

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
Faculty of Social Sciences
School of Economics and Business Administration

Vlas Chebotarov

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON PURCHASING DECISIONS FOR
E-COMMERCE: A CASE STUDY OF FALCONCLAW.EU

Bachelor's Thesis

Supervisor: Professor Andres Kuusik

Tartu 2024

I have written this Bachelor's Thesis independently. Any ideas or data from other authors or sources have been fully referenced.

Table of contents

Introduction.....	4
1. Social media marketing in e-commerce: impact on purchasing decisions	5
1.1. Concepts of social media marketing and its role in e-commerce	5
1.2. Factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions online.....	14
1.3. Review of previous studies on the relationship between social media marketing and purchasing decisions	18
2. Impact of social media marketing on purchasing decisions at Falconclaw.eu	21
2.1. Methodology of the empirical study	21
2.2. Results and discussion of the empirical study on the relationship between social media marketing and purchasing decision.....	25
Conclusion	35
List of references.....	37
APPENDIX A.....	42
Survey Questionnaire for Consumers	42
Resümee.....	45

Introduction

In today's era of technology and social media, it is crucial to be progressive and stay on top of trends to remain competitive and ensure brand awareness. Nowadays, the impact of social media marketing on e-commerce businesses has become increasingly significant, as platforms like YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok are crucial for dominating modern digital marketing strategies. According to a recent 2024 report by Statista, approximately 73.9 percent of global internet users actively use social media as a source of product research, which indicates the growing influence of social networks on consumers. The evidence presented thus far supports the idea that social media significantly impacts consumers' purchasing decision-making processes by not only providing a source for information exchange and fostering trust through positive feedback but also shaping social identity, which collectively influences purchasing behavior (Mu, 2023). Therefore, in order for companies to remain competitive and build strong consumer relationships, it is crucial to understand how social media marketing influences both their brand as well as customers' purchasing decisions. Moreover, Valerio, Curzi, Lecoq, and Quéré (2019) have shown in their thorough analysis that social media enhances the level of customer trust and, at the same time, inspires customers to buy through social networking sites.

Previous studies regarding these subjects produced various results. While some authors have confirmed their hypothesis that social media marketing positively correlates with customers' purchasing decisions (Valerio, Curzi, Lecoq & Quéré, 2019; Mu, 2023; Lee, Lee, & Oh, 2015; Salhab, Al-Amarneh, Aljabaly, Al Zoubi, & Othman, 2023), others could not conclusively support this statement (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Okadiani, Mitariani, & Imbayani). Despite the established significance of social media marketing, more research on the topic is needed as a research gap occurs in understanding its specific impact on smaller e-commerce businesses like Falconclaw.eu. Furthermore, smaller businesses often operate within limited budgets and provide services to specific markets, which may influence the effectiveness of their social media strategies. In order to explore how social media marketing influences purchasing decisions within the specific context, the author addresses this gap by focusing on Falconclaw.eu, a small Estonian retail e-commerce business that provides high-standard night vision and thermal equipment. Another gap lies in the methodologies used in previous studies. Some studies may rely on surveys or consumer interviews to gather insights, which may introduce biases or fail to capture actual purchasing behavior (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Conversely, quantitative metrics such as conversion rates, click-through rates (CTR), and engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments) can provide a more objective

assessment of customer correlations between social media marketing and purchasing decisions. Thus, this study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining both insights from surveys and quantitative data from social media analytics, to provide a more comprehensive analysis.

The research aims to explore the impact of social media marketing in shaping purchasing decisions, using an Estonian-based online retail company, Falconclaw.eu, as a case study. The study seeks to provide recommendations on effective social media marketing strategies for e-commerce companies by analyzing both consumer perspectives and company insights.

The following research tasks are set to achieve this aim:

- Define and analyze the key concepts of social media marketing and consumer purchasing decisions.
- Provide a theoretical background on social media marketing's role in e-commerce and its relationship with purchasing behavior.
- Review previous empirical studies on the relationship between social media marketing and purchasing decisions.
- Collect data on consumer behavior and Falconclaw.eu's social media marketing performance using customer survey and accessing insights from analytics tools.
- Analyze the data using correlation and other statistical methods to evaluate the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies.
- Conclude by discussing the findings, comparing them with previous studies, and providing recommendations for Falconclaw.eu.

This thesis is divided into two main parts: theoretical and empirical. In Chapter 1, the author presents an analysis of the key concepts, theoretical background, and a review of relevant previous empirical studies on the topic. Chapter 2 describes the methodology used to conduct the empirical research and provides an analysis of the data collected. The results are then compared with findings from previous studies, followed by a discussion of their implications for Falconclaw.eu's marketing strategies.

Keywords: social media marketing, purchasing decisions, e-commerce, consumer behavior, Falconclaw.eu.

1. Social media marketing in e-commerce: impact on purchasing decisions

1.1. Concepts of social media marketing and its role in e-commerce

In this subchapter, the author will focus on the main concepts of the term social media marketing and the role it plays in e-commerce. To begin with, the term social media

marketing (SMM) has been discussed and defined in various ways in academic literature, reflecting how differently the term is perceived and applied across studies and books. The author has collected 5 versatile definitions in Table 1, which summarizes those definitions by different authors, highlighting the variation in their focus.

Table 1.

Social Media Marketing definitions

Source	Definition
Tuten (2023), p. 19	SMM is leveraging social media platforms, tools, and technologies to create, share, deliver, and exchange content that provides value to an organization's stakeholders
Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick(2019), p. 238	SMM is based on the way of leveraging consumer-to-consumer (C2C) interactions for brand awareness increase through social media amplification, encouraging participation and user-generated content
Kotler & Armstrong (2018), p. 47	SMM involves using digital tools such as websites, social media, online video, email, blogs, and apps to engage consumers anywhere, anytime, by connecting brands with consumer activities and trending topics
Singh & Singh (2018), p. 23	SMM is a form of internet marketing that uses variety of social media platforms in order to achieve marketing goals, involving content sharing, videos, images, and techniques like targeting audiences and electronic word of mouth
Eid, Abdelmoety & Agag (2019), p. 7	SMM refers to leveraging various social networks like blogs, social networks, content communities, forums, and content aggregators.with the aim to achieve marketing goals

Source: Compiled by author based on the sources presented in the table

The definitions of SMM provided by Tuten (2023), Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2019), Kotler & Armstrong (2018), Singh & Singh (2018), and Eid, Abdelmoety, & Agag (2019) incorporate varied perspectives on the concept. It is worth mentioning that each definition emphasizes different aspects of SMM, reflecting differences in focus, application, and strategic goals. For instance, Tuten (2023) emphasizes the role of creating, communicating, exchanging, and delivering value to the stakeholders, highlighting the broader organizational context of SMM. This definition integrates leveraging various business applications, such as social funding platforms like Kickstarter, illustrating how SMM extends beyond traditional marketing objectives to include stakeholder engagement and innovation. This stakeholder-centric approach interpretation contrasts with that of Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019), who provide perhaps the most comprehensive definition, focusing more narrowly on consumer-to-consumer interactions and user-generated content (UGC). Their definition underscores the importance of proper use of C2C in order to improve brand awareness, simultaneously minimizing negative mentions. In addition, they also

brought up the participatory nature of social media, where users actively contribute to brand awareness through reviews, ratings, and organic or paid social sharing.

While both definitions emphasize engagement, Tuten provides a more comprehensive organizational perspective, whereas Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick center on consumer participation and brand awareness. Kotler & Armstrong (2018), on the other hand, adopt a more technological and platform-oriented perspective, emphasizing the use of different digital tools and platforms such as websites, social media, email, blogs, mobile apps, ads, and online videos to engage consumers anywhere and anytime. This definition reflects the real-time and multi-platform side of SMM, making it highly relevant in today's fast-moving digital environment. However, Kotler and Armstrong's definition lacks the depth of consumer interaction highlighted by Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick and the stakeholder focus seen in Tuten's work. While Kotler and Armstrong present a technologically wide view, it overlooks the participatory and relational aspects that are central to the other definitions.

According to a more tactical definition provided by Singh and Singh (2018), SMM is presented as a form of internet marketing that uses different social platforms to reach specific marketing and advertising goals. They focus on content sharing, targeted advertising, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), presenting SMM as a tool for influencing consumer behavior. This definition complements Kotler's by emphasizing techniques like targeting audiences and online brand-related activities, but does not account for the broader organizational or participatory dynamics emphasized by Tuten (2023) or Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019).

Eid, Abdelmoety & Agag (2019) provide a detailed overview, breaking down SMM into various applications, including blogs, social networks, content communities, forums, and content aggregators. Their definition emphasizes a multi-channel approach, recognizing the diverse platforms that businesses can use to engage with consumers. Their platform-oriented view is similar to that of Kotler and Armstrong's, but also expands on it by detailing specific tools and their roles in facilitating communication and collaboration. Moreover, this definition is similar to that found in (Singh & Singh, 2018), who defined the SMM as referring to leveraging various applications, which may be used as SMM channels to achieve marketing objectives. Furthermore, Eid, Abdelmoety & Agag (2019) expand their definition of SMM, highlighting the historical evolution of social media applications, such as blogs and various RSS sites, situating SMM within the broader context of Web 2.0 technologies.

It can be concluded that the definitions provided by authors incorporate a variety of aspects. The author of this study concluded a few criteria on which the definitions can be

analyzed and compared; see Table 2. Therefore, reflecting on the provided analysis, definitions of SMM can portray the priorities across four key dimensions, such as engagement method, platform breadth, scope, and objective.

Table 2.

Comparative analysis of Social Media Marketing definitions

Source	Method Of Engagement	Platform Breadth	Scope	Objective
Tuten (2023)	Stakeholder value creation and engagement	Broad, emerging social media technologies, software and channels	Broad Organizational, stakeholder relationships	Value-oriented: delivering value to stakeholders
Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2019)	Building brand awareness through social media amplification	Broad, focused on social networks and participatory elements	Consumer-Centric, increasing brand awareness and participation	Participation-driven, increasing brand awareness
Kotler & Armstrong (2018)	Real-time consumer engagement through a variety of digital and social media platforms	Broad: Includes mobile apps, websites, and online videos.	Consumer-Centric, focused on immediate engagement and interaction	Leveraging digital marketing tools for consumer outreach
Singh & Singh (2018)	Using different social medias for content sharing, targeted advertising, boosting site's SEO	Moderate, limited with various social media platforms for content sharing and advertising	Advertising-Centric	Advertising-driven - focus on targeting the right audience and achieving marketing objectives
Eid, Abdelmoety & Agag (2019)	A multi-channel approach: leveraging blogs, social networks, and content-sharing platforms	Broad, includes blogs, forums, social networks, and aggregators	Multi-Channel Organizational, integrates diverse platforms for engagement	Value-oriented: achieving marketing objectives

Source: Compiled by author based on the sources presented in the table

As can be seen from the table, the definitions of social media marketing reveal distinct approaches when analyzed across chosen criteria. The definitions differ significantly in their approach to the engagement method. Tuten (2023) focuses on the organization's stakeholder value creation. In addition, Tuten (2023) not only emphasizes the role of SMM in customer service, maintaining customer relationships, new product creation, and

acknowledging customers about new products and special offers, but also in influencing brand attitudes. This broad perspective contrasts with Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019), who highlight brand awareness through consumer participation, such as user-generated content and customer-to-customer communications (C2C). They propose the term "Social media amplification" as the process of leveraging C2C interactions to enhance brand visibility, which involves increasing awareness through organic or paid social sharing of media updates in social networks with posts and advertisements. While both address engagement, Tuten's focus is more strategic, aiming to align SMM with broader organizational goals, whereas Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick prioritize direct consumer interactions.

