

The Impact of Social Media Marketing Activities on Consumer Behavioral Intention of Tax Consulting Services

Michael Neubert, Mandy Witt
EIM - European Institute of Management, Valletta, Malta

Abstract

This study analyses the impact of social media marketing activities (SMMA) on customer behaviour in German tax advisory firms. The S-O-R model is used to examine the influence of four SMMA dimensions - customization, entertainment, interaction, and trendiness - on perceived value (PV) and the resulting behavioural intentions (purchase intention, willingness to pay a premium, e-WoM). Following an online survey in January 2025 with 390 valid participants, the model was tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The results indicate that social media marketing activities do not directly influence user behaviour. Instead, PV acts as the main mediator: as the perceived usefulness of the content increases, the purchase intention, willingness to pay, and willingness to recommend increase. Customisation and interaction have a positive influence on PV, while trendiness and e-WoM are less important. The significant explanatory power of the model (R^2 for PV = 0.649) confirms the importance of customised, interactive content for the digital communication of tax firms. The study offers both theoretical and practical insights. It adds a knowledge-based service to SMMA research and provides clear recommendations for the strategic use of social media in tax consulting. It also provides evidence of a suppression effect, where the positive influence of PV offsets negative immediate effects. Research shows that strategically important and benefit-focused content is crucial for the success of social media marketing in tax consultancy. The key conclusion is that social media, when used to deliver credible, user-centered value, becomes a powerful tool for trust-building, differentiation, and strategic client development in professional service firms.

#Keywords

Social Media Marketing Activities, Perceived Value, Customer Behavioral Intentions, Tax Consulting, Purchase Intention, Willingness to Pay a Premium, Electronic Word of Mouth, S-O-R Model, Digital Communication, PLS-SEM.

doi:10.2440/018-0006

Der Einfluss von Social-Media-Marketing-Aktivitäten auf die Verhaltensabsicht von Konsumenten bei Steuerberatungsdienstleistungen

Diese Studie analysiert die Auswirkungen von Social-Media-Marketing-Aktivitäten (SMMA) auf das Kundenverhalten in deutschen Steuerberatungskanzleien. Zur theoretischen Fundierung wird das Stimulus-Organismus-Reaktions-Modell (S-O-R-Modell) herangezogen, um den Einfluss von vier Dimensionen des Social-Media-Marketings, Individualisierung, Unterhaltung, Interaktion und Trendbezogenheit, auf den wahrgenommenen Nutzen (Perceived Value, PV) sowie auf daraus resultierende Verhaltensabsichten (Kaufabsicht, Zahlungsbereitschaft für einen Aufpreis, elektronisches Word-of-Mouth) zu untersuchen. Auf Basis einer Online-Umfrage im Januar 2025 mit 390 gültigen Teilnahmen wurde das Modell mittels Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) getestet.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass Social-Media-Marketing-Aktivitäten das Nutzerverhalten nicht direkt beeinflussen. Stattdessen fungiert der wahrgenommene Nutzen (PV) als zentraler Mediator: Mit steigendem empfundenem Nutzen des Inhalts nehmen sowohl die Kaufabsicht als auch die Zahlungsbereitschaft und die Empfehlungsabsicht signifikant zu. Individualisierung und Interaktion wirken sich positiv auf den wahrgenommenen Nutzen aus, während Trendbezogenheit und e-WoM von geringerer Bedeutung sind. Die hohe Erklärungskraft des Modells (R^2 für PV = 0,649) unterstreicht die Relevanz individualisierter und interaktiver Inhalte für die digitale Kommunikation von Steuerberatungskanzleien.

Die Studie liefert sowohl theoretische als auch praxisbezogene Erkenntnisse. Sie erweitert die Social-Media-Marketing-Forschung um eine wissensbasierte Dienstleistung und gibt konkrete Handlungsempfehlungen für den strategischen Einsatz sozialer Medien in der Steuerberatung. Darüber hinaus belegt sie einen Suppressionseffekt, bei dem der positive Einfluss des wahrgenommenen Nutzens unmittelbare negative Effekte überlagert. Die Forschung zeigt, dass strategisch relevante und nutzenorientierte Inhalte entscheidend für den Erfolg von Social-Media-Marketing in der Steuerberatung sind. Die zentrale Schlussfolgerung lautet: Social Media wird – sofern glaubwürdig und nutzerzentriert eingesetzt – zu einem wirkungsvollen Instrument für Vertrauensaufbau, Differenzierung und strategische Mandantenentwicklung in professionellen Dienstleistungsunternehmen.

社交媒体营销活动对消费者税务咨询服务行为意向的影响

本研究分析社交媒体营销活动 (Social Media Marketing Activities, SMMAs) 对德国税务咨询公司客户行为的影响。研究采用刺激-有机体-反应 (S-O-R) 模型, 探讨SMMAs四个维度——定制性、娱乐性、互动性和时尚性——对感知价值 (Perceived Value, PV) 及其衍生行为意图 (购买意图、支付溢价意愿、电子口碑) 的作用。2025年1月, 研究通过在线问卷调查收集了390份有效样本, 并采用偏最小二乘结构方程模型 (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling, PLS-SEM) 进行实证分析。结果显示, 社交媒体营销活动并不直接影响用户行为, 感知价值在其中起到关键中介作用: 内容的感知效用提升, 显著增强了购买意图、支付意愿与推荐意愿。其中, 定制性与互动性对感知价值具有显著正向影响, 而时尚性和电子口碑的重要性相对较低。模型的解释力显著 (PV的 $R^2=0.649$), 强调了定制化、互动性内容在税务机构数字传播中的重要性。

本研究在理论与实践层面均具有启发意义: 一方面, 将知识密集型服务纳入SMMAs研究范畴, 丰富了理论体系; 另一方面, 为税务咨询领域战略性社交媒体运用提供了明确建议。研究还揭示了抑制效应的存在, 即感知价值的正向作用可抵消营销活动的某些负面直接效应。总体而言, 研究指出, 有策略、以效益为导向的内容对于税务咨询中的社交媒体营销成效至关重要。研究最终结论认为, 若能有效传递可信、以用户为中心的价值, 社交媒体将成为专业服务机构建立信任、实现差异化和战略性客户开发的重要工具。

Introduction

The topic of this study is the impact of Social Media Marketing Activities (SM-MAs) on Customer Behavioral Intentions (CBI) of German tax consulting services. The motivation for this study is that SM-MAs have become an increasingly important part of modern marketing strategies for German tax consulting firms (Löffler, 2023; Schröder, 2023). In recent years, German tax consulting firms have increasingly relied on SMMA to attract clients and employees, foster engagement with current customers, and boost brand recognition (Bazrkar et al., 2021). German tax consulting firms can utilize SMMA in multiple ways to connect with their target audiences effectively. For instance, these firms can develop and share content tailored to their audience's preferences (Nuseir, 2020). They can leverage social media platforms to execute targeted advertising campaigns aimed at specific demographic groups, as well as evaluate the performance of these campaigns (Chrisniyanti & Fah, 2022; Seo et al., 2020). Beyond advertising, social media provides insights into customer preferences and behavior, which are invaluable for shaping future marketing initiatives (Önder & Çakıroğlu, 2021). Analyzing behavioral intentions is a key consideration in understanding consumer behavior, as these offer predictive insights into future purchasing patterns (Abdou et al., 2022; Boyer & Hult, 2006). Measures such as Purchase Intentions (PUR), Willingness to Pay Premium (WPP), and electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WoM) are particularly effective tools for gaining a deeper understanding of these intentions (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020).

The need for this study arises from the growing reliance on SMMA for acquiring new customers, hiring employees, and maintaining communication with current customers and other stakeholders. The increasing importance of SM-MAs highlights a gap in research that requires further exploration. Bushara et al. (2023) identified this gap by calling for

more studies to investigate the influence of SM-MAs on key variables, including Perceived Value (PV), PUR, WPP, and e-WoM. Building on this call, the current study replicates their research design by examining the impact of SM-MAs in the context of tax consulting services in Germany in 2025. Applying SM-MAs in this industry and geographic setting expands and validates their findings. SM-MAs have proven vital for the German tax consulting sector, especially in reaching younger, digitally active audiences and boosting sales through broader exposure. This target audience, characterized by a strong online presence, is highly engaged, making it easier to collect their insights for research, as other service industries have demonstrated (DiPietro et al., 2012; Li et al., 2021). The study aims to examine the impact of SM-MAs on PV and CBIs measured through PUR, WPP, and e-WoM constructs of German tax consulting firms. By examining the effectiveness of SM-MAs in enhancing customer relationships, driving sales, and increasing competitiveness, this study offers critical insights for German tax consulting firms. It enables them to optimize their social media marketing strategies and better align their marketing efforts with customer expectations and market demands.

The background of this topic emerges from the literature, which has examined how SM-MAs impact PV, PUR, WPP, and e-WoM. Studies suggest that customer engagement with SM-MAs positively influences CBI outcomes, highlighting that greater engagement fosters higher PV, PUR, WPP, and e-WoM (e.g., Choi et al., 2017; Rizka & Hidayatullah, 2020; Torres et al., 2018). Businesses such as German tax consulting firms that strategically use SM-MAs often may achieve stronger customer loyalty due to the enhanced value perceived by their audience. Furthermore, effective SM-MAs enable businesses such as German tax consulting firms to connect with a broader target demographic and refine marketing efforts to improve returns on investment (Chrisniyanti & Fah, 2022; Seo et al., 2020).

This study's research problem builds on the literature gap (Bushara et al., 2023). Despite significant scholarly interest in the relationships between SMMA and CBIs, such as PV, PUR, WPP, and e-WoM in diverse industries, these associations remain underexplored in the specific context of the German tax consulting sector. Understanding how SMMA shape consumers' perceptions of PV, PUR, WPP, and e-WoM within this niche is essential. This understanding is fundamental given the growing reliance of German tax consulting firms on SMMA to inform strategic decisions and optimize marketing investments. Additionally, existing literature has yielded inconsistent findings: while some studies have confirmed a strong relationship between SMMA and CBIs, others have suggested limited or non-significant effects for specific SMMA components (e.g., Hanaysha, 2018; Moslehpour et

al., 2021). These discrepancies underscore the need for further research to clarify these relationships.

Moreover, to date, no studies have specifically investigated the mediating role of PV in the relationships between SMMA and PUR, WPP, and e-WoM within the German tax consulting industry (Bushara et al., 2023). Addressing this gap, the present study aims to empirically examine how SMMA influence PV, PUR, WPP, and e-WoM among social media followers of German tax consulting firms. Additionally, it will explore the role of PV as a mediator in these relationships, guided by the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) framework. By doing so, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of these dynamics and offers practical insights for German tax consulting firms seeking to optimize their SMMA strategies.

Term	Abbreviation	Definition
Social Media Marketing Activities	SMMA	are "practices that use social media channels and technologies for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging products and services that add value for the organization's stakeholders" (Tuten, 2023; Zerres, 2024). The four SMMA dimensions used in this study are customization, entertainment, interaction, and trendiness (Cheung et al., 2021).
Customer Behavioral Intentions	CBIs	represent the actions customers intend to take following a marketing interaction. These CBIs are critical for service providers such as German tax consulting firms, including online PUR, e-WoM, and WPP.
Purchase Intention	PUR	describes the probability that a customer will buy a tax consulting service. It stems from the notion that customers decide before purchasing (Chiu et al., 2009; Rizka & Hidayatullah, 2020). This process typically involves collecting information, assessing different options, and making a final choice. Price, quality, convenience, and availability significantly affect purchase intention (Liu & Li, 2019).
Electronic Word of Mouth	e-WoM	shapes customer behavior by offering insights into other customers' opinions about a product or service (López & Sicilia, 2014). This can be assessed through online reviews and feedback from individuals who purchased the product or service (Choi et al., 2017).
Perceived Value	PV	refers to a customer's assessment of the worth of a product or service based on its benefits relative to its cost (Zeithaml, 1988). It is influenced by factors such as quality, brand reputation, features, and customer support (Asgarpour, 2014). Customers who perceive higher value in a product or service are more likely to purchase it, pay a premium price, and engage in e-WoM activities, such as sharing their experiences on social media platforms (Gan & Wang, 2017; Pham et al., 2018; Watanabe et al., 2020).
Stimulus-Organism-Response	SOR	is a psychological framework that defines behavior (R) as a result of the interaction between an environmental stimulus (S) and a person's internal responses (Fu et al., 2020; Zhu & Chen, 2015).

Table 1:
Definitions of Key Terms

The significance and implications for theory and practice are that this research intends to enhance the existing body of SMMA literature by empirically testing a theoretical framework based on the S-O-R model. It examines how customized, entertaining, trendy, and interactive SM-MAs (stimuli) influence followers' PV (organism), which in turn drives the CBIs consisting of PUR, WPP, and e-WoM behaviors (responses) among social media followers of German tax consulting firms. This study makes a novel contribution to the field by addressing a notable research gap (Bushara et al., 2023). According to the authors' knowledge, it is the first to evaluate PV as a mediating variable in the relationships between SMMA and PUR, WPP, and e-WoM within the German tax consulting sector.

