

**The Influence of Social Media Platforms on Consumer Purchasing Decisions among
Strathmore University Students**

By

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

SMC	School of Management and Commerce
SNS	Social Networking Sites
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
UGC	User-Generated Content

ABSTRACT

The growth of online social networks around the world has created a new place of interaction and communication among people. Individuals can share their knowledge, opinions, and experiences with one other due to the online social networks provided features and may have an impact on people's behaviour in terms of communication and purchasing. Studies conducted on social media and its effect on purchasing decisions showed mixed findings as some agreed that the social media platforms did have an effect on consumer purchase decisions while others disagreed and others showed that there was no relationship between the two constructs. This study focused on students in Strathmore so as to gain better insight on the extent to which social media platforms influenced purchasing decisions. It examined the relationship social media platforms and purchasing decisions by looking at specific factors that drove consumers particularly university students into purchasing products through social media.

The study found that Instagram was the most widely used by Strathmore University Students in making their purchase decisions related to their product, brand and dealer choices followed by YouTube and finally Facebook. The study also found that YouTube and Instagram had a significant influence on product, brand and dealer choices while Facebook did not significantly influence brand choice. The study findings also showed that the three social media platforms had a positive and significant influence on the overall consumer purchase decisions of the students. Hence, a conclusion was made that businesses and firms that were able to capitalize on these social media platforms were likely to influence the consumer purchase decisions of their consumers and that various consumers including students who used the various social media platforms were likely to be influenced when undertaking their purchase decisions.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Customers have increasingly begun to embrace social media platforms in astounding numbers as a source of information in addition to being able to communicate without boundaries as well as expressing feelings and thoughts (Humphrey Jr, Laverie & Rinaldo, 2017). In the past, there were a limited number of media channels hence in order for customers to gain information about products that sparked an interest in them, they either relied on word-of-mouth or print media (Woo, Ahn, Lee, & Koo, 2015). Internet has altered both the quality and the quantity of information available to customers (Morrison, 2015)..

According to Duffett (2015) and Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014), brand managers understand and recognize the need to establish a presence in social media platforms hence the efforts in setting aside budgets that are directed towards the movement. Social media platforms enable users to interact with the brands, shape the consumers' experiences as well as leverage their voices for a greater marketing impact (Morrison, 2015).

The social media trend can be allotted to various factors such as the fact that consumers tend to ignore traditional online marketing (Morrison, 2015). Young individuals have moved to online and the use of conventional media channels has dwindled and finally a viral campaign can produce many more engaged customers than a television campaign at a much lower cost. Kozinet (2002) suggests that word of mouth and provision for new opportunities to consumers to interact are some of the reason as to why brands and firms may be interested in social media platforms. Social media relationships can aid in the increment of sales, this would be as a result of having people visit the brands page on social media (Chaudhary & Gupta, 2012).

The growing numbers of social media users in the United States of America are students especially those aged 15 to 24 years old (Duque, San Antonio, & Brazil, 2017). Research on the frequency of the use of social media among university students stipulates that a cosmic majority of undergraduates have at least one social media account, which they inspect numerous times on a daily basis (Peluchette & Karl 2008; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke 2008;

Salaway & Caruso 2008). A national poll carried out by Harvard Institute of Politics in 2015 showed that at least 90% of students at four-year colleges reported having Facebook profiles. Additionally, in another study, usage was strongest among first and second year students among four-year institutions (Junco, 2016). In another survey of a comparable national sample of 456 four-year accredited U.S. Institutions, 100% reported using some type of social media, whilst Facebook was used by 98% , Twitter was used by 84% (Barnes & Lescault, 2017).

The study was based on the theory of reasoned action and theory of planned behaviour. Theory of planned behaviour explains a great range of human behaviour that includes consumer behaviour (Hegner, Fenko and Teravest, 2017). The theory also provides that intention is a direct function of the attitude towards behaviour as well as subjective norm and control. While theory of reasoned action maintains that attitude towards buying and subjective norm are the antecedents of performed behaviour (Lutz 1991). These theories are useful in this study because they will enable marketers understand the social media platforms that consumers prefer in order to help them in making purchase decisions.

In Kenya, foregoing studies have shown that Kenyan students rarely use social media to their academic and their educational goals in as much as they use the platforms extensively. A study by Wambilyanga (2014) showed that university students use the internet mostly as a medium for social interaction. While assessing internet use among university students in Kenya, Waithaka (2013) found that at least 88% of the respondents had a Facebook account, 39% had accounts on Twitter, 28% had accounts on LinkedIn and finally 2% ad accounts on Friendster and Hi5 each. University students have become a major target by marketers and advertisers as several brands seek to win this market segment (Ogunyombo et al., 2017). The current study therefore aims to assess the influence of social media use on consumer purchasing decisions among Strathmore University students

1.1.1 Social Media Platforms

Social media refers to text-messaging, blogging video-sites, wikis and social networks. These social media sites are characterized by inter-related communication technologies that allow people to engage in their local communities and the global community (Solomon et. al., 2010). Profiles, friends and comments are the pillars on which social media is built on. Social media sites are uncharted territory with potential for information aimed at mostly reaching

the youth. Social media is defined “as a group of internet based application that builds on the ideological and technological foundation of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (Bocconcelli et al., 2017).

According to Mangold & Faulds (2009) social media includes a wide array of online word of mouth conversations, company-sponsored discussion boards and chat rooms, consumer-to-consumer e-mail, consumers’ product or service ratings websites as well as forums as well as internet discussion boards and forums. Social media has been irreversible in the manner in which it has revamped marketing communications by switching methods in which consumers choose, share and assess information (Morrison,2015). With the emergence of social media, conventional media may have lost uninterrupted viewership and readership and their impact as advertising channels may have been weakened.

Companies are increasingly using social media platforms as part and parcel of the marketing and brand building activities, this is because there has been fast penetration of social media into the society though only few firms have able to get comfortable in this space (Morrison, 2015). Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter aid with the notion of connection, amongst the consumers themselves as well as between the firm and the customers (Waithaka,2013). This interactive nature of social media platforms allows those selling their products and services to communicate with their clients. Companies have the chance to share switch relationship from dialog and triologue with the consumers in order to ensure engagement of meaningful relationships (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). With the rate at which social media networks and Web 2.0 users are expanding, it becomes easier to share opinions about experiences on either the product or service hence influencing other users purchasing decisions (Mas-Machuca & Marimon, 2016).

Social media is described as media for social interaction using highly accessible and scalable communication techniques that can also be thought of as user-generated or consumer-generated content (Lin & Xu, 2017). Social media platforms offer a means of conspicuous consumption, whereby people can incorporate goods into their personal profiles, with little obligation to match this virtual consumption with their material reality. Social media channels are inexpensive, user-friendly, scalable internet, and mobile-based technologies that allow for the sharing of user-generated material (Sigala & Marinidis, 2009).

1.1.2 Consumer Purchasing Decisions

Consumer purchasing decisions refers to the process in which consumers identify their needs, collect information, evaluate alternatives and finally make the purchase decision. Solomon et. al. (2016) posit that consumer purchasing decisions is the study of the process involved when individuals or groups select, buy, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires. Bennet (1989) defines consumer buying decisions as the dynamic interaction of affect and cognition, behaviour and environmental events by which human beings conduct the exchange aspects of their lives.

Consumer purchasing decision is a process that starts way before the purchase is carried out and has consequences long afterward. Consumer purchasing process leads to the final decision-making which entails a model that has five stages of the classic model. First its problem recognition, then information search, then evaluation of alternatives after-which purchase decision and post-purchase behaviour follows (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). Marketers must identify how consumers actually make their buying decisions. Individuals can be initiators, as well as influencers, deciders, buyers or users and different marketing campaigns might be targeted to each type of person (Kotler, 2000).

Consumer purchasing decision encompasses making the actual decision of purchasing, consumer interaction as well as the range of experiences that associated with consuming is a part of consumer behaviour. Customers are required to make many decisions day in day out and hence, they are bombarded with information. In order to deal with the information overload, there are certain habits and heuristics that are used such as brands in the contemporary marketplace. Brands tend to facilitate many purchase decisions and offer assurance as they connect both current and future decisions and experiences ,satisfactions and knowledge (Hutter et al., 2013).

According to Blythe (2008) consumers' physical and social environment have a massive influence on consumer's purchase decision and can make a sizeable contrast in their desire and motives for the purchase of a product. One of the important aspects in consumer buying behaviour is social time, which typically means that the time relation to social processes and rhymes and schedules in society as working hours, opening hours, eating hours, and other institutionalized programmes (Solomon et al, 2010).

There is a list of factors that influence consumer purchase decisions (Kotler, 2001). Kotler categorized the factors into two categories, the market stimuli and buyer characteristics. The market stimuli include factors such as promotion, price, product and place. The buyer characteristics include factors such as culture, psychological, social and personal factors. Kotler (2001) postulates that in making their purchase decisions, consumers are confronted by choices among them the product choice, the brand choice, the dealer choice, the purchase timing and the purchasing amount.

Aaakar (1991) posits that brand choice refers to the attitudes about the existing brand alternatives from an arrangement of a preferential order regarding the brands. Purchase amount is the amount a consumer will pay for products or services. Purchase timing refers to the time that a consumer buys from a store. Store or dealer choice refers to the shop consumers will purchase products (Aakar, 2001). This study will focus on consumers' purchase decisions in regards to brand choice, product choice and dealer/store choice.

Consumers purchasing decisions are influenced by brand name, whereby a good brand name should go hand in hand with coming up with quality products. Product placement is also a key factor, having the brand pages in a manner that accessibility of it becomes easy will increase the engagement level of consumers with the product (Mas-Machuca & Marimon, 2016). Pricing is a factor to consider such that the challenge becomes how sensitive the target market is in relation to the product that is being sold or rather advertised. Another important factor is reputation, in that word of mouth aids in promoting and maintaining a positive reputation (Morrison, 2015). If there can be development of positive brand reputation in the market place, one is able to influence customer purchase decisions more frequently. Consumers will look at the product and what others have said about the favoured product over competitors (Kotler, 2002).

Rational consumer purchasing behaviour is based on the decision process, which involves the set of rules that the buyer employs to match his motives and his means of satisfying those motives (Howard & Sheth, 1969).

According to Bannister (2013) the aspects of consumer purchasing behaviour and decision-making can be broadly divided into three categories, the first being the process of brand choice that is preference, purchase, and repeat purchase (degree of brand loyalty). The second one is responses to marketing stimuli such as advertising exposure, consumer promotions and

incentives, pricing, packaging, in other words the entire field of 'effects' or results of multiple forces and inputs. Finally, the interplay of a variety of intervening explanatory variables such as perception, learning, memory, habit as well as cultural conditioning, socio-economic factors both demographic and behavioural which have been postulated by marketing theorists and by researchers in the fields of sociology, psychology, economics, social psychology, mass communication, media-all of which impinge upon market behaviour in the aggregate.

Every day, individuals that have active social media accounts log in order to touch base or rather interact with friends and colleagues. There are scenarios whereby the participants will interact with brands unequivocally such as liking a brand on Instagram or following a brand on Facebook. According to (Humphrey Jr et al., 2017) research indicates that consumer interactions with brand-generated content are minimal; only 0.1 per cent of consumers with brand content for the top 2,500 brands on social media. As a result, consumers reveal that brand preference through following brands on social media sites, but explicit follow-up consumer-to-brand interactions initiated by consumers are rare. These are referred to as brief brand encounters incidental consumer brand exposures by Ferraro et al (2009) whilst others refer to them as mere exposures (Fang et al., 2007).

Lin and Xu (2017) posit that most social media sites such as Facebook and Instagram provide open access mechanisms for publishing user-generated reviews which also tend to lead to social media communities among the consumer reviewers. According to Bannister (2013), opinions on social media about products do not necessarily mean that an individual will purchase the product. Such that, be it negative reviews or not, an individual would rather buy a product in order to try it out and form a personalized opinion about it as opposed to relying on other people's opinions. A Google analysis that was based on 57 million online reviews reported that approximately fifty percent of purchase decisions were influenced by consumer reviews (Morrison, 2015).

Online consumer reviews tend to profit from their referrals and receive advertising income hence making their credibility questionable (Chen et al, 2015). In as much as the spending power of consumers has increased in the last decade there is need for market research in order to understand what customers really want to associate with. Very little is known about how millennials respond to user-generated consumer reviews. Jembere et. al (2013) reveals that social media in African countries, particularly South Africa has had a positive impact on sales

especially for well established firms that are targeting young people, though if social media is not managed well it can have a huge effect on brand image.

Theories that can be used to explain consumer purchase decisions are theory of reasoned action and theory of planned behaviour (Ferraro et al 2009). These theories explain the reasons why buyers behave in the manner in which they do when faced with different situations. They also explain the marketing stimuli which influence consumer actions. The marketing mix when referring to the marketing stimuli includes; product, price, place and promotions. Other stimuli are such as social background, cultural background, lifestyles and group membership (Kotler, 2001).

Decision researchers that utilize an information processing perspective (Bettman, 1979) assert that decision-making could not be comprehended simply by scrutinizing the ultimate decision outcome (Svenson, 1979). Payne (1976) found that, faced with a vast number of choices, decision maker's first use less cognitively demanding decision strategies to eliminate unacceptable options until only a few alternatives are left as candidates for choice. Eventually, decision makers use more cognitively challenging decision strategies to choose between the remaining choices. Payne's (1976) view of a phased decision process has found aid from other behavioural researchers in the psychology and marketing disciplines (Wright and Barbour, 1977).

It is important to study consumer purchase decision because marketers gain a good insight and into understanding what makes consumers prefer one product over another product when being influenced by social media platforms. Marketers can use information gained by comprehending how consumers think, feel, reason and choose, in order to ensure that they model products and services that consumers will desire (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997). Additionally, marketers will be able to suggest these options to the consumer base in an irresistible way (Ketelaar et al., 2015). Firms that recognize the importance of social media platforms take into consideration where to post their products so that more consumers come into contact with the message they are trying to disperse in order to provide additional competitive advantage.

