

# Impact of Instagram on the Marketing Performance of Home-Based Businesses in the North Al Batinah Region, Oman

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## Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of Instagram-based marketing strategies for home-based businesses (HBBs) in post-pandemic Oman by applying social selling and interaction theory. The research focuses on the dynamic relationships among interactivity, information content, and trendiness on Instagram, examining how these factors collectively influence the marketing performance of HBBs. Data were gathered from 100 HBB owners through a structured questionnaire. The findings reveal significant correlations between the use of Instagram and improved marketing performance for these businesses, demonstrating the platform's importance in the current market landscape. Despite acknowledging certain research limitations, the study emphasizes Instagram's unique role as a powerful marketing tool for HBBs. The research suggests that future studies should include larger and more diverse samples to obtain more comprehensive insights. Ultimately, this study enhances the existing literature on Instagram marketing for HBBs and offers practical implications for business owners, contributing to a deeper understanding of social media marketing dynamics in this sector.

**Keywords:** Instagram, interactivity, information content, trendiness, HBBs, marketing performance

## 1. Introduction

In the aftermath of the pandemic, home-based businesses in Oman have increasingly embraced online marketing to connect with their target markets. This trend, notably evident in industries like clothing and fashion, has witnessed businesses capitalizing on the digital realm to promote products, resulting in substantial sales growth. However, despite the evident shift, there is a lack of literature support that specifically addresses the recent developments in home-based businesses in Oman and their transition to online marketing strategies. This highlights a critical gap in the current understanding of the dynamics and implications of this transformation.

Recent literature emphasizes the significant impact of information and communication technology on contemporary business landscapes, especially concerning marketing strategies and information dissemination to customers. To adapt and effectively engage with tech-savvy younger generations, organizations must adopt suitable marketing tools and harness the power of the Internet. Social media platforms have emerged as pivotal tools for organizations to connect with both local communities and the global market. Despite the growing importance of online marketing, there is a noticeable gap in recent literature that comprehensively explores the implications of this digital shift for home-based businesses in Oman.

Home-based business owners are increasingly leveraging various social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn, YouTube, and TikTok, to engage with customers and derive value from these interactions. However, the specific impact of these platforms on home-based businesses in Oman remains an underexplored area in recent literature. The current study aims to bridge this gap by examining the influence of content creation and sharing on marketing efforts within the context of home-based businesses in Oman.

While technology and the prolonged impact of COVID-19 have driven a paradigm shift toward Internet-centric marketing and business strategies, there is a lack of recent literature addressing the unique challenges and opportunities faced by home-based businesses in Oman during this transformation. This study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by exploring these research gaps and providing insights into the evolving landscape of online marketing for home-based businesses in Oman post-pandemic.

The evolution of the world has brought about substantial changes in marketing practices, particularly in the realm of social media platforms. Additionally, there has been a shift in company culture towards remote and digital operations. Traditional marketing methods, such as paper-based advertisements and marketing personnel, have been impacted by the challenges of mobility and the need to adapt to new marketing landscapes. This has led to a transition from physical marketing representatives and print publications to the electronic realm and social media platforms. This shift highlights the integration of marketing strategies with social media, allowing businesses to leverage these platforms for their marketing efforts (Ebrahim., 2019).

The extended closures in aviation, tourism, and other industries have resulted in significant losses and challenges for companies involved in product transportation. There has been a notable shift in consumer purchasing power, with a focus on essential items such as food, beverages, and medicine. This shift has led to substantial losses for large companies and small to medium-sized enterprises, as well as widespread employee layoffs. Additionally, many jobs in these sectors have been eliminated, and some companies have transitioned to online platforms (Sirkeci I., 2020). The challenges of job loss and economic difficulties faced by individuals and companies have prompted a significant transition from traditional marketing methods such as text message data and phone calls to the internet and social media platforms. Video marketing has become essential and mandatory, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Zhang & Watson, 2020).

The objectives of this study are based on the problem description provided above which can be summarized as; first to investigate the impact of Instagram interactivity on home-based businesses' marketing performance. Second; to investigate the impact of Instagram information content on home-based businesses' marketing performance. Third; to investigate the impact of Instagram trendiness on home-based businesses' marketing performance. Finally; to investigate the mediating role of customer awareness about Instagram interactivity, information content and trendiness, and home-based businesses' marketing performance.