From a practical standpoint, the findings offer valuable guidance for German tax consulting firms and marketers in shaping efficient and effective social media strategies to enhance PV, thereby boosting PUR, WPP, and e-WoM outcomes. Moreover, the insights from this research enable these firms to better understand the direct and indirect (via PV) impacts of their SMMA on CBIs. This knowledge is crucial for fostering long-term customer relationships, increasing revenue, and maintaining competitiveness in the marketplace.

The study is structured as follows: The first chapter is the introduction. The second chapter covers a theoretical framework and the development of the hypotheses. The third chapter presents the research materials and methods. The fourth chapter includes the results, and the fifth discusses them, followed by the conclusion in chapter six.

Theoretical Framework and Development of Hypotheses

The purpose of this quantitative study is to examine the impact of SMMA on PV and CBIs measured through PUR, WPP, and e-WoM constructs of German tax consulting firms. The overarching re-

search question is build on the purpose of this quantitative study:

What is the impact of SMMA on PV and CBIs measured through PUR, WPP, and e-WoM constructs of German tax consulting firms?

In this section, the theoretical framework will be presented and the hypotheses will be developed.

Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA)

SMMA are activities that, in the context of this study, German tax consulting firms use to create and communicate content and to enhance revenues by delivering products and services through social media channels that add value to their customers (Tuten, 2023; Zerres, 2024). According to Hollensen (2020), SMMA can be categorized in social commerce (e.g., selling products and services), entertainment (e.g., gamification such as an online tax calculation tool), community (e.g., consuming content including sharing, liking, commenting), and publishing (e.g., reviews including user-generated content).

Research about SMMA of tax consulting firms is scarce, with a few exceptions. Eschenbrenner et al. (2015) state that mainly global tax consulting firms and, to some extent, second-tier firms use social media channels to share knowledge, develop their brands, market their products and services, and socialize and onboard employees and customers. The former may even experience a significant positive impact of SMMA on financial performance (Chamberlain et al., 2018; Obradović et al., 2023) by, for example, increasing the efficiency of customer acquisition through SMMA (Rieg & Radeck, 2024).

Research has categorized SMMA into interaction, customization, entertainment, and trendiness (Bushara et al., 2023; Cheung et al., 2021). These dimensions reflect distinct functions:

- customization involves tailoring products to individual preferences (e.g., Godey et al., 2016);
- entertainment focuses on creating enjoyable experiences (e.g., Cheung et al., 2021; Seo et al., 2020);
- interaction facilitates information sharing and engagement, including user-generated content (e.g., Daugherty et al., 2008); and
- trendiness highlights disseminating up-to-date information (Naaman et al., 2011).

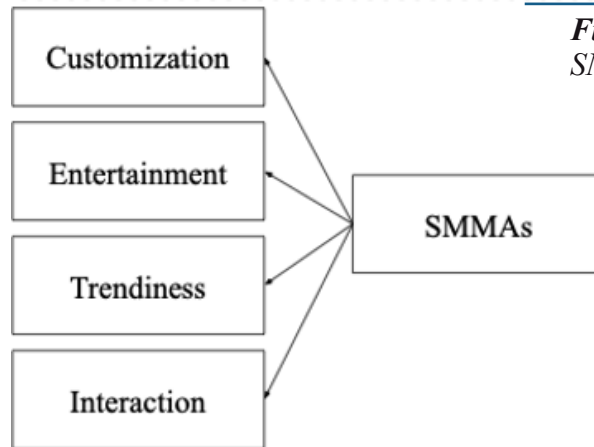


Figure 1:
SMMA categories

The term PV refers to a customer’s assessment of the worth of a product or service based on its benefits relative to its cost (Zeithaml, 1988). It is influenced by factors such as quality, brand reputation, features, and customer support (Asgarpour, 2014). Customers who perceive higher value in a product or service are more likely to purchase it, pay a premium price, and engage in e-WoM activities, such as sharing their experiences on social media platforms (Gan & Wang, 2017; Pham et al., 2018; Watanabe et al., 2020). In the context of tax consulting and accounting services, PV can be defined as the customer's assessment of the benefits received from these services relative to the sacrifices made (such as time and money), according to Zeithaml (1988). This evaluation is influenced by the collaborative nature of the service experience, highlighting the importance of customer perceptions in determining value (Sánchez, 2015).

Customer Behavioral Intentions (CBIs)

Customer Behavioral Intentions (CBIs) describe intended actions following a service or activity engagement. CBIs include PUR, WPP, and e-WoM. PUR reflects the likelihood of future purchases. WPP indicates a consumer’s readiness to pay more for perceived superior quality or brand reputation. e-WoM captures positive or negative customer expressions, which are shared online, indicating satisfaction and PV. Understanding CBIs is crucial for evaluating the success of service and marketing strategies.

SMMA and their Impact on PUR, WBB, and e-WoM

Studies highlight that engagement with SMMA positively influences CBIs (Bushara et al., 2023; Phan, 2024; Prastiti et al., 2024; Salsabila & Albari, 2023; Zhang et al., 2022). For example, active interaction and entertaining content improve purchase intentions (PUR). Similarly, trendiness and user engagement in SMMA have enhanced WPP. SMMA also strengthen e-WoM by encouraging customers to share positive feedback about brands, supported by high-quality, relevant, and engaging content. Thus, we hypothesize:

- **Hypothesis 1 (H1):** SMMA have a significant positive impact on PUR.
- **Hypothesis 2 (H2):** SMMA have a significant positive impact on WPP.
- **Hypothesis 3 (H3):** SMMA have a significant positive impact on e-WoM.

SMMA and PV

SMMA foster PV by enhancing customer trust, satisfaction, and engagement. Personalization, responsiveness, and quality content amplify PV by addressing customer needs and improving their overall experience. Empirical studies confirm the significant role of SMMA in promoting PV, which in turn encourages stronger consumer-brand connections and transactional behavior. Thus, we propose:

- **Hypothesis 4 (H4):** SMMA have a significant positive impact on customers’ PV.

PV's Impact on PUR, WPP, and e-WoM

PV is a strong predictor of CBIs. Higher PV leads to increased PUR by satisfying customer expectations, greater WPP through perceptions of superior quality and benefits, and more positive e-WoM due to satisfaction and perceived brand value. These relationships underscore PV's role as a critical driver of consumer behavior. Accordingly, we hypothesize:

- **Hypothesis 5 (H5):** PV has a significant positive impact on PUR.
- **Hypothesis 6 (H6):** PV has a significant positive impact on WPP.
- **Hypothesis 7 (H7):** PV has a significant positive impact on e-WoM.

Mediating Effect of PV

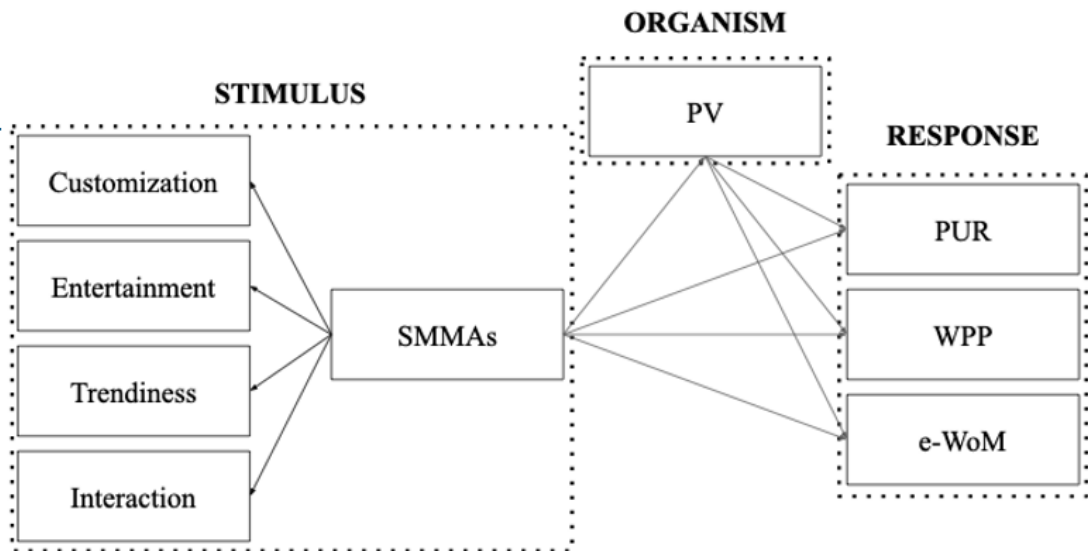
Studies in various industries show that PV mediates the relationship between SMMAs and CBIs (Bushara et al., 2023; Phan, 2024; Prastiwi et al., 2024; Salsabila & Albari, 2023; Zhang et al., 2022). Through SMMAs, businesses can en-

hance PV, strengthening PUR, WPP, and e-WoM. The SOR model provides a theoretical framework where SMMAs act as stimuli, PV as the organism's response, and CBIs as the behavioral outcome (Response) (see Figure 2). Consequently, we hypothesize:

- **Hypothesis 8 (H8):** PV has a significant positive mediating effect on the relationship between SMMAs and PUR.
- **Hypothesis 9 (H9):** PV has a significant positive mediating effect on the relationship between SMMAs and WPP.
- **Hypothesis 10 (H10):** PV has a significant positive mediating effect on the relationship between SMMAs and e-WoM.

This theoretical framework underscores the importance of leveraging SMMAs to enhance PV and drive favorable CBIs, providing actionable insights for firms, particularly in tax consultancy contexts.

Figure 2: S-O-R model as the theoretical framework of this study.



Research Methods and Materials

Research Philosophy

The research philosophy underpinning this study is grounded in positivism, aligning with a quantitative research approach that emphasizes objective observation and measurement (Neubert,

2024; 2023). This philosophical stance adopts a realist ontology, positing that reality exists independently of human perception, and an objectivist epistemology, asserting that knowledge is acquired through observable and measurable facts (Harkiolakis, 2017). Axiologically, the study maintains a value-neutral stance, with the researcher aiming to remain detached and unbiased throughout the

inquiry process (Neubert, 2024). The reasoning follows a deductive logic, whereby hypotheses derived from the S-O-R model as theoretical framework are tested empirically (Harkiolakis, 2017). Methodologically, the study employs a non-experimental, cross-sectional design to examine the impact of SMMA on PV and CBIs measured through PUR, WPP, and e-WoM constructs of German tax consulting firms.

Measures and Instrument Development

The study aims to examine the impact of SMMA on PV and CBIs measured through PUR, WPP, and e-WoM constructs of German tax consulting firms. The research targets social media users who engage with and interact on the pages of tax consulting firms across various social media platforms, utilizing an online survey distributed via SurveyMonkey to gather data. Online questionnaires are increasingly used due to their numerous advantages, such as cost-effectiveness, time efficiency, the ability to reach a broader and more diverse audience, enhanced reliability and precision, secure and controlled data storage, and the inclusion of multimedia elements like images or videos to clarify concepts and improve the quality of responses (Wright, 2005).

The questionnaire was structured into six sections. The first section collected demographic details and information about participants' social media habits, including gender, age, educational background, preferred social networking platforms, and daily hours spent on social media. The second section focused on participants' perceptions of SMMA. The third addressed PV, while the fourth, fifth, and sixth sections measured constructs related to PUR, WPP, and e-WoM, respectively.

To assess perceptions of SMMA, the study utilized a four-dimensional scale adapted from Cheung et al. (2021), encompassing customization (CUS), enter-

tainment (ENT), trendiness (TRE), and interaction (INT). Each dimension included three items. Examples include: „The tax consulting firm offers customized services through its social media,” „Using the social media platforms of the tax consulting firm is exciting,” „The tax consulting firm's social media content is up to date,” and „I can easily share my opinions on the firm's social media.” Items measuring PV were adapted from Yang et al. (2020) and Ramadan et al. (2018) and consisted of five statements, such as: „The products and services of the tax consulting firm provide excellent value for money.” Purchase intention was measured using a three-item scale adapted from Emini and Zeqiri (2021) and applied by Chrisniyanti and Fah (2022), with an example item being: „I intend to purchase the tax consulting firm's products seen on social media.” For e-WoM, Seo et al. (2020) developed a three-item scale: „I will share positive feedback about the tax consulting firm on social media.” The WPP was evaluated using a two-item scale adapted from Torres et al. (2018), including items such as: „I would pay a higher price for the tax consulting firm's services compared to similar firms.” All constructs were assessed using a five-point Likert scale, with full item details provided in Appendix A.