In Kenya, there is a rising online community that is a good target for advertisers and marketers. A good number of private companies and organizations both local and international have employed the use of social media to target the Kenya market. This is

evidenced by Google's Kenya Business Online Project which seeks to support Small and Medium Enterprises improve their visibility online. Big blue chip corporations are also increasing their brand communications in online SNS channels especially twitter and Facebook. Safaricom Kenya limited is especially renown for this.

The effect of social media on consumer satisfaction, trust and loyalty has been extensively discussed in various research articles. Various researchers have looked at these effects from different dimensions, but few have focused on the direct relationship between social media and the purchasing decision (Lindestard, 1998; Rehman, 1999; Trivellas et al., 2010; Jamal et al., 2002).

There are also controversies surrounding the influence of social media platforms on consumer purchase decisions. Jianging (2006) studied price, brand, product, purchase timing and dealer choice, however, the study indicated that there was no link between social media platforms and the purchasing behaviour of consumers. In addition, social media traffic also presents a higher bounce-rate of 85%, than search engine traffic of 50%, this means that individuals that access sites courtesy of social media platforms are less likely to become frequent customers. (LaDuque, 2010).

Despite these possible conveniences, companies must also be vigilant when using social media platforms such as Facebook. This is because culture has developed on the website, and companies must be careful to abide by the cultural norms present on the site (Vorvoreanu, 2009). To apprehend how companies could effectively engage in public relations on Facebook, Vorvoreanu (2009) conducted six focus groups with 35 college students. Vorvoreanu realized some users feel as though corporations do not belong on the site, as it was meant for friends to interact. However, other studies show that many users view their profiles as a means of self-expression, and becoming fans of a company allows them to express their interests.

Wheeller (2004) believes that Instagram users use the filters to manipulate or enhance a picture as a result, many users refrain from being impacted to purchase a product and consider social media to be an untrustworthy research tool. Some users are aware of this editing facility seeing that they use them themselves and hence may be jaded when they see posts on social media.

Comments that are posted anonymously don't necessarily affect consumer purchase intention. According to Harris and Dennis (2011) research findings, reviews from friends are trusted more than anonymous reviews, and this provides an explanation why respondents did not associate general Facebook user's comments to their purchase decision. Though, the findings from this study contradicted Ewing (2009) and Fournier and Avery's (2011) who were of the opinion that consumers do take notice of what other people are sharing their experiences through Facebook.

While studying travel buying behavior in social network site users, Rondán-Cataluña, Arenas-Gaitán, and Ramírez-Correa (2015) found that SNS use does not influence purchase behaviour in the sample of Social Network Sites (SNS) users under study in the tourist sector. This fact means that the features which have shown a deep impact on SNS-related models are not relevant in purchase behaviour even for potential clients who are connected to SNS. Therefore, the purchase behaviour and social network behaviour of potential tourist clients are influenced by different variables. This contradicts the findings by Parsons (2017) who found that social media significantly influenced travel decisions.

Otugo et al. (2015) and Adelabu (2015) note that social media advertisements appear limited in driving purchasing decisions among students in Nigeria. They note that despite the positive view held by students in higher institutions on social media advertisements, majority of them do not automatically respond to the advertising messages and take purchasing decisions as expected by the advertisers. On the other hand, Bailey and iModerate in the United States of America as cited in eMarketer (2010) revealed that social media users, particularly students, are more likely to purchase products that they are exposed to online. In the study, more than one-half of students who were Facebook fans said they are more likely to make a purchase for at least a few brands and 67% of Twitter followers reported the same. 60% of respondents on Facebook would recommend a brand to a friend.

1.1.3 Overview of Strathmore University

This study will be focusing on undergraduate students, specifically Bachelor of Commerce students. This is because Strathmore University is a multi-cultural as well as multi-religious and the generation is young hence it will possible to get information from individuals of different backgrounds. Also, these students can access good infrastructure hence the

assurance that they access and they know of the existence and use of the social media platforms.

Students at Strathmore University are exposed to many social media platforms. Among these social media platforms are YouTube, Instagram and Facebook. This study sought to find out how social media platforms influenced consumer purchasing decisions amongst students at Strathmore University.

1.2 Problem Statement

University students in Kenya form a large proportion of social media users which makes them a crucial target by businesses and various brands in their marketing and advertising platforms (Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2014). Most business face fierce competition and therefore, many have considered posting about their products and services that they render online, aiming to attract the same customer base (Morrison, 2015). In order for a firm or business to have a competitive advantage, social media posts have to be frequent and informative as well. It should be noted that marketers have also increased their social media budgets, in Africa to be specific is speculated to have the highest social media advertising spend growth at 64 percent (eMarketer, 2014).

As businesses strive to capitalize on the student market in Kenya, they have to be cognizant of the differing influence of various social media platforms in order to understand the most efficient blend of platforms to use in order to gain competitive advantage (Waithaka,2013).. Nyagucha (2017) found that WhatsApp was more preferred among university students in Kenya, followed by Youtube, Instagram, Facebook and Google + respectively. On the contrary, Ochieng (2012) discovered that Facebook was the most influential among the university students followed by Twitter, Google+ and LinkedIn. However, there seems to lack clarity on whether these social media platforms influence purchase decisions among university students.

In his quest to explain the nature of the relationship between social media platforms and consumer purchase decision, Weisberg et al., (2001) argued that consumers go on social media so that they can learn about products that are trending and the price for the particular products or service. On the other hand, in as much as products are posted on social media, it does not translate to sales being made on these products (Weisberg et al., 2011). The findings

of Jianging (2006) indicated that there was no relationship between social media platforms and the purchasing behaviour of consumers. Bilal et. Al (2014) found that every stage in the purchase decision making process was influenced to unalike extent by social media platforms.

Richard and Guppy (2014) found that posting comments on social media showed no significant effect on purchase intention while Shao and Ross (2015) found that posts or comments on social media pages by users were considered a participatory behaviour hence will have an impact on decisions that the consumers will partake. Another contradiction is also found in the findings of a study by Harris and Dennis (2011) that anonymous comment postings on social media platforms do not significantly affect consumer purchase intention which contradicted that of Ewing (2009) and Fournier and Avery's (2011) view that consumers are aware and conscious of other people sharing their experiences through social media platforms which influences their purchase decisions.

In the context of university students, Bannister et al. (2013) found that the attitudes of university students towards social media advertising were negative. Respondents divulged that social media advertisements were primarily uninformative, irrelevant and not interesting hence they don't tend to click on them. Furthermore, a majority of college students stated that they would not make a purchase owing to social media advertising. This is in line with Otugo et al. (2015) and Adelabu (2015) who note that despite the positive view held by students in higher institutions on social media advertisements, majority of them do not automatically respond to the advertising messages and take purchasing decisions as expected by the advertisers. However, this is not the case for other students who are more likely to purchase products that they are exposed to online (eMarketer, 2014).

Therefore, with these contradictory study results regarding social media use and consumer purchasing decisions particularly among students, it becomes difficult to automatically imply that social media influences the purchase decisions of this market segment. Therefore, a study to approve or disapprove these findings was crucial for informed recommendations to be made. Various researchers had looked at the influence of social media platforms on consumer purchase decision in different contexts but few had focused on the influence of social media platforms on consumers purchasing decisions amongst university students in the Kenyan context such as Lim et al., (2014), Munguatasha et al., (2011) and Hamade (2013). This study

was therefore fundamental in assessing the influence of social media platforms on consumer purchasing decisions among university students with a particular focus on Strathmore University students.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 Main Objective of the Study

The key objective of the study was to assess the influence of social media platforms on consumer purchasing decisions among Strathmore University students.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To establish the extent to which Strathmore University students use social media platforms in their purchase decisions.
- ii. To examine the extent to which Facebook influences purchase decisions amongst Strathmore University students.
- iii. To examine the extent to which YouTube influences the purchase decisions amongst Strathmore University students.
- iv. To examine the extent to which Instagram influences the purchase decisions amongst Strathmore University students.
- v. To find the extent to which social media platforms influence purchasing decisions among Strathmore University students.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What extent does Strathmore University students use social media platforms in their purchase decisions?
- ii. What extent does Facebook influence the purchase decisions of Strathmore University students?
- iii. What extent does YouTube influence the purchase decisions of Strathmore University students?
- iv. What extent does Instagram influence the purchase decisions of Strathmore University students?
- v. What extent does social media platforms influence purchasing decisions among Strathmore University students?

1.5 Justification of the Study

This study would be beneficial to businesses and firms with knowledge on the manner in which social media platforms influenced consumers purchasing decisions. It would also enable them to know the extent to which Strathmore University students use Facebook, Instagram and YouTube prior to purchasing products and services. Secondly, the study would provide knowledge to the marketers on which social media platform was most preferred by university students.

Customers and the general public will also benefit from the research by understanding the social media platforms that are mostly preferred. This will come in handy when they are making decisions with regards to what products to buy, the brand choices to be made, the dealer choice, the purchasing timing as well as purchasing amount.

The study would benefit academicians by providing an explanation of the relationship between social media platforms and consumer purchase decision. Future scholars would also benefit from this study as they continue in the pursuit of further studies in this topic.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study was confined to assessing the influence of social media use on consumer purchasing decisions of students at Strathmore University. The study focused on Strathmore University because the university recognized the importance of ensuring participation in online social media platforms not only among staff but also students. This was supported by the fact that the university had an established online social media policy which was intended to guide all staff and students on the use of the online social media space both when participating personally in a manner that may affect the University as well as when acting on behalf of Strathmore University (Communication and University Relations Department, 2016). The study targeted 1083 undergraduate students at Strathmore University in all the four years of study. The study will be undertaken in Strathmore University due to the multi-religious as well as multi-cultural nature of the students in the campus. The campus is encompassed with students that are tech-savvy due to the infrastructure at their disposal hence the generalizations made will be in accordance to what students in private universities feel about the influence of social media platforms on consumer purchase decisions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the literature reviewed. It entails the theoretical framework, which looks at the theories which the study was anchored on; the empirical review, the conceptual framework and the identified research gaps.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on two theories, that is, Theory of Planned Behaviour and Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA).

2.2.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour

The theory of planned behaviour is an extension of the theory of reasoned action and it has been instrumental in both explaining and predicting behaviour. It offers an absolute yet parsimonious psychological theory that identifies a causal structure for explaining a wide range of human behaviour including consumer behaviour (Morris et al, 2005). Intentions are known to be the pre-cursors of behaviour (Hegner, Fenko and Teravest, 2017).

Ajzen (2011) posits that intention is a direct function of the attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norm and control. Subjective norm tends to refer to the individual's perceptions of general social pressure. If an individual perceives that significant others endorse the behaviour, they are more likely to intend to show the behaviour. Attitude towards the behaviour reflects the individual's favourable or unfavourable evaluations of performing particular behaviour.

One of the main strengths of this theory is the fact that it has been used in numerous fields to study and predict behaviours of people. This theory also explains how consumers perceive the use of social media and the extent to which they use the platforms to actually buy a product. Notably, we should be able to understand the impact of use of social media to people around us.

This theory has been criticized to be purely logical, not taking into account both the cognitive and affective factors that are known to bias human judgments and behaviour. Ajzen (2011) posits that a misinterpretation of the theory would be to perceive it as consisting of solely rational and controlled aspects as a result it leads to depict that the theory posits an impassionate, rational person that reviews all available information in an objective way to arrive at a decision (Hegner et al., 2017).

According to Ajzen (1985, 1991) theory of planned behaviour is an extension of the theory of reasoned action. For this theory, attitude toward the target behaviour and subjective norms about engaging in the behaviour are thought to influence intention and theory of planned behaviour includes perceived behavioural control over engaging in the behaviour as a factor influencing intention. Factors such as product choice, brand choice, dealer choice, purchasing amount and purchasing timing will be studied in order to understand which one has an effect on purchasing behaviour and purchasing decision. The attitude towards the social media platforms namely Instagram, Facebook as well as YouTube will be examined.

An individual's conduct of certain behaviour is determined by his or her intent to perform that behaviour. An individual's attitudes toward a behaviour is informed by intent, subjective norms about engaging in the behaviour and perceptions about whether the individual will be able to successfully engage in the target behaviour (George, 2004). According to Ajzen (1985) an attitude can either be negative or positive depending on the behaviour. Attitudes tend to be informed by beliefs; norms are informed by normative beliefs and motivation to comply and perceived behavioural control is informed by beliefs about the individual's possession of the opportunities and resources needed to engage in the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Ajzen compares Bandura's concept of perceived self-efficacy to perceived control (Bandura, 1997). Theory of planned behavioural also includes a direct link between perceived behavioural control and behavioural achievement. Given two individuals with the same level of intention to engage in a behaviour, the one with more confidence in his or her abilities is more likely to succeed than one who has doubts (Ajzen, 1991).

This theory attempts to explain the relationship between attitudes and social influences on intentions and behaviour. According to this theory, a person's intention to perform a given behaviour is the immediate determinant of the action and thus tends to play an important role

in understanding the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). This theory explains how consumers perceive the different social media platforms amongst students in universities.

2.2.2 Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

A person's intention is a function of two basic determinants, one being personal whilst the other reflects on social influence. The personal factor is one's positive or negative evaluation of performing the behaviour (attitude toward behaviour). The other determinant is the perception of the social pressure put on the individual to perform or not to perform the behaviour in question seeing as it deals with perceived prescriptions (subjective norm) (Lada, Harvey Tanakinjal and Amin, 2009).

Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) developed the theory of reasoned action model. It is a belief-attitude-behavioural intention model that postulates that an individual's perception of what others consider relevant is affected by their intention and that attitude plays a major role in predicting behaviour. This theory was useful in this study in that it helped to understand what drives consumer purchase decision. Furthermore, it was useful in determining the extent to which social media influenced consumer purchasing decisions.