Since April 2020, due to social distancing caused by the coronavirus, many employees have been relying more on websites to perform tasks. This has led to various changes, such as remote work becoming more common. There has also been an increased reliance on the internet and websites for communication, including sending messages through email or social media platforms. As a result, virtual selling has become more prominent, and there has been a diversification in meetings and obtaining training through video communication websites. These changes reflect the preferences and needs of the market, and organizations and institutions have recognized the importance of technology during this time (Hartmann & Lussier, 2020). Home-based companies have recognized the importance of social media platforms and websites and have been actively investing in strengthening their presence on these platforms. According to marketers, social media spending is expected to increase by 71 percent of the marketing budget in companies and for-profit organizations from 2020 to 2024 (Ebrahim, 2019).

The evolution of data and digital marketing has gone through various stages of change and advancement. It initially began in the 1990s when data was utilized through traditional marketing channels such as communications, magazines, newspapers, and television, before the widespread use of the Internet and computers. In the mid-1990s, the advent of internet connectivity and smartphones marked the next phase of development. This was followed by the era of technology, which emerged in the early 21st century with the introduction and rapid evolution of smartphones (Maryville University Online., 2023). This technological revolution brought about significant changes in human life, expanding the scope of scientific knowledge and connecting people from different parts of the world. These advancements have prompted significant changes in economies, as companies and consumers now have direct communication channels (Lammi & Pantzar, 2019). This has opened up diverse and expansive opportunities to cater to the preferences of consumers from different cultures and countries. The utilization of smartphone applications and programs has played a crucial role in the realm of digital marketing (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

The presence of social networking programs and platforms, with over 2.77 billion users worldwide, has revolutionized the way entrepreneurs can reach both domestic and international markets. Over the past two decades, the Internet has facilitated significant possibilities and changes in the field of business and digital marketing (Zhang & Watson, 2020). However, the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting closure and divergence policies have had a devastating economic impact on countries and businesses. All stakeholders, including suppliers, customers, investors, employees, and society as a whole, have sought to minimize costs and mitigate the negative effects. The weakness in business operations has also caused disruptions in local and global import-export activities, particularly in the energy, food, and health sectors (Sheth, 2020).

Instagram has emerged as a dominant marketing platform within the realm of social media, surpassing traditional media marketing methods and becoming the go-to tool for companies seeking to promote their products or services.

With a billion monthly users, including 88% from the United States and 71% under the age of 35, Instagram has established itself as the most powerful program for marketing purposes (Dean, 2023). Companies are now prioritizing the acquisition of followers on this social networking site to avoid the need for expensive traditional marketing strategies. Instagram is widely regarded as the best social media platform for marketing endeavors (Al Adwan, 2019).

In this study, the strategic impact of social media marketing, with special emphasis on the role of Instagram, on marketing performance will be investigated based on the theoretical model of social selling and interaction theory. Social media is such a unique marketing channel because of the transparent, two-way potential of interaction. This theory argues that rather than broadcasting corporate messages, brands have the opportunity to engage consumers on an individual basis as well as generate leads in a very targeted fashion (Social Media Theory, Content and Strategy, 2021).

