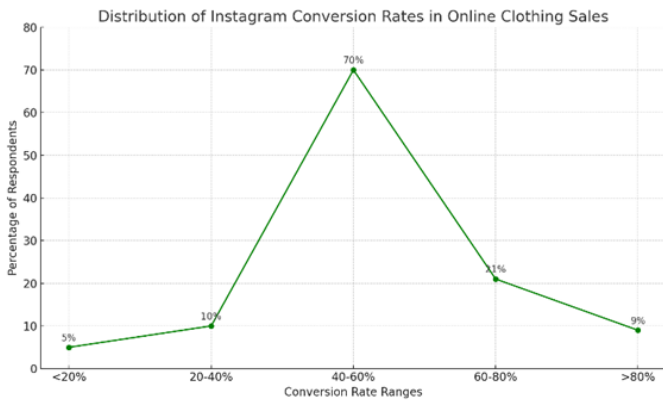


Figure 4: Conversion Rates and Online Clothing Sales

As shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**, the highest concentration of respondents—70%—falls within the 40–60% conversion rate range, suggesting that this level of engagement is most commonly associated with successful sales outcomes. This implies a positive correlation between moderate-to-high conversion rates and increased total clothing sales. Additionally, 21% of respondents reported conversion rates between 60–80%, reinforcing the trend that higher engagement translates into stronger sales performance. Conversely, only a small proportion of respondents (5%) experienced very low conversion rates (<20%), indicating that minimal Instagram engagement rarely contributes significantly to clothing sales. Likewise, the relatively small share (9%) of those achieving very high conversion rates (>80%) may reflect advanced marketing strategies or highly aligned audience-product dynamics, which are less common.

Overall, the pattern reveals that as conversion rates rise particularly from the 40% threshold upward there is a corresponding increase in sales effectiveness. This supports the hypothesis that Instagram functions not just as a promotional platform but as a catalyst for measurable commercial impact in the online clothing market. This distribution reflects a significant concentration of sales-relevant activity, highlighting Instagram's effectiveness not only as a visibility tool but as a conduit for actionable consumer behavior. These findings indicate that social media followers in this context are not merely passive observers but active participants in the sales funnel. The high representation of conversion rates in the 40–60% range suggests that Instagram serves as a platform for strategic engagement, where visual storytelling and targeted marketing tactics convert interest into transactions. Conversely, the minority of respondents reporting very low (<20%) or very high (>80%)

conversion rates may reflect variation in marketing maturity, content strategy, or audience-product alignment.

The regression analysis **Error! Reference source not found.** provides compelling evidence of a statistically significant relationship between key Instagram marketing metrics Engagement Rate (Estimate = 0.19), Following Rate (Estimate = 0.17), and Conversion Rate (Estimate = 0.13) an online clothing sales performance.

TABLE 3: Coefficients of engagement, follower growth, and Conversion rates increase in Sales Outcomes

Independent Variable	Estimate	St. Error	t-value	Pr(> t )
Engagement rate	0.19	0.027	7.1	<0.000***
Following rate	0.17	0.026	6.1	<0.000***
Convention rate	0.13	0.029	4.6	<0.000***
Constant	=0.3			
Multiple R-squared:	=0.776			
F-statistics:	=35.7			
Residual St. Error	=0.068	P<0.05		
n.	=82			

Signif. codes: 0 '\*\*\*'0.01 '\*\*'

All three predictors exhibit positive coefficients, indicating that as engagement, follower growth, and conversion rates increase, so too do sales outcomes. The high t-values (7.1, 6.1, and 4.6 respectively) and p-values below 0.000 confirm the robustness of these associations, allowing us to confidently reject the null hypothesis and affirm the influence of social media activity on commercial performance in this context. The intercept value (0.3), though not practically zero-bound, establishes a baseline against which the incremental contributions of these variables can be interpreted.

These quantitative findings align with the conceptual shift described by Kaplan who frame social media as evolving from a tool for peer communication into a marketplace for consumer-brand interaction and economic exchange (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In this paradigm, Instagram's visual-first design serves as a potent channel for fashion retail, where aesthetic appeal heavily influences buyer behavior (Gretzel & Sigala, 2017). The strong positive estimates in the regression model echo this transformation, affirming Instagram's utility in converting attention into tangible economic outcomes.

Moreover, this study supports De Vries and others, who posit that social media metrics likes, shares, comments, and follower counts can be strategically leveraged to drive business results (De Vries et al., 2012). The finding that a substantial proportion of surveyed businesses reported conversion rates between 40% and 60% illustrates the commercial viability of targeted Instagram campaigns. These elevated conversion rates signal more than just content visibility; they reflect effective alignment with consumer expectations through intentional and data-informed marketing.