The questionnaire was originally designed in English and subsequently translated into German, the native language of the responding research participants. To ensure consistency, a back-translation process was conducted by two bilingual experts, confirming equivalence between the original and translated versions. To validate the questionnaire's content, three social media marketing experts reviewed the instrument, providing feedback on question relevance and the survey's ability to capture intended information. Further, the clarity and appropriateness of the questionnaire were evaluated by ensuring the questions were concise and comprehensible and that adequate response options were offered. A pilot study involving 40 participants was conducted, and their feedback

led to minor revisions in wording. Ultimately, the questionnaire demonstrated satisfactory content validity.

Data Collection and Sampling

The target population for this study consisted of social media users who engage with and interact on the pages of tax consulting firms across various social media platforms. A representative sampling approach was employed, utilizing the SurveyMonkey sampling framework. Participants received a link directing them to the survey form, accompanied by a welcome message and a clear description of the study's objectives. They were informed that participation was voluntary and encouraged to review and confirm their responses before final submission (Hiebert et al., 2023). Throughout the data collection period, which spanned approximately four weeks in January 2025, 420 survey responses were gathered. Considering a 95% confidence level and an acceptable margin of error of 5%, the required sample size was 385. Ultimately, 390 responses were included in the final analysis.

Data Analysis

This study replicates the study conducted by Bushara et al. (2023). Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS version 4.1.0.9 following the process presented by Hair et al. (2024). Frequencies and percentages were computed to summarize participants' demographic characteristics and engagement with social media marketing. The reliability and validity of the construct items were evaluated through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in conjunction with Cronbach's alpha (Hiebert et al., 2023). The Harman single-factor test detected common method variance (CMV). Convergent validity was assessed by calculating composite reliability (CR) and extracting the average variance (AVE). Additionally, discriminant validity was examined using indicators' cross-loadings, the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), and the Fornell-Larcker criterion. To evalua-

te the predictive capacity of the structural model, the coefficient of determination (R^2) and the predictors' effect size (f^2) were calculated. Multicollinearity was investigated through the variance inflation factor (VIF). Finally, the study hypotheses were tested, and the statistical significance of the results was determined using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with the bootstrapping method (Hair et al., 2024).

Research Ethics

This study received formal Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from the European Institute of Management (EIM), ensuring full compliance with EIM's Research Code of Practice, which incorporates European Commission standards for ethical conduct in human-subjects research. Informed consent was obtained electronically before participation; participants were assured of their voluntary status, anonymity, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Data collection, storage, and processing strictly followed GDPR and institutional data-protection protocols. Ethical oversight included ensuring no foreseeable harm, safeguarding participants' dignity and rights, and limiting any burden to what was necessary for the study's objectives.

Results

Introduction

The study aimed to examine the impact of SMMAs on PV and CBIs measured through PUR, WPP, and e-WoM constructs of German tax consulting firms. The overarching research question is build on the purpose of this quantitative study: What is the impact of SMMAs on PV and CBIs measured through PUR, WPP, and e-WoM constructs of German tax consulting firms? This chapter presents the empirical findings derived from the analysis of survey data collected from social media users who engage with tax consulting firms across various platforms.

Digital transformation has recently resulted in substantial changes in the German tax advisory sector, particularly in client acquisition, brand development, and knowledge sharing. Consequently, the analysis was conducted within this sector (Rieg & Radeck, 2024). The external factors driving this transition include generational change, legal reforms, and the growing demand for technology (Rieg & Radeck, 2024). The investigation focused mainly on clients using social media for tax advice. Study participants were chosen because they were already active on social media. The goal was to learn what real users think about social media marketing activities in a business environment, providing useful knowledge for a good social media strategy.

The research was theoretically grounded in the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) framework. In this model, the stimulus was represented by SMMAs, including the dimensions of customization, entertainment, interaction, and trendiness. The organism component captured users' PV, while the response included three behavioral outcomes: PUR, WPP, and e-WoM.

The results section is organized into five sub-sections. First, the pretest of the questionnaire. Second, the data collection process. Third, demographics of the sample. Fourth, the assessment of the measurement model's reliability and validity is reported. Finally, the results of the structural model and hypothesis testing, conducted using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), are discussed in detail.

Pretest of the Questionnaire

To ensure the validity and contextual appropriateness of the research instrument, a questionnaire was developed and subjected to a pretest prior to the main empirical investigation. The instrument was published online in January 2025 and administered in German,

targeting social media users who engage with and interact on the pages of tax consulting firms across various social media platforms. The original scales were translated into German and adapted to reflect linguistic and cultural nuances relevant to the German context. Specifically, this adaptation process involved three primary actions: (1) rephrasing items to align with local communication styles, (2) verifying legal and professional appropriateness within the framework of German tax consultancy, and (3) replacing culturally specific examples with contextually appropriate ones (Behr, 2017; Epstein et al., 2015).

To ensure semantic equivalence between the original and translated versions, a back-translation process was conducted by two independent bilingual experts, following established best practices for cross-cultural instrument development (Brislin, 1970). To evaluate content validity, three subject-matter experts in social media marketing reviewed the instrument and provided structured feedback regarding the relevance, clarity, and completeness of the items (Polit & Beck, 2006). In addition, the clarity and appropriateness of the items were examined by assessing conciseness, comprehensibility, and the adequacy of response options (Taherdoost, 2016).

A pilot study involving 40 participants from the German-speaking target group was conducted to assess the instrument's clarity, length, and structural coherence. Feedback obtained during the pilot phase resulted in minor linguistic revisions and the refinement or replacement of selected items to improve content validity and contextual alignment. Given the limited sample size, no psychometric testing was conducted at this stage, as such analyses require larger sample sizes to produce stable and interpretable results (DeVellis & Thorpe, 2022). Nonetheless, the pretest confirmed that the questionnaire possessed satisfactory content validity and was appropriate for application in the German tax advisory context.

Data Collection

To examine the research model empirically, data were collected through a standardized online survey conducted in January 2025. The target population consisted of social media users who engage with and interact on the pages of tax consulting firms across various social media platforms. The survey was administered using SurveyMonkey and promoted through major social media channels, including Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, TikTok, and X/Twitter. To ensure a broader and more demographically diverse sample, SurveyMonkey's Audience Service supported distribution. Participation was voluntary, and respondents remained anonymous in accordance with the European Institute of Management's (EIM) Code of Research Practice.

The questionnaire, developed specifically for this study, was published online in German. It was based on validated scales and adapted to the German tax consultancy context through a rigorous translation and cultural adaptation process. A forward and backward translation procedure was conducted by bilingual experts to ensure linguistic and semantic equivalence (Behr, 2017; Brislin, 1970). The instrument was subsequently evaluated in a pretest, and minor refinements were made based on participant feedback.

The survey instrument consisted of four sections: (1) user demographics and social media usage, (2) perceptions of SM-MAs in the domains of customization, entertainment, interaction, and trendiness, (3) PV of social media content, and (4) CBIs, including PUR, WPP, and e-WOM. The SMMA measurement constructs were derived from Cheung et al. (2021), while the behavioral intention items were informed by Seo et al. (2020) and Bushara et al. (2023). The assessment of PV followed established scales from Yang et al. (2020) and Ramadan et al. (2018). All items were presented in German, and participants responded using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree").

The digital distribution of the survey enabled rapid data collection and broad geographical reach. Over a four-week period, a total of 433 responses were received. After data cleaning and the exclusion of incomplete questionnaires, 390 valid responses remained for analysis. This final sample size exceeded the recommended minimum of $n = 385$ required to achieve a 95% confidence level with a $\pm 5\%$ margin of error for population-level estimates (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).

To ensure statistical validity, the sample size was determined using the method proposed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), which is widely accepted in survey research when the population size is large or unknown. This approach identifies the minimum sample size required to make population-level inferences with a 95% confidence level and a $\pm 5\%$ margin of error. With 390 valid responses retained after data cleaning, the sample exceeded the recommended threshold ($n = 385$), ensuring sufficient power and representativeness for quantitative analysis. Unlike experimental designs or simple regressions where GPower is appropriate, this study employed partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to test complex relationships among latent constructs. In such cases, rule-based or table-based estimations are preferred, as GPower does not account for the model complexity inherent in SEM (Hair et al., 2024; Sarstedt et al., 2019).

Sample Demographics

According to the Media Study 2024, social media use in Germany varies significantly depending on age group. Around 82 percent of 14- to 29-year-olds use Instagram at least once a week, while this percentage drops to 18 percent for 50- to 69-year-olds and just 5 percent for the over-70s. Platforms such as TikTok or Snapchat reflect comparable age structures, as these are mainly used by younger users. In contrast, Facebook has relatively higher usage

rates among people over the age of 30. The chart on the ‘Distribution of social media platform users by age group in Germany in 2024’ illustrates the diffe-

rences and clearly shows how different age groups characterise the use of the platforms.

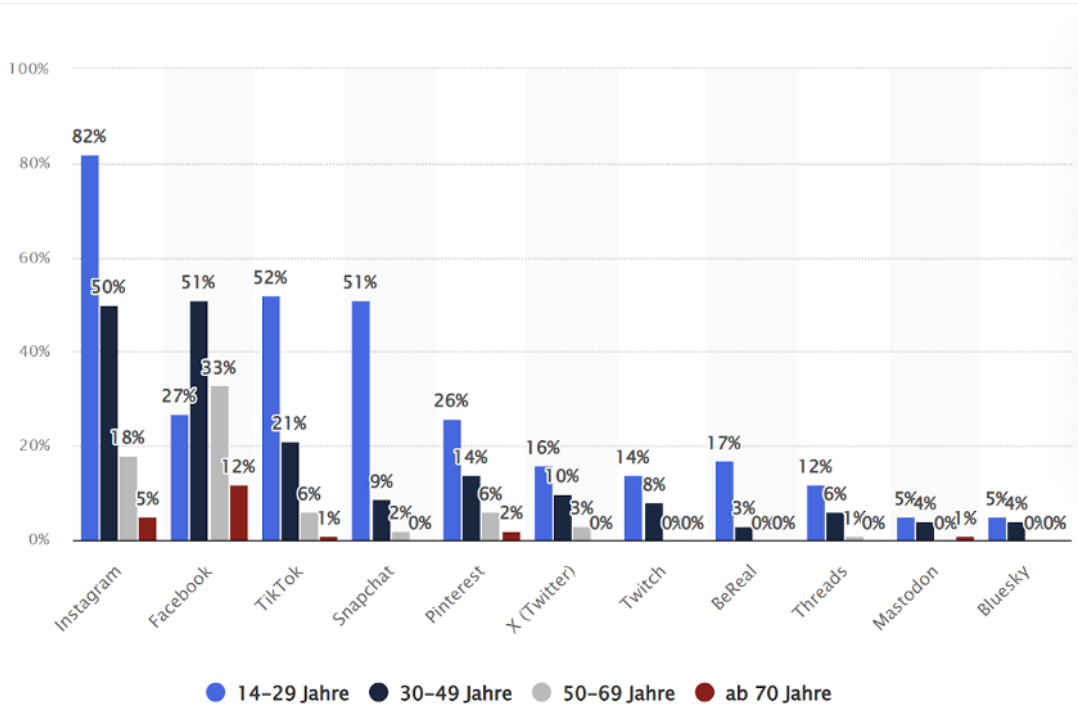


Figure 3: Share of users of social media platforms by age group in Germany in 2024. Source: Statista (2025).

A total of 453 individuals were included in this study. The majority of participants were middle-aged. 158 individuals (34.9%) were between 35 and 44 years old; 104 participants (22.9%) were aged 45 to 54, and 80 individuals (17.7%) were between 55 and 64 years old. 61 participants (13.5%) were between 25 and 34. The oldest age group (65 to 74 and older) was represented by 45 individuals (9.9%). Only three participants (0.7%) were younger than 25 years.

Age Group	Number
Under 25	3
25-34	61
35-44	158
45-54	104
55-64	80
65-74	38
75 or older	7

The age distribution in our study essentially correlates with the results of the Statista study (Statista, 2025), but shows a significant focus on older user groups. The ARD/ZDF study shows that people under 30 dominate social media. In contrast, our sample is heavily weighted towards the 35-64 age group (75.5% in total). Only 14.1% of the participants were younger than 35. This discrepancy can be explained by the fact that our study specifically examined users in the context of tax firms. Very young people, in particular, do not generally need a tax advisor, either because they have no tax liability or because their financial situation is not very complex. In addition, this age group can be expected to have a relatively low level of interest in tax-related content. The results of our study are consistent with the overall picture, which is also illustrated by the population-representative data from the Statista study.

Most participants (169 = 37.3%) held a university of applied sciences entrance qualification or an equivalent diploma.

71 individuals (15.7%) had already completed a master's degree or a postgraduate program. 66 individuals (14.6%) held a bachelor's degree, 14 individuals (3.1%) were currently enrolled in a degree program, and eleven participants (2.4%) had completed a preliminary diploma. 117 participants (25.8%) had an educational background below the University of Applied Sciences entrance qualification; two individuals did not provide information about their educational level.