Kotler and Armstrong (2018) emphasize real-time consumer engagement through various digital marketing tools, providing a more practical and immediate view of SMM's role in reaching out to customers and fostering interaction. Similarly, Singh and Singh (2018) use a tactical approach, emphasizing targeted advertising and content sharing across platforms as primary marketing techniques. In contrast, Eid and Agag (2019) adopt a multi-channel perspective, which includes leveraging blogs, online personal journals, different social networks, content communities, forums, and content aggregators. Thus, framing engagement as part of a broader organizational strategy to achieve marketing objectives.

The second aspect of the SMM definitions analysis is platform breadth. The platform breadth, which is mentioned in the definitions, can be considered to range from broad to moderate. Tuten (2023) and Eid and Agag (2019) take a broad perspective, covering both traditional social media services such as blogs, forums, and aggregators, with emerging social networks. On the other hand, Kotler and Armstrong (2018) and Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) emphasize popular social networks, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, Pinterest, and LinkedIn. They focus on platforms and media channels that encourage interaction and user-generated content, aiming to facilitate immediate consumer engagement within the stream of social network users. The focus taken by Singh and Singh (2018) is more moderate, identifying key platforms for content sharing and advertising without detailing broader applications, as Twitter was chosen as the primary platform for further analysis.

The third aspect evaluates the scope of SMM according to the definitions. Tuten (2023) and Eid and Agag (2019) take a broad, organizational perspective, considering SMM within the context of stakeholder engagement and integration of media multi-channel platforms for engagement. In contrast, Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) and Kotler and

Armstrong (2018) focus on consumer-centric approaches, emphasizing brand awareness, participation, and real-time interaction. This interpretation contrasts with that of Singh and Singh (2018), who provide a narrow scope, centering on advertising objectives and specific marketing tactics across general social networks and electronic word of mouth.

The objectives highlighted in these definitions align with their focuses and scopes. Tuten (2023) and Eid and Agag (2019) emphasize value-oriented goals, such as delivering value to stakeholders and achieving broad marketing objectives. In contrast to value-oriented goals, Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) prioritize participation-driven goals, aiming to increase brand awareness through consumer engagement. On the other hand, Kotler and Armstrong (2018) and Singh and Singh (2018) focus on leveraging SMM for specific outcomes, such as consumer outreach and targeted advertising. There are several similarities between the works of Eid and Agag (2019) along Singh and Singh (2018), who pursued the value-oriented objective in their definitions, which was the achievement of marketing goals.

Overall, these definitions highlight the multifaceted nature of SMM, which covers a diverse range of concepts. Each source contributes unique perspectives, from Tuten's (2023) focus on stakeholder value creation and emerging applications to Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick's (2019) emphasis on user-generated content and brand amplification. Some authors bring attention to real-time interaction, brand awareness, and content sharing, while some underscore tactical approaches like targeted advertising and content sharing. Furthermore, the emphasis on content sharing and SEO enhancement, along with maintaining customer trust through relationship building, are the essentials of a successful social marketing strategy. Based on the analysis of the definitions provided above, the author of this study defines SMM as a dynamic, multi-aspect strategy that utilizes digital platforms and participatory interactions to improve brand awareness, trust, customer loyalty, and achieve set marketing objectives.

Secondly, this subchapter focuses on the role of the SMM in e-commerce, highlighting some key aspects it can bring to businesses.

E-commerce, also known as electronic commerce, refers to the process of buying and selling goods, products, or services over the Internet (Brahma & Dutta, 2020). This business model allows both companies and individuals to conduct transactions online, utilizing different devices, including computers, tablets, and smartphones. Essentially, e-commerce functions as digital shopping, offering a wide array of products and services, including books, music, airline tickets, and financial services like stock investments and online banking (Brahma & Dutta, 2020). Therefore, understanding the role of SMM is crucial.

Social media has drastically changed the world of e-commerce, and how companies interact with customers, promote their goods, and drive sales (Kalemaj, 2023). Social media networks, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, have evolved beyond simple tools of communication to become key components in e-commerce. Such industry practices as social networking allow companies to reach more customers, communicate directly with customers, and customize the shopping experience (Thapa, 2024).

The first key aspect of SMM for online businesses is customer engagement. According to a definition provided by Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2019), customer engagement is described as the recurrent interactions a customer has with a brand facilitated by both online and offline channels. Thus, social media helps businesses to directly engage with their customers through comments, messages, and interactive posts. Same way, Thapa (2024) emphasizes the importance of direct interactions on social media, as it not only fosters brand loyalty but also builds trust and credibility. Similarly, Semenda et al. (2024) highlight how data-driven insights from social media analytics can further improve engagement strategies by getting a better understanding of consumer preferences, focusing on likes, shares, and comments. A study by Semenda et al. (2024) has supported the hypothesis that applying aggressive marketing strategies remarkably improves engagement, which in turn positively affects sales performance. Thapa (2024) views hashtags and challenges as good means for boosting user participation and content related to the products, as this tactic may help in going viral and involve more people, enhancing overall engagement.

Social media is also a powerful tool for the second key aspect of SMM - increasing brand awareness. Platforms like Instagram and Facebook allow businesses to present their products to a global audience through visually appealing content. Both Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2019) and Thapa (2024) highlight that utilizing customer-to-customer interactions significantly fosters brand awareness by leveraging user-generated content, such as reviews and testimonials. Additionally, Rachmad (2022) notes that influencer marketing plays a vital role in introducing brands to new audiences effectively and, therefore, increasing popularity.

The third aspect focuses on the direct effects of social media on the sales of e-commerce businesses. By simplifying the purchasing process and integration features such as shoppable posts or in-app purchases, where products can be directly tagged into posts or easily accessed through links, impulsive buying is promoted (Thapa, 2024). In addition, Jaiswal et al. (2021) remarked that incorporating social media into e-commerce marketing strategies has not only raised conversion rates but also increased revenue. Furthermore, Semenda et al. (2024) conducted a regression analysis that pointed out that the increase in

engagement metrics such as likes, comments, and shares positively correlates with sales growth, forecasting its uplift and suggesting that shares had the most influence on sales, followed by likes and comments, respectively. These statements are similar to those found (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019), who wrote that utilizing SMM for sale relies on the development of social interactions, as they promote more shares.

The fourth key aspect is e-loyalty and trust, which is essential for maintaining long-term customer relationships. It is worth mentioning that the term e-loyalty is referred to as „an online application of traditional loyalty“; therefore, customers who are more likely to make a repurchase from the same site are called e-loyal (Kalemaj, 2023, p.82). Social media provides transparency and improves customer satisfaction as it allows brands to share behind-the-scenes content and respond promptly to customer concerns (Thapa, 2024). The author highlights that customers are more attracted and likely to make purchases from those brands that provide reliable and expert recommendations/insights, utilize customer support, and engage with them through social media (Thapa, 2024). Therefore, e-commerce businesses that utilize active SMM, which results in high interaction and support from the business end, are more likely to increase sales and maintain e-loyal customers. The effectiveness of SMM has been exemplified in a report by Kalemaj (2023), who showcased that SMM on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp can remarkably increase e-loyalty, which in turn increases sales.

The fifth and final aspect is advertising and its effectiveness. Social media platforms can provide businesses with the opportunity for targeted advertising, which allows businesses to optimize their advertising campaigns for maximum impact at minimal cost. According to Brahma & Dutta (2020), SMM is one of the best strategies to achieve a great return on investment (ROI) and is beneficial for selling products and services worldwide regardless targeted audience. In addition, the authors emphasize the cost-effectiveness of social media advertising compared to traditional methods, which allows businesses, regardless of their size, to utilize SMM strategies (Brahma & Dutta, 2020).

According to Semenda et al. (2024), digital marketing strategies have transitioned from broad, mass marketing approaches to micro-targeting, which allows businesses to focus on the right group of customers, maximizing advertisement's performance and ROI. Similarly, Thapa (2024) emphasizes the importance of personalized recommendations based on customers' previous searching and purchase histories, which enhances engagement and boosts potential sales. It is interesting to note that the author has observed that personalized ads are more likely to generate higher click-through rates (CTR) and conversions than others

since users are more likely to engage with ads adjusted to their current interests (Thapa,2024).

The integration of SMM into e-commerce strategies has transformed the way businesses engage with customers. The key aspects that have been analyzed are summarized in Table 3, highlighting insights from various sources. The table provides a clear overview of how SMM strategies contribute to enhancing e-commerce outcomes and the multidimensional benefits they bring to businesses.

Table 3.

Key aspects of SMM's role in e-commerce

Key aspect	Insights from Sources
Customer Engagement	SMM facilitates the engagement through direct interactions, such as interactive posts, increasing trust and credibility and sale performance (Thapa, 2024; Semenda et al., 2024; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).
Brand Awareness	SMM enhance brand awareness through visually appealing user generated content, customer-to-customer interactions, reviews, testimonials, and influencer marketing significantly boost (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019; Rachmad, 2022; Thapa, 2024).
Sales Growth	Simplified purchasing processes promote impulsive buying. SMM increases conversion rates and revenue (shares, likes, and comments impact sales growth). (Thapa, 2024; Semenda et al., 2024).
E-Loyalty and Trust	SMM enhance transparency, customer satisfaction, and trust by sharing brand's behind-the-scenes content, providing customer support and expert recommendations. Active social media engagement contributes to retaining e-loyal customers (Kalemaj, 2023; Thapa, 2024).
Advertising Effectiveness	SMM targeted advertising optimize campaigns for cost-effectiveness and ROI. Personalized ads based on customer behavior lead to higher engagement and conversions compared to generic ads (Brahma & Dutta, 2020; Semenda et al., 2024; Thapa, 2024).

Source: Compiled by author based on the sources presented in the table

These findings emphasize the critical role SMM plays in e-commerce. By utilizing some unique features of social media like direct engagement tools, influencer collaborations and recommendations, shoppable posts, and data-driven targeting, businesses can create a seamless shopping experience that may not only sustain and build up brand awareness, customer satisfaction, and loyalty but also increase sales.

To summarize, this subchapter defined the term Social Media Marketing by analyzing and comparing various definitions provided by scholars and compiling the author's own definition, incorporating the most important aspects. Furthermore, the role of SMM in e-commerce was explored by highlighting key aspects like customer engagement, brand awareness, sales growth, e-loyalty, trust, and advertising effectiveness. By analyzing and leveraging these aspects, it has been found that businesses may reveal the full potential of

SMM to build stronger customer relationships, enhance their brand awareness, and increase revenue growth.

1.2. Factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions online

This subchapter provides an overview of the main factors that influence purchasing decisions online. Various studies and journal articles have identified several main factors, ranging from product characteristics and trust to demographics and cultural context. This analysis categorizes and examines these factors under five main aspects: product characteristics, trust, usability, psychological factors, and demographics.

The first key aspect, which influences purchase decisions, is product characteristics. According to Mican and Sitar-Taut (2020), product attributes, reviews, and low prices are the most significant determinants of consumer behavior, as they directly influence buyers' perceptions of value and satisfaction. Consumers can evaluate these characteristics based on the reviews, ratings, and descriptions that are provided on the e-commerce platform. Thus, any uncertainty associated with a product or service can be reduced. Furthermore, these statements are exact to those reported in the clustering study by (Wang et al., 2023), who highlight the importance of online reviews and further categorize product-related factors into innovation, functionality, and perceived value, emphasizing their role in driving purchase intention. The highlighted importance of product attributes is similar to that found in (Musa et al., 2015), who found a remarkable correlation between buyer intention and the attributes of the product, such as function, features, and benefits. Moreover, after-sales services such as product warranties play a huge role in customer satisfaction. According to Haryadi, Haerofiatna, & Alfarizi (2022), such after-sale services play a vital role in reducing risk perception and improving customer loyalty, which directly influences loyalty and purchase decisions.