Choong (1998) posits that the theory of reasoned action was constructed in order to demonstrate how a consumer leads to a certain buying behaviour (Fishbein, 1980). This theory argues that attitude towards buying and subjective norm are the antecedents of performed behaviour (attitude and subjective norm). This theory is useful in this study because it will enable marketers understand the social media platform that consumers prefer in order to help them in making purchase decisions. Attitude and subjective norm influence the purchase decision as well as purchase behaviour additively though a conceptual argument was developed earlier leading to an interaction and direct effects. Two arguments offered by Lutz (1991) when using theory of reasoned action are, first, a person's attitude has to be measured toward performing a particular behaviour and finally, the subjective norm is intended to measure the social influences on a person's behaviour. It is important to pinpoint the factors that influence consumer purchase decision and the extent to which social media influences the decisions to purchase product or service.

In essence, the model focuses on an individual's motivations as determinants of the probability of engaging in a specific behaviour is driven by their intention to act and the latter

is influenced by their attitude toward this behaviour and the way their subjective norms affect their thought patterns (Netemeyer et al., 1993). This study expounded on the link between social media platforms and consumer purchase decisions, focusing on the elements that propelled consumers into buying a product or service.

For this study, the intention was to focus on the attitude-intention path and test a reduced TRA model that does not include subjective norms because the latter are viewed as having an external locus of causality, involving plans and behaviours that are initiated and pursued as a result of pressures that are external to the self (Bagozzi et al., 2000; Sheeran et al., 1999).

Customers have massive responsiveness to elements such as the product choice, the brand choice, the dealer choice, the purchasing timing and the purchasing amount and therefore these elements can have an effect of consumer purchase decision. Social media platforms enable consumers understand the products or services that are being offered and the consumer is in a position to make an informed decision based on the details provided. They study used this theory to explain how social media influenced consumer purchasing decision of students.

The use of Theory of Reasoned Action is used to predict behavioural intention. The attitude towards behaviour and the subjective norms which emerge from social influence tend to affect an individual's beliefs. Such that the belief about the result of behaviour and the evaluation of the result shapes the attitude. In this case, this theory would enable the understanding the extent of use of social media platforms in the purchase of products and services by Strathmore University students.

2.3 Empirical Review

This section looks at the different types of social media platforms namely as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. The relationship between these platforms and consumer purchasing decisions is also examined.

2.3.1 Social Media Platforms

To define what social media platforms is based only on those that presently exist is limiting. In order for the definition and approach to be sustainable, there is need to take into consideration the new social media platforms that are constantly being developed, and the

likelihood that some will become very successful in the future (Hegner et al., 2017). It helps that there is a pattern in the way new forms of social media emerge. Some of these platforms have scaled down from public broadcasting, while others have reduced from private communication (Hegner, Fenko & Teravest, 2017). Some of the common social media platforms include Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube. For the interest and purpose of carrying out this study, the focused on Facebook and consumer decisions, YouTube and consumer decisions as well as Instagram and consumer decisions. The study focused on these three platforms because they had been found to be the most popular among a large number of students when compared to others such as Pinterest and Google+.

Facebook is now being used by everybody, but initially used by college students. It belongs to a new category of websites that focus on social networking thus it allows users to express themselves, interact with friends, share personal information with friends as well as publish their own views on issues on the Internet (Hardwick et al., 2013). Facebook endures as the most favoured interactive Internet platform where people meet, discuss issues and share ideas. It is the most popular social networking site in several countries that are English-speaking. In fact, it is the leading social networking site based on ComScore Agency Reports, cited in Wikipedia (2013). On the fast growth of Facebook, Moriarty, Mitchell, and Wells (2009) maintains that by 2007, the smaller but still phenomenally popular Facebook had created a community of 24 million members, comprising mainly university friends and colleagues that share personal life moments. By 2017, Facebook had 1.94 billion monthly active users (Kallas, 2017).

The website was created in February 2005, by two former PayPal employees that were unsatisfied with the experience of video sharing and visualization of videos on the Internet (Stone, 2006). The competitive advantage of their platform was that it was based on a conversion system that transformed different formats of videos in Adobe Flash format, which enabled a better streaming experience (Chang & Lewis, 2009). The YouTube model was created giving freedom to users to upload their own content, where anyone can view it. The videos present nowadays in YouTube go from a variety of homemade videos to professional ones, being many of them developed by brands/companies.

YouTube allows users, which can be individual customers or even institutions, to have their own channel. On the channel users can promote their content, organizing it in many ways, while other users can subscribe/follow the channel. Subscribers of a specific channel will receive notifications about that channel's activity, which can be a new video, a comment from the owner of the channel on some content, or even a recommendation through "liking a video". This channel structure gives YouTube a huge potential that should be explored by brands, as their own channel can represent them. YouTube allows consumers to define their relationships with products or brands freely and in a creative way (Pace, 2008); and millions of internet users have become self-broadcasting consumers (Harris, 2012). By 2017, YouTube had 1 billion monthly active users (Kallas, 2017).

Instagram was introduced as a smart-phone photo-sharing app with the purpose of taking photos and sharing it after applying different filters in the social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Flickr (Benjamin, 2012). The platform can be used on all different operation systems and is suitable for almost all kinds of devices (Raice & Spencer, 2012). It was created by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger and launched on the 6th of October 2010 and considered as one of the most popular social media applications and (Instagram, 2011). Instagram currently has 700 million monthly active users and more than 400 million of them are active daily (Instagram, 2017). Instagram videos have 2 times the engagement of any other social media platform (Aslam, 2017). Instagram is estimated to be of approximately \$50 billion and it was bought for \$1 billion by Facebook (Hutchinson, 2017). According to SproutSocial.com (2017), 59% of Instagram users are between 18 and 29 years old, followed by 33% between 30 and 49; 18% are between 50 and 64; and the remaining 8% are over 65 years old.

2.3.2 Social Media Platforms used in Consumer Purchasing Decisions

Nyagucha (2017) assessed the impact of social media on the decision making process among the youth in Nairobi. A descriptive research design was used for the study. The study targeted students in institutions of higher learning namely Daystar University, Strathmore University, St. Paul's University, University of Nairobi and Technical University of Kenya. Nairobi County aged 18-35 years. The study findings showed that WhatsApp was more preferred followed by YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and Google + respectively in making purchase

decisions. The study found that the social media had an impact on the students' pre-purchase, purchase stage, and post-purchase stage.

Ochieng (2012) assessed the find out the effectiveness of social networking sites (SNS) advertisements among college going students using the case of University of Nairobi students. The study adopted descriptive study design. The study found that SNS advertisements had a positive effect on products awareness, purchasing intent and brand loyalty. The study found that over half of university students who were on SNS were subscribed to more than one service. However, Facebook was the most influential in influencing purchase decisions among the students followed by Twitter, Google+ and LinkedIn. The students on social networking sites did interact with adverts on SNS. Brand or product information obtained on social media was found to influence the students' attitudes towards them. The study found that beyond knowledge reasons, SNS was increasingly becoming the first port of call before purchasing decisions were made hence a key determiner of purchasing intent.

Al-Dhuhli and Ismael (2013) investigated the impact of social media on consumer buying behaviour among students in Omani. The study used mixed methods research design. The study found that most students who shopped online selected Instagram as a prime tool to buy online comparing to previous studies which stated that Facebook had the highest rate respond among western users. From the analysis, Instagram had great impact on fashion products because it had features of displaying products in fashionable images and videos which as a result attracted more student consumers, especially females who were affected mostly by informational, design, psychological and cultural factors. The study concluded that the students believed that Instagram was the best and suitable tool to buy fashion products online.

Bilal, Ahmed, and Shehzad (2014) examined the part of social media (YouTube, Blogs, and Twitter etc.) and social networks (Facebook, Google, LinkedIn) on consumer decision making in context of the apparel industry. The study was based on a survey of students and faculty of University of Gujrat, Pakistan. The study found observed that whether or not students were using these social media platforms, their usage of these platforms led to an influence or change in their purchasing patterns regarding different products and services. The results showed that the students mostly preferred Facebook and YouTube in making their purchase decisions. The results revealed that online media had a strong influence on the

purchase decisions of the students. The study found that students used the various platforms as sources for obtaining information about different companies, their brands, products and services. According to the study, every stage in the purchase decision making process was impacted to different extent by online social networks.

Mwaisaka (2017) investigated the influence of social media on the consumer decision making process in the cosmetic industry in Nairobi County. A descriptive cross sectional survey design was adopted and targeted all women above the age of 18 years in Nairobi. The study findings indicated that individuals pursue a very active role in information search as well as comparison of alternative cosmetic products on social media mainly from Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Pinterest in that order. The study also concluded that there existed a positive relationship between the number of hours an individual spends on social media and their decision to purchase a cosmetic product. The study further recommended that cosmetic brands to carefully consider which social media platforms to take up based on popularity in order to ensure more targeted and successful social media campaign.

Reis (2015) assessed the influencing factors on consumer buying behaviour of luxury goods focusing on the buying behaviour of young consumers in Finland. The study used a descriptive research design and targeted 20-26-year-old students and working students currently living in Finland. Considering the four social media (Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and Blogs), blogs were identified as the most common influencers that resulted in a purchase decision being made. Respondents seemed to find Instagram as having the least effect on actual purchasing, but it was identified as a source of inspiration. Contrary to theory, social media was not seen as important in terms of influencing the purchase decision of the students. All students under study had a Facebook account while very many had an Instagram account, however most agreed that these media did not affect their purchase decision that much.

2.3.2.1 Facebook and Consumer Purchase Decisions

Facebook has been able to give marketers a means for direct interaction with consumers and constitute an exemplary environment for creating online brand communities. According to Facebook's filing of 2012 (Facebook, 2012) more than four million companies have their own brand pages on the social network as a result online brand communities on Facebook have become the most prominent channel for companies to communicate about their products (Hutter et al., 2013). Brand managers aim to focus on social media activities with an attempt

to initiate and extend meaningful engagement online brand communities on Facebook. In as much as there has been significant growth in social media, the benefits of social media for business is unclear. It is paramount to understand what pushes consumers to like a brand's Facebook page and what influences their willingness to contribute to the co-creation of value through posting their behaviour in the Facebook site.

Facebook becomes important to individuals that rely on the social media site to meet their needs. According to Mehrabian and Russell (1974), researchers found that the nature of an environment influences an individual's motivation to engage. Facebook provides a platform whereby user's gratification include socializing, entertainment and information seeking and this may lead to the users liking a brand hence having the need to purchase it due to conversation that have taken place with other users about the brand (Shao & Ross, 2015).

Facebook enables consumers to exert a greater influence on products and brands that they would consider for purchase. Posts or comments on Facebook pages by users is considered a participatory behaviour hence will have an impact on decisions that the consumers will partake (Shao & Ross, 2015). The amount of information available to both the business and the consumer when it comes to Facebook pages is vast. This information helps the customers make balanced and objective assessments about business and the products that they have to offer (McCarthy et al. 2010).

Brands posting on Facebook need to create exciting content, interaction and advocacy via social conduits in order to initiate relationships that would lead to intention to purchase (Maxwell, 2013). A study conducted by Persuad (2013) found that high levels of interactivity on Facebook were positively correlated to the decision making process as well as the purchasing process. Baretto (2013) determined that Facebook advertising resulted in lower purchase consideration levels in comparison to the word of mouth by friends.

Gelles (2010) suggests that Facebook likes aid firms in increasing brand awareness and engagement, hence return on investment is contributes to positively (Barnard & Knapp, 2011). The value of each consumer that likes a brand on Facebook has increased an average of 28 per cent over past couple of years (PR Newswire, 2013). Consumers that are engaged in research on products are likely to be satisfied with the brand that they choose and they will continue using it in the future (Smith, 2013).

Darban and Li (2012) examined the impact of online social networks (Facebook) on consumers' purchasing decision process in food retailer shops among students at Jönköping University. The study was based on a qualitative research methodology. The study found out that online social networks impacted every step of students' purchasing decision process to different extent regarding food retailer shops. The reasons were mainly because Facebook's features brought convenience to students, students spent more time on it, and Facebook's features allowed consumers to interact with supermarkets and other consumers and see comments from other consumers on supermarkets' Facebook pages. The study found that when students made purchasing decision regarding food retailers, online social networks influenced information search step the most, followed by purchase decision and evaluation of alternatives. Online social networks also impacted problem recognition and post-purchase evaluation steps but not as much as other steps.

Senthilkumar, Ramachandran, and Anand (2013) assessed the influence of electronic word-of-mouth over Facebook on consumer purchase decisions among students at SRM University, India. An exploratory survey research was conducted. The study manifested a comprehensible link between seeking product related recommendation over Facebook and purchasing products or services based on the Facebook friends' recommendations. The outcome also proved that there was a compelling relationship between perceived use and perceived ease of use of Facebook in pursuing product recommendations over Facebook by the students. This study emphasized the role of Facebook as a medium of communication where students shared freely product related inputs which otherwise does not take place in the real life face-to-face circumstances.

Sue (2012) examined the effect of social media, particularly Facebook, on the purchasing habits of college students from a Midwestern university. The study used a mixed methods research design. Findings revealed that Facebook was being used to obtain sales information and promotions. Furthermore, gender had an impact on this social networking site. Additionally, this study found the higher the frequency of social media usage (Facebook), the more likely customers were to shop at the businesses they have befriended.

Akpan et. al (2015) investigated the influence of Facebook advertisement on buying behaviour of undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria. The survey method was adopted. The study findings indicated that it was not certain whether the students patronized

the products because while (54.80%) patronized the products, (45.20%) did not patronize the products. This showed that there was no significant margin between those that patronized the products and those who did not. Although a majority of the students, representing 66.10%, felt like patronizing the products after viewing the advertisements only 54.80% that actually patronized the product. This called for more collaborative efforts on the part of ad agencies and advertisers to make the ads on Facebook more enticing as well as put all details needed for ease of patronage of the advertised product.

Kaur et. al (2014) assessed the impact of social media on the decision making process amongst university students in Malaysia. A descriptive research design was used. The social media platforms under study were community blogs, twitter and Facebook. The findings showed that social media does influence the consumer decision making process at every level using the EKB Five steps model. The findings indicated that in problem recognition, individual may have been prompted by internal or external stimuli; in this research the social media sites were the external stimuli. 69 % of respondents believed it was a trigger to perform a purchase. The findings also indicated that social media provided a strong platform where students could notice new products, services or even new brands in the marketplace. The findings also showed that after the purchase of the products or services, the students were likely to share their opinions (comments, reviews or related articles) on social media.