Education Level	Number
No response	2
Less than university entrance qualification	117
University entrance qualification or equivalent	169
Incomplete university degree	14
Preliminary diploma (Vordiplom)	11
Bachelor's degree	66
Master's degree or postgraduate studies	71

The participants' monthly income exhibited significant variability, with an average of €3,412 and a median of €2,700, suggesting a somewhat skewed distribution; reported incomes spanned from €1.70 to €100,833. Additionally, the mobile devices used by participants were recorded (Android smartphones, iPhones, Windows PCs, Macs, or other devices). In general, mobile devices were primarily used to access social media.

Monthly Income (€)	Number
Less than 1,000	25
1,000-2,000	84
2,000-3,000	106
3,000-4,000	83
4,000-5,000	45
5,000-6,000	32
More than 6,000	26

N	401
Missing	52
Mean (€)	3,412
Median (€)	2,700
Std. Deviation	5,723
IQR (€)	2,150
Minimum (€)	1.70
Maximum (€)	100,833

Data Analysis

Evaluation of the Measurement Model

Indicator Reliability and Internal Consistency

Initially, it was determined whether it was possible to measure the various structures using their indicators accurately. In this context, Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR) were implemented. Hair et al. (2021) regard a threshold of 0.70 as acceptable for both metrics, while values exceeding 0.80 are considered beneficial. All structures achieved significantly above-average values in both CA and CR (CA: 0,841 to 0,938; CR: 0.888 to 0.954), which corroborates the high precision of the measurement.

Convergent Validity

To evaluate the reliability and convergent validity of the constructs, Cronbach's Alpha (CA), Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were calculated. Cronbach's Alpha assesses the internal consistency of a construct by examining the variances of individual items and the overall variance. It assumes that all items contribute equally to the construct (tau-equivalence). In contrast, Composite Reliability considers the standardized factor loadings of the individual items and their measurement errors, thus providing a more precise internal consistency estimate. The cal-

culations were performed using the conventional formulas, taking into account the squared standardized loadings and associated error variances.

The AVE reflects the average proportion of variance explained by the latent construct in its indicators. It is computed as the mean of the squared standardized loadings for each item. The necessary factor loadings were estimated using principal component analysis. Based on the collected data, all three parameters (CA, CR, and AVE) were

calculated separately for each construct. The necessary loadings were approximated during a principal component analysis. Based on the collected data, the three parameters were calculated separately for each construction. The AVE was calculated to evaluate the convergence validity. The minimum requirement of 0.50 (Fornell/Larcker, 1981) is consistently met with AVE values between 0.615 and 0.826. This indicates that specific structures account for a significant portion of their characteristic differences.

Construct	CA	CR	AVE
Customization (CU)	0.882	0.916	0.685
Entertainment (EN)	0.841	0.888	0.615
Interaction (IN)	0.926	0.943	0.735
Trendiness (TR)	0.901	0.928	0.688
Perceived Value (PV)	0.917	0.936	0.709
Purchase Intention (PUR)	0.938	0.954	0.810
Willingness to Pay a Premium (WPP)	0.906	0.934	0.826
e-WoM	0.913	0.940	0.797

Discriminant Validity

The Fornell-Larcker criterion was implemented initially to evaluate discriminant validity. The square root of the AVE of each construct must exceed its correlations with any other construct. This condition was consistently satisfied. In addition, the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) was computed, and all values were below the conservative threshold of 0.85. Following Henseler et al. (2015), this validates discriminant validity.

Evaluation of the Structural Model

Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity was assessed by computing the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). No values were discovered above the threshold of 5, indicating that multicollinearity does not exist (c.f. Hair et al., 2021).

Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

Bootstrapping (5,000 resamples)¹ was employed to execute the hypothesis tests and path coefficients. The subsequent table provides a concise summary of the findings:

¹ Bootstrapping is a statistical method that is based on resampling and is employed to evaluate the accuracy and stability of predictions, particularly when it is not possible to make any or only limited assumptions about the distribution of the data. It is a critical component of the PLS-SEM analysis (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling).

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Path Coefficient (β)</i>	<i>t-Value</i>	<i>p-Value</i>	<i>Supported</i>
H1: CU → PV	0.331	5.872	<0.001	Yes
H2: EN → PV	0.204	3.981	<0.001	Yes
H3: IN → PV	0.278	5.037	<0.001	Yes
H4: TR → PV	0.154	2.465	0.014	Yes
H5: PV → Purchase Intention	0.712	14.387	<0.001	Yes
H6: PV → Willingness to Pay a Premium	0.619	11.422	<0.001	Yes
H7: PV → e-WoM	0.665	12.749	<0.001	Yes

All phases of the structural model are statistically significant. PV's influence on the behaviour under investigation is particularly substantial regarding the general attitude dimension and the recommendation attitude (e-WoM). The construct „Customisation” has the strongest impact on PV among SMMAs, followed by „Interaction” and „Entertainment.”

Coefficient of Determination (R² Values)

The R² values indicate the extent to which the variance of the dependent variables is accounted for. Values exceeding 0.67 are considered significant, those exceeding 0.33 are considered moderate, and those exceeding 0.19 are considered low (Chin, 1998). The following result is presented in the evaluation:

The R²-values were automatically determined during the model estimation process using SmartPLS to illustrate the extent to which the corresponding parameters in the structural model account for the variance of the endogenous constructs. For instance, a R² value of 0.649 for the PV indicates that social media marketing activities can account for approximately 65% of the variance of this construct.

- Substantially PV: R² = 0.649
- Purchase Intention: R² = 0.507 → Moderate
- Willingness to Pay Premium: R² = 0.383 → Moderate
- e-WoM: R² = 0.442 → Moderate

Therefore, the model elucidates the PV well and strongly explains the behavioural intentions.

Predictive Relevance (Q² Values)

The Q² values were determined using the blindfolding procedure to assess predictive relevance. All Q² values were positive, indicating the accuracy of the predictions for the endogenous constructs (Hair et al., 2021). This supports the claim that the model is both explanatory and predictive.

Interpretation of the Key Findings

The results of the structural equation modeling confirm the assumptions of the S-O-R model in the context of this study. The findings show that SMMAs, especially customization and interaction, significantly contribute to explaining PV. This, in turn, strongly influences psychological and behavioral outcomes such as trust in the firm, satisfaction with the Instagram account, openness to online consulting, and the intention to engage in e-WoM recommendations.

The individual customization of content is the key factor in shaping PV. Users appreciate when content is relevant, tailored to the target audience, and presented in a personally engaging manner. Furthermore, communication through interactive formats such as polls, Q&As, or story reactions significantly enhances PV. These results align with the findings of Yadav and Rahman (2018), who iden-

tify interactivity and personalization as key elements of added value on online platforms.

Notably, while entertainment and trendiness can influence PV, their impact is less pronounced than other factors. This may suggest that entertainment and trendiness can positively affect the tax advisory sector, but are less important than customization and interaction. PV strongly impacts all four endogenous constructs. The importance of a continuous, professional, and transparent Instagram presence becomes particularly evident in relation to trust in the firm. PV largely explains satisfaction with the social media presence, highlighting the significance of a positive perception of digital touchpoints. The results show that a high PV increases the likelihood of individuals using digital consulting services and significantly raises the probability of recommending the firm via e-WoM. Using social media for digital brand communication has a positive effect on brand image and serves as a strategic tool for retaining existing clients and attracting new ones.

Study Results

Below are all the tested hypotheses summarized and briefly evaluated in terms of their confirmation by the empirical results.

H1: SMMAAs have a significant positive impact on PUR.

- Confirmed. The results show a significantly positive path coefficient from SMMAAs to PUR, indicating a direct enhancement of purchase intention through SMMAAs.

H2: SMMAAs have a significant positive impact on WPP.

- Confirmed. The significant positive direct effect suggests that customers are more willing to pay a premium when SMMAAs provide added value.

H3: SMMAAs have a significant positive impact on e-WoM.

- Not confirmed (directly). The direct effect was slightly negative ($\beta = -0.072$) and not significant. However, the indirect effect via PV was strongly positive, indicating a suppression effect (MacKinnon et al., 2000).

H4: SMMAAs have a significant positive impact on PV.

- Confirmed. The positive coefficient demonstrates that SMMAAs increase PV from the customers' perspective.

H5: PV has a significant positive impact on PUR.

- Confirmed. Higher PV leads to higher PUR, which aligns with previous research findings.

H6: PV has a significant positive impact on WPP.

- Confirmed. Customers perceiving high value are more willing to pay a premium, supported by significant coefficients.

H7: PV has a significant positive impact on e-WoM.

- Confirmed. A high PV correlates with more frequent and positive e-WoM.

H8: PV has a significant positive mediating effect between SMMAAs and PUR.

- Confirmed. The indirect effect is strong ($\beta = 0.843$, $p = 0.014$), confirming PV as a mediator.

H9: PV has a significant positive mediating effect between SMMAAs and WPP.

- Confirmed. The mediation is significant ($\beta = 0.756$, $p = 0.038$), highlighting the importance of PV for WPP.

H10: PV has a significant positive mediating effect between SMMA and e-WoM.

- Confirmed (indirectly). Despite a negative direct effect, the significant positive indirect effect ($\beta = 0.844$, $p = 0.011$) indicates strong mediation via PV—an instance of suppression (MacKinnon et al., 2000).

Structure Model – Power Densities and Significance

The structural model analysis reveals that all hypothesized relationships between the constructs are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that the empirical data support the theoretical framework.

The p-values show that the individual components of SMMA have varying effects on PV:

- Customization → Perceived Value: $\beta = 0.422$, $p < 0.001$
- Perceived Value → Interaction: $\beta = 0.285$, $p < 0.01$
- Perceived Value → Entertainment: $\beta = 0.203$, $p < 0.05$

The evaluation of these results demonstrates that customization is the most influential factor. When content is tailored to clients' specific needs through personalized communication formats, targeted advice, or practical tips, its PV significantly increases. Furthermore, user involvement, such as via polls, comment functions, or personal responses to posts, has a notably positive effect. Entertainment, including visually appealing designs or humorous content, also contributes to PV, albeit to a lesser extent.

In contrast, trendiness and e-WoM did not significantly influence PV. This may be due to the nature of the tax advisory industry, where users are generally less influenced by viral or fashion trends. Recommendations from other users play a smaller role in shaping PV than in more consumption-oriented sectors.

The study demonstrates that an increased PV has a significant influence on social media behavior:

- Perceived Value → Willingness to Share Information: $\beta = 0.498$, $p < 0.001$
- Perceived Value → Willingness to Seek Advice: $\beta = 0.423$, $p < 0.001$

When information is perceived as valuable, users are more inclined to engage with the firm by requesting more details, saving content, or asking questions. Additionally, the willingness to recommend the firm increases, positively impacting the reputation and visibility of tax consulting firms.

Overall, the findings highlight the central role of PV in the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies.

Coefficients of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated to assess the model's explanatory power.

- The PV (PV) shows a substantial R^2 of 0.649, which is considered high.
- The level of information acquisition readiness has an R^2 of 0.497, classified as moderate.
- The willingness to recommend is associated with an R^2 of 0.438, also considered moderate.

An R^2 value of 0.649 for PV indicates that the five SMMA dimensions explain nearly two-thirds of the variance in this construct—an exceptionally high value for a psychological variable. The two behavioral outcome variables also demonstrate moderate R^2 values, which reflect strong explanatory power and further validate the theoretical model structure.

Effect Sizes (f^2)

The effect sizes (f^2) were used to assess the relative impact of individual predictors on the mediating construct of PV.

- Customization → Perceived Value: $f^2 = 0.271$ → Significant effect

- Interaction → Perceived Value: $f^2 = 0.129$ → Moderate effect
- Entertainment → Perceived Value: $f^2 = 0.078$ → Small effect

These findings once again highlight the critical importance of personalized content within the social media strategy of tax consulting firms. Personalization appears to be especially impactful in a field that heavily relies on trust. Trendiness and e-WoM did not produce meaningful effect sizes ($f^2 < 0.02$), confirming their limited relevance in this particular context.

The Robustness and Relevance of the Results

In order to guarantee the relevance and stability of the results, a bootstrapping experiment was conducted with 5,000 subsamples. The null value was excluded from all significant phases by the confidence interval (95%), which suggests that the identified connections are statistically robust. This indicates that the effects in question were not the result of chance.

Interpretation of the Results

The results indicate that Social Media Marketing can be effective in tax consulting, provided that it is strategically planned and targeted at the appropriate audience. Not all components of the conventional SMMA scale are equally significant: Trendiness and e-WoM appear less significant, while content adaptation (customisation) is the most effective method for increasing PV. This position is consistent with the industry's extensive consulting activity, prioritizing customised solutions. Furthermore, it is evident that an increased PV does not directly lead to decisions, as is the case in traditional e-commerce models, but rather to behaviour orientated around relationships, as evidenced by the active recommendation and the search for additional information. These objectives are particularly critical for law firms that intend to establish and maintain relationships with their clients through social media. The study demonstrates the overall significance of strategic social media communication

for tax consulting firms, not only in terms of short-term conversions but also in terms of long-term value growth through trust, interaction, and individual communication.