The second factor influencing purchasing decisions is trust, which is a cornerstone of online consumer behavior. Positive eWOM significantly influences consumer purchasing decisions by providing social proof, thus, reviews, testimonials, and ratings from other customers help reduce uncertainty and build trust in the product or platform, while negative reviews can deter potential buyers. (Handoyo, 2024). However, trust elements in influencing customer behavior are not limited to only reviews and eWOM. Another factor shaping online purchasing decisions, according to Handoyo (2024), is perceived security, which determines the extent to which customers believe the online transaction will be safe. Therefore, factors like website design, brand reputation, and third-party certifications for e-commerce play a huge role in consumers' confidence. The effects of trustworthy websites on purchasing

decisions are similar to those reported by Mican & Sitar-Taut (2020), who found that reliable websites with good reputations, which offer product reviews, are more likely to attract customers. Furthermore, (Deng, Su, Zhang, & Tan (2021) highlight trust as a key factor in shaping purchasing intention in online retailing, proposing that businesses can enhance their credibility by leveraging third-party evaluations and certifications or by fostering trust in established brands. Additionally, adopting a credit mechanism strategy such as "commitment + guarantee" can help address consumers' doubts, encourage confident shopping behavior, and foster trust (Deng, Su, Zhang, & Tan, 2021, p.9).

The third important aspect, which cannot only significantly influence customer satisfaction, but also, as a result, purchasing intention, is the usability of online shops. The term usability „refers to the ease of use and functionality of the website, which includes navigation, search, and checkout processes (Kumar et al., 2023, p.109). In addition, Khan, Azizah, & Mohamadali (2023) emphasize the role of design, intuitive navigation, and ease of website use in influencing consumers' trust and intention to make purchases. Therefore, those websites that simplify the process of navigating, finding products, and completing purchases significantly improve user satisfaction. Saeed (2019) also supported the idea of the importance of user interface design and seamless navigation, discussing how poor navigation design, orphaned pages, misleading links, and inconsistent menu and icon labeling lead to poor user experience, decreased satisfaction, and business revenue. Similarly, Shweta Singh (2023) emphasizes the role of clear website navigation paths, ease of operation, and appealing layout in encouraging repeat visits. Fast-loading pages can also reduce frustration and improve the likelihood of purchase, as people tend to close those that are loading slowly. Studies show that delays in loading times can lead to higher bounce rates and lower conversion rates (Kumar et al., 2023). Despite this, significant progress has been made with mobile devices, which offer customers the opportunity and convenience of shopping anytime and anywhere, completely changing the shopping experience. One of the biggest motivations for utilizing mobile shopping is its time-saving opportunities. Consumers value the efficiency of browsing and purchasing through mobile apps, as it eliminates the need to wait in queues or travel to physical stores (Pantano & Priporas, 2016). Therefore, a reasonable approach for businesses could be to utilize mobile apps or ensure the compatibility of their websites with both desktop and mobile viewports to guarantee the best user experience possible.

Other significant aspects that may influence consumer purchasing decisions online are psychological factors such as motivation, attitudes, and emotions. Motivation is well-known as an internal drive that compels consumers to satisfy their needs and desires. A great study

provided by Gangal et al. (2024) shows that consumers are more likely to purchase products when they feel a strong need for them, so, for instance, a consumer motivated by esteem needs may purchase luxury goods, while those with self-actualization needs may make purchases of educational courses or fitness programs which will help them express themselves. Attitude is another significant aspect influencing consumer behavior. According to Al-Debei, Akroush, & Ashouri (2015), attitudes toward online shopping are shaped by trust, perceived benefits, and website quality. The above authors state that positive attitudes towards online shopping often lead to higher purchase intentions, while negative attitudes can deter consumers. Moreover, the study by Zirena-Bejarano & Zirena (2024) shows that attitudes are also facilitated by social networks and recommendations from friends or reference groups. Both authors highlight that those consumers with positive attitudes are more likely to make online purchase decisions.

Turning now to the evidence on emotions' effect on consumer behavior. Emotions may strongly influence consumer decision-making processes. To begin with, positive emotions like excitement or joy can enhance purchase intentions and post-purchase satisfaction, while negative emotions like fear or frustration can deter purchases (Nuradina, 2022). Emotional appeals in marketing, such as storytelling or influencer endorsements, are effective in creating connections with consumers. Those effects are similar to those found in (Zhao, 2024), who writes that positive emotions encourage impulse buying and unplanned purchases in online shopping. Moreover, the above author also highlights that positive emotions also influence attitudes towards online shopping, creating a favorable perception of it and therefore increasing intention to make a purchase. In addition, frustration factors like slow web page loading speeds and complex navigation processes may influence shopping cart abandonment (Erdil, 2018).

Demographic factors such as age, gender, income, and education significantly influence consumer purchasing behavior online. A study by Ahmeti (2022) provides valuable insights into how these factors shape preferences, perceptions, and decision-making, stating that younger consumers (18-30 years) preferred local products, while older groups (31-40 years) leaned toward imported goods for perceived quality. Gender also plays a significant role in shaping online purchasing behavior. For example, women are generally more detail-oriented shoppers who rely on all aspects of available information and reviews before making decisions, while men tend to use heuristic approaches focusing on specific attributes like functionality (Chen et al., 2022). Income levels directly impact purchasing power and preferences in online shopping (Ahmeti, 2022). Therefore, higher-income groups are more

likely to purchase premium and imported goods due to greater financial flexibility. Education level may influence consumer behavior by influencing perception and trust in e-commerce platforms. Consumers with higher education levels are more likely to prioritize security features, detailed product descriptions, and recommendations, along with reviews when making purchasing decisions (Gami et al., 2023). These results align with the statement of Ahmeti (2022), who reported that customers with higher education levels tend to make more informed purchase decisions as they do more research on available products.

Table 4 below summarizes the main factors and aspects identified through the analysis, including key insights from a variety of sources mentioned before.

Table 4.

Key factors influencing online purchasing decisions

Key aspect	Key Factors	Insights from Sources
Product Characteristics	Quality, price, functionality, after-sale services	Product attributes such as quality, price, and functionality are significant determinants (Mican & Sitar-Taut, 2020; Wang et al., 2023). After-sale services reduce risk perception and boost loyalty (Haryadi et al., 2022).
Trust	Positive reviews, perceived security, website reputation	Positive eWOM and secure platforms enhance trust (Handoyo, 2024). Trust in brand reputation and third-party certifications fosters confidence (Deng et al., 2021).
Website Usability	Navigation, design, mobile compatibility, fast-loading pages	Seamless navigation, clear layout, and mobile optimization improve user satisfaction and conversion rates (Kumar et al., 2023; Pantano & Priporas, 2016).
Psychological Factors	Motivation, attitudes, emotions	Motivated by needs (Gangal et al., 2024). Positive emotions like excitement boost purchases, while frustration deters (Nuradina, 2022; Zhao, 2024).
Demographics	Age, gender, income, education	Younger consumers prefer local products; older ones lean toward imported goods. Education affects trust and research behavior (Ahmeti, 2022; Gami et al., 2023).

Source: Compiled by author based on the sources presented in the table

This chapter begins by describing different factors that influence purchasing decisions online. It went on to suggest that factors, such as product characteristics, trust, usability, psychological factors, and demographics, may play a huge role in shaping a customer's purchasing decision. The suggestions made by Zhao (2024) seem to perfectly reflect the insights of this chapter. The above author suggests three key strategies to focus on: personalization, user-friendly website design, and engaging, positive content, where personalization involves leveraging data analytics to provide recommendations and offers to

individual preferences. Additionally, a well-designed, easy-to-navigate, mobile-friendly, and readable website enhances the overall user experience. Finally, encouraging positive emotions through engaging content, like positive reviews and emotionally hooking advertisements, can considerably boost purchase intentions.

To conclude, from these studies, aspects that influence online purchasing behavior demonstrate that consumer behavior is complex and can be influenced by many means. For example, product features, such as quality, price, and functionality, are especially crucial since they determine perceived worth and satisfaction. Trust in online platforms, determined by positive reviews and secure transactions, can also boost confidence and reduce hesitation. A seamless, user-friendly website with mobile optimization contributes to customer satisfaction, which also leads to more purchases. Psychological factors like motivation and positive attitude enhance purchasing decisions, while demographic factors such as age group, gender, and even level of education define the individual's tastes, buying, and decision-making behavior. It is worth mentioning that this subchapter considers the most critical factors influencing purchasing decisions online, while there is a multitude of factors explaining online consumer behavior.

1.3. Review of previous studies on the relationship between social media marketing and purchasing decisions

This subchapter presents an analysis of previous empirical studies, exploring the impact of social media marketing on purchasing decisions. The focus will be on synthesizing findings to identify some commonalities, differences, and gaps, highlighting the relevance of these studies to this thesis. The studies by McClure & Seock (2020), Lee, Lee, & Oh (2015), and Hasan & Sohail (2020) were selected because of their focus on content quality, focus on social media advertisements influence, and role of brand trust, brand community, and emotional attachment in moderating the relationship between SMM activities and purchase intentions.

Studies collectively provide some significant insights into the relationship between social media marketing (SMM) and consumer purchasing decisions. Each study brings a unique perspective through various methodologies and contexts, contributing to a broader understanding of the subject. McClure & Seock (2020) emphasize the role of consumer involvement and content quality in shaping purchase intentions. Their study highlights how brand familiarity and the quality of social media content mediate consumer engagement, which in turn predicts purchase intentions. Notably, the study found information quality to be the strongest driver of involvement, showcasing the importance of well-made content.

However, the study's limitation lies in its narrow focus on female college students aged 18–25, which restricts its generalizability. Additionally, the absence of platform-specific insights leaves questions about how these findings translate across different social media platforms.

Lee, Lee, and Oh (2015), on the other hand, take a different approach by focusing only on Facebook likes (FBL) as a predictor of sales performance. The authors use three-stage least squares (3SLS) regression to address endogeneity issues, which makes their findings particularly reliable. The study demonstrates that FBLs significantly influence sales, especially for products with high uncertainty. However, their sole focus on Facebook limits the applicability of their findings to other platforms, such as Instagram or TikTok, which are increasingly dominant in the social media environment.

In contrast, Hasan & Sohail (2020) provide a comparative analysis of the effects of SMM on local and non-local brands in Saudi Arabia. The authors use the structural equation modeling (SEM) approach, identifying brand trust, community, and interaction as significant predictors of purchase intentions, with brand trust being more influential for non-local brands. While the study offers valuable insights into cultural and regional dynamics, its findings are limited to the Saudi Arabian market, which may not fully apply to other regions. Nevertheless, although the study incorporates diverse social media platforms like Twitter and WhatsApp, it does not explore platform-specific strategies in depth.

Blazeska et al. (2024) investigated how social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook influence consumer purchasing decisions. Using a quantitative survey, their study showed that 72.4% of respondents reported that purchases were influenced by posts or advertisements on social platforms. They also highlight that Instagram and Facebook are particularly effective for product discovery and engagement, and videos are the most engaging type of content, followed by images.

Comparatively, all four studies highlight the importance of consumer engagement in SMM. McClure & Seock (2020) focus on the mediating role of involvement, while Lee et al. (2015) highlight engagement metrics such as likes, and Hasan & Sohail (2020) emphasize brand trust and interaction. Blazeska et al. (2024) add to this statement by emphasizing platform-specific dynamics, particularly the effectiveness of Instagram and Facebook in driving consumer engagement through visual content like videos and images. Nevertheless, while Lee et al. (2015) provide comprehensive quantitative insights, they lack the consumer-level focus seen in McClure & Seock (2020) and Hasan & Sohail (2020). This paper integrates these perspectives by analyzing both quantitative metrics and qualitative consumer feedback, offering a comprehensive approach.