Richard and Guppy (2014) investigated the influence of Facebook applications and tasks on consumers purchase intention and provided awareness into whether consumers observe their peer's activity on Facebook and whether that activity influenced consumer purchase intention. The study was based on an online survey of Facebook users. The study found that that the use of Facebook's like button, location based check-in service and the share button applications positively influenced consumers purchase intention. Posting comments on Facebook showed no significant effect on purchase intention. Consequently, the study recommended that marketers should plan to add activities on their Facebook page to help create brand, product or service awareness, and stimulate sales. Shopping through social media is a key for the future.

2.3.2.2 YouTube and Consumer Purchase Decisions

YouTube is a video based communication medium, and it has been successful as a channel to express feeling, communicate with friends and advertise business messages. It is paramount

to note that not all content posted on YouTube get desired attention and only a fraction can reach a large audience, particularly the videos posted by social media marketers expecting millions of views (Vong, 2014). E-wom is defined as any positive or negative statement made by customers (potential, actual or former) about a product or company which is made available to a great number of people and institutes via the internet.

Businesses with YouTube pages or influencers that get to review products or services should be aware of the fact that as the number of total videos posted increase the chance of a video to go viral posted by the same user decreases proportionally. On the other hand, as the video published date increases, the chance of the video getting viral also decreases proportionally (Cha et. al, 2007). This suggests that users should avoid posting too many videos, because this will negatively impact on the chances of the video going viral. As a result, it will have an impact on the number of people that come across the product or service being reviewed.

A popular way to deliver product information to customers is through online a video advertising; this is because it increases the sales of products and services. This study will be able to reveal the attitudes of online video advertising influence shopping intention. People may be absorbed by the product or service information when paying attention whilst watching online video advertising. If people watch the videos they may be attracted by the content and have intention or behaviour to buy things. In a scenario whereby consumers have enough information, they trust and enjoy the videos that they are watching hence may have appositve attitude for their shopping intentions and behaviour (Yang et al., 2017).

According to Ducoffe (1996) special media advertising value is a measure of advertising effectiveness. The study research findings indicated the role of advertising value in Web advertising context scrutinize the determinants of advertising value. When consumers watch online advertising they need to know the product information, enjoyment and trust of the brand. Consumers may not be disturbed by advertising when they go through the web pages (Pheiffer e. al., 2014).

Interactions that take place in the comments section on YouTube channel between the followers will have an impact on purchasing decisions such that it gives the followers a chance to comment on products that are being reviewed. Alternative products may be recommended. Friends' recommendations may be considered to be an influential source of product information. People tend to be more receptive to information from family and friends

(Iyengar et al., 2011). According to a study by Moore (2012) E-wom communication influences consumer assessment of consumption experiences. Researchers contend that social networks have changed consumer-to-consumer communication, and these social networks have become an important marketing tool (Chu & Kim, 2011).

O'Connor (2016) conducted a study on 'Millennials and YouTube with an aim to investigate the influence of user-generated video content on the consumer decision making process. The study assessed the usage of YouTube among Millennials, determined Millennials attitudes towards advertising on YouTube, compared the roles of peer reviewed content to branded content on Millennials decision making process and determined effect of source credibility on millennials purchase decisions. The researcher opted to use qualitative research methods, selecting semi-structured interviews as the data collection tool. The major findings from the research were that millennials actively seek out recommendations from their peers by watching a variety of UGC on YouTube. One of the key findings showed that millennials trusted people over brands when it comes to making purchase decisions. The study proposed that marketers ought to use these findings to restructure the marketing strategies targeted at millennials or post millennial generations.

Dehghani et. Al (2016) evaluated the influence of YouTube advertising for attraction of young customers namely students at Sapienza University of Rome. A descriptive survey design was used. The study found that entertainment, informativeness and customization were the strongest positive drivers of brand awareness, and accordingly on purchase intention of consumers, while irritation was negatively related to YouTube advertising. The study concluded that consumers' perception on YouTube advertising was linked to purchase intention and that customization through YouTube advertising played a main role on advertisement value.

Yüksel (2016) sought to identify the factors that affected purchase intention of consumers who watch product related YouTube videos. Online questionnaires for consumers who watched make-up / beauty videos on YouTube were used to investigate the hypotheses. Structural equation modelling approach was used to explore the relationships in the model. The findings reveal that product related videos on YouTube are important for influencing consumers' purchase intentions. In addition, several factors affect purchase intention on different levels. Perceived usefulness of the information had a significant positive effect on

attitude toward purchase and purchase intention. According to the study, consumers considered YouTube contents useful if they thought that information given in the videos would enhance their purchase performance and reduce the risk in making decisions, so the perception of usefulness would have an effect on attitude and intention toward purchase.

Vähäajlkkä and Lepistö (2017) explored YouTubers' impact on viewers' buying behavior. The sample was formed of Finnish female lifestyle YouTubers' viewers between the ages of 16 to 23. The study applied a qualitative research methodology where interviews were conducted. The study found that all the eight respondents experienced need recognition, information search and purchase. Six of them evaluation of alternatives and seven of them post-purchase behaviour. The study also found that the number of YouTubers recommending the product was mentioned as an external influencer. This indicated that perhaps using similar commercialized content for different YouTubers could create trust among viewers which contributed to being influenced. If the viewer experienced the recommendations in a positive form, it contributed to being influenced and purchasing the product.

Wang (2015) examined the relationship between attitudes toward user-generated content (UGC) on YouTube, the perceived credibility of UGC, and the factors that influenced purchase intention of products being reviewed. This study aimed to answer the question whether differences existed between active and passive YouTube users' attitudes toward UGC and their purchase intentions. One hundred and seventy adult consumers aged 18 to 65 and who were YouTube users completed the online survey. Active users and passive users not only held different attitudes toward UGC and different purchase intentions for the products being reviewed, but also the predictive power was varied. For active users, parasocial interaction explained the most variance of purchase intentions; however, user activity had the most predictive power for passive users on their future buying behaviour.

2.3.2.3 Instagram and Consumer Purchase Decisions

People's increasing preference for images and visual content is a trend on social media this is because consumer's brains can consume process and understand more information faster through images than through text (Neher, 2013). Building awareness, increasing traffic, conversation and shares are a result of images and visual content that is posted to social media (Neher, 2013). Instagram has a higher level of usage for interaction, co-creation and engagement as compared to other platforms (Coelho et al.,2016). According to a consumers'

usage study of social media carried out by Phua et al. (2017), Instagram was the most frequently used platform to follow brands.

Instagram authorizes the creation of individual and brand profiles which are used as interaction tools. This social medium uses features that are similar to other medium such as Facebook and Twitter, such that followers can share, like as well as comment on the pages. According to Boyd and Ellison (2007) users can incorporate personal and professional profiles information, upload photos and invite friends while brands can connect to their consumers and publicize marketing related material. There are studies that discovered that content such as entertainment and information raises the number of likes, comments and shares (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013) while others had no impact (De Vries et al., 2012). A study carried out by De Vries et al. (2012) invokes four specific types of content, namely: interactive, informative, entertaining and contrasting.

Accounts can either be private or public, such that images posted on public accounts can be viewed by everyone whilst accounts that are private can only be viewed by users that have been approved to see them. The success of an account is indicated by the number of followers and the engagement levels of the account. Interaction on Instagram can take place through the comments and the likes that are posted in response to a post by the account holder. These comments can either be positive or negative which could have an impact on sales if a product or service is either being promoted or advertised (De Vries et al., 2012). When a consumer comments on a brand's Instagram post, in addition to his or her friends on his or her own profile, anyone who views the brand's post can also see the comment, even though the consumer does not know those viewers personally. Commenting behaviour allows consumers to share their opinions about or agreement or disagreement with the content on the Instagram's page, created either by the brand itself or other visitors.

The company should maintain a balance as to when and how often it engages in user's social media feeds this is to reduce the risk of being perceived as a spammer (Keitzmeann et al., 2012). A company should balance between those that they follow and those that follow them (Miles, 2014). In order to manage the spam, they should only follow users that follow them.

Jargalsaikhan and Korotina (2016) explored the attitudes towards Instagram micro-celebrities and their influence on consumers' purchasing decisions in Sweden. A qualitative approach was applied in this study. The study found that consumers mostly had a positive attitude

towards micro-celebrities as a phenomenon. The attitude towards promotion done by micro-celebrities was found to be dependent on the type of marketing tool: discount code offering was found to be the most attractive tool of promotion done by micro-celebrities, followed by advice giving, and product placement was found to be least favorable. Discount code offering influences most of the stages of consumer decision making process including the actual purchase; product placement and advice giving each influenced two stages of consumer's decision making process, however, out of those two only product placement influenced the actual purchase. Product placement influenced the actual purchase even though the attitude towards this kind of promotion was mostly negative.

Parsons (2017) sought to find out whether social media particularly Instagram had impacts upon an individual's decision to visit a tourist destination. This study found that social media impacted upon the motivation of a tourist and in turn influenced tourist decision-making behaviour. The study noted that additional information was often gathered at the during-trip stage of the travel planning process where Instagram was used to find different attractions. The study found that Instagram, primarily influenced the younger generation due to their predominant presence on the platforms and that, the pressure surrounding it had caused a trend amongst younger people to go travelling to different destinations.

Shuqair and Cragg (2017) measured the immediate impact of User- Generated- Contents (UGC) in forms of Instagram images on changing the viewer's perceptions towards a travel destination. An experimental research design was used. The study targeted students at Bahrain Polytechnic campus. The findings showed that Instagram posts were effective in changing the viewers' perceptions and it can influence viewers' behavioural intentions during the pre-visitation stage. As Instagram provides individuals with the opportunity to share their experience with others, several destinations collaborated with SNSs influencers as part of their promotional campaigns to create favourable destination image, increase the exposure to their destinations and attract prospective travellers. The study found that Instagram images provided a medium that better communicated the functional attributes of a destination.

2.4 Research Gaps

While various authors that social media platforms have an influence on purchasing decisions, very little attention is given to the specific variables that lead to the actual purchase of products and services in universities. Nyagucha (2017) and Ochieng (2012), showed the

extent to which various social media platforms had been used by university/college students in their purchase decisions but with mixed findings.

The review showed that much concentration had been directed to Facebook use (for instance, studies by Ramezani & Sali (2016) while Instagram and YouTube had received little attention in this setting despite findings from other scholars on the increasing use of these two social media platforms among students. The existing studies on influence of Instagram and YouTube did not clearly show how the purchase decision of consumers was influenced. The review also showed that studies on this study area among university students in Kenya were limited despite them being recognized as major social media users.

The review revealed that there were mixed findings in the studies conducted in this area. Reuters and Ipsos (2012) report that one in five Facebook users had acquired products as a result of comments that they viewed on Facebook. A study carried out by Bannister (2013) indicated that Facebook advertisements and comments were largely uninformative, irrelevant, uninteresting and as a result, users would not click nor act on them.

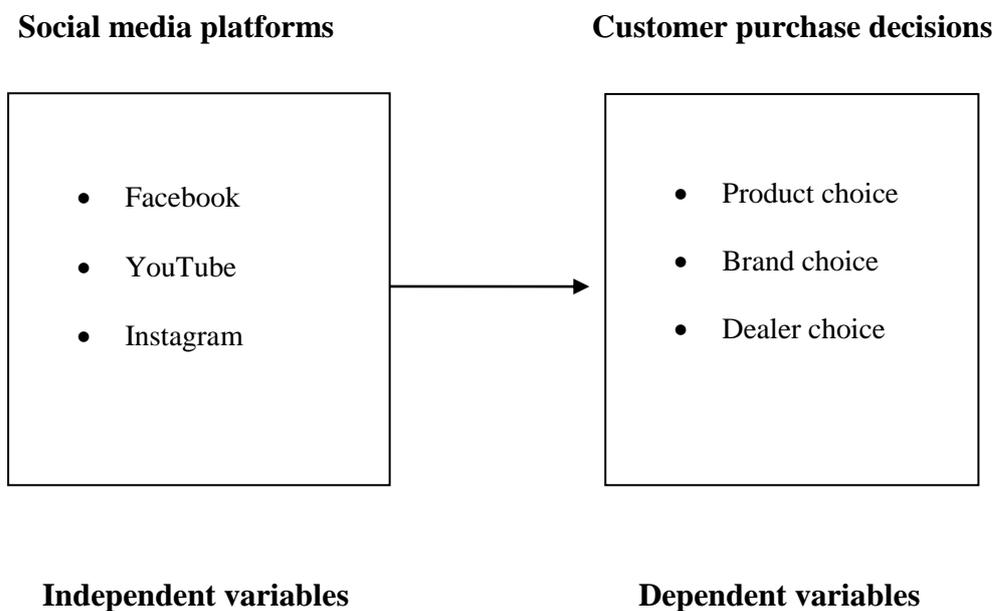
Richard and Guppy (2014) found that posting comments on Facebook showed no significant effect on purchase intention which contradicts the findings by Shao and Ross (2015) who found that posts or comments on Facebook pages by users were considered a participatory behaviour hence will have an impact on decisions that the consumers will partake. A study by Nyagucha (2017) found that WhatsApp was more preferred among university students in Kenya, followed by Youtube, Instagram, Facebook and Google + respectively in making purchase decisions. On the contrary, the study by Ochieng (2012) showed that Facebook was the most influential in influencing purchase decisions among the university students followed by Twitter, Google+ and LinkedIn. The authors did not however explain in detail if consumer purchase decisions were influenced by social media platforms.

Therefore, a study on the influence of social media platforms on consumer purchasing decisions among university students especially in the Kenyan context was crucial in order to approve or disapprove the varying viewpoints on this study area which would lead to the expansion of the body of knowledge in this study area.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework below explains the relationship between social media platforms and consumer purchasing decisions. The social media platforms namely Facebook, YouTube and Instagram were the independent variable whilst the consumer purchase decision which was the dependent variable was analyzed on the following constructs: product choice, brand choice and dealer choice. The study sought to explain the relationship between the two.

