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**Examining the influence of Social Media Marketing on
Consumers' Online Purchasing Decisions: A comparative study
of consumers in Nepal and Finland.**

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ABSTRACT :

Social media marketing is an interactive web that allows buyers and sellers to communicate, exchange feedback, and to stay updated on the current market trends. This study investigates the influence of SMM features and consumer features on consumers' online purchase decisions. The primary objective of this thesis is to explore the impact of social media marketing (SMM) on consumers' online purchase decisions in Nepal and Finland. In this thesis, the independent variables are divided into two main categories: social media marketing features and consumer features. The social media features include informativeness, perceived relevance, interactivity, and eWOM. While consumer features include attitude, trust, perceived security, and price sensitivity. All these independent variables were used to analyze the influence on consumers' online purchases in Nepal and Finland.

The study used purposive sampling, which is a non-probability sampling technique. A deductive research approach has been used in the study. In this research, primary survey data were collected from consumers in Finland and Nepal by using Webropol. The study consists of a total of 202 respondents, with 92 respondents from Finland and 110 respondents from Nepal. Data was analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics software. In this study, different data analysis methods were used, such as descriptive statistics, Confirmatory factor analysis, and multiple regression analysis to test the hypothesis.

The findings reveal that female consumers of the young age group are more active in using SM Platforms and are more involved in online purchasing than male consumers in both countries. Out of all eight independent variables, only the independent variable attitude was found to have a statistically significant effect on consumers' online purchasing decisions both in Finland and Nepal. Similarly, Nepali consumers' online purchasing decisions are influenced by eWOM and price sensitivity, as it shows a positive and significant relationship, whereas trust in sellers significantly influenced the Finnish consumers' online purchase decisions, as it shows a positive and significant relationship. Therefore, although social media marketing features have an influence on consumer online purchase, consumer features are seen to have a greater influence on consumer online purchase decisions. Finally, it is concluded that Nepali consumers online purchase decision is influenced by attitude, eWOM, and price sensitivity, whereas Finnish consumers online purchase decisions are influenced by attitude and trust, which reflects the difference in consumer online purchase decisions in both countries.

KEYWORDS: Social media, Consumer behaviour, Online advertising, Trust, Interactivity, Internet, Consumers, Electronic business, Marketing.

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Abbreviations

SMM: Social media marketing

SM: Social media

eWOM: Electronic Word of Mouth

B2C: Business-to-consumer

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

NS: Not supported

1 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, research question, and objective with delimitations of the study and definitions of key terms. Also, previous studies are presented. Finally, the structure of the thesis is developed.

1.1 Background of the study

The rapid development in technology and innovation has influenced traditional buying from retail stores into online channels, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic (Safeer, 2024). This enhances social media communication and allows consumers to buy online regardless of time or location. Social media marketing is a technique of gaining website traffic or attention through the relevant social sites like Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, and others (Kuhikar, 2013, p.15). According to Iqbal et al. (2023), unlike normal marketing, social media marketing is an interactive web that allows buyers and sellers to communicate, exchange feedback, and stay updated on the current market trend. Consumers who view social media as a marketing tool tend to favour it due to its convenience, as it enables shopping at any time and from any location (p.2332). Social media has transformed customers into marketers, as platforms like Instagram, Facebook & YouTube allow customers to generate, create, edit, and share fashion information online (Hasan & Sohail, 2021, p.351).

In the present, not only the customer but also fashion brands are increasingly using social media to engage customers towards their brands (Hasan & Sohail, 2021, p.352). With social media emerging as one of the main platforms of fashion inspiration and buying behaviour among consumers, brands today are increasingly required to create trust in their marketing by applying open and genuine marketing principles to successfully convert consumer interaction into real sales (Kim & Ko, 2011, p. 1484). Online shopping allows individuals to purchase items anytime and anywhere, and digital advertisements have a potent effect on what is purchased by consumers. However, the businesses must be careful not to market their products in a manner that is annoying or

obtrusive, as customers will have a valuable experience (Vavrová, 2024, p. 44). Despite the growing dependence on online platforms, it is worthwhile to investigate how social media marketing contributes to deciding to shop online, more specifically, within the geographical context.