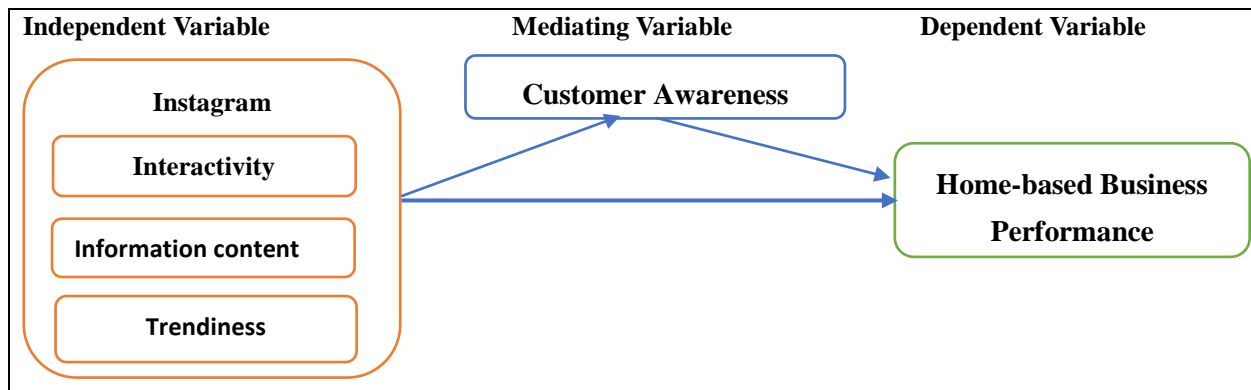


Figure 1. Study Framework

The study framework is now clarified, with home-based business performance serving as the dependent variable and Instagram as the independent variable. Instagram comprises sub-variables, namely interactivity, information content, and trendiness, collectively shaping the factors under investigation in the study. The mediating variable will be customer awareness. Based on Figure 1, the study can investigate specific hypotheses as will be discussed in the following section.

#### **Interactivity:**

The interaction between business owners and consumers can help build trust and make customers more inclined to engage with a business (Ebrahim, 2019). Interactivity plays a crucial role in enhancing the significance of social media platforms. It can be defined as the process through which a group can communicate with each other and synchronize messages and publications, as well as their impact. The level of interactivity varies among business characteristics published on the internet. For example, an ad that only contains text is considered less interactive compared to one that includes a link to a website where business followers can click and explore further (de Vries et al., 2012).

*H1: Instagram interactivity will positively impact the marketing performance of home-based businesses.*

#### **Information content:**

People use social media platforms to search for information and content, especially when it comes to commercial businesses and products. When followers of a business account find informative posts about the product, it increases their positive attitudes and popularity (de Vries et al., 2012). Social media sites are also used by consumers to interact with other business users, share their experiences, and gather information about businesses. This information on posts helps build trust and eliminates uncertainty about the product content (Ebrahim, 2019).

*H2: Instagram information content will positively impact the marketing performance of home-based businesses.*

#### **Instagram Trendiness:**

The evolution of social media has led to positive interactions and strong relationships between businesses and consumers. With the development of online marketing tools and content, there has been a shift from traditional

marketing to online marketing, resulting in improved interaction and communication. As a result, consumers are increasingly turning to social media for communicating and engaging with trendy content, which has a positive impact on their buying decisions. Therefore; the effectiveness of social media in terms of consumer responses and participation enhances the overall performance and competitiveness of companies. Effective communication between companies and customers is key in this modern era of social media, as it stimulates consumer behavior differently compared to traditional marketing methods (Ebrahim, 2019).

H3: Instagram trendiness will positively impact the marketing performance of home-based businesses.

#### ***Customer awareness:***

Due to the lack of research on the impact of direct marketing promotional tools on awareness and business growth, researchers have conducted studies on the effect of these tools on customer awareness and business performance, specifically in the electronics industry (Valens et al., 2020). Trust between customers and communication companies plays a crucial role in direct contact, and the lack of public awareness has been identified as a problem that can lead to the loss of many businesses (Kang & Hustvedt, 2013). Given the high cost associated with promotional tools and the lack of a clear understanding of their application, it is important to raise consumer and customer awareness to maximize the benefits (Al Badi, 2018). In the past, companies relied on traditional marketing techniques and oral communication to increase customer awareness (Safari et al., 2020).

H4: Customer awareness has a significant mediating role considering the impact of Instagram interactivity, information content, and trendiness, on the marketing performance of home-based businesses.

#### ***Home-Based Businesses' Marketing Performance:***

Home-based businesses HBBs are small businesses that operate from the business owners' home offices (Kapasi & Galloway 2016). These businesses typically have a small number of employees, often consisting of immediate family members. They do not have a physical storefront, customer parking, or street advertising signs (Helmrich, 2014). The use of a home as a business space can provide advantages such as reduced initial capital requirements. However, the success of a home-based business relies on clients accepting the home as a professional space and recognizing home-based businesses as legitimate entities (Evangelista & Savona, 2003). Home-based businesses can encompass a wide range of industries and can involve the production and/or sale of products or services (Crittenden et al., 2019).

According to (Clark & Douglas, 2014), home-based businesses (HBBs) are not limited by their small size and can operate across various geographic regions, including local, regional, national, and even international markets. This challenges the perception that HBBs are merely hobbies or craft activities and establishes them as legitimate businesses. The owner-managers of HBBs have high aspirations for growth and employ ambitious marketing strategies to achieve sales growth. This demonstrates that despite their size, HBBs can be successful and even operate on an international scale. Therefore, researchers need to focus on developing strategies that can help these businesses thrive.