Equally important are the contributions of Appel et al., (2020), who emphasize the roles of trust, authenticity, and interactive brand relationships in digital marketing success. Many respondents in this study employed influencer marketing, personalized content, and real-time engagement, all of which are known to deepen customer trust and strengthen loyalty. The regression coefficients thus capture not only

quantitative engagement but also qualitative factors underpinning relational marketing dynamics.

Perhaps most striking is the contrast with industry benchmarks. Chaffey et al., (2024) report average e-commerce conversion rates between 2% and 5%, making the 40%–60% range observed in this study exceptional. While broader interpretations of conversion (e.g., including inquiries or messages) might partially explain this disparity, the consistently high rates suggest that Instagram's unique interface visual, mobile-friendly, and interaction-rich shortens the traditional marketing funnel, facilitating quicker and more decisive consumer actions.

The analysis substantiates theoretical frameworks from social media marketing literature and demonstrates their operational efficacy within the online fashion retail sector. The integration of follower growth, engagement, and conversion metrics into a predictive model confirms Instagram's strategic value not just for visibility, but as a performance-driven tool for revenue generation. As such, Instagram emerges as a critical digital asset for retailers navigating the competitive e-commerce environment where visual branding, timely engagement, and consumer trust drive both brand resonance and transactional success.

These findings underscore a strong and statistically significant association between Instagram marketing metrics and online clothing sales performance. The model's F-statistic of 35.7 ( $p < 0.05$ ) confirms the overall significance of the regression, indicating that at least one of the predictor variables contributes meaningfully to explaining variations in sales outcomes. Furthermore, the residual standard error of 0.068 reflects the average deviation of observed values from the regression line, with its relatively low value suggesting a good model fit. The analysis is based on a sample of 82 observations, enhancing the robustness and credibility of the statistical results.

Overall, the regression analysis reveals a strong positive correlation between Instagram marketing metrics—specifically engagement rate, follower growth, and conversion rate and online sales performance. This suggests that strategic improvements in Instagram marketing practices can significantly enhance commercial outcomes in the clothing sector.

These findings align with and reinforce existing scholarship on the interplay between social media marketing and sales. For instance, (“Kumar et Al.,” 2020) emphasize the importance of cross-platform engagement in driving consumer purchasing behavior and building brand loyalty. The current results echo these insights, demonstrating that Instagram functions not merely as a channel for visibility but as a performance-driven platform for conversion.

However, Müller and Thakur (2021) provide a necessary caveat: while engagement is essential, it does not automatically translate into sales without intentional, targeted marketing strategies. This nuanced understanding is critical in interpreting the role of digital engagement as a precursor but not a guarantee of transaction.

Nevertheless, as (A. Bennett, 2007) remind us, the relevance of traditional marketing approaches should not be overlooked.

Certain demographic segments may still respond more favorably to conventional outreach strategies, indicating the need for integrated marketing frameworks that balance digital innovation with proven traditional methods.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study explored the impact of Instagram marketing on the performance of online clothing businesses in Dodoma District Council, focusing on engagement rate, follower growth, and conversion rate. The findings revealed a strong and statistically significant relationship between these Instagram metrics and online sales, with engagement rate emerging as the most influential factor. The regression model explained 77.6% of the variance in sales performance, underscoring the strategic importance of Instagram in driving visibility, trust, and consumer action within the fashion sector. Based on the results, it is recommended that clothing businesses prioritize interactive and visually compelling content to enhance engagement. Strategies such as leveraging Instagram Stories, Reels, influencer collaborations, and targeted advertising can significantly improve brand reach and customer conversion. However, engagement must be purposeful—aligned with clear pathways to purchase such as shoppable posts and direct links to ensure it translates into tangible sales growth. Businesses should also adopt consistent content strategies supported by analytics to refine their messaging and optimize performance.

Moreover, while Instagram is a powerful tool, a hybrid marketing approach that includes traditional channels may be necessary to reach offline audiences. Policymakers and support organizations should consider offering training and resources to equip SMEs with the digital skills and infrastructure needed to thrive online. In conclusion, Instagram holds great potential for enhancing the competitiveness and sustainability of clothing businesses, but success depends on intentional, data-driven strategies that balance digital innovation with inclusive outreach.

#### COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

The study strictly complies with ethical standards by ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and cultural sensitivity throughout the research process

#### DISCLOSURE OF POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no financial, personal, or institutional relationships that could have influenced the integrity or outcome of this research.

#### INFORMED CONSENT

Informed consent was obtained from all participants, where required. This paper is submitted with the consent of co-publisher Dr Castor Mfugale, who made significant contributions to its content and structure

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