Figure 2.1: Social Media Platforms and Consumer Purchase Decision



Source: Researcher (2018)

2.5.1 Operationalization of study variable

This research revolved around concept of social media and consumer purchasing decisions. The social media platforms were the independent variables while customer purchase decision was the dependent variable.

Table 2.1: Operationalization of Study Variables

Variable	Constructs	Operation Definition	Measurement Indicator	Source
Independent	Facebook	Facebook is a popular free social networking website	Five point Likert	Darban & Li (2012); Akpan,

variables		that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues.	scale 1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Somewhat Agree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Disagree	Nwankpa, & Agu (2015)
	Instagram	Instagram is an online photo sharing service. It allows users to apply different types of photo filters to their pictures with a single click, then share them with others.	Five point Likert scale 1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Somewhat Agree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Disagree	Parsons (2017); Shuqair and Cragg (2017); Neher(2013).
	YouTube	YouTube is a video sharing service that allows users to watch videos posted by other users and upload videos of their own. While YouTube can serve a business platform, most people simply visit YouTube for fun.	Five point Likert scale 1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Somewhat Agree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Disagree	Leskovec et al.(2007); Iyengar et al. (2011).
Dependent variable (Consumer purchasing decision)	Product Choice	This refers to the specific good that a consumer desires to purchase	Five point Likert scale Five point Likert scale 1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Somewhat Agree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Disagree	Kotler, 2001;Sekaran and Roger, 2009

	Brand choice	This refers to the decisions consumers make in regards to the brand of products or services.	Five point Likert scale Five point Likert scale 1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Somewhat Agree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Disagree	Kotler, 2001;Sekaran and Roger, 2009
	Dealer choice	This refers to the preferred dealer based on consumers' alternatives available	Five point Likert scale Five point Likert scale 1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Somewhat Agree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Disagree	Kotler, 2001;Sekaran and Roger, 2009

Source: Researcher (2018)

2.6 Chapter Summary

The literature review chapter illustrated the theoretical background and conceptual framework. From the literature reviewed in this chapter, there seemed to be mixed feelings with regards to the influence of social media platforms on purchase decisions. There were suggestions that comments on social media were inapt and uninformative hence most individuals will not click on them neither will read the comments.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methods and procedures that were used in conducting the study. It encompasses the following sections: research design, study area, target population, sampling technique and research method, and validity of the instruments, reliability of the instruments, data collection and data techniques.

3.2 Research Philosophy

This study was built on the positivism philosophical framework. This approach was adopted because the study assumed that only factual knowledge is trustworthy (Bajpai, 2011). In this study, the researcher was concerned with facts and not impressions (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). Unlike social constructionism philosophical approaches that have provision for human interest and subjection, positivistic studies only require the researcher to collect factual data and interpret it (Crowther & Lancaster, 2008). Through the positivism approach, the researcher was also able to explore social reality in this case, social media use and its influence on consumer purchasing decisions of university students and beyond by means of scientific methods (Bell & Bryman, 2007). The research findings that the researcher obtained by using the positivistic research were observable and statistically quantifiable (Wilson, 2014).

The major aim of this inquiry was to establish the influence of social media use on consumer purchasing decisions among Strathmore university students. This research philosophy required that research hypotheses be crafted based on present theories that are relevant to the study. The testing and confirming or disapproving of the hypotheses would afterwards be undertaken using quantitative and statistical methods where the main aim was answering the outlined research questions and accomplishing the objectives of the study. As stated by Remenyi et al. (2005), the final outcome of this kind of research can be applied through the use of this research paradigm. Therefore, through the use of this research approach, the researcher was in a position to make generalizations pertaining to the influence of social

media platforms on consumer purchasing decisions particularly among Strathmore University students.

3.3 Research Design

This study used descriptive research design and also applied inferential analysis. Descriptive research design is used when collecting information about people's attitude, habit or any other variety of education or social issues and it reports the way things are at present. Descriptive studies portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations, describing the existing conditions and attitudes through observation and interpretation techniques (Chandran, 2004). This design ordinarily focuses on providing a detailed description of a given universe concerning crucial variables where the main prominence is given to finding out the association between the variables. Through inferential analysis, the researcher was able to reveal the causal relationship existing between variables and hence determine the influence of one variable on another. This design assisted the researcher to comprehend, describe, envisage and also control the relationships that exists between the study variables.

3.4 Population of the Study

The target population for this study was all the 1083 undergraduate students in the School of Management and Commerce of Strathmore University, Bachelor of Commerce (SMC Administration Office, 2018). This was because this school had the highest number of students enrolled and therefore it provided an adequate sample for adequate generalization. The researcher also targeted the students at Strathmore given that the university recognized the importance of ensuring participation in online social media platforms not only among staff but also students. This was supported by the fact that the university had an established online social media policy which was intended to guide all staff and students on the use of the online social media space both when participating personally in a manner that may affect the University as well as when acting on behalf of Strathmore University (Communication and University Relations Department, 2016).

Furthermore, studying students in one university allowed the researcher to obtain comprehensive findings which would increase the credibility of the generalizations they made. The study also targeted undergraduate students from First to Fourth Year of study given that they were more likely to have free time and spend relatively much time on social

media when compared to postgraduate students. Hence, they were more equipped with the relevant information required in this study.

3.5 Sample Design

Kothari (2004) defines a sample as the selected respondent representing the population. The major criterion used when deciding on the sample size is the extent to which the sample size represents the population. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) and Kothari (2004) a sample size of 10% to 30% of the total population is adequate for a study. Based on the assertions of these well-known scholars, a sample of 30% of the total population (i.e. 325) was used in this study.

The research made use of stratified sampling in choosing the sample. Stratified sampling was used to ensure that students in all years of study namely first, second, third and fourth year were represented. Therefore, the target population was stratified into 4 strata (each of year of study). The students were randomly selected from each group.

Table 3.1: Sample Size

Year of Study	Target Population	Sample size (30% of the target population)
First Year	170	51
Second Year	275	83
Third Year	354	106
Fourth Year	284	85

Source: School of Management and Commerce of Strathmore University Administration Office (2018)

3.6 Data Collection Instrument and Procedures

The study used primary data that collected using structured questionnaires. The questionnaire was divided into sections as per the areas of investigation which were preceded by a section which contained questions on the demographic characteristics of the students. The questionnaires were self-administered with the assistance of two research assistants who were sort to aid in the data collection exercise. The questionnaires were administered using drop and pick later whereby, if a participant did not complete the questionnaire, follow up was undertaken after three days through phone calls. The questionnaires were accompanied by an

introduction letter informing the respondents who the researcher was and the purpose of conducting the research. Primary data was used because it was authoritative as well as original.

The questionnaires were used because they were commonly used as instruments to collect important information about the population being studied when the respondents could be easily reached and they were cost efficient (Sarantakos, 1993). Respondents selected their answers guided by a Likert scale. A Likert scale refers to a psychometric response scale that is primarily used in order to obtain participants' degree of agreement with a statement. This study used a five-point scale to assess these statements i.e. Strongly Agree (5 points), Agree (4 points), Somewhat Agree (3), Disagree (2 points) and Strongly Disagree (1 point). This enabled the respondents to take a stand on a particular issue being assessed.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis refers to the process of data reducing, summarizing, pattern examination and statistical evaluation necessary to prove or disapprove hypothesis (Cooper and Schindler, 2006). The data collected was checked for completeness and errors in the entries. It was then analyzed using the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS), which is the statistical program commonly used in research studies and has also been used in previous research work that have focused on a similar topic. The data collected was coded and categorized to make it easy to analyze and make conclusions and meaning of the data. Checking of errors before data analysis was undertaken to check for correctness of data input to the system.

Table 3.2: Summary of Data Analysis Plan

Objective	Kind of analysis to be conducted
Objective 1: To establish the extent to which Strathmore University students use social media platforms in their purchase decisions.	Descriptive Analysis
Objective 2: To examine the extent to which Facebook influences of purchase decisions among Strathmore University students	Inferential analysis-both correlation and regression analysis

Objective 3: To determine the extent to which YouTube influences the purchase decisions among Strathmore University students	Inferential analysis-both correlation and regression analysis
Objective 4: To find out the extent to which Instagram influences the purchase decisions among Strathmore University students.	Inferential analysis-both correlation and regression analysis
Objective 5: To find the extent to which social media platforms influence purchasing decisions among Strathmore University students	Inferential analysis-both correlation and regression analysis

3.7.1 Descriptive Statistics

This was used to analyze the objective that was about the extent to which university students in Nairobi used social media platforms in their purchase decisions. The mean and standard deviation were examined in this case. Descriptive statistics on consumer purchasing behaviour of the students were also extracted. Information related to the demographic characteristics of the students was summarized in terms frequencies and percentages.

3.7.2 Correlation analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted for the second, the third and the fourth objective. This was done in order to determine whether there was an association between that exists between the dependent and the independent variables and the strength if present (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). The correlation coefficient value determines the measures of linear association between two variables where the coefficient is always between -1 and +1. A coefficient of -1 means that variables are perfectly associated in a negative linear sense, 0 means that there is no association between the variables and +1 indicates that the variables are perfectly associated in a positive linear sense (Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

3.7.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

This analysis is used when there is more than one independent variable. After conducting a correlation analysis on objectives two, three, and four and finding an association between variables, the next step was conducting multiple regression analysis. In this study, a model of relationship was hypothesized in the form $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \dots + \beta_j X_k + \varepsilon$ where β_0 and $\beta_1 \dots \beta_j$ are the model parameters and ε is a probabilistic error term that accounts for any variability in Y that cannot be explained by the linear relationship with X.

The relationship between social media platforms and consumer purchasing decisions of Strathmore University students was hypothesized using a multiple regression equation that contained the three social media platforms namely Facebook, YouTube and Instagram as predictor variables regressed against consumer purchasing decisions of the students as the dependent variable.

The following model will be tested;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Where;

Y= Dependent variable (Consumer Purchasing decisions) and X is the independent variables (X_1 =Facebook, X_2 –YouTube and X_3 , Instagram). β_1 , β_2 and β_3 are the beta coefficients associated with the social media platforms. β_0 is the Y intercept which represents the value of Y when all the social media platforms equal to 0.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of the research and the extent to which studies can be replicated (Wiersma, 1986). The notion is that if the investigation is carried out once again, the same results or something similar will be echoed. According to Cooper and Schindler (2006), measurement of reliability coefficients occurs numerically through correlation formulas. In this study, the questionnaires were subjected to an overall reliability analysis of internal consistency. The Cronbach alpha which was a coefficient of internal consistency was used to quantify the reliability of the questionnaire. Internal consistency quantifies the associations that exist between the various items on the same test and whether various items

that are suggested to measure the same general construct result to similar scores. Castillio (2009) presents the decision rules as follows: >0.9 – Excellent, >0.8 – Good, >0.7 – Acceptable, >0.6 – Questionable, >0.5 – Poor and <0.5 – Unacceptable. In this study, the acceptable value of 0.7 was taken as the cut-off of reliability. The reliability test results showed that all the variables were reliable as shown by the associated Cronbach alphas that were greater than 0.7.

Table 3.3: Reliability Test Results

Variable	No of Items	Respondents	Cronbach Alpha
Facebook	11	33	0.874
YouTube	10	33	0.858
Instagram	9	33	0.912
Product Choice	5	33	0.910
Brand Choice	4	33	0.897
Dealer Choice	4	33	0.919

According to Bryman et al., (2007) validity refers to how accurately the data obtained captures what it was purported to measure. In ensuring the validity of the questionnaire, the inquiry made use of construct and content validities. In the case of construct validity, the questionnaire was segmented into a number of sections so that under each section, information regarding a specific objective was gathered besides ensuring the same closely ties with the study’s conceptual framework. In enhancing the content validity, the questionnaire was presented for thorough scrutiny by two marketers of two companies actively marketing their products on social media platforms and also the study supervisor. They were invited to gauge the relevance and meaningfulness of the questionnaires after which their comments were integrated in adjusting the questionnaires. That way, the validity of the questionnaire was enriched.

Pilot testing was conducted to pre-test the data collection instrument so that the researcher can eliminate ambiguity and improve its relevance to the study objectives. Usually, a pre-test should be carried out on 1 to 10% of the actual sample size (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). In this study, a pretest was undertaken on 10% of the sample population. Therefore, a pilot study involving 33 university students in Kenya who were not part of the study was undertaken. These students were randomly selected. The feedback obtained from the pilot study data gathered was analyzed and used to make adjustments to the questionnaire besides

equipping the researcher with crucial experience needed in collecting the data for the main study.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

The study was undertaken within ethical frameworks of social research. In particular, the researcher was guided by legal and moral principles of social research as outlined by Bryamn (2001) which are; there should be informed consent, there should be no deception involved, there is no harm to the participants, and there is no an invasion of privacy. The researcher acted openly and truthfully in order to promote accuracy guided by the ethical principles of integrity and objectivity. From the onset, an introductory letter requesting access and outlining in brief the purpose of the research was presented to respondents.

The confidentiality of information supplied by research subjects and the anonymity of respondents was respected. Research participants were allowed to participate voluntarily, free from any coercion, any harm to research participants was avoided and the independence of research was clear, and any conflicts of interest or partiality were explicit (Economic and Social Research Council, 2005). Respondents to the study were informed before consenting to participation of the research of their right to determine how they would participate in the data collection process, including rights not to answer any question or set of questions, rights not to provide any data requested and possibly to withdraw data they would provide.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

This comprises of data analysis, findings and interpretation. Results are presented in tables and diagrams. The analyzed data was arranged under themes that reflected the research objectives. The demographic information of the students, descriptive statistics of social media platforms, correlation and regression analysis as well as a summary of the chapter is provided.

4.2 Response Rate

The number of questionnaires administered was 325. A total of 249 questionnaires were properly filled and returned. This represented an overall successful response rate of 76.62% as shown on Table 4.1. This response rate was considered adequate based on the assertions of recognized scholars such as Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) and Babbie (2004).