During the pandemic, there has been a significant increase in the number of home-based businesses as many companies have shifted to remote work. Home-based companies have generally performed well, especially compared to larger companies that have had to adapt to remote work. Interestingly, even after the restrictions were lifted, some small businesses have continued to operate from home, utilizing the Internet, social media marketing, and technology. This shift to remote work has had a lasting impact on the industrial structure and working lives of people in home-based companies (Jamil et al., 2022). It has also created opportunities for growth in the sector of small home-based businesses, as they have lower operational costs and the potential for significant growth (Zhang et al., 2021).

The survival of organizations is crucial for their performance and long-term success. Performance is a key factor in the growth and profitability of a business. According to (Hornby, 2000), performance is measured by the level of success and determination achieved. Performance is analyzed from the perspective of the organization (Jamil and Mohamed, 2012). Based on Hornby's definition, it can be inferred that performance and success are closely related. The factors that determine performance may vary from one organization to another (Idris, 2017). Finance is often considered a major indicator of performance, including metrics such as sales per worker, productivity levels, revenue, profit, and return on investment (Cao & Weerawardena, 2023).

Recent studies have found that multiple factors can be used to measure the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), beyond just financial metrics (Jasper, 2021), (Chittithaworn et al., 2011) identified eight factors that influence the success of SMEs, including characteristics of the SMEs themselves, management and know-how, products and services, customers and the market, the way of doing business and cooperation, resources and finance,

strategy, and the external environment. The performance of small enterprises is seen as their ability to contribute to wealth creation, job creation, and overall growth in the economy (Komppula, 2016, Jin, 2019, Urban, 2021, Ezennia & Mutambara, 2020)

The literature review provided offers a broad overview of the evolution of digital marketing and the impact of social media platforms, particularly Instagram, on business operations, especially in the context of home-based businesses (HBBs). While it effectively highlights the increasing reliance on social media and the internet in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, several gaps in the existing literature are apparent. The limitations of previous studies can be seen in some areas as the generalization across business types as many of the studies cited focus broadly on digital marketing and social media without specifically addressing the unique challenges and opportunities faced by HBBs. While the growth of social media usage is acknowledged, there is limited exploration of how this affects businesses that operate primarily from home, which have distinct operational constraints compared to traditional businesses. The second area is the lack of specific focus on Instagram's role as a dominant platform. Previous research does not investigate deeply into how specific features of Instagram (such as interactivity, information content, and trendiness) influence the marketing performance of HBBs. The literature tends to treat social media platforms as a homogenous group, failing to recognize the distinct capabilities and user behaviors associated with different platforms. Third; the insufficient attention given to the pandemic's long-term impact. Fourth; the underexplored mediating variables, such as customer awareness, in the relationship between social media usage and business performance. The existing literature often overlooks how awareness, driven by targeted social media campaigns, can bridge the gap between marketing efforts and actual business outcomes.

Therefore; the current study aims to fill these gaps by providing a more accurate understanding of the impact of Instagram on the marketing performance of HBBs. By focusing specifically on Instagram, this study will offer insights into how its features—interactivity, information content, and trendiness—affect business performance. The use of a theoretical framework grounded in social selling and interaction theory allows for a more targeted analysis of these relationships. Moreover, the study introduces customer awareness as a mediating variable, which is often neglected in the existing literature. This focus will provide a deeper understanding of how HBBs can leverage Instagram to not only engage with customers but also build long-term awareness and trust, ultimately enhancing their marketing performance. In addition; and by concentrating on the post-pandemic context, this research will contribute to the ongoing discussion about the lasting changes in business practices, particularly for HBBs. It will offer practical insights for practitioners on how to effectively utilize Instagram in a rapidly evolving digital landscape, thereby contributing to the broader understanding of social media marketing dynamics in the context of small, home-based enterprises.

## 2. Method

The research employed a quantitative approach, utilizing a survey as the primary data collection method. The unit of analysis comprised home-based business owners or individuals responsible for marketing activities. The survey encompassed a diverse range of questions, employing a 5-point Likert scale for research-relevant inquiries that covered all study variables. The questionnaire featured a preliminary section soliciting general information, including details such as age, gender, marital status, ownership status, level of education, and business type. To maximize accessibility and outreach, the questionnaire was distributed online through specialized platforms relevant to the target audience. The survey links were disseminated via popular communication channels, including WhatsApp, emails, and Instagram, with Google Forms serving as the online questionnaire platform.