According to Patil et al. (2024), the results of the GlobalWebIndex survey reveal that 54% of social users of digital platforms purchase products because of the advertisements they encounter (p. 1). The unique variations that exist between companies that are involved in social media marketing in terms of their strategic goal, organizational resources and capabilities, as well as their point of focus in terms of industries and market structures, suggest that there must also be variations in the social media marketing strategy sought (Li et al., 2020, p.57). The introduction of social media has brought fundamental change in the way individuals communicate and get information and contributed to the current transformation of this era because it integrated both media and social features (Chu, 2024, p.170). The correlated connection between social media marketing and consumer buying behaviour, portraying that social media marketing can be used as a good marketing tool that can influence the perception of the customers and ultimately shape their decision to purchase or not (Shrestha et al., 2023, p.75). Online shopping is majorly affected by social media nowadays. Having access to the internet, individuals are willing to shop in online shops rather than visit the conventional physical shops (Miah et al., 2022, p. 2). The social networks influence consumer behaviour in the virtual world, particularly when individuals are exposed to numerous messages and develop a relationship with the information presented before making a purchase (Jothi & Gaffoor, 2017, p. 585).

One of the most popular online activities is social media use. The number of social media users worldwide was more than five billion in 2024, with an estimated growth of more than six billion in 2028 (Statista, 2025). Social media marketing is especially important to the firms since the use and advertising spending will continue to increase significantly across the globe. It is an effective tool for brand awareness, lead generation, and sales since users spend over two hours on average every day across different platforms

(Ketan, 2025). The strategy should be oriented toward the key areas, including video content, user-generated content, influencer marketing, and social commerce (Ketan, 2025). The growth of the use of online shopping depends on the quality of Internet connections, the overall frequency of Internet use, willingness to search the Internet to find information about goods and services, and Internet banking usage (Huterska & Huterski, 2022, p. 681).

According to Madyatmadja et al. (2024, p.274), the evolution of social media is no longer merely a social interaction environment where users can communicate, collaborate, cooperate, and connect with each other easily. But social media has also made the process of buying and selling the only feature accessible on the same platform. Social media allows companies to interact with the end consumer in real-time and at a lower cost, which is far more efficient than the traditional medium of communication (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009, p. 67). The current technological revolution, specifically smartphones with permanent internet connectivity, has introduced drastic shifts in all spheres of life, with social media applications being the best Web 2.0 applications (Sağtaş, 2022, p. 22).

In the modern business world, the marketing industry across the world is constantly examining new ways to reach out to consumers. In awareness of the increasing power of social media networks, more organizations are incorporating consumer feedback about social media networks in the creation and enhancement of their marketing (Neupane, 2020, p.167). In social media marketing, the information by word-of-mouth is useful in enhancing brand image, such that it becomes famous instantly. The product quality factor prompts buyers to familiarize themselves with the product at a rapid rate and sometimes even consult friends, relatives, and as well as community (Halik et al., 2025, p. 58). Alalwan, p. (2018, p. 74) revealed that social media advertising is a crucial concept in contemporary marketing as it has a powerful impact on consumer behaviour. These studies indicate that the key factors to consider when influencing purchase intention include performance expectancy, hedonic motivation, interactivity,

informativeness, habit, and perceived relevance as these factors account a good part of purchase intention.

Finland is a high-tech country in the North of Europe, which has absorbed social media to the point of daily life, transforming communication, access to information, and the way business is conducted. Facebook is the most popular social media in Finland, having over 2.8 million users, and Facebook is the main medium through which people mostly interact with friends, family, and companies (Lemmetty, 2024). As per the data provided by the United Nations, population of Nepal was 29.6 million people having 14.8 million active social media user identities in late 2025, whereas Facebook is the most famous social media among the users (Kemp, 2025). The realm of Internet expansion and development of Technology has offered various advantages as well as disadvantages (Juan, 2017, p. 6). Up-to-date media communication has been changing the world along with the consumer's preferences for different goods and services. Today, almost every people use the internet to analyze and see reviews on their preferences before buying those products (Rai, B., & Sherpa, D., 2024, p. 120). Nepal, as a developing country, is untouched by this trend and has many users who are using various digital services, channels, mobile phone apps, and social media in their day to day lives (Rai, B., & Sherpa, D., 2024, p. 121). On the other hand, Finland, as a developed country in technology, Online purchasing is in rising trend, showing 3.13 million e-commerce users in 2024 (Statista, 2025). Research also shows that Finns prefer Zalando and Jimms over Amazon (Bashir, 2025).