Reviewing the previous studies, the author has composed Table 5 to summarize the methodology, focus area, sample, key findings, and the limitations of each work.

Table 5.

Comparison of Methodologies and Key Findings in Empirical Studies

Source	Methodology	Focus	Sample	Key findings	Limitations
McClure & Seock (2020)	Survey, regression analysis	Consumer Involvement on Social Media	159 U.S. female college students aged 18–25	Information quality mediates purchase intentions, involvement drives engagement FBLs influence sales, particularly for high-uncertainty products and small firms	Narrow demographic focus; lacks platform-specific insights
Lee et al. (2015)	3SLS Regression	Facebook Likes and Sales Performance	1,327 deals from social commerce enterprise Groupon	Social media significantly influence decision-making, videos are the most engaging	Exclusive focus on Facebook
Blazeska et al. (2024)	Survey	Influence of social media on purchasing decisions	Students at the University of Skopje	Brand trust and interaction strongly affect purchase intentions	Narrow sample limited to students, focus primarily on Instagram and Facebook
Hasan & Sohail (2020)	Survey, SEM	Local vs. Non-Local Brands	314 Saudi consumers aged 16–40	Region-specific findings; limited platform-specific analysis	

Source: Compiled by author based on the sources presented in the table.

Each study contributes valuable insights, such as the importance of information quality and consumer involvement (McClure & Seock, 2020), the effectiveness of engagement metrics like Facebook likes (Lee et al., 2015), and the role of brand trust and community in influencing purchase intentions (Hasan & Sohail, 2020). These studies also include some limitations, such as the limited demographic scope, focus on specific platforms, and the lack of attention to smaller niche businesses like Falconclaw.eu.

These studies also directly relate to the factors and aspects outlined in Tables 3 and 4, which focus on key aspects of SMM's role in e-commerce and key factors influencing online purchasing decisions. For instance, the focus on consumer engagement aligns with McClure & Seock's (2020) findings on the mediating role of involvement and Blazeska et al.'s (2024) emphasis on platform-specific engagement strategies. Similarly, the importance of trust and transparency is also reflected in Hasan & Sohail's (2020) analysis of brand trust and community as predictors of purchase intentions. Furthermore, the importance of usability and platform design correlates with Blazeska et al.'s (2024) findings on the effectiveness of Instagram and Facebook in enhancing consumer interactions through visual content.

2. Impact of social media marketing on purchasing decisions at Falconclaw.eu

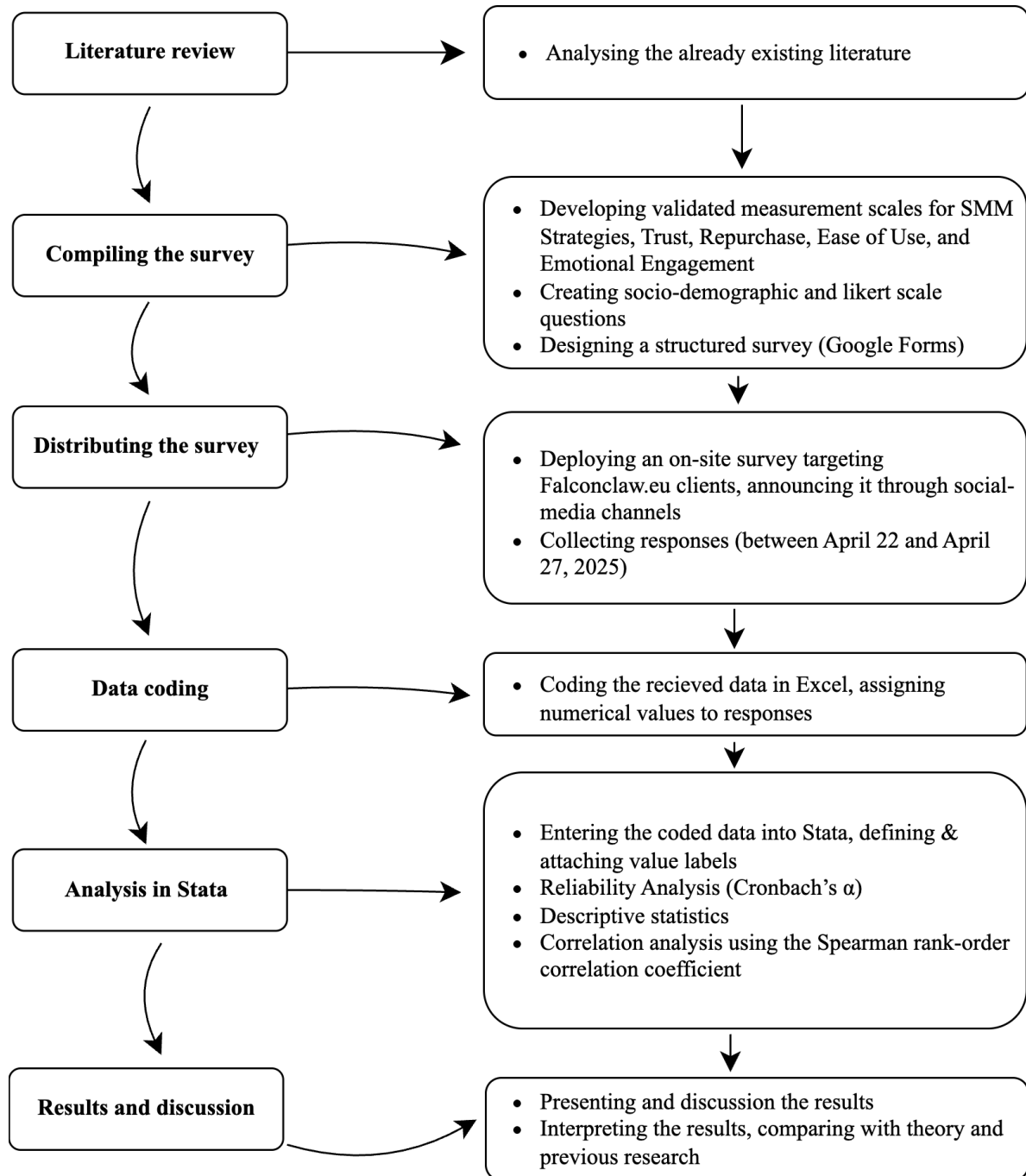
2.1. Methodology of the empirical study

In this subchapter, the methodology used to examine the impact of SMM on influencing consumer purchasing decisions online in the Estonian retail e-commerce business, Falconclaw.eu, will be discussed. This study uses a mixed-methods approach that combines a consumer survey with analytics at the channel level to evaluate the impact of social media marketing (SMM) on purchasing decisions at Falconclaw.eu. The methodology unfolds in five stages, each based on established previous research (McClure & Seock, 2020; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019; Semenda et al., 2024)

The methodology comprises several steps, starting with a literature review, followed by survey design, distribution, data coding, statistical analysis, and social media and website analytics to complement the survey results, and finally culminating in the presentation of the results.

The first phase will involve designing a structured online survey. Please see Figure 1, in which the whole process is described in detail, on the next page. The survey was aimed at capturing consumer perceptions of SMM and its influence on purchasing decisions. Five key aspects were identified through a thorough analysis of e-commerce and digital marketing studies (e.g., Kotler & Armstrong, 2018; Hasan & Sohail, 2020; Dwivedi et al., 2021): Repurchase Intention, Emotional Engagement, Trust, Ease of Use, and social media marketing (SMM) Strategies. Questions, which can be found in Appendix A of this thesis, are grouped into five key categories so that all critical aspects influencing purchasing decisions are covered. Questions also help to reflect how SMM facilitates sales and customer engagement through direct interactions, reflect the impact of influencer marketing on brand visibility/awareness, and how SMM drives impulsive buying and conversions.

Using Google Forms, the primary data collection tool, the author created a structured online questionnaire based on the literature study and five categories of interest: Social Media Marketing Strategies, Trust, Repurchase, Ease of Use, and Emotional Engagement



. Figure 1: Methodology of the study

Source: Compiled by author

Three to five items on a five-point Likert scale (1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree) were used to measure each component. These items were all modified from

validated scales used in earlier SMM and e-commerce studies. Repurchase intention was also recorded by two other items (repurchase likelihood and recommendation). In order to facilitate subgroup analysis, the survey began with two demographic questions (age group and monthly income). Demographic questions mirror prior segmentation work (Ahmeti, 2022).

The survey link was embedded on the Falconclaw.eu website as a separate menu, which leads to the page. The survey was announced via the company's Facebook and Instagram pages and directly on the website to reach actual users of the site. Data were collected over a six-day window (April 22-27, 2025). Overall, 357 responses were received. To promote response rates, a giveaway was proposed. Each completed survey earned one entry into a draw for 1 of 10 limited-edition Falconclaw merch T-shirts. Only one entry per completed survey was allowed to avoid duplicate responses and ensure the integrity and fairness of the prize draw. Participation was entirely voluntary. Before accessing the survey link on the page, an informed-consent checkbox was created to explain its purpose and request permission to collect email addresses to notify the prize winners.

The raw responses from the survey were exported to Excel. All textual Likert answers were recoded numerically (1-5), and demographic categories were coded (age: 1=18-30; 2=31-44; 3=45+; income (1= <€1000; 2= €1000-€5000; 3= >€5000). Variable names were designed (smm1-smm4, trust1-trust3, ease1-ease5, emo1-emo4, repur1-repur2) and saved for initial analysis, later single-variable summaries (scale means) were created for each construct for better analyzing and correlating them (variables: SMM, Trust, EaseUse, Repurchase, Emotion, that each represent the average response on their constituent items).

The obtained data was analyzed using the statistical analysis tool - STATA. Firstly, basic descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) were computed for each item to characterize the sample, ensure data quality, and profile age, income, and individual questionnaire items. For each multi-item construct of SMM Strategies, Trust & E-Loyalty, Ease of Use, Emotional Engagement, and Purchase Intention, the author computed Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's α) to assess internal consistency. Scales with $\alpha \geq 0.70$ were retained without modification; any scale falling below this threshold was reviewed for poorly performing items. The author then acquired descriptive statistics for the variables under study. The data was then examined using correlation analysis with the Spearman correlation coefficient. Given that the researchers had previously used the preceding subchapter to carry out their investigations, the approaches chosen are based on it.

To complement the survey results with real-world outcomes, the author utilized YouTube's channel analytics and WooCommerce's sales reports to gather data over a twelve-month period, from June 2024 (the trough month) to May 10, 2025 (cf. Semenda et al., 2024; Thapa, 2024). The detailed process is described in Figure 2. This analysis helped to examine how Falconclaw.eu's YouTube engagement converts into e-commerce performance. The reason for reviewing such a timeline lies in the posting activity of the company, since starting from July, active posting of video content began. In addition to the store's monthly net sales, eight key YouTube indicators were obtained: views, impressions, watch time (in hours), click-through rate (CTR), likes, comments, shares, and the number of subscribers gained.