The target population of the study is the HBBs in Oman. According to the available data published by the Authority for the Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED), Sultanate of Oman, the number of small units licensed to practice home-based business activity stood at 9,000 as of mod 2022. The North AL-Batinah Region is the second largest after Muscat as per the distribution of HBBs in Oman, with around 3000 units. Therefore, due to the nature of this research, the sample frame is from HBBs in the region. The study used (Krejcie & Morgan's, 1970) sample size table to draw a sample size from the target population. Following Morgan's table, a 100-sample size was determined for the HBBs. The study used random probability sampling techniques to determine who participated in the survey. Considering the nature of the variables in this study, the organization was chosen as the unit of analysis. Therefore, the key respondents for this study were chief executives or senior management staff of the manufacturing firms.

Table 1. Reliability Test

Construct	Number of Variables	Cronbach alpha
Interactivity	4	0.684
Information content	4	0.768
Trendiness	4	0.882
Home Business Performance	5	0.784

Before administration, the questionnaire underwent a validation process by selected faculty members from the business department at Sohar University. The validation ensured that the questionnaire was clear, the statements were relevant to the constructs under investigation, and respondents could answer questions without difficulty. Reliability, as of Table 1, was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with results exceeding 60 percent for all constructs, affirming the instrument's consistency. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics to examine general respondents and home-based business information. Additionally, the correlation matrix was employed to assess relationships between dependent and independent variables. For hypothesis testing, linear and multiple regression models were utilized, allowing for a comprehensive examination of the research hypotheses. These methodological choices were made to ensure a robust and thorough investigation of the effectiveness of Instagram-based marketing strategies for home-based businesses in the North Al Batinah region of Oman after the pandemic.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 General Information

Table 2 presents comprehensive general information on Home-Based Businesses (HBBs) sample characteristics, yielding key insights into the entrepreneurial landscape in the North Al Batinah region of Oman. The data underscores a youthful demographic, with 38 percent of respondents aged 31 to 35 and 27 percent aged 25 to 30, signaling a vibrant entrepreneurial scene. Entrepreneurial involvement is predominant, constituting 72 percent of the sample, with 28 percent holding marketing or sales management roles, emphasizing hands-on participation. A majority (72 percent) possess less than five years of experience, indicating a concentration of newer entrants. Notably, 62 percent engage in electronic marketing, particularly through Instagram, highlighting the significance of digital platforms in their strategies. Educationally, 46 percent hold university degrees, 36 percent have college certificates, and 18 percent have pre-university diplomas, reflecting a well-educated sample. Geographically, the distribution of HBBs varies, with 29 percent in Sohar, 28 percent in Saham, 26 percent in Shinas, 17 percent in Al-Khaboura, and 6 percent in Al-Suwaiq, illustrating diverse concentrations across cities and states in the region. Overall, the study's sample comprises young, educated entrepreneurs actively engaging in digital marketing, shaping the dynamic landscape of Home-Based Businesses in the contemporary business environment.

Moreover, the table highlights the varied sectors encompassed by the sample. Among Home-Based Businesses (HBBs), 33 percent operate in the food and drink industry, 18 percent in the makeup sector, 16 percent in modeling, 10 percent in photography, 9 percent in designing, 9 percent in computer and IT, 5 percent in wedding organizing, 2 percent in fashion and clothing, and 1 percent in textiles. This proportional breakdown reflects the distribution of businesses across these sectors, providing insight into the diverse entrepreneurial landscape within the sample.

In addition, the table delineates the allocation of annual marketing budgets within the HBBs. Notably, 32 percent of HBBs allocate between 31-40 percent of their total budget to marketing efforts, while 30 percent dedicate 10-20 percent of their budget to marketing. A further 21 percent allocate less than 10 percent of their total budget to marketing, 14 percent allocate 21-30 percent, and only 3 percent designate 41-50 percent of their total budget for marketing purposes. This budget distribution insight underscores the varied approaches to marketing within the HBBs, with the majority falling within the 10-40 percent range.