However, many studies have examined the influence of social media marketing on online buying behaviour with single or developed countries (Maaroufi, 2025; Tsatsou, 2021; Shrestha et al., 2023; Hasan and Sohail, 2021) but most of them lack the comparative research between two very different countries such as a developing country in Asia (Nepal) and a developed country in Europe (Finland). It would be a good decision for this comparative study by examining the role of social media marketing on consumers' online purchasing decisions between Nepal and Finland. Furthermore,

existing literature also fails to explore the influence of Social Media Marketing (SMM) features and consumer features on consumers' online purchase decisions (Mazeed & Kodumagulla, 2019; Migkos et al., 2025; Yang, 2024). Therefore, this study fills these gaps by directly comparing how specific social media marketing features and consumer factors uniquely drive online purchases in these two distinct contexts.

1.2 Research question and objectives of the study

The preceding discussion on research gaps steers the course of the present thesis. The primary objective of the present thesis is *to explore the impact of social media marketing (SMM) on consumers' online purchase decisions*. Accordingly, the main research question is:

How does social media marketing (SMM) influence consumers' online purchase decisions?

To answer the main research question, the following 5 sub-objectives are developed:

- 1) *To study the conceptualization and characteristics of business-to-consumer companies*
- 2) *To study the conceptualization and importance of SMM and consumers' online purchase decisions*
- 3) *To understand the types of social media used by business-to-consumer companies*
- 4) *To explore the influence of SMM features and consumer features on consumers' online purchase decisions.*
- 5) *To empirically explore the influence of SMM features and consumer features on consumers' online purchase decisions in Nepal and Finland.*

1.3 Delimitations of the study

This study is limited in several ways to provide clarity, focus, and manageability of the research. Firstly, the study is limited to the geographical location of the consumers in Nepal and Finland, which were chosen to give a comparative idea between a developing and a highly digitalized developed country, with their online purchasing behaviours. Secondly, in this study, the author has included the social media marketing feature and consumer features for comparative analysis of consumer online purchase decisions. Thirdly, the study has limited its sample to consumers who use social media actively and who have already gained experience in online shopping, thus not considering those who lack experience in online shopping or social media. Also, the study is limited to online consumer purchase decisions, excluding offline or in-store purchase behaviours. Lastly, this study is based on quantitative research.

1.4 Definitions of key terms

The key terms used in this thesis are defined below:

Social Media

Social media's global commercial success is the reason it keeps becoming increasingly popular. Social networking websites account for a sizable portion of advertising campaigns (Jothi & Gaffoor, 2017, p.576). Social media enables users to create and share content, and it is built on internet apps and the World Wide Web's technological foundations. As a subset of social communication, social media refers to media for social engagement (Kuhikar, 2013, p. 16). Social media provides a virtual community whereby individuals can enjoy sharing, exchanging, and controlling communications anytime and anywhere. The wide adoption of social media has created a marketing communication

revolution by providing a range of opportunities to communicate between the user and the brand (Thein, 2025, p. 171).

Social media marketing

Social media marketing is an interactive communication strategy that aims to engage young consumers along with the older group of consumers to connect empathically with luxury goods (Kim & Ko, 2012). Nowadays, Businesses have made extensive use of social media as a tool of their marketing strategy (Ali et al., 2022). With the development of technology, the effect of SMM is increasing. Regardless of the country's development level, technology has the most impact on the lifestyle of young consumers (Ali et al., 2022). Social media marketing is having a tremendous effect on the marketing policy of businesses. It is a type of marketing that is slowly increasing, growing, and replacing the outdated mode in certain companies (Akar & Topçu, 2011, p. 41).

Online purchase decision

Online purchase decisions can be described as the process that a consumer undertakes towards deciding to purchase a product or service using an internet-based platform (Daroch et al., 2021, p. 39). Online shopping is an activity that is becoming a common aspect of our lives, with the advancement of the internet and social media platforms allowing customers to shop and analyze products, features, and suppliers with ease before deciding what to buy (Mican & Sitar-Taut, 2020, p. 63). Consumers' purchase decisions impact either internal or external elements of marketing. The key elements of internal marketing factors consist of beliefs and attitude together with knowledge, followed by personality and perception alongside lifestyle and roles and status (Hanaysha, 2022, p.2).