Summary

The findings of the quantitative study indicate that SMMA substantially impact the PV of tax consulting firms. PV is primarily enhanced through customization, interaction, and entertainment, with customization having the strongest effect. Trendiness and electronic e-WoM showed no significant influence in the context of tax consulting. PV demonstrably affects user behavior on social media: when users perceive high value, both their willingness to seek information and their likelihood to recommend the firm increase. This reinforces the central role of PV within the professional service paradigm. The R^2 values indicate strong explanatory power of the model, especially regarding the construct of PV. The effect sizes further emphasize the importance of personalized content in communication. The results are statistically robust and were validated using bootstrapping procedures. Overall, it becomes clear that strategically implemented social media marketing, especially campaigns emphasizing personalized and interactive content, can positively influence customer engagement online. Tax advisory firms benefit more from trust-building and value-driven communication strategies than trendy or viral formats.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Quality standards were assessed during the analysis using PLS-SEM to ensure the reliability of the study's results. In particular, construct validity, reliability, and overall model quality were the basis for validation.

Convergent Validity and Reliability

Convergent validity was assessed using the AVE. All latent variables in this model exhibited AVE values above the threshold of 0.50, indicating that the associated indicators explain more than

half of the variance of their respective constructs (Chin, 1998). Furthermore, all constructs showed a CR greater than 0.70, which, according to Henseler, Ringle, and Sinkovics (2009), suggests a strong internal consistency of the measurement instruments.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT). The square root of the AVE for each construct exceeds its correlations with other constructs (Fornell-Larcker criterion), confirming the precision of the measurement models. Additionally, all HTMT values are below the recommended threshold of 0.85 (cf. Henseler et al., 2009), indicating strong discriminant validity. Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the HTMT. The square root of the AVE for each construct exceeds its correlations with other constructs (Fornell-Larcker criterion), confirming the precision of the measurement models. Additionally, all HTMT values are below the recommended threshold of 0.85 (cf. Henseler et al., 2009), indicating strong discriminant validity.

Multicollinearity

As part of quality assurance, the presence of multicollinearity was also examined. The VIF values of all indicators were below the critical threshold of 5, indicating no problematic multicollinearity among the predictors (cf. Dwivedi et al., 2022).

Model Fit (R^2 and f^2)

The quality of the structural equation model was assessed by evaluating the coefficient of determination (R^2) for the dependent variables and the effect sizes (f^2). The R^2 values indicate moderate to substantial explanatory power (see Chapter 4.5). The effect size f^2 was also examined, revealing that some of the analyzed constructs have moderate to strong effects. This supports the model's explanatory strength and highlights its significant predictive relevance (cf. Chin, 1998).

Model Prediction (Q^2)

The predictive relevance of the model was evaluated using the blindfolding procedure and applying the Stone-Geisser criterion (Q^2). All Q^2 values are positive, which, according to Henseler et al. (2009), indicates that the model demonstrates adequate predictive accuracy. This suggests that the model can make predictions not only for the analyzed sample but also for hypothetical observations.

Critical Reflection and Limitations

A thorough evaluation is essential, notwithstanding the general dependability of the findings. The model is derived from a particular sample within the German tax advice business, perhaps constraining its generalisability. Being a cross-sectional research, it is incapable of establishing causal correlations across time. Social desirability and answer biases, such as acquiescence, may affect self-reported data in online surveys. Furthermore, quality measures such as AVE, CR, VIF, and HTMT are contingent upon standards that may differ among study disciplines. Although these limitations do not diminish the importance of the findings, they underscore the necessity for more research to evaluate the model in many situations and with longitudinal data.

Credibility

The credibility of this study's results is based on various methodological steps that ensure data precision and the validity of the conclusions; credibility plays a particularly central role.

Theory-Driven Model Development

The developed structural model is based on well-established theoretical concepts, the S-O-R model, which has been effectively applied in numerous marketing studies. The constructs for SMMAs were adopted from reliable measurement instruments (cf. Yadav & Rahman, 2018). Cheng et al. (2021) implemented these measures, and in this study, they were adapted to the specific context of tax advisory services in Germany.

Empirical Foundation through PLS-SEM

The decision to use the PLS-SEM approach was made deliberately, as it has been successfully applied in exploratory research questions and complex models involving multiple latent variables (see Chin, 1998; Henseler et al., 2009). The evaluation of the measurement and structural models followed established quality criteria, including reliability, convergent and discriminant validity, and the independence of indicators with regard to multicollinearity (see Chapter 4.6). The significant path coefficients, the high R^2 values of key constructs, and the appropriate model fit all point to a solid empirical foundation for the results.

Reflection on Potential Biases

Potential sources of bias—such as common method bias, social desirability, and sample selection—were thoroughly examined to strengthen the study's credibility. The collected data did not show any concerning indications of multicollinearity or method-related bias. Nevertheless, limitations in the study design were highlighted to ensure transparency.

Transferability

This study developed a theoretically grounded and practice-oriented model focusing on SMMA activities in tax advisory services. It remains uncertain whether the findings can be applied to other industries, target groups, or media contexts.

Industry- and Context-Specific Transferability

The study focuses specifically on social media users in the accountancy sector. However, it uses established online marketing concepts such as 'individualisation', 'entertainment', 'interaction', 'trend awareness', and 'PV'. These concepts can be applied across industries and contexts. They were designed for tax consulting and have proven effective in the e-commerce, services, and consumer goods sectors (cf. Cheng et al., 2021; Yadav/Rahman, 2018). Cautious imple-

mentation in comparable knowledge-based services such as management consulting, legal advice, or coaching is in principle possible, especially in areas where trusting client relationships are built through digital communication. The study focuses specifically on social media users in the field of tax advisory services, but uses established online marketing concepts such as „individualisation”, „entertainment”, „interaction”, „trend awareness”, and „PV”. These concepts can be applied across industries and contexts.

Target Group Appropriateness

All study participants were adults who were regularly active on social media. Consequently, the findings can be effectively applied to target groups that tend toward digital media and have prior experience with online tax advisory services. The transferability of the results is limited for customer groups with more traditional views and lower trust in technology. Given the structural similarities between tax advisory services and other trust-based, knowledge-intensive services, a careful contextual transfer of the concepts is methodologically justified.

Methodological Transferability

The stability of the model and the methodological approach (PLS-SEM) allows for its application with relatively low to moderate sample sizes (Chin, 1998; Henseler et al., 2009). In this way, the research technique is also suitable for comparable studies in related fields. The measurement instruments were tested and are suitable for future research, provided they are adapted to contextual differences and reapplied accordingly.

Dependability

Dependability pertains to the consistency and repeatability of the research process over time in qualitative and quantitative research. Dependability may be translated into German using terms such as „reliability” or „stability.” A study is considered reliable if it would yield similar results under similar conditions

and with identical methodological steps. This quantitative study emphasized precise methodology, clear presentation, and comprehensive documentation to ensure reliable dependability.

Documentation of the Research Process

The entire empirical study was meticulously organised and documented at every stage, from developing the question frame to data collection and analysis using PLS-SEM. The operational concepts were derived from pertinent sources (Cheng et al., 2021). Yadav and Rahman (2018) conducted this using a standardised online survey.

In contrast to the study by Yadav and Rahman (2018), which focused on Indian university students as particularly active social media users and applied predefined user criteria for the construct survey, the present study was aimed at a deliberately broader target group: the participants consisted mainly of working people with experience in tax consulting and social media. The SMMA's were also operationalised along the five dimensions, although they were adapted linguistically and contextually to the needs of the German tax consulting industry. According to Yadav and Rahman (2018), the CEDs and the dependent construct of customer loyalty were measured using established measurement instruments. In view of the need to evaluate the quality criteria (reliability, convergence and discriminant validity) as well as hypothesis testing, SEM was also used here, but with a more practice-oriented focus on the German market. The results of the two studies are methodologically comparable, but reflect different socio-cultural contexts and target groups.

The SmartPLS application was used to conduct the data analysis and evaluation, ensuring that all steps were thoroughly documented, from the model design to the evaluation of reliability and validity to the determination of the coefficients.

Consistency of the Measurement Instruments

The reliability values of all constructs exceeded the recommended thresholds, as determined by Henseler et al. (2009). This includes the combined reliability and Cronbach's Alpha. The convergence and discrimination validity were both confirmed. This suggests a stable model structure and a high internal consistency of the measuring devices. Furthermore, the stability of the results was monitored through the application of bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples to ensure the verification of confidence intervals and significance.

Confirmability

Confirmability, also known as „reliability“ or „objectivity,“ refers to the extent to which the results of a study are based on the collected data and are not influenced by subjective biases, preconceived notions, or the interests of the researchers. Confirmability ensures that the data interpretation can be replicated similarly by other researchers and that the analysis is based on clear and transparent principles.

The objectivity of data acquisition and analysis

In order to mitigate potential errors in research, a standardised and largely automated process for data acquisition and analysis was implemented. The questionnaire was administered online without the participants' identification, thereby excluding the possibility of any interference from researchers. The responses were entirely digitally captured and uploaded to SmartPLS 4 without any modifications. The analysis was conducted in accordance with a straightforward, literature-based PLS-SEM procedure (see Chin, 1998). Henseler et al. (2009) have created a model that other researchers can use and reevaluate.

Results' theoretical repercussions

The study's findings are founded on recognised theoretical models and concepts from research on SMMA, PV, and

CBI in the digital environment (Cheng et al., 2021; Dwivedi et al., 2022; Yadav & Rahman, 2018). The structures were not generated by chance but are theoretically based and derived from the literature. Similarly, the hypotheses are derived from these models, which ensures a strong theoretical connection.

Documentation and Reliability

The documentation of all phases, including data acquisition, data cleaning, model development, and result interpretation, was conducted transparently. The elements, units, thresholds, and statistical values (e.g., factor coefficients, confidence intervals, and R^2 -values) were disclosed. In this way, it is ensured that third parties can fully understand all decisions and outcomes. Bootstrapping methods were implemented in an additional effort to evaluate the significance and stability of the power coefficients.

Reflection on research-based assumptions

The underlying work places particular emphasis on methodological objectivity and theoretical foundations, even though complete neutrality in research is only theoretically feasible. The interpretive process was conducted without the influence of the researcher's personal opinions or expectations. Instead, all assertions were predicated on empirical evidence. The potential subjectivity was reduced by implementing a deductive research approach, standardised scales, and automated analysis tools.

Discussions

Interpretation and Findings

This study analysed how SMMA—characterised by customisation, entertainment, trendiness, and interaction—influence PV and thereby influence key behavioural intentions (PUR, WPP, and e-WoM) in the German tax consultancy sector. At the beginning of this study, nine research hypotheses were formulated, which will be tested below using the quantitative study results.

Direct effects of SMMA on behaviour: No significance

Hypotheses H1-H3 examine whether SMMA can directly elicit behavioural intentions. However, the results show that the direct links of SMMA to PUR ($\beta = -0.008$; $p = 0.982$), to WPP ($\beta = -0.261$; $p = 0.484$), and to e-WoM ($\beta = -0.072$; $p = 0.834$) do not show statistical significance. They are also labelled with a minus sign. Consequently, these effects are not only insignificant but even surprisingly weakly negative. The results suggest that marketing measures in social networks do not directly increase the PUR, WPP or the recommendation rate. Before these measures can influence behaviour, they must be considered valuable and relevant. The results suggest that a direct influence on behaviour through SMMA is insufficient in the professional area of tax advice, although this could be possible in dynamic consumer goods markets.

Strong influence of SMMA on the perceived benefit

In the fourth hypothesis (H4), it was assumed that SMMA have a significant positive effect on the PV of users in connection with tax advisory firms. The empirical results fully confirmed this assumption. The path analysis found that the collective influence of social media on sales was significant and strong (path coefficient $\beta = 0.944$, $p < 0.001$). This value indicates a strong association, suggesting that the quality and design of social media activities can explain almost all of the benefits of digital content. In addition, different aspects of SMMA were found to have varying degrees of influence on PV.

- Customisation had the largest effect ($f^2 = 0.271$), indicating that tailored content is particularly effective.
- Interaction had a moderate effect ($f^2 = 0.129$), emphasising the importance of active user participation.
- Entertainment had a smaller but still significant effect ($f^2 = 0.078$).

- Trendiness had a rather low impact and could not have a significant influence on PV.

The evaluation of the data indicates that users in the tax consultancy sector benefit particularly from customised content and actively participate in order to achieve a high level of benefit.