Furthermore; the table provides general information regarding Home-Based Businesses (HBBs) and their owners revealing several noteworthy patterns. First, 45 percent of these businesses possess a capital ranging from 10,000 to 50,000 OR (Omani Rial), while 33 percent have a capital between 51,000 and 100,000 OR, and 22 percent have a capital between 101,000 and 500,000 OR, where OR1 approximately equals to \$2.59. This data illuminates the diversity of financial resources available to these HBBs, highlighting their varying levels of capacity and scale. Additionally, the table emphasizes that a significant portion of the sampled HBBs (75 percent) are relatively new, with an operational age of less than 10 years. Meanwhile, 25 percent of the businesses have been active for 11-20

years. This distribution of business age provides insight into the level of experience within the HBB sector, showcasing a mix of both emerging and established enterprises.

In terms of market reach, the majority of these HBBs (75 percent) primarily focus on selling their products and services within the national market. A noteworthy 19 percent of the sample engaged in both national and international sales, reflecting a level of global expansion among a subset of HBBs. Interestingly, a smaller proportion (6 percent) exclusively target international markets. This information paints a clear picture of the targeted customer base for the selected HBBs in this study, emphasizing the predominant focus on the national market, with a noticeable but smaller presence in the international arena.

Table 2. Respondent Profile of Sample HBBs

General HBB Information	Details	N	%
Age	Under 25 years	23	23
	25-30 years	27	27
	31-35 years	38	38
	36-40 years	12	12
Role of respondent	An entrepreneur	72	72
	Marketing/sales manager	28	28
Experience	Less than 5 years	72	72
	Between 5-10 years	28	28
Education	Pre-university diploma	18	18
	Collage certificate	36	36
	University graduate	46	46
Location	Shinas	20	20
	Sohar	29	29
	Saham	28	28
	Al-Khaboura	17	17
	Al-Suwaiq	6	6
Sector	Computers and it	9	9
	Modeling	16	16
	Makeup	18	18
	Food and drink	30	30
	Photography	10	10
	Fashion and clothes	2	2
	Textile	1	1
	Designing	9	9
	Wedding organizing	5	5
Annual marketing budget as a percentage of the total company budget	Less than 10 %	21	21
	10 – 20 %	30	30
	21 – 30 %	14	14
	31 – 40 %	32	32
	41 – 50 %	3	3
Business Capital (000) OR	10-50	45	45

	51-100	33	33
	101-500	22	22
Enterprise age	Less than 5 years	15	15
	5 – 10 years	60	60
	11 – 20 years	25	25
Selling for which market	Nationally	75	75
	Internationally	6	6
	Both	19	19

### 3.2 Test of Hypotheses

Spearman's correlation coefficient was employed to assess the relationship between the independent variables: Instagram information content, interactivity, and trendiness, and the dependent variable, namely, the marketing performance of Home-Based Businesses (HBBs). The analysis reveals a robust and statistically significant correlation between the utilization of Instagram and the marketing performance of HBBs. Specifically, the correlation between each sub-variable of Instagram information content, interactivity, and trendiness, with the marketing performance of HBBs, demonstrates a high degree of significance.

Table 3 of the one-way ANOVA evaluates the means of the pertinent groups and discerns if there exist any statistically notable variations among them. In this particular case, the one-way ANOVA yields a significant result (Sig. = 0.000), as explicitly displayed in the accompanying table. Drawing from this specific finding, it is prudent to suggest strategies aimed at bolstering Home-Based Businesses' (HBBs) online marketing efforts, leveraging the observed distinctions in marketing performance attributed to Instagram's interactivity. This recommendation holds substantial value, particularly for practitioners and policymakers, as it can serve as valuable support for enhancing overall marketing effectiveness.

Table 3. ANOVA: Interactivity Effect on Marketing Performance with the Moderating Role of Customer Awareness

Model	Sum of squares (SS)	degree of freedom (df)	Mean of squares (MS)	D	Sig.
Regression	0,213	2	0,106	2,570	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
1 Residual	4,018	97	0,041		
Total	4,230	99			

It was found that there is a strong causal effect between the independent variable interactivity of Instagram and the dependent variable marketing performance of HBBs, where (P-value = 0.000). Since the P-value is P-value  $\leq$  0.05, the relationship between the interactivity and marketing performance variables is significant given the moderating role of customer awareness.