Table 4.1 Response Rate

Response	Frequency	Percent %
Responded	249	76.62
Did Not Respond	76	23.38
Total	325	100.0

4.3 Demographic Information of the Students

This section consists of information that describes basic characteristics of the students such as their gender, age, year of study, employment status, having social media applications in their phones as well as the average time they spent checking various social media platforms daily.

4.3.1 Gender of the Students

The results indicated that majority of the students, 58.6%, were male while 41.4% of the students were female.

4.3.2 Age Bracket of the Students

The study findings indicated that 12.0% of the students were aged 18 to 20 years, 39.8% of the students were between the age of 21 to 23 years while 48.2% of the students were aged 24 to 26 years.

4.3.3 Year of Study of the Students

The study findings further indicate that 21.7% of the students were in their first year of study, 12.0% of the students were in their second year of study while 26.9% and 39.4% of the students were in their third and fourth years of study respectively. The findings are as shown in Figure 4.1.

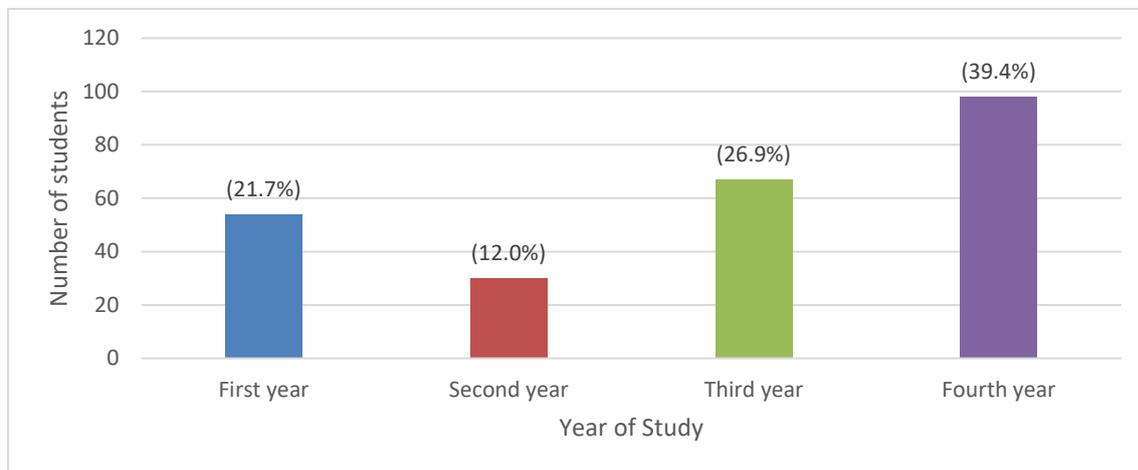


Figure 4.1: Year of Study of the Students

4.3.4 Employment Status of the Students

The study further assessed the employment status of the students. The study found that a majority of the students, 69.9%, were not employed while 30.1% had been employed.

4.3.5 Having Social Media Application in the Students' Phones

The study also assessed whether the study had social media applications in their phones. The study results showed that all the students had social media applications in their mobile phones.

4.3.6 Average Time Spent Checking Social Media Platforms Daily

The study found that on average, 11.2% of the students spent 30 minutes or less checking their social media platforms daily, 44.2% of the students spent up to an hour while 13.7% and 30.9% of the students spent up to 2 hours and over 2 hours checking their social media platforms daily respectively.

4.4 Descriptive Analysis

This section presents descriptive statistics pertaining to the extent to which Strathmore University students used social media platforms in their purchase decisions. The mean and standard deviations were computed and interpreted.

4.4.1 Use of Facebook in making Consumer Purchase Decisions

A set of eleven questions representing different aspects of the extent to which Facebook influenced of purchasing decisions among Strathmore University students were presented to the respondents and they were in turn requested to express their degree of agreement on a Likert scale where 1 was strongly disagree, 2 was disagree, 3 was somewhat agree, 4 was agree and 5 was strongly agreed. The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement with the 11 questions. The results were first described using descriptive statistics where mean and standard deviation was computed to give the extent to which Facebook influenced of purchasing decisions among Strathmore University students. As shown in Table 4.2, the overall mean was 2.1092 while the standard deviation was 1.095. This implied that overall, the respondents disagreed that Facebook influenced purchasing decisions among Strathmore University students.

Table 4.2: Use of Facebook in making Consumer Purchase Decisions

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
Use of Facebook in making Consumer Purchase Decisions	N	1	2	3	4	5		
I often use Facebook to seek recommendations from my online friends regarding product(s) that I plan to purchase.	249	74	35	94	40	6	2.4739	1.1466

I have befriended/liked a considerable number of companies/businesses on Facebook that have products /services that I would possibly purchase	249	125	15	13	83	13	2.3734	1.4922
Information available on Facebook pages influence objective decision making about brands and products	249	53	124	24	43	5	2.2891	1.0495
I use Facebook to get details of products/services that I am interested in and take into consideration advertisements put out before making a purchase	249	83	76	45	45		2.2088	1.0945
Because I subscribe and see the content of a specific brand, only under extreme circumstances would I consider purchasing a different brand.	249	110	30	60	49		2.1927	1.1993
I spend time checking my Facebook account while going through products / services before I purchase them	249	103	73	19	36	18	2.1686 7	1.3027 82
The more I interact with Facebook, the more it affects my decisions to purchase products or brands	249	98	49	88	14		2.0722	0.9851
I believe the more the likes on a Facebook post, the higher the awareness on a brand/product	249	140	19	60	30		1.9196	1.1330
I follow brands that have a huge following on Facebook because I purchase most of their products/services	249	120	49	75		5	1.8795	0.9763
I often receive information about sales, specials or coupons from the companies I have befriended/”liked” on Facebook hence leading to a purchase taking place	249	125	75	19	30		1.8152	1.0150 12
I often shop at the stores that I have befriended/liked on	249	95	124	30			1.7389	0.6600

Facebook before I purchase a product /service online				
Valid N (listwise)	249		2.1029	1.0958

4.4.2 Use of YouTube in making Consumer Purchase Decisions

As shown in Table 4.3, the overall mean was 3.15216 while the standard deviation was 1.25111. This implied that overall, the respondents somewhat agreed that YouTube influenced purchasing decisions among Strathmore University students.

Table 4.3: Use of YouTube in making Consumer Purchase Decisions among Students

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree		
	N	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Deviation
I access YouTube most of the time during the day/night to look a products/services being reviewed prior to purchasing them	249	64	30	30	60	65	3.43775	1.102207
Statements and comments on YouTube influence the decisions to purchase a product	249	60	30		105	54	3.43373	1.654852
I often shop at stores which have their products advertised on YouTube.	249	5	75	79	60	30	3.25301	1.522758
I think that the product information given in the videos provide useful information for my purchase.	249	45		109	60	35	3.22088	1.029507
User generated product content on YouTube is dependable when considering to purchase a product/service	249		139	45	30	35	3.16064	1.227334
After having seen the video, I'm curious to purchase a product	249		75	79	60	35	2.99598	1.360438

I have an active Instagram account that I use when considering a purchase of either a product/service	249	15	30	90	60	54	3.43373	1.134426
I have severally bought something after someone I follow on Instagram shared it.	249	30		75	60	84	3.37349	1.497666
I have used customer feedback on Instagram before visiting a store several times prior to purchasing a product	249	29	30	72	64	54	3.33735	1.266285
I have made purchases through Instagram courtesy of accounts that I follow	249	15	30	90	90	24	3.31325	1.007164
I prefer looking at images on Instagram than watching videos of products/brands being reviewed	249	35	49	75	30	60	3.12450	1.354712
I trust information on Instagram to be true.	249	30	34	90	90	5	3.02410	1.031471
Valid N (listwise)	249						3.36769	1.22998

4.5 Consumer Purchasing Decisions among Students

The consumer purchase decisions of the students were assessed using three constructs namely product choice, brand choice and dealer choice. The overall consumer purchase decisions were computed by getting an overall mean of responses from the means of these three constructs.

4.5.1 Product Choice of Students

As shown in Table 4.5, the overall mean was 2.74699 while the standard deviation was 1.33772. This implied that overall, the respondents somewhat agreed that Product Choice influenced purchasing decisions among Strathmore University students.

Table 4.5: Product Choice of Students

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree		
	N	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Deviation
I will purchase from a dealer that has less negative reviews on social media platforms	249	30	30	90	99		3.03614	1.001359
I am more likely to purchase from a dealer who is active on social media platforms	249	60	45	30	60	54	3.01205	1.503978
I will purchase from a dealer who I can engage with on social media early on and throughout the purchase process	249	75	60	30	60	24	2.59036	1.382810
I will purchase from a dealer that friends and family have recommended through Facebook, Instagram and YouTube	249	105	60		60	24	2.34940	1.462712
Valid N (listwise)	249						2.74699	1.33772

4.5.2 Brand Choice among Students

The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement with the given questions. The results were first described using descriptive statistics where mean and standard deviation was computed to give the extent to which Brand Choice influenced of purchasing decisions among Strathmore University students. As shown in Table 4.6, the overall mean was 3.17068 while the standard deviation was 1.28802. This implied that overall, the respondents somewhat agreed that Brand Choice influenced purchasing decisions among Strathmore University students.

Table 4.6: Brand Choice among Students

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree		
	N	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Deviation
Brand pages on Facebook, Instagram	249	60	60	30	99		3.43373	1.580063

and YouTube provide plenty of information about brands								
I have been able to learn of unfamiliar brands courtesy of Facebook, Instagram and YouTube	249	30	15	90	49	65	3.41767	1.270894
I have been able to discover new brands via Facebook, Instagram and YouTube	249	45	30	60	60	54	3.19277	1.386494
I will choose a brand if recommended by friends and family through posts and comments on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube	249	15	120	54	60		2.63855	0.914643
Valid N (listwise)	249						3.17068	1.28802

4.5.3 Dealer Choice among Students

The findings outlined in Table 4.7 Dealer Choice influenced of purchasing decisions among Strathmore University students. The overall mean was 2.747 while the standard deviation was 1.338. This implied that overall, the respondents somewhat agreed that Dealer Choice influenced purchasing decisions among Strathmore University students.

Table 4.7: Dealer Choice among Students

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree		
	N	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Deviation
I will purchase from a dealer that has less negative reviews on social media platforms	249	30	30	90	99		3.03614	1.001359
I am more likely to purchase from a dealer who is active on social media platforms	249	60	45	30	60	54	3.01205	1.503978
I will purchase from a dealer who I can engage with on social media early on and throughout the purchase process	249	75	60	30	60	24	2.59036	1.382810

I will purchase from a dealer that friends and family have recommended through Facebook, Instagram and YouTube	249	105	60	60	24	2.34940	1.462712
Valid N (listwise)	249					2.74699	1.33772

4.6 Correlation Analysis

The association between social media platforms namely Facebook, YouTube and Instagram and the consumer purchase decisions of Strathmore students was assessed by using Pearson correlation analysis. Hence, the direction, strength and significance of the Pearson correlation coefficients associated to each social media platforms were examined. Pearson coefficients range from -1 to +1 and the interpretation of their strength is as follows; .00 to .19 is very weak, .20 to .39 is weak, .40 to .59 is moderate, .60 to .79 is strong while .80 to 1.0 is very strong (Yue, Pillon & Cavadias, 2002). The significance of the correlation between social media platforms and consumer purchase decisions of this study was tested at 95% confidence level or 0.05 significance level where if the p value obtained was greater than the critical p value which was set at 0.05 for this study, then the correlation between the variables would be deemed insignificant and vice versa.

The study found that Facebook use had a weak positive and significant correlation with the consumer purchase decisions of Strathmore University students ($r=0.249$, $p=0.000$). The study also discovered that the association between YouTube and the consumer purchase decisions of these students was strong, positive and significant as shown by ($r=0.666$, $p=0.000$). It was further found that Instagram use was positively and significantly correlated with the consumer purchase decisions of students at Strathmore University and that this association between the two variables was strong ($r=0.793$, $p=0.000$). The study findings implied that social media platforms were positively and significantly associated with the consumer purchase decisions of students at Strathmore University. The correlation results are as shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Correlation Results

		Consumer Purchase Decisions	Facebook	YouTube	Instagram
Consumer Purchase	Pearson Correlation	1			

Decisions					
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	249			
Facebook	Pearson				
	Correlation	.249**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000			
	N	249	249		
YouTube	Pearson				
	Correlation	.666**	.220**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		
	N	249	249	249	
Instagram	Pearson				
	Correlation	.793**	0.021	.435**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.744	0.000	
	N	249	249	249	249

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.7 Multi-collinearity

Multi-collinearity refers to situations where there is high correlation between independent variables in our model, which results in high coefficient of determination. Variance inflation factor (VIF) was used to test whether presence of multi-collinearity is statistically significant. The table below provides the Results of the Multi-collinearity. Check Using Tolerance and VIFs.

From the table below, The $VIF < 10$ hence we can conclude that the presence of multi-collinearity is not statistically significant.

Table 4.9: VIF and Tolerance level.

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)		
Mean_Facebook	0.945	1.058
Mean_YouTube	0.766	1.306
Mean_Instagram	0.804	1.243

4.8 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to establish the relationship that existed between social media platforms and consumer purchase decisions among Strathmore University students. The major aim of the regression analysis was to quantify the extent to which the social media platforms namely Facebook, YouTube and Instagram influenced the consumer purchase

decisions of the university and whether this influence was significant. Both the influence of these social media platforms on the three indicators of consumer purchase decisions namely product choice, brand choice and dealer choice individually was assessed and thereafter their influence on the overall consumer purchase decisions was investigated.

4.8.1 Influence of Social Media Platforms on Product Choice

The results outlined in Table 4.10 show that a significant proportion of variation in the product choice among students at Strathmore University was explained by social media platforms (Facebook, YouTube and Instagram). The coefficient of determination (RSquared) of 0.723 meant that 72.3% of the variability in product choices of these students were attributed to Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. Other factors not considered in this model explained 27.7% of the total variation in the product choice of these university students.