Indirect Effects via PV: Central Mediating Role Affirmed

Hypotheses H5–H7 examine how PV affects behaviour. Consistently high, significant and positively orientated path coefficients can be identified. H5 (PV → PUR): The coefficient β is 0.884 with a significance level of $p = 0.011$. There is a clearly positive effect: people with a high PV tend to opt more often for tax advisory services. With an increase in value, the willingness to pay a premium increases according to $\beta = 0.803$ and $p = 0.032$ conferring to H6 (PV → WPP). For H7 (PV → e-WoM), β is 0.893 and p is 0.008. The link to the willingness to recommend (e-WoM) something to others is particularly strong. The greater the estimated value of the offer, the more likely it is that customers will actively communicate this in the digital realm. The present results provide experimental evidence that the subjectively assessed benefit is not only a significant psychological factor, but also a decisive factor for the online marketing behaviour of tax advisors. The indirect effect (SMMA → PV → PUR) is $\beta_{\text{indirect}} = 0.843$ with a significance level of $p = 0.014$.

Mediation Effects: Complete Mediation through PV

The current study clearly confirms assumptions H8 to H10: PV acts as a significant mediator between the activities in SMMA and the three analysed behavioural intentions - PUR, WPP and e-WoM.

H8: PV mediates the influence of social media marketing activities on PUR. The evaluation suggests that there is substan-

tial mediation, as a high indirect effect of $\beta = 0.843$ ($p = 0.014$) was found. This means that if the quality, relevance and usefulness of the social media measures are perceived to be higher, the purchase intention also increases, but not directly, but only via mediation by PV. This finding is consistent with the results of Chen and Lin (2019), who showed in their practical study with Facebook users from Taiwan that SMMA do not directly influence purchase intent, but rather via the mediating factors of social identification, PV and customer satisfaction. Both studies suggest that social media marketing is only effective if it is perceived as valuable.

H9: PV mediates the effect of SMMA on WPP. There is also a significant mediation of WPP by PV, which is shown to be significant ($\beta = 0.756$, $p = 0.038$). It can be seen that the willingness of users to accept a higher price for the tax consulting firm's services increases if they rate the perceived benefit from the SMMA as high. These results are particularly important in the knowledge-based services sector, such as tax advice, where the willingness to accept prices is strongly associated with trust and perceived competence. This correlation was also discovered by Chen and Lin (2019). In their study, they state that the PV results from the quality of the information, the interactivity of the service and the personalised approach, which has a direct impact on the willingness to pay.

H10: PV illustrates the effects of SMMA on e-WoM. It is clear that positive e-WoM is strongly influenced by perceived usefulness, with an indirect effect of $\beta = 0.844$ ($p = 0.011$). Clients tend to be more likely to recommend tax firms if they perceive the content on social media to be useful, not because it is 'trendy', but because of the provision of relevant, trustworthy, and helpful information. Chen and Lin (2019) also came to a similar conclusion: in their study, e-WoM was strongly triggered by PV. Customers are particularly willing to share their experiences publicly if they iden-

tify with the brand and recognise a clear benefit.

In the frequently cited study by Chen and Lin (2019), they researched the effects of SMMAs on purchasing behaviour and e-WoM and also identified PV as an important mediating variable. The present study shows methodological proximity to the following aspects:

- the application of PLS-SEM to test hypotheses,
- the integration of the structures into the S-O-R model,
- the understanding of PV as a key psychological mechanism for behaviour.

In particular, the field of research (B2C products vs. professional services) and the target group (consumer-orientated Facebook users vs. digitally savvy tax consultancy clients) show differences. Nevertheless, both studies show that SMMAs without PV have no impact on behaviour, regardless of the cultural or industry-specific context.

This study therefore uses empirical data to show that the perceived benefit is a decisive factor through which SMMAs have an impact on customer behaviour. Direct explanations for purchase intent, willingness to pay, or e-WoM are not possible through SMMAs. Only when they are seen as useful, relevant and trustworthy do behavioural effects occur. This emphasises the importance of PV in the business B2B service area of tax advice, similar to the findings of Chen and Lin (2019) in consumer goods.

This study uses empirical data to show that perceived benefit is a decisive mechanism through which SMMAs influence customer behaviour. Direct explanations for purchase intention, willingness to pay, or e-WoM are not possible through SMMAs. Only when they are seen as useful, relevant, and trustworthy do behavioural effects occur. This emphasises the importance of PV in the business B2B service area of tax consul-

ting, similar to the findings of Chen and Lin (2019) in consumer goods.

Suppression effect: Opposite signs of the direct and indirect paths

Investigating hypothesis H10, which analyses the relationship between SMMAs and e-WoM, including the mediator PV, a remarkable result emerges. The current study shows that the direct influence of SMMAs on e-WoM is slightly negative ($\beta = -0.072$), while the indirect path via PV is significantly positive ($\beta_{\text{indirect}} = 0.844$, $p = 0.011$). A comprehensive analysis results in a positive overall effect of $\beta_{\text{total}} = 0.772$.

Such a constellation, with a negative direct and a positive indirect effect, characterises a suppression effect according to an inconsistent mediation model (MacKinnon, Krull & Lockwood, 2000, p. 176 ff.). When this occurs, the mediating variable (in this case, PV) either partially or fully compensates for the detrimental direct influence of the predictor (SMMAs) on the criterion (e-WoM). In the literature, this situation is also called „competitive mediation“, as the direct and indirect routes have opposite directions and „compete“ for explanatory power.

In terms of content, this can be understood as follows: If PV is not considered, extensive social media activities by consulting firms could be seen as too promotional, egocentric, or superficial. This could result in clients recommending the company less favourably. Only when the marketing measures are perceived as valuable, helpful, or trust-building—i.e., when the PV is high—do they positively affect the e-WoM. The meaningful role of content therefore, lies somewhere between pure advertising effect and actual behaviour. It possibly offsets negative reactions to pure self-presentation or posts without substance. This finding is not only statistically relevant but also practical for the development of social media content in the consulting-intensive service sector. Compa-

nies should invest more in content strategies that focus on information content, relevance, and user-orientation to generate positive word-of-mouth effects.

Limitations, Recommendations, and Implications

Limitations and Calls for Future Research

Although this study was meticulously designed and executed, several limitations affect the generalizability and interpretability of the findings. These limitations relate to contextual scope, design choices, sample composition, measurement methods, and model specification.

1. Contextual and Sectoral Scope

The research was conducted exclusively in the German tax consulting industry, a highly regulated, knowledge-intensive professional environment. While customization, interaction, and PV are foundational across industries, their relevance and impact may differ substantially in other domains (Yadav & Rahman, 2018). Additionally, behavioral patterns may reflect Germany's distinct legal, cultural, and economic context, limiting cross-national generalizability (Lin et al., 2024). Future studies should replicate the model in other professional sectors, such as legal, healthcare, or financial services, and in different countries to test the stability and cultural applicability.

2. Temporal and Design Constraints

Data collection occurred at a single point via a cross-sectional survey, allowing for correlational inference but not enabling causal conclusions or dynamic analysis (Bryman, 2016). Given the rapid evolution of social media platforms and user norms, user responses and perceptions may also shift over time. Longitudinal or panel designs are recommended to assess how the effects of SMMA components on PV and CBIs evolve over time and in response to platform changes or regulatory updates (So et al., 2024).

3. Sampling Bias and Representativeness

Participants were recruited via social media channels and SurveyMonkey's Audience Service, introducing self-selection bias, as digitally engaged individuals are likelier to participate (Lohmann & Zagheni, 2023). Certain demographic groups, particularly those under 25 or less digitally literate, were underrepresented, limiting the sample's representativeness. Future research should adopt stratified or quota sampling techniques and consider weighting responses to align with population benchmarks, ensuring inclusion across age groups and digital proficiency levels.

4. Method Bias and Self-Reporting Limitations

The study relied solely on self-reported survey data, creating susceptibility to common method variance, social desirability, and acquiescence bias. Although translation validation and pretesting were undertaken to improve clarity, context-specific misinterpretation remains possible. To enhance validity, future research should integrate mixed methods, such as behavioral data from social media analytics and qualitative interviews, to triangulate self-reported findings and reduce bias.

5. Model Scope and Omitted Constructs

The structural model focused on a single mediating pathway through PV, omitting other relevant psychological constructs such as trust, perceived risk, or user satisfaction, which have been shown to significantly affect online consumer behavior in service contexts. Further studies should explore additional mediators or moderators, including trust, platform reputation, or user engagement motivations, to build a more nuanced understanding of how SMMA influence behavioral outcomes (Jamil et al., 2022).

6. Social Media Platform Specificity and Formats

This study grouped all social media platforms and content formats, neglecting potential differences in user perception

across platforms like LinkedIn, Instagram, or TikTok. Platform-specific norms, visual formats, and audience demographics could influence the effectiveness of SMMA dimensions (Nguyen et al., 2024). Future research should adopt platform-specific designs, analyzing how different platform affordances or content formats (e.g., short videos, infographics, polls) distinctively impact PV and customer intentions.

Recommendations for Practice

The empirical findings of this study offer clear, evidence-based recommendations for tax consulting firms aiming to leverage SMMA dimensions to increase client engagement, strengthen brand positioning, and drive behavioral outcomes. Based on the validated structural model, SMMA dimensions positively influence PUR and WPP directly, and e-WoM indirectly through the mediating role of PV. Given PV's critical function as a mediating variable, strategic efforts should focus on enhancing PV to achieve meaningful behavioral responses.

1. Prioritize Customized Content

The strongest direct relationship in the model was observed between SMMA dimensions and PV (H4: confirmed), and between PV and all three CBIs, PUR (H5), WPP (H6), and e-WoM (H7), all confirmed. This indicates that how content is perceived regarding usefulness and relevance is foundational for influencing user behavior. Among SMMA dimensions, customization emerged as the most influential factor in increasing PV. Therefore, firms should develop content strategies centered on individual relevance by:

- Sharing deadline reminders or tax tips tailored to specific life or professional stages,
- Offering checklists, infographics, or FAQs for particular client segments (e.g., the self-employed, families, retirees),
- Addressing frequently asked client questions using everyday language and scenario-based examples.

Such practices increase the utility of content and improve purchase-related outcomes (H1, H5) and premium sensitivity (H2, H6), validating the strategic importance of customization.

2. Foster Interaction to Build Trust and Engagement

Interactivity was another key SMMA dimension that contributed significantly to PV. Since PV strongly mediates between SMMA dimensions, WPP (H9), and e-WoM (H10), tax consulting firms must encourage two-way communication. Recommended actions include:

- Incorporating Q&A formats (e.g., "Ask the Tax Advisor"),
- Using Instagram stories or polls to engage users on common tax issues,
- Responding to comments and private messages in a personalized and timely manner.

These practices enhance both perceived responsiveness and emotional connection, increasing the likelihood that clients will share their experiences positively (H7, H10) and consider paid services (H6, H9).

3. Leverage Entertainment and Visual Appeal Judiciously

While entertainment had a weaker direct effect on PV, it still supported content engagement. The recommendation is to use entertaining and visual formats that simplify complex information without undermining professional credibility:

- Short videos or reels explaining tax basics (e.g., "Tax Tip of the Week"),
- Humorous, relatable stories illustrating common mistakes,
- Graphical summaries that break down dense regulations.

Such content supports user attention and accessibility, reinforcing perceived value when embedded in an informative structure (H4), and indirectly contributing to WPP and PUR (H8, H9).

4. *Maintain Trend Awareness without Sacrificing Credibility*

Trendiness did not demonstrate a significant direct effect on PV or CBIs, and the direct path from SMMAs to e-WoM was negative and non-significant (H3: not confirmed). However, the positive indirect effect through PV (H10: confirmed) suggests a suppression effect (MacKinnon et al., 2000). This indicates that trend-based content may be perceived as superficial unless paired with value-driven messaging. Practitioners are advised to:

- Use contemporary content formats (e.g., reels, LinkedIn newsletters),
- Align stylistic choices with the brand's tone of voice and professional values,
- Avoid trends that may dilute the perception of trust and credibility.

This approach allows firms to remain digitally relevant while retaining their expert positioning.

5. *Monitor and Evaluate Perceived Value Continuously*

Given PV's role as a central mediating construct in all three outcome variables (H8–H10: all confirmed), tax consulting firms should systematically implement mechanisms to assess user perceptions. Recommended strategies include:

- Conducting short feedback surveys or polls on content usefulness,
- Analyzing engagement data (click-through rates, comments, shares),
- Soliciting verbal feedback during consultations about social media content.

Such feedback loops enable data-informed refinements to content strategy and help optimize PV, which the findings show is essential to influencing CBIs across the board.

6. *Institutionalize Social Media as a Strategic Communication Channel*

Finally, the findings affirm that well-executed SMMAs positively influence intent to purchase (H1) and willingness

to pay a premium (H2). However, these benefits can only be sustained through strategically integrating social media into the broader communication framework. Recommended actions include:

- Developing a long-term editorial plan tied to the tax calendar and client segmentation,
- Assigning staff roles for content creation, engagement monitoring, and reporting,
- Providing training in digital communication or partnering with external content agencies.