Table 4. Coefficients: Interactivity Effect on Marketing Performance with the Moderating Role of Customer Awareness

Model	Non-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Standard error	Beta		
(Constant)	4,803	0,249		19,317	0,000
1 Customer Awareness	-0,135	0,060	-0,224	-2,265	0,026
Interactivity	-0,003	0,022	-0,013	-0,130	0,000



The mediation effect results can be seen where the mediator variable has a P-value of **0.000**. Since the P-value is lower than 0.05, we can consider that the mediator variable customer awareness affects the relationship between the independent variable Instagram interactivity, and the dependent variable marketing performance of HBBs.

Table 5. ANOVA: Information Content Effect on Marketing Performance with the Moderating Role of Customer Awareness

Model	The sum of squares (SS)	degree of freedom (df)	Mean of squares (MS)	D	Sig.
Regression	0,224	2	0,112	2,712	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
1 Residual	4,006	97	0,041		
Total	4,230	99			

Table 5 presents one-way ANOVA which investigates the means of information content and its potential influence on the marketing performance of Home-Based Businesses (HBBs), while also assessing the existence of statistically significant relationships between these variables, with information content as the independent variable and marketing performance as the dependent variable. Notably, the one-way ANOVA indicates a highly significant result (Sig. = 0.000).

This significant finding allows us to draw a crucial inference; the linear model exploring the potential mediating effect of customer awareness on the relationship between Instagram information content and HBBs' marketing performance is indeed statistically significant. In essence, the data suggests that customer awareness might play a vital role in explaining how Instagram information content contributes to the marketing performance of HBBs. This insight has implications for understanding the underlying mechanisms driving marketing effectiveness for HBBs using Instagram and underscores the importance of cultivating customer awareness in optimizing marketing outcomes within this context. This conclusion holds valuable implications for practitioners and policymakers seeking to enhance the marketing strategies of HBBs by leveraging the interconnected factors of information content, customer awareness, and Instagram's impact on marketing performance.

Table 6. Coefficients: Information Content Effect on Marketing Performance with the Moderating Role of Customer Awareness

Model	Non-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Standard error	Beta		
(Constant)	4,748	0,247		19,188	0,000
1 Customer Awareness	-0,136	0,060	-0,225	-2,276	0,025
Information Content	0,019	0,036	0,053	0,534	0,000

The research reveals that there is a strong causal effect between the independent variable Instagram information content and the dependent variable marketing performance of HBBs, where (P-value = 0.000). Since the P-value is P-value  $\leq$  0.05, the relationship between the information content and marketing performance variables is significant given the moderating role of customer awareness. Therefore; information content has a statistically significant relationship with the marketing performance of HBBs given the moderating role of customer awareness.

Table 7. ANOVA: Trendiness Effect on Marketing Performance with the Moderating Role of Customer Awareness

Model	Sum of squares (SS)	degree of freedom (df)	Mean of squares (MS)	D	Sig.
Regression	0,268	2	0,134	3,274	0.042 <sup>b</sup>
1 Residual	3,963	97	0,041		
Total	4,230	99			

Concerning Instagram trendiness as an independent variable, from the one-way ANOVA table above, it can be derived that the linear model of the moderating effect of customer awareness on the relationship between trendiness and marketing performance of HBBs is statistically significant.

Table 8. Coefficients: Trendiness Effect on Marketing Performance with the Moderating Role of Customer Awareness

Model	Non-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Standard error	Beta		
(Constant)	4,864	0,241		20,219	0,000
1 Customer Awareness	-0,136	0,059	-0,225	-2,294	0,024
Trendiness	-0,020	0,017	-0,114	-1,164	0,000

From the coefficient Table 8, it is clear that there is a strong causal effect between the independent variable trendiness of Instagram and the dependent variable marketing performance of HBBs, where (P-value = 0.042). Since the P-value is  $P\text{-value} \leq 0.05$ , the relationship between the trendiness and marketing performance variables is significant, given the moderating role of customer awareness. Therefore; trendiness has a significant relationship with the marketing performance of HBBs given the moderating role of customer awareness.

#### 4. Discussion

The first key finding emphasizes the significance of enhancing the activation of social media accounts for home-based businesses (HBBs). Drawing upon prior research, it is evident that active social media engagement is a common determinant of success in the online marketing landscape. This aligns with the work of (Ebrahim, 2019), who emphasized the pivotal role of social media presence in driving consumer engagement. However, it is noteworthy that our study identifies certain nuances in the North Al-Batinah Region context, challenging previously assumed universalities.