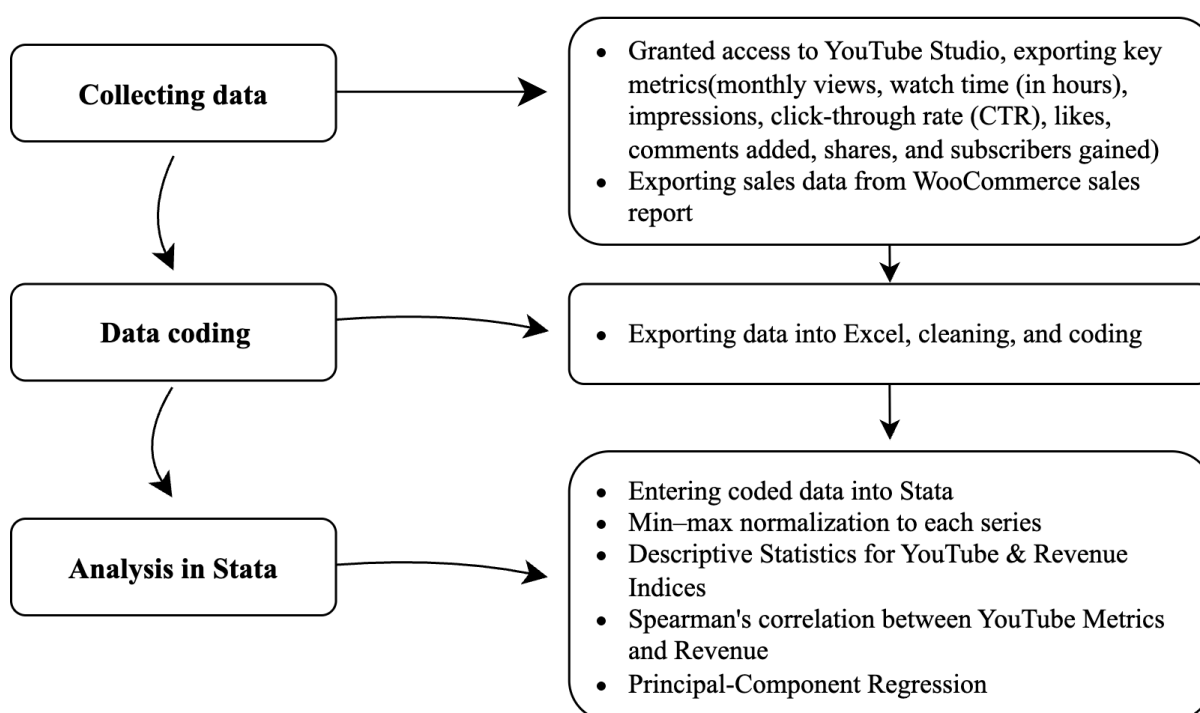


Figure 2: Analytical Workflow for YouTube-WooCommerce Data

Source: Compiled by author

For better comparability and variance stabilization, all raw counts were imported into Stata and converted. View and impression counts were divided by one million, while watch time, likes, comments, shares, subscriptions, and revenue were all divided by one thousand. Each metric was then rescaled to a 0-100 index, where 100 denotes the peak performance month and 0 denotes the lowest performance month, to prevent sensitive number leaks and enable comparison across measures with wildly disparate units and magnitudes. This was necessary because the metrics had to be kept confidential. The author rescaled each variable via min-max normalization by subtracting its lowest monthly value, dividing by the difference between its peak and trough, and then multiplying by 100 to make the values more

straightforward to understand and obtain more reasonable-looking coefficients. This way, the lowest month receives a score of zero, and the best-performing month gets a score of 100.

Following this, the author created descriptive statistics (mean, median, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum) for each of the nine indices using Stata's *tabstat* command. Next, a Spearman rank-order correlation between the revenue index and each YouTube index was conducted. Finally, since the eight YouTube indices moved closely together, conventional ordinary least squares regression yielded unstable estimates due to multicollinearity. Therefore, the author conducted a principal component analysis (PCA) and extracted two orthogonal components. First, which captures the overall engagement volume (including views, impressions, watch time, likes, comments, shares, and subscribers), and second, which isolates the click-through rate in relation to these engagement metrics. For each month, component scores were generated, and the indexed revenue series was regressed against these two newly created variables using robust standard errors.

Presenting and discussing the findings while contrasting them with the theory and earlier research was the final phase. The results will be presented in tables for better understanding in the following section.

2.2. Results and discussion of the empirical study on the relationship between social media marketing and purchasing decision

In this section, the results obtained from the survey will be analyzed. The findings will be compared with previous research to validate the results and determine contributions.

Firstly, an overview of the sample's demographic composition will be presented. Sample characteristics can be found in Table 6. The sample consisted mainly of young, middle-income individuals aged 18-30 (65.33%), with another 30.40% aged 31-44, and just 4.27% aged 45 or older.

Table 6.

Sample characteristics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age Group	18-30	245	65.33%
	31-44	114	30.40%
	45+	16	4.27%
Income Group	<€1000	82	21.87%
	€1000-€5000	256	68.27%
	>€5000	37	9.87%

Notes: N=357

Source: Compiled by author

This concentration of respondents under 45 suggests that the findings will be most representative of more digitally comfortable cohorts, precisely the group most active on social media channels.

In terms of income groups, a clear majority (68.27%) represent monthly incomes between €1000 and €5000, while about one-fifth (21.87%) earn less than €1000 per month, and only 9.87% exceed €5000. Most middle-class customers probably represent Falconclaw.eu's primary clientele, which consists of professionals or enthusiasts who can afford more expensive night-vision and thermal gear but are not necessarily in the top income tier. All of these characteristics suggest that the majority of the respondents to the survey were young to mid-aged adults with moderate purchasing power, making them the perfect group to assess how social media marketing affects their purchasing decisions.

Next, the author has assessed the reliability of the measurement tools (see Table 7). It is worth noting that one of the SMM statements, *smm1*, has a low item-rest, and its removal raises α to a borderline acceptable level for exploratory purposes, making the scales *smm2-smm4* more suitable.

Table 7.

Reliability analysis of measurement tools

Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
SMM Strategies	0.69	3
Trust	0.65	3
Ease of Use	0.89	5
Repurchase Intention	0.74	2
Emotional Engagement	0.87	4

Source: Compiled by author

The reliability analysis (Cronbach's α) revealed that SMM Strategies ($\alpha = 0.69$), Ease of Use ($\alpha = 0.89$), Emotional Engagement ($\alpha = 0.87$), and Repurchase Intention ($\alpha = 0.74$) were all above the traditional 0.70 threshold, while SMM Strategies ($\alpha = 0.69$), on the other hand, was only marginally acceptable for an exploratory scale. Rather than capturing a single unidimensional construct, the Trust items produced a moderate $\alpha = 0.65$, suggesting they capture related but different dimensions. For transparency, the author keeps all three of the "Trust" components, but examines them separately rather than as a composite:

- *trust1* ("I perceive Falconclaw.eu's online platform as secure for transactions.") captures platform security;
- *trust2* ("Customer reviews on Falconclaw.eu influence my purchase decisions.") captures Influence of e-WOM;

- trust3 (“Falconclaw.eu’s brand reputation is important in my purchase decisions.”) captures Reputation importance.

The author will now proceed with the analysis of descriptive statistics of the researched variables, as the reliability of measurement instruments has been established. Table 8 below presents the descriptive statistics for all survey items (N = 375), each measured on a 1-5 Likert scale.

Table 8.

Descriptive statistics of the studied variables

Variable	Mean	Median	Std.Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
SMM	4.22	4.33	0.79	1	5
EaseUse	4.15	4.20	0.71	1	5
Emotion	4.40	4.75	0.73	1	5
Repurchase	4.30	4.50	0.75	1	5
trust1	4.12	4	0.92	1	5
trust2	3.51	3	1.05	1	5
trust3	4.18	4	0.94	1	5

Notes: N=357

Source: Compiled by author

The descriptive statistics in Table 8 (N = 375) indicate that the majority of constructs received consistently high evaluations, with means that were significantly higher than the scale midpoint (3.0) and medians that were at or above 4.0.

The composite SMM index has a mean of 4.22 (SD = 0.79; median = 4.33), suggesting that consumers generally believe social media videos, images, and user-generated content are effective. Respondents express strong opinions about Falconclaw.eu's SMM strategies. There is little disagreement, as indicated by the comparatively tight standard deviation, where the majority of ratings fall between "Agree" and "Strongly agree."

Website Ease of Use likewise shows generally positive perceptions (M = 4.15, SD = 0.71; median = 4.20). Most responders find the site responsive and easy to use, as seen by scores above 4 for mobile/desktop parity, search functionality, load speed, navigation, and product characteristics on pages. Although they are uncommon, a few outliers with significant usability problems, the mobile-vs-desktop comparison (ease5) dips a bit further, signaling that while the site is broadly user-friendly, some users find the mobile experience less seamless than the desktop version.

The highest-rated composite is Emotional Engagement (M = 4.40, SD = 0.73; median = 4.75), demonstrating the effectiveness of Falconclaw.eu's social media content and storytelling in promoting a sense of investment, connection, and positive affect. Most people

are emotionally attached to the brand, as evidenced by the high median, which is almost at the "Strongly agree" level.

Strong repurchase intention is also indicated ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 0.75$; median = 4.50), indicating a definite desire to repurchase and refer Falconclaw.eu to others. While both metrics show strong devotion, the narrower SD for recommendation indicates more agreement on advocacy than on repurchase.

When examined separately, the three Trust items show more varied trends. With a mean score of 4.12 ($SD = 0.92$; median = 4.00), trust1 ("platform security") demonstrates a general level of confidence in transaction safety. Trust2 ("influence of customer reviews") drops to $M = 3.51$ ($SD = 1.05$; median = 3.00), indicating a wide range of opinions regarding the persuasiveness of e-WOM. Even if peer reviews are not as widely trusted, brand status is still a significant motivator, as evidenced by the fact that trust3 ("brand reputation importance") bounces back to $M = 4.18$ ($SD = 0.94$; median = 4.00).

Taken together, these descriptive findings reveal that respondents are generally enthusiastic about the social media content, report high trust, are satisfied with the site's usability, emotional involvement, and have a strong willingness to repurchase and suggest. This pattern provides a decent background for future investigations.

Having established the reliability and descriptive profiles of our measures, to understand which factors most closely align with customers' intentions to repurchase, the author has conducted Spearman rank-order correlations between Repurchase Intention and each key antecedent (see Table 9): SMM Strategies, Ease of Use, Emotional Engagement, and the three Trust dimensions (platform security, e-WOM influence and brand reputation). Table 9.

Correlation between the studied variables and Repurchase intention

Factor	Repur1	Repur2	SMM	EaseUse	Emotion	trust1	trust2	trust3
Repur1	1.00							
Repur2	0.58	1.00						
SMM	0.35	0.41	1.00					
EaseUse	0.25	0.37	0.28	1.00				
Emotion	0.35	0.44	0.42	0.45	1.00			
trust1	0.33	0.43	0.28	0.41	0.28	1.00		
trust2	0.23	0.26	0.28	0.17	0.20	0.26	1.00	
trust3	0.32	0.38	0.33	0.28	0.36	0.35	0.44	1.00

Notes: N=357; All correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Compiled by author

Across both loyalty measures: "likely to repurchase" (repur1) and "likely to recommend" (repur2), which themselves correlate strongly ($\rho = .58$), indicating that

likelihood to buy again and likelihood to recommend move together, Emotional Engagement and SMM Strategies emerge as the strongest predictors. Emotional Engagement exhibits the strongest association with repurchase intention, $\rho = 0.35$ ($p < .001$), which underscores that customers who feel a strong emotional connection and positive affect from Falconclaw.eu's content are more likely to purchase again, which is aligned with Blazeska et al. (2024), who highlighted the power of emotional appeals in social-commerce contexts. Additionally, these findings align with those of McClure and Seock (2020), who found that consumer involvement mediates the effect of social media page content quality on purchase intentions. Our survey similarly showed Emotional Engagement as a top predictor, proving that well-crafted, emotionally resonant content drives intent for repurchase. It also aligns with the statement that positive emotion, such as excitement, boost purchases (Nuradina, 2022; Zhao, 2024). Its robust correlations with SMM ($\rho = 0.42$) and Ease of Use ($\rho = 0.45$) underscore the central role of affective connection, indicating that emotionally engaged users are both loyal buyers and brand advocates.