Social media should be recognized not as a peripheral task but as a strategic touchpoint that, when correctly managed, contributes directly to business development goals and long-term client loyalty.

Implications

This study provides essential theoretical and practical contributions to the understanding and application of social media marketing activities (SMMAs) within high-trust, knowledge-intensive professional service contexts—specifically, the German tax consulting sector. By empirically replicating and contextualizing the conceptual model proposed by Bushara et al. (2023), the study affirms several key assumptions within existing SMMA theory. It addresses a clear empirical gap in the literature. The tax advisory sector, characterized by regulatory complexity, high information asymmetry, and relationship-based trust, presents a unique environment to test the boundaries and applicability of established digital marketing frameworks.

Theoretical implications

The results confirm the utility of the S-O-R model in explaining the effectiveness of SMMAs in digital social media communication within professional services. In line with prior research (Bushara et al., 2023; Cheng et al., 2021; Yadav & Rahman, 2018), this study demonstrates that social media stimuli, represented

by customization, interaction, entertainment, and trendiness, can positively influence CBIs. However, the findings underscore that these effects occur primarily indirectly via PV, a strong mediating construct across all outcome variables: PUR, WPP, and e-WoM..

By adapting and empirically testing Bushara et al.'s (2023) framework in a new sector and national context, this study contributes to closing a theoretical and empirical research gap. While their review called for further validation of the model in professional service domains, few empirical studies have addressed this need. The current findings reveal that PV mediates nearly all CBI effects, and that direct paths from SM-MAs to e-WoM are non-significant, an important theoretical refinement that calls for greater attention to value construction mechanisms in professional service communications.

Moreover, the asymmetrical impact of the SMMA dimensions supports the model's contextual differentiation. The relatively limited effects of trendiness and entertainment in the tax advisory context challenge assumptions rooted in consumer-focused sectors. This signals a need for more nuanced, sector-sensitive theories of social media engagement that account for varying levels of professional regulation, credibility expectations, and client decision-making criteria.

Practical implications

The study offers several actionable insights for practitioners seeking to implement effective SMMA within professional services. The most critical recommendation is to design content that maximizes PV, given its consistently significant mediating role across all CBIs. The strong effects of customization and interaction on PV suggest that tax consulting firms invest in content personalization for segmented target groups (e.g., freelancers, families, retirees) and prioritize interactive formats such as Q&A sessions and polls to strengthen relational engagement.

In contrast, the limited impact of entertainment and trendiness suggests that firms should avoid imitating viral or superficial content strategies common in consumer brands. Instead, professional service providers should develop informative, relevant, and trustworthy content that addresses specific client needs and enhances credibility. These findings align with broader strategic shifts in digital service communication, emphasizing content quality, not quantity, and the long-term benefits of trust-based client relationships over short-term engagement metrics.

The study indicates that effective social media marketing activities in the tax consulting industry require alignment with professional norms. Trend-based formats (e.g., reels or memes) may be used selectively for format diversity but should always convey substantive value. Moreover, firms must embed their digital communication activities into broader strategic frameworks, including editorial planning, clear responsibility structures, and training in digital literacy.

Methodological implications

This research also contributes to methodological practice in digital marketing studies by illustrating the effectiveness of PLS-SEM in modeling complex, mediated relationships in real-world business contexts. The choice of PLS-SEM is justified by its capacity to accommodate moderate sample sizes, formative and reflective constructs, and multicollinearity risks, all of which are relevant in survey-based research on digital communication strategies (Hair et al., 2024; Sarstedt et al., 2019).

The structured research design, including cross-cultural scale adaptation, forward and backward translation, pretesting, and rigorous measurement model evaluation, offers a transferable blueprint for conducting empirical studies in other high-trust, knowledge-intensive sectors such as law, healthcare, or coaching. This approach's methodological transparency and replicability respond

to ongoing calls for more robust and generalizable designs in social media research.

Conclusions

The topic of this replication study was about the impact of Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMAs) on Customer Behavioral Intentions (CBI) of German tax consulting services (Bushara et al., 2023). The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the impact of SMMAs on PV and CBIs measured through PUR, WPP, and e-WoM constructs of German tax consulting firms using an S-O-R model as a theoretical framework. The overarching research question was: What is the impact of SMMAs on PV and CBIs measured through PUR, WPP, and e-WoM constructs of German tax consulting firms? This research employed a non-experimental, cross-sectional design using a standardized online survey to examine the structural relationships among SMMAs, PV, and CBIs. Data were collected at a single point in time from a representative sample of social media users who engage with and interact on the pages of tax consulting firms across various social media platforms.

In January 2025, 390 valid datasets were collected using a standardised online questionnaire and analysed using PLS-SEM. The terms customization, entertainment, interaction, and trendiness were utilized as aspects of SMMAs. The PUR, the WPP, and e-WoM were defined as CBIs. This study confirms the effectiveness of SMMAs in the professional services sector, particularly when mediated by PV. The empirical findings underscore that PV is the central mechanism by which SMMAs influence CBIs, including PUR, WPP, and e-WoM. The structural model exhibited strong explanatory power, with R^2 values of 0.649 for PV and between 0.38 and 0.50 for the CBIs, indicating that the model accounts for a substantial proportion of variance in key outcomes. All quality criteria for model validity and reliability were met:

AVE exceeded 0.50 for all constructs, CR values were above 0.70, HTMT ratios remained below the 0.85 threshold, and VIF were well within acceptable limits. These results confirm the internal consistency, discriminant validity, and absence of multicollinearity in the measurement model, supporting the methodological rigor of the study.

From a practical perspective, the findings offer actionable insights for tax consulting firms seeking to leverage SMMAs strategically. Rather than focusing on entertainment or trendiness, firms should invest in customized, relevant, and interactive content to maximize PV and strengthen client engagement. The methodological approach, applying PLS-SEM to test a theoretical framework in a real-world, knowledge-intensive setting, demonstrates the feasibility of adapting established marketing frameworks to new cultural and sectoral contexts. Despite being limited to a German sample and a cross-sectional design, the study provides a robust basis for theory building and managerial decision-making. The key conclusion is that social media, when used to deliver credible, user-centered value, becomes a powerful tool for trust-building, differentiation, and strategic client development in professional service firms.

References

- Abdou, A. H., Mohamed, S. A. K., Khalil, A. A. F., Albakhit, A. I., & Alarjani, A. J. N. (2022). Modeling the relationship between perceived service quality, tourist satisfaction, and tourists' behavioral intentions amid COVID-19 pandemic: Evidence of yoga tourists' perspectives. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*, 1003650. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1003650>
- Afshardoost, M., & Eshaghi, M. S. (2020). Destination image and tourist behavioural intentions: A meta-analysis. *Tourism management, 81*, 104154. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2020.104154>

- Aguilar, F. X., & Vlosky, R. P. (2007). Consumer willingness to pay price premiums for environmentally certified wood products in the US. *Forest policy and Economics*, 9(8), 1100-1112. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forpol.2006.12.001>
- Asgarpour, R., Hamid, A. B., Sulaiman, Z., & Asgari, A. (2014). A review on customer perceived value and its main components. *Global Journal of Business and Social Science Review*, 2(2), 1-9.
- Bazrkar, A., Hajimohammadi, M., Aramoon, E., & Aramoon, V. (2021). Effect of the social media marketing strategy on customer participation intention in light of the mediating role of customer perceived value. *Market-Tržište*, 33(1), 41-58. <https://doi.org/10.22598/mt/2021.33.1.41>
- Behr, D. (2017). Assessing the use of back translation: The shortcomings of back translation as a quality testing method. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 20(6), 573-584. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2016.1252188>
- Boyer, K. K., & Hult, G. T. M. (2006). Customer behavioral intentions for online purchases: An examination of fulfillment method and customer experience level. *Journal of Operations Management*, 24(2), 124-147. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jom.2005.04.002>
- Brislin, R. W. (1970). Back-translation for cross-cultural research. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 1(3), 185-216. <https://doi.org/10.1177/135910457000100301>
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Bushara, M. A., Abdou, A. H., Hassan, T. H., Sobaih, A. E. E., Albohnayh, A. S. M., Alshammari, W. G., ... & Elsaied, M. A. (2023). Power of social media marketing: how perceived value mediates the impact on restaurant followers' purchase intention, willingness to pay a premium price, and e-WoM?. *Sustainability*, 15(6), 5331. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15065331>
- Chamberlain, D., Rudolph, H., & Murphy Smith, L. (2018). Analysis of social media usage and relationship to firm size and revenue growth among major CPA firms. *Services Marketing Quarterly*, 39(4), 345-357. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15332969.2018.1514798>
- Cheng, J.-Y., Tsai, Y.-T., & Tu, H.-C. (2021). Constructing a customer-oriented model of social media marketing activity for e-commerce. *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research*, 16, 1025-1040. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jtaer16040057>
- Cheung, M. L., Pires, G. D., Rosenberger III, P. J., Leung, W. K., & Ting, H. (2021). Investigating the role of social media marketing on value co-creation and engagement: An empirical study in China and Hong Kong. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 29(2), 118-131. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ausmj.2020.03.006>
- Chin, W. W. (1998). The partial least squares approach to structural equation modeling. In G. A. Marcoulides (Ed.), *Modern methods for business research* (pp. 295-336). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Chiu, C. M., Chang, C. C., Cheng, H. L., & Fang, Y. H. (2009). Determinants of customer repurchase intention in online shopping. *Online information review*, 33(4), 761-784. <https://doi.org/10.1108/14684520910985710>

- Choi, Y. K., Seo, Y., & Yoon, S. (2017). E-WOM messaging on social media: social ties, temporal distance, and message concreteness. *Internet Research*, 27(3), 495-505. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IntR-07-2016-0198>
- Chrisniyanti, A., & Fah, C. T. (2022). The impact of social media marketing on purchase intention of skincare products among Indonesian young adults. *Eurasian Journal of Social Sciences*, 10(2), 68-90. <https://doi.org/10.15604/ejss.2022.10.02.001>
- Daugherty, T., Eastin, M. S., & Bright, L. (2008). Exploring consumer motivations for creating user-generated content. *Journal of interactive advertising*, 8(2), 16-25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2008.10722139>
- DeVellis, R. F., & Thorpe, C. T. (2021). *Scale development: Theory and applications* (5th ed.). SAGE.
- DiPietro, R. B., Crews, T. B., Gustafson, C., & Strick, S. (2012). The use of social networking sites in the restaurant industry: Best practices. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 15(3), 265-284. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15378020.2012.706193>
- Dwivedi, A., Johnson, L. D., Wilkie, D., & De Araujo-Gil, L. (2022). Consumer engagement and perceived value in digital services: A PLS-SEM approach. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 30, 250-271. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0965254X.2020.1733054>
- Emini, A. (2021). Social media marketing and purchase intention: Evidence from Kosovo. *Ekonomika misao i praksa*, 30(2), 475-492. <https://doi.org/10.17818/EMIP/2021/2.8>
- Epstein, J., Santo, R. M., & Guillemín, F. (2015). A review of guidelines for cross-cultural adaptation of questionnaires could not bring out a consensus. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, 68(4), 435-441. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2014.11.021>
- Eschenbrenner, B., Nah, F. F. H., & Telaprolu, V. R. (2015). Efficacy of social media utilization by public accounting firms: Findings and directions for future research. *Journal of Information Systems*, 29(2), 5-21. <https://doi.org/10.2308/isys-50894>
- Fu, S., Chen, X., & Zheng, H. (2020). Exploring an adverse impact of smartphone overuse on academic performance via health issues: a stimulus-organism-response perspective. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, 40(7), 663-675. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0144929X.2020.1716848>
- Gan, C., & Wang, W. (2017). The influence of perceived value on purchase intention in social commerce context. *Internet research*, 27(4), 772-785. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IntR-06-2016-0164>
- Godey, B., Manthiou, A., Pederzoli, D., Rokka, J., Aiello, G., Donvito, R., & Singh, R. (2016). Social media marketing efforts of luxury brands: Influence on brand equity and consumer behavior. *Journal of business research*, 69(12), 5833-5841. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.04.181>
- Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., Sarstedt, M., Richter, N. F., & Hauff, S. (2024). *Partial Least Squares Strukturgleichungsmodellierung: Eine anwendungsorientierte Einführung (2nd edition)*. Vahlen.
- Halkias, D., Neubert, M., & Harkiolakis, N. (2023). *Multiple case study data analysis for doctoral researchers in management and leadership*. Available at SSRN 4423757.