Table 4.10: Model Summary for Social Media Platforms and Product Choice

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.850a	0.723	0.719	0.584719

a Predictors: (Constant), Instagram, Facebook, YouTube

The ANOVA results presented in Table 4.11 were examined in order to attest whether the model used to show the link between social media platforms (Facebook, YouTube and Instagram) and product choice of students at Strathmore University was significant. The F statistic and its associated p value were explained where the decision rule was that if the significance value associated with the F statistic was less than the critical significance level (0.05) as set in this study, the model linking these two variables would be termed as significant otherwise insignificant. The study findings show that the model used in this study was significant in showing the relationship between social media platforms and product choices of Strathmore University students given ($F = 212.835, p = 0.000$).

Table 4.11: ANOVA Results for Social Media Platforms and Product Choice

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	218.303	3	72.768	212.835	.000b
	Residual	83.765	245	0.342		
	Total	302.067	248			

a Dependent Variable: Product Choice
b Predictors: (Constant), Instagram, Facebook, YouTube

The regression coefficients as displayed in Table 4.12 were analyzed in order to establish whether the influence of social media platforms (Facebook, YouTube and Instagram) on product choices of students at Strathmore University was significant. The t statistics and associated p value were examined and the decision rule was that, for a variable to be significant in explaining a dependent variable, the associated p value should be less than the critical p value which is set at 0.05 in this study. The study noted that Facebook had a positive and significant influence on product choices of Strathmore University students given $\beta = 0.198$, $t = 5.320$, $p = .000$. A unit increase in Facebook use would lead to increase in product choice among these students by 0.198 units. The study also found that YouTube positively and significantly influenced the product choice of Strathmore University students as shown by $\beta = 0.537$, $t = 11.719$, $p = .000$. Hence, a unit increase in YouTube use would lead to increase product choices among these students by 0.537 units. Further, the findings indicated that Instagram had a positive significant influence on the product choices of Strathmore University students given $\beta = 0.559$, $t = 13.318$, $p = .000$ where a unit increase in Instagram use would lead to increase in product choices by 0.559 units.

Table 4.12: Regression Coefficients for Social Media Platforms and Product Choice

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-1.01	0.167		-6.064	0.000
Facebook	0.198	0.037	0.184	5.320	0.000
YouTube	0.537	0.046	0.450	11.719	0.000
Instagram	0.559	0.042	0.500	13.318	0.000

a Dependent Variable: Product Choice

Hence, the following model was fitted to show the relationship between social media platforms and product choices among Strathmore University students.

$$\text{Product Choice} = -1.01 + 0.198 \text{ Facebook} + 0.537 \text{ YouTube} + 0.559 \text{ Instagram}$$

Where;

-1.01= is the value of product choice among Strathmore University students when the value of social media platforms is zero

0.198= is the regression coefficient which implies that for every unit increase in Facebook use, the product choice of students at Strathmore University is expected to increase by 0.198 units holding all other factors constant.

0.537= is the regression coefficient which implies that for every unit increase in YouTube use, the product choice of students at Strathmore University is expected to increase by 0.537 units holding all other factors constant.

0.559= is the regression coefficient which implies that for every unit increase in Instagram use, the product choice of students at Strathmore University is expected to increase by 0.559 units holding all other factors constant.

4.8.2 Influence of Social Media Platforms on Brand Choice

The study findings also showed that a significant proportion of the variability in brand choice among Strathmore University students was explained by social media platforms namely Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. The study results showed that Facebook, YouTube and Instagram explained 78.1% of the changes in brand choice among these university students as shown by an R squared of 0.781. These findings meant that 21.9% of the total variability in brand choice among the students was linked to other factors not taken in to consideration in this model.

Table 4.13: Model Summary for Social Media Platforms and Brand Choice

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.884a	0.781	0.778	0.542486

a Predictors: (Constant), Instagram, Facebook, YouTube

The significance of the model used to show the influence of the social media platforms (Facebook, YouTube and Instagram) on brand choices among students at Strathmore University was assessed using the ANOVA results. It was found that the model used was significant as supported by $F = 290.976$ and associated $p = 0.000$ which was less than 0.05.

Table 4.14: ANOVA Results for Social Media Platforms and Brand Choice

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	256.895	3	85.632	290.976	.000b
	Residual	72.101	245	0.294		

Total	328.996	248
a Dependent Variable: Brand Choice		
b Predictors: (Constant), Instagram, Facebook, YouTube		

The regression coefficients results presented in Table 4.14 reveal that Facebook had a positive but insignificant influence the brand choices among Strathmore University students as shown by $\beta = 0.062$, $t = 1.792$, $p = .074$. The findings imply that a unit increase in Facebook use would lead to an increase in brand choice by 0.062 units and this increase was insignificant. The study also found that YouTube positively and significantly influenced brand choice among Strathmore University students ($\beta = 0.272$, $t = 6.409$, $p = .000$). This meant that a unit increase in YouTube use would lead to increased brand choice among these university students by 0.272 units. Similarly, Instagram had a positive and significant influence on brand choice among Strathmore University students ($\beta = 0.888$, $t = 22.795$, $p = .000$). A unit increase in Instagram use would lead to increase in brand choices by 0.888units.

Table 4.15: Regression Coefficients for Social Media Platforms and Brand Choice

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-0.725	0.155		-4.693	0.000
Facebook	0.062	0.034	0.055	1.792	0.074
YouTube	0.272	0.042	0.219	6.409	0.000
Instagram	0.888	0.039	0.76	22.795	0.000

a Dependent Variable: Brand Choice

The following model was therefore fitted to show the relationship between social media platforms and product choices among Strathmore University students.

$$\text{Brand Choice} = -0.725 + 0.062\text{Facebook} + 0.272\text{YouTube} + 0.888\text{Instagram}$$

Where;

-0.725= is the value of brand choice among Strathmore University students when the value of social media platforms is zero

0.062= is the regression coefficient which implies that for every unit increase in Facebook use, the brand choice of students at Strathmore University is expected to increase by 0.062 units holding all other factors constant.

0.272= is the regression coefficient which implies that for every unit increase in YouTube use, the brand choice of students at Strathmore University is expected to increase by 0.272 units holding all other factors constant.

0.888= is the regression coefficient which implies that for every unit increase in Instagram use, the brand choice of students at Strathmore University is expected to increase by 0.888 units holding all other factors constant.

4.8.3 Influence of Social Media Platforms on Dealer Choice

The model summary results in Table 4.16 reveal that social media platforms (Facebook, YouTube and Instagram) explain 75.0% of the total variation in dealer choices of students at Strathmore University as shown by R^2 of 0.750. This finding implies that 25.0% of the total variability in dealer choices among these students are connected to factors not taken into account in this model.

Table 4.16: Model Summary for Social Media Platforms and Dealer Choice

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.866a	0.750	0.747	0.610755

a Predictors: (Constant), Instagram, Facebook, YouTube

The ANOVA results in Table 4.17 show that the model used in this study to show the relationship between social media platforms and dealer choices among students at Strathmore University was significant as supported by $F = 244.553$ and associated $p = 0.000$

Table 4.17: ANOVA Results for Social Media Platforms and Dealer Choice

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	273.67	3	91.223	244.553	.000b
	Residual	91.39	245	0.373		
	Total	365.06	248			

a Dependent Variable: Dealer Choice
b Predictors: (Constant), Instagram, Facebook, YouTube

The results presented in Table 4.18 reveal that Facebook use had a positive and significant influence on dealer choice among Strathmore University students ($\beta = 0.255$, $t = 6.580$, $p = .000$). A unit increase in Facebook use would lead to increase in dealer choice among the students by 0.255 units. Similarly, YouTube positively and significantly influenced dealer

choices among students at Strathmore University as given by ($\beta = 0.480, t = 10.041, p = .000$). These findings implied that a unit increase in Facebook use would lead to increased dealer choices among these students by 0.480 units. Further Instagram use was found to have a positive significant influence on dealer choices among Strathmore university students ($\beta = 0.719, t = 16.398, p = .000$). This meant that increased Instagram use by one unit would lead to increased dealer choice among these students by 0.719units.

Table 4.18: Regression Coefficients for Social Media Platforms and Dealer Choice

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-1.731	0.174		-9.949	0.000
Facebook	0.255	0.039	0.216	6.580	0.000
YouTube	0.480	0.048	0.367	10.041	0.000
Instagram	0.719	0.044	0.584	16.398	0.000

a Dependent Variable: Dealer Choice

The following model was therefore fitted to show the relationship between social media platforms and dealer choice among Strathmore University students.

$$\text{Dealer Choice} = -1.731 + 0.255 \text{ Facebook} + 0.480 \text{ YouTube} + 0.719 \text{ Instagram}$$

Where;

-1.731= is the value of brand choice among Strathmore University students when the value of social media platforms is zero

0.255= is the regression coefficient which implies that for every unit increase in Facebook use, the brand choice of students at Strathmore University is expected to increase by 0.255 units holding all other factors constant.

0.480= is the regression coefficient which implies that for every unit increase in YouTube use, the dealer choice of students at Strathmore University is expected to increase by 0.480 units holding all other factors constant.

0.719= is the regression coefficient which implies that for every unit increase in Instagram use, the dealer choice of students at Strathmore University is expected to increase by 0.719 units holding all other factors constant.

4.8.4 Overall Regression Model

A combined regression analysis was carried out to show the influence of social media platforms on the consumer purchase decisions of Strathmore University students. Product choice, brand choice and dealer choice were combined to form composite score representing consumer purchase decisions of these students.

The model summary results in Table 4.19 show that a considerable proportion of the variance in consumer purchase decisions of Strathmore University students was attributed to social media platforms. The study found that Facebook, YouTube and Instagram explained 78.0% of the consumer purchase decisions of students at Strathmore University. This is as shown by the R squared of 0.780. Other factors not considered in the model explained 22.0% of the total changes in the consumer purchase decisions of these students.

Table 4.19: Model Summary for Social Media Platforms and Consumer Purchase Decisions

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error Of The Estimate
1	.883a	0.780	0.777	0.529501

A Predictors: (Constant), Instagram, Facebook, YouTube

The ANOVA results in Table 4.20 show that the model used to show the relationship between social media platforms and consumer purchase decisions of students at Strathmore University was significant as shown by ($F = 288.796, p = 0.000$).

Table 4.20: ANOVA Results for Social Media Platforms and Consumer Purchase Decisions

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	242.911	3	80.97	288.796	.000b
	Residual	68.691	245	0.28		
	Total	311.602	248			

a Dependent Variable: Consumer Purchase Decisions
b Predictors: (Constant), Instagram, Facebook, YouTube

As shown in Table 4.21, Facebook use had a positive and significant influence on consumer purchase decisions among Strathmore University students as given by ($\beta = 0.171, t = 5.100, p = .000$). The implication of these findings is that a unit increase in Facebook use would lead to increased consumer purchase decisions among students at Strathmore University. The

study also found that YouTube use positively and significantly influenced consumer purchase decisions of Strathmore University students as shown by ($\beta = 0.430, t = 10.363, p = .000$). Hence, increased YouTube use among these students by a unit would result to an increase in the consumer purchase decisions of the students by 0.430 units. It was further found that Instagram use had a positive significant influence on the consumer purchase decisions of Strathmore University students ($\beta = 0.722, t = 18.992, p = .000$). This meant that a unit increase in Instagram use among these students would lead to increase in their consumer purchase decisions by 0.722 units.

Table 4.21: Regression Coefficients for Social Media Platforms and Consumer Purchase Decisions

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-1.156	0.151		-7.66	0.000
Facebook	0.171	0.034	0.157	5.100	0.000
YouTube	0.430	0.041	0.355	10.363	0.000
Instagram	0.722	0.038	0.635	18.992	0.000

a Dependent Variable: Consumer Purchase Decisions

Thus, the overall optimal model for this study that was used to show the influence of social media platforms on the consumer purchase decisions of Strathmore University students is also follow;

$$\text{Consumer Purchase Decisions of Strathmore University students} = -1.156 + 0.171\text{Facebook} + 0.430\text{YouTube} + 0.722\text{Instagram}$$

Where;

-1.156= is the value of brand choice among Strathmore University students when the value of social media platforms is zero

0.171= is the regression coefficient which implies that for every unit increase in Facebook use, the consumer purchase decisions of students at Strathmore University is expected to increase by 0.171 units holding all other factors constant.

0.480= is the regression coefficient which implies that for every unit increase in YouTube use, the consumer purchase decisions of students at Strathmore University is expected to increase by 0.480 units holding all other factors constant.

0.722= is the regression coefficient which implies that for every unit increase in Instagram use, the consumer purchase decisions of students at Strathmore University is expected to increase by 0.722 units holding all other factors constant.

4.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a comprehensive account of how the data gathered was analyzed in order to answer the stated research questions. The first objective of the study was to establish the extent to which Strathmore University students used social media platforms in their purchase decisions. Based on the means of responses and standard deviations that were calculated, it can be said that Instagram was the social media platforms used to the largest extent by these students in making their consumer purchase decisions, followed by YouTube and then Facebook which was least utilized by these students in their purchase decisions.

The second objective of the study was to examine the extent to which Facebook influenced the purchase decisions among Strathmore University students. The study found that Facebook had a positive and significant influence product choice and dealer choice of these students but the influence on brand choice though positive, was insignificant. The study also found that the influence of Facebook on the overall consumer purchase decisions of these students was positive and significant.

The third objective of the study sought to determine the extent to which YouTube influenced the purchase decisions among Strathmore University students. The study found that YouTube had a positive and significant influence on product choice, brand choice, dealer choice as well as the overall consumer purchase decisions of Strathmore University students. The fourth objective of the study was to find out the extent to which Instagram influenced the purchase decisions among Strathmore University students. Similarly, Instagram positively and significantly influenced the product choice, brand choice, dealer choice as well as the overall consumer purchase decisions of Strathmore University students. The last objective of the study was to examine the extent to which social media platforms influence purchase

decisions amongst Strathmore University students. The study found that Strathmore University students prefer Instagram to Facebook and YouTube.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter of the study presents a discussion of the study findings which is presented in subsections reflecting the study objectives. The chapter also presents the conclusions, recommendations for policy and practice and areas for further research. The study limitations are also presented.