SMM Strategies correlate moderately with Repurchase ($\rho = 0.35$) and more strongly with Recommendation ($\rho = 0.41$), supporting the idea that effective social-media content not only prompts repeat purchases but especially motivates word-of-mouth advocacy, which mirrors McClure & Seock's (2020) finding that involvement mediates the impact of social-media content on purchase intent, and Blazeska et al.'s (2024) evidence that engaging visual content drives consumer decisions.

Ease of Use also relates positively to both repurchase (0.25) and recommendation (0.37), showcasing that a smooth and intuitive website fosters not only satisfaction but also emotional investment ($\rho = 0.45$), which is a pattern consistent with Jaiswal et al. (2021) findings that intuitive interfaces reduce cognitive load, fostering repeat purchases, and Pantano & Priporas' (2016) work on usability as a loyalty driver. This confirms that an intuitive, fast website contributes directly to repurchase intentions, as Pantano & Priporas (2016) and Kumar et al. (2023) have shown. Therefore, while a user-friendly website directly contributes to purchase behavior, its impact on recommendations is even more pronounced, perhaps because ease of use leaves a positive overall impression that users are eager to share.

Among the Trust dimensions, platform security (trust1) shows moderate correlations with repurchase (0.33) and recommendation (0.43), nearly matching Ease of Use in predictive power. Brand reputation (trust3) similarly correlates 0.32/0.38 with loyalty outcomes, while e-WOM influence (trust2) is somewhat weaker (0.23/0.26), reflecting mixed consumer reliance on peer reviews. These findings support and expand on Hasan & Sohail's

(2020) focus on brand trust, which is broken down into many aspects, as well as Lee et al.'s (2015) discovery that social signals, such as likes and reviews, are important yet context-dependent.

Inter-construct correlations further support our measurement model: SMM correlates 0.42 with Emotional Engagement and 0.28 with Ease of Use, indicating that effective social-media content both engages users and complements site functionality. Trust aspects intercorrelate moderately ($\rho = 0.26-0.44$). Platform Security (trust1) exhibits a robust correlation of $\rho = 0.33$ ($p < 0.001$), indicating that confidence in transaction safety underpins repurchase decisions - a finding aligned with Handoyo (2024) on the centrality of perceived security in e-commerce. Brand Reputation (trust3) also correlates positively, $\rho = 0.32$ ($p < .001$), suggesting that the credibility and public standing of Falconclaw.eu encourage repeat business. Those findings align with the statement that True Brand's brand reputation fosters confidence (Deng et al., 2021). Although the influence of reviews (trust2) has the weakest, yet still significant link, $\rho = 0.23$ ($p < .001$), indicating that while peer testimonials matter, they are less critical compared to security and reputation in driving repeat purchases.

To complement our survey findings on the drivers of repurchase intention, the author will now examine real-world performance data obtained from Falconclaw.eu's YouTube channel and WooCommerce store over the twelve months from June 2024 through the 10th of May 2025, as mentioned before. The author was granted access to eight key YouTube metrics: monthly views, watch time (in hours), impressions, click-through rate (CTR), likes, comments added, shares, and subscribers gained, alongside a monthly net sales report from WooCommerce, representing a revenue metric. To prevent confidential information leaks and facilitate comparison across measures with vastly different units and magnitudes, each metric was rescaled to a 0-100 index, where 100 represents the peak performance month and 0 represents the lowest performance month. To make them more interpretable (and to get more reasonable-looking coefficients), the author rescaled each variable via min-max normalization by subtracting its lowest monthly value, dividing by the difference between its peak and trough, and multiplying by 100, so that the slowest month scores zero and the best-performing month scores 100. Table 10 presents the relative monthly means and variability for our nine indices. The 12-month index reveals several nuanced performance patterns. Beginning in July 2024, when Falconclaw.eu doubled its video-posting frequency, all nine indices jumped well above their mid-year baselines and largely remained there through the beginning of May 2025.

Table 10.

Descriptive Statistics for YouTube & Revenue Indices

Metric	Mean	Median	Std.Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Views	28.28	23.31	29.49	0	100
Impressions	44.40	54.63	36.54	0	100
CTR	45.00	36.00	27.30	0	100
Watch-time	27.61	23.50	29.13	0	100
Likes	30.68	28.75	30.68	0	100
Comments	38.77	41.52	33.11	0	100
Shares	29.46	22.66	29.38	0	100
Subscribers gained	27.85	24.74	29.23	0	100
Revenue	48.00	42.16	33.48	0	100

Notes: $N=12$ months

Source: Compiled by author

For instance, the views increased from their June trough (index = 0) to exceed the median of 23.31 in seven of the eleven months that followed, peaking at 100 in November and averaging 28.28 (SD = 29.49). Impressions saw an even stronger lift, with nine months above the median of 54.63, yielding the highest average index of 44.40 (SD = 36.54), which confirms that a higher posting frequency unlocks substantially greater reach. CTR increased over its 36.00 median (mean = 45.00, SD = 27.30), suggesting that better titles and thumbnails were progressively turning that increased reach into actual views. The same was true for watch time, which increased to 27.61 (SD = 29.13) and above its 23.50 median in the majority of "post-July" months, demonstrating that viewers not only clicked but also remained interested for longer. Social interactions also accelerated: likes and shares, which had medians of 28 and 23, respectively, consistently fell within the 40-60 range, reaching 30.68 (SD = 30.68) and 29.46 (SD = 29.38), respectively. The most significant spike occurred in comments, where the index averaged 38.77 (SD = 33.11) and exceeded its median of 41.52 on eight occasions. Subscribers' growth also exceeded its median of 24.74, yielding a mean of 27.85 (SD = 29.23) - monthly gains that added up to more than half a million new followers over the timeline. Finally, Revenue mirrored these engagement trends, exceeding the 42.16 median, resulting in a mean index of 48.00 (SD = 33.48).

To further explore how Falconclaw.eu's YouTube metrics translate into monthly WooCommerce revenue; the author conducted a Spearman correlation analysis, as shown in Table 11. The study assesses explicitly relationships between the indexed monthly revenue and eight (1-8) YouTube performance metrics (views, impressions, click-through rate (CTR), watch time, likes, comments, shares, and subscriber gains accordingly).

Table 11.

Correlation between YouTube Metrics and Revenue

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Revenue	1.00								
Views	0.65	1.00							
Impressions	0.77	0.77	1.00						
Watch-time	0.63	0.97	0.74	1.00					
Subscribers gained	0.52	0.95	0.69	0.96	1.00				
CTR	0.00	-0.28	-0.18	-0.41	-0.35	1.00			
Likes	0.63	0.97	0.76	0.98	0.97	-0.28	1.00		
Comments	0.68	0.97	0.84	0.92	0.88	-0.24	0.92	1.00	
Shares	0.63	0.97	0.85	0.97	0.95	-0.37	0.97	0.95	1.00

Notes: $N=12$; Correlations $\geq |0.60|$ indicate strong relationships. Values closer to 0 represent negligible or no association.

Source: Compiled by author

It's essential to note that our twelfth observation (May 2025) only includes ten days of data, which may marginally attenuate any metrics whose monthly trend deviates significantly from that of the first ten days when analyzing these Spearman correlations. This exhibit may show muted metrics that tend to spike, such as time, like subscriber additions or comments, which would slightly lower their correlation coefficients. Keeping this caveat in mind, a Spearman coefficient ($\rho = 0.77$) reveals that impressions exhibit the strongest individual correlation with revenue, indicating that higher monthly impressions are strongly associated with improved sales performance. Blazeska et al. (2024) highlighted the videos as the most engaging format on Instagram and Facebook. Our data show that impressions ($\rho = .77$) and deep engagement metrics (comments, watch-time) on YouTube are the strongest revenue drivers, extending their platform-specific insights to YouTube-ecommerce linkages. This finding highlights the importance of content visibility, as simply reaching a wider audience has a significant positive impact on revenue results.

Revenue and comments showed the second-highest correlation ($\rho = 0.68$), underscoring the importance of active audience interaction and discussion surrounding the brand's videos. In addition to indicating viewer involvement, high commenting activity may increase video visibility through YouTube's algorithm, expanding reach and generating more income. Additionally, there is a substantial correlation between monthly net sales and metrics that measure viewer volume and duration, such as views ($\rho = 0.65$) and watch time ($\rho = 0.63$). According to these relationships, even drawing in viewers and holding their interest has a significant impact on sales. This aligns with earlier theoretical predictions that longer

viewer retention indicates deeper engagement, which is likely to translate into customer trust and purchase behavior.

Likes ($\rho = 0.63$) and shares ($\rho = 0.63$), which are indicators of social interactions, also strongly correlate with revenue performance. These exchanges imply both active audience advocacy and viewer satisfaction, which could increase organic reach and positively influence new viewers' purchasing decisions. Lee, Lee, & Oh (2015) demonstrated that likes predicted sales in social commerce. The analysis extends this by also showing that comments and watch time correlate even more strongly with actual revenue, suggesting that deeper metrics may outperform superficial engagement indicators. Affective involvement and social proof are important drivers in digital commerce, as demonstrated by McClure & Seock (2020), and this supports the idea that meaningful social interactions and active participation generate trust and purchase intent. The somewhat weaker relationship between subscriber growth and immediate monthly sales suggests that subscriber growth itself may be less directly linked to immediate monthly sales and may instead function as a longer-term indicator of brand loyalty or audience expansion rather than an immediate revenue driver ($\rho = 0.52$). There is no significant relationship between revenue and click-through rate (CTR) ($\rho = 0.00$). This implies that improving revenue performance is not achieved by merely increasing video clicks without ensuring viewer engagement. This highlights the importance of genuine interactions over superficial engagement metrics.

Overall, this correlation analysis reveals that Falconclaw.eu's monthly income is most closely correlated with indicators of deep viewer engagement, including views, comments, and watch time, as well as broad content reach, measured by impressions. The need to focus on content tactics that capture user attention and sustain engagement, rather than just generating initial clicks, is underscored by the fact that superficial engagement (CTR) has a limited direct impact on monthly income. Subsequently, the author employs a principal-component regression to quantify how underlying dimensions of YouTube engagement drive Falconclaw.eu's e-commerce revenue. Since Falconclaw.eu's eight YouTube engagement indices are extremely highly intercorrelated, standard multivariate regression of revenue on those raw metrics suffers from severe multicollinearity, which leads to unstable coefficient estimates and inflated standard errors. Therefore, the author applied principal component analysis (PCA) and divided them into two orthogonal components, as shown in Table 12. First component (PC1) represents the overall "Engagement Volume" (views, impressions, watch time, likes, comments, shares, and subscribers). In contrast, the second component (PC2) represents the "CTR Contrast" (click-through rate relative to volume metrics). The

indexed monthly revenue was then regressed on these two components, and robust standard errors were used to check for heteroskedasticity.

Table 12.

Regression of Indexed Revenue on Principal Components

Predictor	Coef. (β)	Robust SE	t-value	p-value	VIF
PC1	6.59	4.45	1.48	0.17	1.00
PC2	11.51	6.28	1.83	0.10	1.00
cons	48.00	8.53	5.63	<0.001**	
R-squared	0.36				
Adj R-squared	0.21				

Notes: N = 12 months; p < 0.01. VIFs \approx 1 because PC1 and PC2 are orthogonal.