A subsequent paragraph in the discussion section focuses on harnessing the experiences of business owners in cultivating effective online interactions and communications. This finding resonates with the insights of (Jamil et al., 2022), who emphasized the role of experiential knowledge in shaping effective online communication strategies. Yet, our study introduces a novel dimension by exploring the regional context, revealing both similarities and contradictions to established theories. By doing so, it contributes to the broader understanding of the dynamic interplay between business owners' experiences and online success.

On a practical level, these findings carry tangible implications for HBBs' owners. The study proposes actionable recommendations derived from the analysis, instilling a sense of confidence in the suggested strategies. These recommendations are not only relevant to HBBs but also extend their applicability to individuals engaged in similar domains, ensuring a broad impact on business practices. Moreover, the insights from this research hold value not only for business owners but also for consumers and followers of HBBs. The study offers a glimpse into the operations and strategies of these businesses, enriching the consumer perspective and fostering a deeper understanding of the dynamics at play. This dual perspective adds richness to the findings, highlighting the symbiotic relationship between HBBs and their audience.

Furthermore, the study is a valuable resource for those contemplating launching new ventures or embarking on future scientific inquiries. The findings and methodology presented herein offer guidance and insights that can inform decision-making in the rapidly evolving landscape of online marketing. By addressing a gap in the literature, the study contributes to the theoretical depth while maintaining practical applicability.

The conclusion of this research stresses its significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge, particularly in the realm of online marketing post the unprecedented period of the Corona pandemic. The proposed theoretical framework, emphasizing the synergistic utilization of interactivity, information content, and trendiness on Instagram, offers a foundational understanding of how these elements collectively impact the success of HBBs' marketing performance in the North Al-Batinah Region. From a theoretical standpoint, the study enriches the literature review by providing new insights into the evolving significance of acknowledgment within online marketing post-pandemic, a unique challenge modeled especially for HBBs. As businesses navigate the complexities of the present landscape, the study emphasizes the potency of digital platforms as vehicles for progress, altering the trajectory of businesses and underscoring the resilience and adaptability of entrepreneurial ventures in the face of adversity.

Acknowledging the scope and boundaries of this study, certain limitations have emerged in both the data collection process and its findings. It is imperative to recognize these limitations as they provide valuable insights for the design of future research endeavors. One of the primary limitations pertains to the sample size chosen for the questionnaire-based study. The size could be increased which might influence the reliability of research outcomes, particularly in the context of investigating marketing through social networking platforms. Moreover, the focus on individuals exclusively from the North Al Batinah Governorate introduces an element of restriction.

Additionally, the study encountered diversity in the types of home projects under investigation. Projects specializing in occasions such as photography, makeup artistry, and wedding organizing exhibited dissimilar purchasing power compared to projects in domains like clothing, food, and beverage, as well as computer and information technology. This variation introduces a layer of complexity when interpreting the study's outcomes, given the distinct dynamics at play within these different business categories.

For future research directions, the study has concentrated on evaluating the performance of home businesses through Instagram account marketing within the North Al Batinah Region, Oman. Given the prevailing trend and the widespread adoption of Instagram by home business owners in the present era, this focus underscores the platform's significance. The popularity of Instagram within this context is indicative of its potential for enduring relevance, particularly in the absence of a prominent rival platform with comparable reach and influence.

As a potential avenue for future exploration, this study can serve as a foundation to guide and enlighten owners of HBBs and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The research could extend its impact by delving deeper into the details of the methods employed within the Instagram program for marketing products and facilitating home sales. By offering insights into effective strategies, content approaches, and engagement techniques, this potential future research could empower businesses to harness the full potential of Instagram to enhance their visibility and resonate with consumers. This anticipated direction holds the promise of facilitating enhanced consumer awareness, thereby contributing to improved business outcomes.

In essence, by expanding on the current study's findings and investigating the nuances of Instagram-based marketing strategies in greater depth, future research could provide an invaluable resource for both aspiring and established entrepreneurs. The insights garnered from such research could serve as a practical roadmap, equipping businesses to effectively navigate the dynamic landscape of digital marketing and capitalize on Instagram's potent capabilities for sustained engagement and growth.

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### **Authors' contributions**

Dr. Adil was responsible for the study design and revisions, while Mr. Abdallah handled data collection and the literature review. Dr. Adil drafted and revised the manuscript. Both authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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