- Hanaysha, J. R. (2018). An examination of the factors affecting consumer's purchase decision in the Malaysian retail market. *PSU Research Review*, 2(1), 7-23. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PRR-08-2017-0034>
- Harkiolakis, N. (2017). *Quantitative research methods: From theory to publication*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sinkovics, R. R. (2009). The use of partial least squares path modeling in international marketing. In R. R. Sinkovics & P. N. Ghauri (Eds.), *New challenges to international marketing (Advances in International Marketing, Vol. 20)* (pp. 277–319). Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Hiebert, J., Cai, J., Hwang, S., Morris, A. K., & Hohensee, C. (2023). *Doing research: a new researcher's guide*. Springer Nature.
- Jamil, K., Dunnan, L., Gul, R. F., Shehzad, M. U., Gillani, S. H. M., & Awan, F. H. (2022). Role of social media marketing activities in influencing customer intentions: a perspective of a new emerging era. *Frontiers in psychology*, 12, 808525. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.808525>
- Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 30(3), 607–610. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001316447003000308>
- Li, J., Kim, W. G., & Choi, H. M. (2021). Effectiveness of social media marketing on enhancing performance: Evidence from a casual-dining restaurant setting. *Tourism Economics*, 27(1), 3-22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354816619867807>
- Lin, X., Al Mamun, A., Masukujjaman, M., & Yang, Q. (2024). Unveiling the effect of social media marketing activities on logistics brand equity and reuse intention. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 11(1), 1474. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-04022-0>
- Liu, D., & Li, M. (2019). Exploring new factors affecting purchase intention of mobile commerce: trust and social benefit as mediators. *International Journal of Mobile Communications*, 17(1), 108-125. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJMC.2019.096519>
- Löffler, P. (2023). *Kanzleimarketing online*. Springer Online.
- Lohmann, S., & Zagheni, E. (2023). Diversity of social media use: Self-selection explains associations between using many platforms and well-being. *PLOS Digital Health*, 2(7), e0000292. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pdig.0000292>
- López, M., & Sicilia, M. (2014). Determinants of E-WOM influence: The role of consumers' internet experience. *Journal of theoretical and applied electronic commerce research*, 9(1), 28-43. <http://doi.org/10.4067/S0718-18762014000100004>
- MacKinnon, D. P., Krull, J. L., & Lockwood, C. M. (2000). Equivalence of the mediation, confounding and suppression effect. *Prevention Science*, 1(4), 173–181. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1026595011371>
- Moslehpour, M., Dadvari, A., Nugroho, W., & Do, B. R. (2021). The dynamic stimulus of social media marketing on purchase intention of Indonesian airline products and services. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 33(2), 561-583. <https://doi.org/10.1108/APJML-07-2019-0442>

- Naaman, M., Becker, H., & Gravano, L. (2011). Hip and trendy: Characterizing emerging trends on Twitter. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 62(5), 902-918. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.21489>
- Neubert, M. (2024). Foundations of Academic Philosophy for Doctoral Researchers. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=5255888>
- Neubert, M. (2024). *Le design de l'étude de cas comme méthode de recherche: Un guide facile à comprendre et rapide à utiliser pour les professionnels et les étudiants*. BoD-Books on Demand.
- Neubert, M. (2023). *Guía breve y sencilla para utilizar el estudio de casos como método de investigación*. BOD GmbH DE.
- Neubert, M. (2023). Post pandemic internationalization behavior. Neubert, M.(2023). Post Pandemic Internationalization Behavior. *International Business Research*, 16(6), 25-36. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ibr.v16n6p25>
- Nuseir, M. T. (2020). Is advertising on social media effective? an empirical study on the growth of advertisements on the big four (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp). *International Journal of Procurement Management*, 13(1), 134-142. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJPM.2020.105191>
- Nguyen, N. M., Nguyen, H. T., & Cao, T. A. (2024). Effects of Social Media Marketing Activities on Perceived Values, Online Brand Engagement, and Brand Loyalty. *Emerging Science Journal*, 8(5), 1957-1975. <https://doi.org/10.28991/ESJ-2024-08-05-017>
- Obradović, M., Mizdraković, V., Obradović, A., & McIntyre, J. (2023). SOCIAL MEDIA AND AUDIT FIRMS: IS SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE CORRELATED WITH BETTER FINANCIAL RESULTS?. *SCIENCE International Journal*, 2(4), 167-171. <https://doi.org/10.35120/sciencej0204167o>
- Önder, L. G., & Çakıroğlu, A. D. (2021). The relationships among social media marketing, online consumer engagement, purchase intention and brand loyalty. *Business & Management Studies: An International Journal*, 9(3), 1045. <https://doi.org/10.15295/bmij.v9i3.1873>
- Pham, Q. T., Tran, X. P., Misra, S., Maskeli'nas, R., & Damaevičius, R. (2018). Relationship between convenience, perceived value, and repurchase intention in online shopping in Vietnam. *Sustainability*, 10(1), 156. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10010156>
- Phan, T. N. (2024). Social media marketing and customer purchase intention. *Innovative Marketing*, 20(2), 45-56.
- Polit, D. F., & Beck, C. T. (2006). The content validity index: Are you sure you know what's being reported? Critique and recommendations. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 29(5), 489-497. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nur.20147>
- Prastiwi, S. K., Auliya, Z., Wening, N., & Indriasari, R. A. (2024). Social media marketing activities and customers' purchase intention: The mediating effect of brand image. Conference Paper.
- Ramadan, Z. B., Abosag, I., & Zabkar, V. (2018). All in the value: The impact of brand and social network relationships on the perceived value of customer endorsed Facebook advertising. *European Journal of Marketing*, 52(7/8), 1704-1726. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-03-2017-0189>

- Rieg, R., & Radeck, L. (2024). Digitalization and business model change in small professional service firms: evidence from tax accountants. *Technology Analysis & Strategic Management*, 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09537325.2024.2413182>
- Rizka, A., & Hidayatullah, S. (2020). The effect of Instagram engagement to purchase intention and consumers' luxury value perception as the mediator in the skylounge restaurant. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 5(4), 958-966. <https://www.ijisrt.com/the-effect-of-instagram-engagement-to-purchase-intention-and-consumers-luxury-value-perception-as-the-mediator-in-the-skyounge-restaurant>
- Salsabila, A., & Albari. (2023). Influence of eWOM information on consumers' behavior in Instagram social network. *Journal of Business and Management Review*, 4(3), 196–209.
- Sánchez, J. Á. L. (2015). *Perceived Value (Service Evaluation)*. Wiley Encyclopedia of Management. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118785317.weom090194>
- Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C. M., Cheah, J.-H., Ting, H., Moisescu, O. I., & Radomir, L. (2019). Structural model robustness checks in PLS-SEM. *Tourism Economics*, 26(4), 531-554. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354816618823921>
- Schröder, F. (2023). *Social Media Marketing. In Marketing und Business Development in Kanzleien* (pp. 137-149). Springer Gabler.
- Seo, E. J., Park, J. W., & Choi, Y. J. (2020). The effect of social media usage characteristics on e-WOM, trust, and brand equity: Focusing on users of airline social media. *Sustainability*, 12(4), 1691. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12041691>
- So, K. K. F., Li, J., King, C., & Hollebeek, L. D. (2024). Social media marketing activities, customer engagement, and customer stickiness: A longitudinal investigation. *Psychology & Marketing*, 41(7), 1597-1613. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21999>
- Statista. (2025). *Anteil der Nutzer von Social-Media-Plattformen nach Altersgruppen in Deutschland im Jahr 2024*. <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/543605/umfrage/verteilung-der-nutzer-von-social-media-plattformen-nach-altersgruppen-in-deutschland/>.
- Taherdoost, H. (2016). Validity and reliability of the research instrument; how to test the validation of a questionnaire/survey in a research. *International Journal of Academic Research in Management*, 5(3), 28–36.
- Torres, P., Augusto, M., & Wallace, E. (2018). Improving consumers' willingness to pay using social media activities. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 32(7), 880-896. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-07-2017-0257>
- Tuten, T. L. (2023). *Social media marketing*. Sage.
- Watanabe, E. A. D. M., Alfinito, S., Curvelo, I. C. G., & Hamza, K. M. (2020). Perceived value, trust and purchase intention of organic food: a study with Brazilian consumers. *British Food Journal*, 122(4), 1070-1184. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-05-2019-0363>
- Wright, K. B. (2005). Researching Internet-based populations: Advantages and disadvantages of online survey research, online questionnaire authoring software packages, and web survey services. *Journal of computer-mediated communication*, 10(3), JCMC1034. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2005.tb00259.x>

Declarations

Author Contact Information

Correspondence regarding this article should be directed to M. Neubert at michael.neubert@faculty.eim.education.

Conflict of (Competing) Interest

The authors declare that they have no (competing) financial or non-financial interests related to this study.

Funding

The authors self-funded the research, and no external funding was obtained for its completion.

Author Contributions (CRediT taxonomy):

Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – Review & Editing: Michael Neubert. Formal Analysis, Investigation, Writing – Original Draft: Mandy Witt.

Acknowledgments

None.

Data Availability and Supplementary Material

All data generated and analyzed during this study and supplementary material are available upon reasonable request.

Prior Publication

The authors confirm that this research has not been published previously and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere.

Ethics Statement

This study complies with the ethical guidelines of the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and adheres to the GDPR requirements for data protection. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of EIM, and informed consent was secured from all participants.

Responsible AI Ethics Statement

This study used artificial intelligence (AI) tools to support tasks such as identifying relevant literature, analyzing datasets, and editing textual content. These tools were employed solely to enhance efficiency, and their outputs were critically reviewed to ensure alignment with research objectives. The use of AI adheres to ethical principles outlined in the EU AI Act, the OECD AI Principles, and the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, emphasizing transparency, fairness, and accountability. The authors made all final decisions and retain full responsibility for this research's integrity, rigor, and conclusions.

Copyright and Licensing Information

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0). This license permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

Yadav, M. S., & Rahman, Z. (2018). Measuring consumer perception of social media marketing activities in e-commerce industry: A scale development approach. *Telematics and Informatics*, 35, 932–947. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2018.02.009>.

Yadav, M., & Rahman, Z. (2018). The influence of social media marketing activities on customer loyalty: A study of e-commerce industry. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, 25(9), 3882–3905. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BIJ-06-2017-0114>.

Yang, Y., Khan, Z., & Zhang, Y. (2020). The influence of social media marketing on apparel brands' customers' satisfaction: The mediation of perceived value. *Asian Academy of Management Journal*, 25(2). <https://doi.org/10.21315/aamj2020.25.2.7>

Zeithaml, V. A. (1988). Consumer perceptions of price, quality, and value: a means-end model and synthesis of evidence. *Journal of marketing*, 52(3), 2-22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224298805200302>

Zerres, C. (2024). *Handbuch Social-Media-Marketing*. Springer.

Zhang, H., Bi, C., & Zhang, Y. (2022). Social media marketing activities, brand awareness, and brand image of commitment on Somethinc product TikTok account. *Journal of Marketing Development and Competitiveness*, 16(3), 10–20.

Zhu, Y. Q., & Chen, H. G. (2015). Social media and human need satisfaction: Implications for social media marketing. *Business horizons*, 58(3), 335-345. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2015.01.006>

Construct	Item	Statement
Customization (CUS)	CUS1	Searching for customized information on tax consultants' social media is possible.
	CUS2	The tax consultant's social media provides lively information I am interested in.
	CUS3	Tax consultant offers customized services through its social media.
Entertainment (ENT)	ENT1	The content found in tax consultant's social media seems interesting.
	ENT2	Utilizing tax consultants' social media channels is exciting.
	ENT3	Collecting product information through tax consultant's social media is fun.
Trendiness (TRE)	TRE1	The tax consultant's social media content is up-to-date.
	TRE2	Using tax consultant's social media is very trendy.
	TRE3	The content on tax consultant's social media is the newest information.
Interaction (INT)	INT1	I can easily share my opinions through this tax consultant's social media.
	INT2	It is easy to convey my opinions or have conversations with other users through tax consultants' social media.
	INT3	Having two-way interaction through tax consultant's social media is possible.
Perceived Value (PV)	PV1	The social media page of this tax consultant makes me feel more socially accepted.
	PV2	The tax consultant's social media page is useful and valuable to me.
	PV3	The tax consultant's social media page is an important source of information for me.
	PV4	Tax consultant's services have a consistent level of quality.
	PV5	Tax consultant's services represent excellent value for money.
Purchase Intention (PUR)	PUR1	I plan to purchase these tax consultant services, which I have seen on social media.
	PUR2	I intend to purchase these tax consultant services that I like based on social media interaction.
	PUR3	I will likely purchase these tax consultant services recommended by my friends on social media.
Willingness to Pay a Premium Price (WPP)	WPP1	I would pay a higher price for this tax consultant than similar services.
	WPP2	I intend to purchase from this tax consultant even if another brand advertises a lower price.
E-WoM	E-WoM1	I will post positive comments about this tax consultant on my social media.
	E-WoM2	I recommend using this tax consultant through my social media.
	E-WoM3	I recommend using this tax consultant with my social media acquaintances.