Source: Compiled by author

PC1 (Engagement Volume) has a positive coefficient ($\beta = 6.59$) in this PCA-based model, meaning that, while PC2 is held constant, a one-unit increase in the volume component translates into an average 6.59-point gain in the revenue index. Although this effect falls short of conventional significance ($p = 0.17$), it is consistent with previous bivariate findings and the theoretical hypothesis that strong user interaction and broad content reach are associated with increased e-commerce sales. This is supported by McClure & Seock (2020), who note that the sheer breadth and depth of user engagement, from views to comments, translate into higher e-commerce sales. Semenda et al. (2024) applied social media analytics to improve e-commerce strategies. Our PCA-regression analysis reveals that a single volume factor (PC1) accounts for most of the predictive ability, aligning with their recommendation to focus on overall engagement metrics rather than just individual click data.

Comparing click-through performance to total engagement, PC2 (CTR-Contrast) similarly demonstrates a positive effect ($\beta = 11.51$), indicating that months with comparatively stronger click-through performance are typically associated with higher revenue. This association is marginally significant ($p = 0.10$), suggesting that tweaking titles and thumbnails to increase CTR may lead to sales growth that extends beyond volume alone, albeit to a lesser extent. This finding extends Thapa's (2024) insights on engagement quality.

All things considered, this analysis supports the main argument of the thesis: the main factor influencing e-commerce performance is extensive and deep Social Media engagement, with CTR-based improvements providing a secondary but supplementary benefit. Practically speaking, Falconclaw.eu should keep creating material that optimizes social engagement and view time. Falconclaw.eu may optimize e-commerce performance by

utilizing these analytics to select initiatives that increase the reach and encourage meaningful viewer interaction.

Conclusion

To conclude, this thesis aims to investigate how social media marketing (SMM) influences consumer purchasing decisions in e-commerce, using Falconclaw.eu, a niche Estonian retailer specializing in night-vision and thermal equipment as a case study. All research tasks have been addressed in two phases: (1) a consumer-survey-based analysis of perceptions, trust, usability, emotional engagement, and repurchase intention, and (2) a twelve-month channel-and-store performance analysis linking YouTube engagement metrics to WooCommerce revenue.

The theoretical background and literature review (in Chapter 1) analyzed diverse definitions of SMM (Tuten, 2023; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019; Kotler & Armstrong, 2018; Singh & Singh, 2018; Eid et al., 2019) and mapped out five key dimensions of online purchasing behavior - product characteristics, trust, usability, psychological factors, and demographics (Mican & Sitar-Taut, 2020; Handoyo, 2024; Kumar et al., 2023; Nuradina, 2022; Ahmeti, 2022). We highlighted both the consensual findings (e.g., the centrality of trust and ease of use) and gaps (e.g., platform-specific effects in smaller e-businesses) in previous empirical work (McClure & Seock, 2020; Lee et al., 2015; Hasan & Sohail, 2020; Blazeska et al., 2024).

The empirical methodology, as outlined in Chapter 2, employed a mixed-methods design grounded in these prior studies. A structured online survey (N = 357) adapted validated scales (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019; McClure & Seock, 2020; Semenda et al., 2024) to measure five constructs: SMM strategies, trust (disaggregated into platform security, e-WOM influence, and reputation importance), ease of use, emotional engagement, and repurchase intention. Demographic segmentation followed Ahmeti (2022). Simultaneously, eight YouTube engagement metrics and monthly WooCommerce sales were collected and transformed into 0-100 indices (min-max normalization) to protect confidentiality and permit comparison.

Reliability analysis confirmed internal consistency for all scales ($\alpha \geq 0.70$) except trust ($\alpha = 0.65$), which was therefore deconstructed into its three component items and treated individually. Descriptive statistics revealed uniformly high means (4.1-4.4) on survey constructs, indicating strong positive perceptions of Falconclaw.eu's SMM, site usability, emotional resonance, and repurchase intentions. Correlation analysis (Spearman's ρ) showed that emotional engagement ($\rho = 0.35$) and SMM strategies ($\rho = 0.35$) were the strongest

survey predictors of repurchase, consistent with Blazeska et al. (2024) on the power of affective content and McClure & Seock (2020) on involvement mediating purchase intentions. Ease of use ($\rho = 0.25$) and trust dimensions (platform security $\rho = 0.33$; reputation $\rho = 0.32$; e-WOM $\rho = 0.23$) also contributed significantly, confirming findings on usability (Pantano & Priporas, 2016; Kumar et al., 2023) and trust (Handoyo, 2024; Deng et al., 2021).

The YouTube channel-level analysis extended these insights to real-world outcomes. Twelve months of YouTube indices (views, impressions, watch-time, CTR, likes, comments, shares, subscribers) were correlated with revenue, revealing that impressions ($\rho = 0.77$), comments ($\rho = 0.68$), views ($\rho = 0.65$), and watch-time ($\rho = 0.63$) most strongly aligned with sales – showcasing the primacy of broad reach and deep engagement over superficial metrics (Lee et al., 2015; Jaiswal et al., 2021). To overcome severe multicollinearity among these indices, principal-component analysis extracted two orthogonal factors - PC1 (“Engagement Volume,” 80% variance) and PC2 (“CTR Contrast,” 12% variance) - which together explained 36% of monthly revenue variation ($R^2 = 0.36$) when regressed with robust standard errors. Both PC1 ($\beta = 6.59$) and PC2 ($\beta = 11.51$) had positive effects, aligning with Semenda et al. (2024) on the importance of aggregate engagement metrics and Thapa (2024) on the incremental value of click-through efficiency.

These results enhance our management and theoretical knowledge of SMM in small e-business settings. They affirm that the main levers for increasing revenue and repurchase are wider content reach and deeper emotional connection, with simplicity of use, transaction security, brand reputation, and CTR optimization playing significant but supporting roles. In reality, Falconclaw.eu should continue to create visually stunning and emotionally charged content that optimizes social interaction and watch duration, while refining titles and thumbnails to increase click-through rates. At the same time, preserving a smooth online experience and clear security indicators will increase advocacy and repurchases.

The research has some limitations. This study focuses exclusively on YouTube as a social media platform. Although Falconclaw.eu's content strategy heavily relies on YouTube videos, other platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, may have alternative methods for boosting sales and brand awareness (Blazeska et al., 2024; Thapa, 2024).

This thesis bridges a knowledge gap regarding how social media marketing (SMM) influences buying decisions in smaller, specialized e-commerce environments by combining conventional survey methodologies with channel-level analytics and sophisticated statistical approaches. It offers practical insights for digital marketers looking to increase engagement

and income while validating and expanding on current ideas of consumer involvement, trust, and technology adoption.

To completely map the routes from social media participation to long-term e-commerce success, future research should aim for larger and more varied samples, experimental or longitudinal designs, multi-platform data, and a wider range of industry outcomes.

List of references

1. Ahmeti, F. (2022). THE IMPACT OF DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS ON CONSUMER PURCHASING PREFERENCES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM KOSOVO. *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs*, 8(1), 98–115. <https://doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2281098a>
2. Al-Debei, M. M., Akroush, M. N., & Ashouri, M. I. (2015). Consumer attitudes towards online shopping: The effects of trust, perceived benefits, and perceived web quality. *Internet Research*, 25(5), 707–733. <https://doi.org/10.1108/INTR-05-2014-0146>
3. Blazeska, D., Klimoska, A. M., & Trajkov, V. (2024). The Effectiveness of Social Media Marketing on Purchasing Decisions. *UTMS Journal of Economics*, 15(1), 27–38.
4. Brahma, A., & Dutta, R. (2020). Role of Social Media and E-Commerce for Business Entrepreneurship. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Computer Science, Engineering and Information Technology*. <https://doi.org/10.32628/CSEIT206559>
5. Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, F. (2019). *Digital Marketing: Strategy, Implementation, and Practice* (7th ed.). Pearson.
6. Chen, T., Samaranayake, P., Cen, X. Y., Qi, M., & Lan, Y. C. (2022). The Impact of Online Reviews on Consumers' Purchasing Decisions: Evidence From an Eye-Tracking Study. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 865702. <https://doi.org/10.3389/FPSYG.2022.865702/BIBTEX>
7. Deng, W., Su, T., Zhang, Y., & Tan, C. (2021). Factors Affecting Consumers' Online Choice Intention: A Study Based on Bayesian Network. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 731850. <https://doi.org/10.3389/FPSYG.2021.731850/BIBTEX>
8. Dwivedi, Y. K., Ismagilova, E., Hughes, D. L., Carlson, J., Filieri, R., Jacobson, J., ... Wang, Y. (2021). Setting the future of digital and social media marketing research:

- Perspectives and research propositions. *International Journal of Information Management*, 59, 102168. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.IJINFOMGT.2020.102168>
9. Eid, R., Abdelmoety, Z. H., & Agag, G. M. (2019). Antecedents and consequences of social media marketing use: an empirical study of the UK exporting B2B SMEs. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*. Retrieved from <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:211803635>
 10. Erdil, M. (2018). FACTORS AFFECTING SHOPPING CART ABANDONMENT: PRE-DECISIONAL CONFLICT AS A MEDIATOR. *Journal of Management, Marketing and Logistics-JMML*, 5(2), 140–152. <https://doi.org/10.17261/Pressacademia.2018.845>
 11. Gami, J., Patel, N., Aghera, V., Patel, N., Gondaliya, M., Chauhan, R., & Maseleno, A. (2023). Impact of Demographics on Consumer Preferences in Online Shopping: An Analysis of Age, Gender, and Education Factors. *Greenation International Journal of Economics and Accounting*, 1(4), 571–584. <https://doi.org/10.38035/GIJE.V1I4.303>
 12. Gangal, A., Agrawal, S., & Vaghela, O. (2024). *Understanding Social and Psychological Factors Influencing Online Consumer Behaviour*.
 13. Handoyo, S. (2024). Purchasing in the digital age: A meta-analytical perspective on trust, risk, security, and e-WOM in e-commerce. *Heliyon*, 10(8), e29714. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.HELIYON.2024.E29714/ASSET/92D6FA19-D537-4AE5-A1A6-3FBEB25CEF3D/MAIN.ASSETS/GR9.JPG>
 14. Haryadi, D., Haerofiatna, H., & Alfarizi, A. W. (2022). The Role of After Sales Service on Customer Loyalty Mediated by Customer Satisfaction. *ECo-Buss*, 5(2), 583–592. <https://doi.org/10.32877/EB.V5I2.511>
 15. Hasan, M., & Sohail, M. S. (2020). The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Consumers' Purchase Decision: Investigating the Effects of Local and Nonlocal Brands. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08961530.2020.1795043>
 16. Jaiswal, M., Das, A., Choudhury, B., & Elizabeth Jacob, M. (2021). Analysing The Role Of Social Media As A Platform Of E-Commerce. *Webology*, 18(1), 1735–188. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/360217608_Analysing_The_Role_Of_Social_Media_As_A_Platform_Of_E-Commerce#fullTextFileContent