5.2 Discussions of Study Findings

This section of this chapter presents the discussions of the major findings of the study. The discussions are presented in line with the study research objectives. The discussions are presented first with the primary findings of the study and these are compared and contrasted with the reviewed literature in the second chapter.

5.2.1 Extent of Use of Social Media Platforms in making Consumer Purchase Decisions among Students

The first objective of the study sought to establish the extent to which Strathmore University students used social media platforms in their purchase decisions. The students were asked to state their extent of agreement with a number of items pertaining to the use of each social media platforms in their purchase decisions. The descriptive statistics obtained showed that Instagram had the highest overall mean of responses score of 3.367 followed by YouTube with a mean score of 3.150 and finally Facebook with a mean score of 2.103. These findings implied that the students were aware of the use of social media platforms in making purchase decisions and somewhat agreed to most of the statements on YouTube and Instagram but disagreed with most of the statements on Facebook. The findings implied that Instagram was the most widely used by Strathmore University Students in making their purchase decisions related to their product, brand and dealer choices followed by YouTube while Facebook was the least utilized by these students in making the purchase decisions. The study findings clearly showed that there was no balance in the extent to which the three social media platforms namely Facebook, YouTube and Instagram were used by the Strathmore University Students in their purchase decisions. The results showed that Instagram was the most

preferred, followed by YouTube and then Facebook which was the least preferred in making consumer purchase decisions of the students.

The findings of the study are in line with that of Al-Dhuhli and Ismael (2013) who found that most students who shopped online selected Instagram as a prime tool to buy online which was in contrast to comparing to previous studies which stated that Facebook had the highest rate respond in making consumer purchase decisions among students. The findings are however contrary to that of Nyagucha (2017) who found that YouTube was more preferred followed by Instagram and then Facebook by students in higher institutions of learning in Kenya in making their purchase decisions. The findings also do not support the findings of Reis (2015) who noted that Instagram had the least effect on actual purchasing among working students in Finland. The study findings did not also agree with that of Mwaisaka (2017) who found that young individuals pursue a very active role in information search as well as comparison of alternative cosmetic products on social media mainly from Facebook, YouTube and Instagram in that order.

5.2.2 Influence of Facebook on Consumer Purchase Decisions among Students

The study sought to examine the extent to which Facebook influenced the purchase decisions among Strathmore University students. The study found that Facebook positively and significantly influenced the consumer purchase decisions of students at Strathmore University. The findings support that of Darban and Li (2012) who found that Facebook impacted every step of students' purchasing decision process namely information search step, purchase decision and evaluation of alternatives. The findings also agree with that of Senthilkumar et. al (2013) who established a clear connection between seeking product related recommendation over Facebook and purchasing products or services based on the Facebook friends' recommendations. The findings further agree with that of Richard and Guppy (2014) that the use of Facebook's like button, location based check-in service and the share button applications positively influenced consumers purchase intention. The study also found that Facebook significantly influenced product choice and dealer choice of the students but not their brand choice. The findings agree partly with that of Shao and Ross (2015) that Facebook enables consumers to exert a greater influence on products that they would consider for purchase but contrast their finding that Facebook provided a platform whereby user's gratification including socializing, entertainment and information seeking is fulfilled

and this may lead to the users liking a brand hence having the need to purchase it due to conversation that have taken place with other users about the brand.

5.2.3 Influence of YouTube on Consumer Purchase Decisions among Students

The study further sought to determine the extent to which YouTube influenced the purchase decisions among Strathmore University students. The study found that YouTube influenced the purchase decisions of students at Strathmore positively and in a significant way. The findings also showed that YouTube had a positive and significant influence on product choice, brand choice, dealer choice as well as the overall consumer purchase decisions of Strathmore University students. The study findings are in line with that of Dehghani, Niaki, Ramezani, and Sali (2016) who found that consumers' perception on YouTube advertising was linked to purchase intention. They also support the findings by Yüksel (2016) which revealed that product related videos on YouTube were important for influencing consumers' purchase intentions. The study findings are also supportive of the study by Vähäyylkkä and Lepistö (2017) which demonstrated that YouTube influenced need recognition, information search and purchase among consumers.

5.2.4 Influence of Instagram on Consumer Purchase Decisions among Students

The study also sought to find out the extent to which Instagram influenced the purchase decisions among Strathmore University students. The study found that Instagram positively and significantly influenced the overall consumer purchase decisions of students at Strathmore University. Instagram was found to have a significant influence on the product choice, brand choice and dealer choice of these students. The study findings are in line with that of Al-Dhuhli and Ismael (2013) who found that the students believed that Instagram was the best and suitable tool to buying products online particularly fashion products. The also support the views of De Vries et al.(2012) that comments on Instagram could have an impact on sales of a product or service that is either being promoted or advertised. The findings also agree with that of Parsons (2017) that Instagram influenced the purchase decision-making behaviour of individuals and also in line with that of Shuqair and Cragg (2017) that Instagram posts were effective in changing the viewers' perceptions and it could influence viewers' behavioural intentions during the pre-purchase stage.

5.3 Conclusions of the Study

Based on the study findings, the study concluded that social media platforms under investigation namely Facebook, YouTube and Instagram significantly explained the variations in the consumer purchase decisions of Strathmore University students. The study concluded that Instagram had the greatest influence the purchase decisions of the students while Facebook had the least influence on the purchase decisions of these students. The study also concluded that these social media platforms were attributed to 78.0% of the total variability in the purchase decisions of these students. These conclusions are in line with the findings of of Bilal et. Al (2014) who found that every stage in the purchase decision making process was impacted to a different extent by social media platforms. However, the conclusions contradict conclusion of the study Jianging (2006) that there was no relationship between social media platforms and the purchasing behaviour of consumers. The study concluded that businesses and firms that were able to capitalize on these social media platforms were likely to influence the consumer purchase decisions of their consumers and that various consumers including students who used the various social media platforms were likely to be influenced when undertaking their purchase decisions.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

The study recommends that businesses and firms need to appreciate the potential of the various social media platforms to complement each other in influencing the purchase decisions of consumers pertaining to the product, brand and dealer/store choice. Therefore, the study recommends that it is crucial for these businesses/firms to ensure that they exploit the various social media platforms to entice or impress their target markets so as to achieve greater success in marketing their products/services, brands and also their stores.

The study also recommends that the management of various businesses or firms can apply the insights from this study for decision making purposes regarding the most suitable an efficient social media platform to use in marketing and reaching out to their targeted customers and what action plans can be used to ensure that the platforms chosen are tailored to achieve maximum results. The study also recommends that these firms can use the information provided in this study to guide the type and amount of resources as well as the efforts that should be directed to the various social media platforms used in reaching out to the customers.

The study also recommends that researchers purposing to conduct further research in this area can use the findings of this study to recommend further areas of study besides using the information provided to guide their conceptual frameworks.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The current study provided further insight into the influence of social media platforms among students in Strathmore University although with limitations. The study used a cross-sectional research design where the respondents were assessed once on their perspectives of the variables under study. The use of cross-sectional data prevented close investigation of several aspects of the relationships in the study. Further study should therefore be conducted on the same sector using the longitudinal study whereby the various aspects will be assessed to determine the whether the results will be the same.

Finally, the study only focused on Strathmore University which is a private campus and yet there are more universities in Kenya both private and public. Future studies could therefore focus on the wider coverage in order to assess the influence of social media platforms whilst taking into consideration all the five purchasing decisions namely, product choice, dealer choice, brand choice, purchase timing and purchase amount.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

The study recommends that a similar student should be conducted involving all the students in institutions of higher learning and also in different locations in order to allow for comparisons since this study is a case of Strathmore University only and the conditions in other universities may be different. The study also recommends that further research should be conducted to show how the features of the different social media platforms impact on the extent to which a particular social media platform influences the purchase decisions of students. A study showing whether there are differences in the influence of the various social media platforms on the purchase decisions of the students based on different products or services is also recommended.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Introduction Letter

Strathmore University,
School of Management and Commerce,
P.O Box 59857 – 00200,
Nairobi.

Dear Participant,

I invite you to participate in a research study entitled ‘**Influence of Social Media on Students’ Purchasing Decisions: A case of Strathmore University**’. I am currently enrolled in the Master of Commerce Degree at Strathmore University and in the process of writing my Master’s Thesis.

The enclosed questionnaire has been designed to collect information on what influences students to purchase products/services through social media.

Your participation in this research project is completely voluntary. Your responses will remain confidential and anonymous. Data from this research will be kept under lock and key and reported only as a collective combined total. No one other than the researcher will know your individual answers to this questionnaire.

If you agree to participate in this project, please answer the questions on the questionnaire as best you can. It should take approximately ten minutes (10) to complete. If you have any questions about this project, feel free to inquire from me.

Thank you for your assistance in this important endeavour.

Sincerely yours,

Ndinda Mutisya.

Appendix II: Questionnaire

This data collection tool has been designed to assist the researcher in gathering information pertaining to the “**Influence of Social Media Platforms on Students’ Purchasing Decisions: A case of Strathmore University Students**”. Kindly answer the following questions as honestly and accurately as possible. The information given will be treated with a lot of confidentiality. Please do not write your name anywhere on this questionnaire. You are encouraged to give your honest opinion.

1. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
2. Indicate your age bracket
3. Year of study
 - a. First year
 - b. Second year
 - c. Third year
 - d. Fourth year
4. Are you employed?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
5. Do you have a social media application in your phone?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
6. If yes in 5, which of the following social media platform do you actively use?
 - a. Facebook
 - b. YouTube
 - c. Instagram
 - d. Other (specify)
7. On average, how much time do you spend each day checking the social media platform selected in 6 above?
 - a. 30 mins or less
 - b. Up to 1 hour

- c. Up to 2 hours []
- d. Over 2 hours []

Section B: Social Media Platforms and Purchasing Decisions

8. Please indicate the extent to which you use the following social media platforms. Using the following scale **1=Not at all , 2= To a small extent, 3=To a moderate extent , 4= To a great extent, 5=To a very great extent**

	Social media platforms	1	2	3	4	5
a.	Facebook					
b.	YouTube					
c.	Instagram					
d.	Others(specify)					

9. Using the following scale **1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Agree, 3=Somewhat Agree, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree**. Please indicate the extent to which social media platforms influences your purchasing decisions

	Social media platforms	1	2	3	4	5
Facebook and Consumer Purchase Decisions						
a.	I spend time checking my Facebook account while going through products / services before I purchase them					
b.	I follow brands that have a huge following on Facebook because I purchase most of their					

	products/services					
c.	I have befriended/liked a considerable number of companies/businesses on Facebook that have products /services that I would possibly purchase					
d.	I often shop at the stores that I have befriended/liked on Facebook before I purchase a product /service online					
e.	I often use Facebook to seek recommendations from my online friends regarding product(s) that I plan to purchase.					
f.	I often receive information about sales, specials or coupons from the companies I have befriended/”liked” on Facebook hence leading to a purchase taking place					
g.	I use Facebook to get details of products/services that I am interested in and take into consideration advertisements put out before making a purchase					
h.	Because I subscribe and see the content of a specific brand, only under extreme circumstances would I consider purchasing a different brand.					
i.	Information available on Facebook pages influence objective decision making about brands and products					
j.	The more I interact with Facebook, the more it affects my decisions to purchase products or brands					
k.	I believe the more the likes on a Facebook post, the					

	higher the awareness on a brand/product					
YouTube and Consumer Purchase Decisions						
a.	I access YouTube most of the time during the day/night to look a products/services being reviewed prior to purchasing them					
b.	I subscribe to several brand channels on YouTube that review products while discussing price as well as the dealer					
c.	I have bought or wanted to buy products/services recommended by a YouTuber					
d.	User generated product content on YouTube is dependable when considering to purchase a product/service					
e.	I think that the product information given in the videos provide useful information for my purchase.					
f.	After having seen the video, I'm curious to purchase a product					
g.	I take into consideration product reviews from vloggers on YouTube hence they have an effect on my purchases					
h.	I often shop at stores which have their products advertised on YouTube.					
i.	Statements and comments on YouTube influence the					

	decisions to purchase a product					
j.	I take note of trending videos on products on YouTube before purchasing a brand/product					
Instagram and Consumer Purchase Decisions						
a.	I have an active Instagram account that I use when considering a purchase of either a product/service					
b.	I follow several brands on Instagram that have a mass following hence influencing my purchases					
c.	I have used Instagram to seek information on a number of products/services that I have purchased or intended to purchase					
d.	I have used customer feedback on Instagram before visiting a store several times prior to purchasing a product					
e.	I have made purchases through Instagram courtesy of accounts that I follow					
f.	I have severally bought something after someone I follow on Instagram shared it.					
g.	I prefer looking at images on Instagram than watching videos of products/brands being reviewed					
h.	I believe Instagram provides high exposure for the products/brands					

i.	I trust information on Instagram to be true.					
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Section C: Consumer Purchasing Decisions

10. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements concerning your purchasing decisions. Use the following scale **1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Agree, 3=Somewhat Agree, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree.**

	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Consumer Purchasing Decisions						
Product Choice						
a.	I am able to get information about products or brands that I want to purchase on social media platforms					
b.	Comments or likes on social media platforms aid in narrowing down on products or brands to purchase					
c.	I am able to be aware and access alternative products through social media platforms					
d.	I am able to voice my opinion or review of products after purchasing through social media platforms					
e.	I am able to compare products easily before purchasing them through social media platforms					

Brand Choice						
a.	I have been able to discover new brands via social media platforms					
b.	I have been able to learn of unfamiliar brands courtesy of social media platforms					
c.	I will choose a brand if recommended by friends and family through posts and comments on social media platforms					
d.	Brand pages on social media platforms provide plenty of information about brands					
Dealer Choice						
a.	I will purchase from a dealer that friends and family have recommended through social media platforms					
b.	I will purchase from a dealer that has less negative reviews on social media platforms					
c.	I am more likely to purchase from a dealer who is active on social media platforms					
d.	I will purchase from a dealer who I can engage with on social media early on and throughout the purchase process					

Thank you for your participation!