17. Kalemaj, E. (2023). The Impact of Social Media Marketing on E-Commerce Sales and E-Loyalty: An Empirical Investigation. *THIRTY-FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON: "SOCIALAND NATURAL SCIENCES – GLOBAL CHALLENGE 2023" (ICSNS XXXI-2023)*. Lisbon.
<https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.13901002>
18. Khan, I., Azizah, N., & Mohamadali, B. (2023). UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF CUSTOMER TRUST IN E-COMMERCE. *International Journal of Computer Science & Information Technology (IJCSIT)*, 15(4).
<https://doi.org/10.5121/ijcsit.2023.15407>
19. Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2018). *Principles of Marketing* (17th ed.). Pearson.
20. Kumar, V., Kumar, V., Singh, S., Singh, N., & Sreenu Banoth, M. (2023). The Impact of User Experience Design on Customer Satisfaction in E-commerce Websites. *The International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 11, 2320–2882. Retrieved from www.ijcrt.org
21. Lee, K., Lee, B., & Oh, W. (2015). Thumbs Up, Sales Up? The Contingent Effect of Facebook Likes on Sales Performance in Social Commerce. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 32(4), 109–143.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07421222.2015.1138372>
22. McClure, C., & Seock, Y. K. (2020). The role of involvement: Investigating the effect of brand's social media pages on consumer purchase intention. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 53, 101975.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/J.JRETCONSER.2019.101975>
23. Mican, D., & Sitar-Taut, D.-A. (2020). *ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS IMPACTING THE ONLINE SHOPPING DECISION-MAKING PROCESS*. 65(1), 54–66.
<https://doi.org/10.2478/subboec-2020-0004>
24. Mu, J. (2023). The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumers' Purchasing Intention. *Frontiers in Business, Economics and Management*, 10, 95–97.
<https://doi.org/10.54097/fbem.v10i3.11455>
25. Musa, H., Amin, M., Mohamad, B., Jabar, J., Sam, J. M., & Azmi, R. (2015). *THE INTENTION IN PURCHASING ONLINE FROM PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES*.
26. Nuradina, K. (2022). PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS AFFECTS ONLINE BUYING BEHAVIOUR. *Journal of Business and Management Inaba*, 1(02), 112–123. <https://doi.org/10.56956/JBMI.V1I02.120>

27. Okadiani, N. L. B., Mitariani, N. W. E., & Imbayani, I. G. A. (2019). Green Product, Social Media Marketing and Its Influence on Purchasing Decisions. *International Journal of Applied Business and International Management*, 4(3), 69–74.
<https://doi.org/10.32535/IJABIM.V4I3.684>
28. Pantano, E., & Priporas, C. V. (2016). The effect of mobile retailing on consumers' purchasing experiences: A dynamic perspective. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 61, 548–555. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.CHB.2016.03.071>
29. Saeed, S. (2019). Role of web usability in online customer experience: A case of Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Computer Science*, 15(5), 728–735.
<https://doi.org/10.3844/JCSSP.2019.728.735>
30. Salhab, H. A., Al-Amarneh, A., Aljabaly, S. M., Al Zoubi, M. M., & Othman, M. D. (2023). The impact of social media marketing on purchase intention: The mediating role of brand trust and image. *International Journal of Data and Network Science*, 7(2), 591–600. <https://doi.org/10.5267/J.IJDNS.2023.3.012>
31. Semenda, O., Sokolova, Y., Korovina, O., Bratko, O., & Polishchuk, I. (2024). Using Social Media Analysis to Improve E-commerce Marketing Strategies. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, 14(4), 61–71.
<https://doi.org/10.32479/IRMM.16196>
32. Shweta Singh, Dr. S. V. and A. K. (2023). THE IMPACT OF USABILITY QUALITY AND SITE SECURITY FEATURES OF A RETAIL E-COMMERCE WEBSITE ON E-SATISFACTION AND INCREASING AI INTERVENTIONS. *MSW Management Journal*, 33(2), 434–443. <https://doi.org/10.7492/3NAX7E07>
33. Singh, M., & Singh, G. (2018). Impact of social media on e-commerce. *International Journal of Engineering & Technology*, 7(2), 21–26.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14419/ijet.v7i2.30.13457>
34. Statista. (2024, August 23). Internet users using social media for brand research by country 2023 | Statista. Retrieved December 2, 2024, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/472306/researching-brands-on-social-media-worldwide/>
35. Thapa, M. (2024). ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN E-COMMERCE: IT'S INFLUENCE IN CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT AND PURCHASE DECISION WITH REFERENCE TO THE CONSUMERS OF DARJEELING HILLS OF WEST BENGAL, INDIA. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 12, 2320–2882. Retrieved from www.ijcrt.org

36. Tuten, T. L. (2023). *Social Media Marketing* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
37. Valerio, C., William, L., & Noémier, Q. (2019). The Impact of Social Media on E-Commerce Decision Making Process. *International Journal of Technology for Business (IJTB)*, 1(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.2591569>
38. Wang, Q., Zhu, X., Wang, M., Zhou, F., & Cheng, S. (2023). A theoretical model of factors influencing online consumer purchasing behavior through electronic word of mouth data mining and analysis. *PLOS ONE*, 18(5), e0286034. <https://doi.org/10.1371/JOURNAL.PONE.0286034>
39. Yoesoep Edhie Rachmad. (2022). Social Media Marketing Mediated Changes In Consumer Behavior From E-Commerce To Social Commerce. *International Journal of Economics and Management Research*, 1(3), 227–242. <https://doi.org/10.55606/IJEMR.V1I3.152>
40. Zhao, Y. (2024). How Do Positive Emotions Influence Online Purchasing Decisions? *Interdisciplinary Humanities and Communication Studies*, 1(5). <https://doi.org/10.61173/DARGJC40>
41. Zirena-Bejarano, P. P., & Zirena, E. M. C. (2024). From Consumer's Attitude towards Online Purchase Decision: Influence of Friends and Reference Groups. *Contemporary Management Research*, 20(1), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.7903/CMR.23109>

APPENDIX A

Survey Questionnaire for Consumers

Measurement tools

Category	Question	Answers
SMM Strategies	I have purchased a product based on Falconclaw.eu's social-media videos.	Scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).
	User-generated content (reviews/testimonials) strongly influences my decision to buy from Falconclaw.eu.	Scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).
	I frequently interact with Falconclaw.eu's content.	Scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).
	Falconclaw.eu's social-media posts are visually appealing and well-designed.	Scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).
	I perceive Falconclaw.eu's online platform as secure for transactions.	Scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).
Trust	Customer reviews on Falconclaw.eu influence my purchase decisions.	Scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).
	Falconclaw.eu's brand reputation is important in my purchase decisions	Scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).

	It is easy to navigate Falconclaw.eu's website.	Scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).
	I am satisfied with the speed of Falconclaw.eu's website.	Scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).
Ease of Use	The search functionality on Falconclaw.eu's website is intuitive	Scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).
	Product pages on Falconclaw.eu provide all the information I need	Scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).
	The site's mobile version is as easy to use as the desktop version.	Scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).
	Falconclaw.eu's social-media posts create a sense of connection with the brand	Scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).
	Falconclaw.eu's storytelling (e.g., behind-the-scenes, brand narratives) makes me feel emotionally invested.	Scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).
Emotional Engagement	I feel motivated to like, comment on, or share Falconclaw.eu's social-media posts	Scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).
	Falconclaw.eu's social-media content evokes positive	Scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).

emotions (e.g., joy, excitement).

Demographics	What is your age group?	(18-30; 31-44; 45+)
	What is your monthly income range?	(<€1000; €1000-€5000; > €5000)
Repurchase	I am likely to repurchase from Falconclaw.eu in the future.	Scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).
	I would recommend Falconclaw.eu to others	Scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).

Source: Compiled by author

Resümee

SOTSIAALMEEDIA TURUNDUSE MÕJU OSTUOTSUSTELE E-KAUBANDUSES: FALCONCLAW.EU JUHTUMIUURING

Vlas Chebotarov

Käesoleva bakalaureusetöö eesmärk oli uurida sotsiaalmeedia turunduse mõju e-kaubanduse ostuotsustele Falconclaw.eu näitel. Esiteks analüüsiti teoreetiliselt sotsiaalmeedia turunduse (SMM) mõisteid ja rolli e-kaubanduses, võttes aluseks Tuten (2023), Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2019), Kotler & Armstrong (2018) jt. töid. Seejärel vaadeldi olulisemaid tarbijate otsust mõjutavaid tegureid - toodetomadused, usaldus, veebipoe kasutusmugavus, psühholoogilised ja demograafilised aspektid (Mican & Sitar-Taut, 2020; Handoyo, 2024; Kumar et al., 2023).

Empiirilises osas koguti aprillis 2025 veebiküsitluse kaudu 357 Falconclaw.eu kliendi vastused (vanus 18-45+, tulukategooriad <€1 000 kuni >€5 000). Mõõdeti viit tegurit: SMM-strateegiad, usaldus, kasutusmugavus, emotsionaalne kaasatus ning uuestiostu ja soovitamise tõenäosus. Tegurite hindamiseks kasutatavate küsimuste kooskõla hinnati Cronbachi α -ga, mis näitas kõigi tegurite korral kõrget usaldusväärsust ($\alpha = 0.69-0.89$), usalduse küsimused aga moodustasid mitmemõõtmelise komplekti ($\alpha = 0.65$), mille tõttu neid analüüsiti eraldi (platvormi turvalisus, e-WOM, maine).

Kirjeldavas analüüsis tõusid keskmised skoorid kõigil teguritel üle 4.0 („nõustun“- „täielikult nõustun“), tugevaim oli emotsionaalne kaasatus ($M=4.40$) ja soovituslikkus ($M=4.30$). Spearmani korrelatsioonides seostusid emotsionaalne kaasatus ($\rho=0.35$), SMM-strateegiad ($\rho=0.35$) ja usaldus ($\rho=0.33-0.43$) tugevalt uuestiostu-sooviga, toetades McClure & Seock (2020) ja Blazeska et al. (2024) järeldusi kaasatuse ja ostusoovi omavahelisest seosest.

Töö tulemusi laiendati YouTube'i ja WooCommerce'i andmetega (juuni 24-mai 10). Kaheksast YouTube'i mõõdikust (vaated, vaatamisaeg, muljed, meeldimised, kommentaarid, jagamised, registreerumised, CTR) olid kõige tugevamad seosed müügiga muljete ($\rho=0.77$), kommentaaride ($\rho=0.68$) ja vaadete ($\rho=0.65$) indeksiga, mis kinnitab Semenda et al. (2024) rõhuasetust kaasatuse mahule. Multikollineaarsuse vältimiseks viidi läbi PCA, mille järel regressioon PC1 (kaasutaja-maht) ja PC2 (CTR-kontrast) suhtes selgitas 36 % variatsioonist ($R^2 = 0.36$; $\beta_{PC1} = 6.59$; $\beta_{PC2} = 11.51$), toetades teooriaid, et nii ulatuslik kui ka kvaliteetne kaasatus mõjutab müügitulemusi.

Uuringu piiranguteks on lühike mai kuu vaatlusperiood, platvormispetsiifilisus (ainult YouTube) ning iseloomustav (mitte kausaalne) disain. Tulevikus soovitatakse täiendavaid

eksperimente ja laiemat andmekogumit, et edendada teoreetilist ja praktilist arusaamist sotsiaalmeedia turunduse ROI-st e-kaubanduses.

Non-exclusive licence to reproduce thesis and make thesis public

_____ Vlas Chebotarov _____,

(author's name)

herewith grant the University of Tartu a free permit (non-exclusive licence) to

reproduce, for the purpose of preservation, including for adding to the DSpace digital archives until the expiry of the term of copyright,

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON PURCHASING DECISIONS FOR
E-COMMERCE: A CASE STUDY OF
FALCONCLAW.EU _____

_____ supervised by _____

_____ Andres Kuusik _____

(supervisor's name)

2. I grant the University of Tartu a permit to make the work specified in p. 1 available to the public via the web environment of the University of Tartu, including via the DSpace digital archives, under the Creative Commons licence CC BY NC ND 3.0, which allows, by giving appropriate credit to the author, to reproduce, distribute the work and communicate it to the public, and prohibits the creation of derivative works and any commercial use of the work until the expiry of the term of copyright.

3. I am aware of the fact that the author retains the rights specified in p. 1 and 2.

4. I certify that granting the non-exclusive licence does not infringe other persons' intellectual property rights or rights arising from the personal data protection legislation.

author's name

13/05/2025