Business to Consumers Companies

Business-to-Consumer companies are those companies that sell goods or services to the people directly (Li & Sun, 2020, p. 1). Business-to-Consumer (B2C) e-commerce is one of the most frequent forms of electronic commerce. B2C e-commerce includes online shopping or purchasing and selling products using the Internet (Huseynov & Yildirim, 2014, p. 452). The future of business-to-consumer (B2C) electronic commerce is not just in how well consumers embrace Internet technologies as a legitimate mode of transaction, but in how well consumers come to trust Web retailers as dependable traders (Pavlou, 2003, p. 101).

Features of SMM

According to Ali et al. (2022), information from social media platforms plays a significant role in consumers' purchasing decisions. SMM has primarily concentrated on the sensual products and services such as: Luxury Brand products, Fashion (clothes and accessories), Travel, and airlines (Huo & Filieri, 2025). Social media marketing can reach the target group (i.e., Millennials and Gen Z) due to its interactive and informative characteristics (Huo & Filieri, 2025). This also applies to content, informativeness, quality, and perceived content usage frequency (Goodrich & Mooij, 2014). There might be many SMM driving factors that influence consumers' online purchasing decisions, among which this study will examine the following in this study:

Informativeness: Informativeness is chosen because it acts as the capacity of an advertising message to convey adequate and relevant information on products or services that allow consumers to make informed decisions (Ducoffe, 1995).

Perceived relevance: Perceived relevance refers to content that is highly relevant to consumers' interests and needs, attracting attention and encouraging purchasing decisions (Faradhilla et al., 2024).

Interactivity: Interactivity of a site is the ability to provide a general dynamic web experience based on customer queries, searches, and interactions with distinctive features, controls, and technologies of an online site (Islam et al., 2019).

Electronic Word of Mouth(eWOM): Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) is selected due to its high impact on consumer trust and credibility, as it is the process of posting personal experiences and opinions regarding products or services using digital channels that give consumers indirect information that shapes their perceptions (Miremadi & Haghayegh, 2022).

Features of Consumers

Consumer behaviour can be defined as the process of choosing, acquiring, or using goods and services to satisfy personal needs and preferences (Rai & Shrepa, 2024). Various studies have found that there is a strong relationship between the attitude of consumers towards certain products or brand preferences and purchasing intention (Kim & Ko, 2012). Due to different motivations and consumption behaviours, purchasing opinions may also vary due to priorities across various social statuses (low, middle, and upper). For example, customers with low income may prefer meeting their necessities over finding high-quality promoted goods (Ali et al., 2022). Social media's role in the consumer decision-making process may also reflect an enormous cultural difference between consumers (Goodrich & Mooij, 2013). Therefore, in this study, the author will examine the following features of consumers that drive online purchasing decisions:

Attitude towards online purchasing: Attitude of consumers toward online purchasing is an important factor because even though attitudes are formed over time and are not easily changed, marketers hope that marketing communications like advertisements could still shape consumer attitudes to have both beneficial and adverse effects by appealing to different consumer motivations (Irshad & Ahmad, 2019).

Security of buying online: Online transaction security is a crucial factor since when consumers are confident that their information and payments are secure, they perceive less risk and trust in making online purchases (Valdez-Juárez et al., 2021).

Price Sensitivity: One of the important factors affecting the selection of online consumers is the price sensitivity, where the perceived price plays an important role in the decision to buy, especially in the case of repeat buyers, and interacts with other decision variables like trust (Kim et al., 2012).

Trust: Trust is a key driver of e-commerce, as it reduces perceived risk and increases consumers' confidence to transact online (Handoyo, 2024).

1.5 Previous studies

Previous studies on the topic of this thesis are summarized in Table 1 below

Table 1.SMM and Consumer Features are driving consumers' online purchase decisions

SMM and consumer features driving Consumer's online purchase decisions				
Studies	Theoretical roots	Nature of study	Methodology, sample size, and location	Findings
Pratesi et al. (2021)	Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions and theory of planned behaviour (TPB)	Quantitative approach	A web-based survey questionnaire among 350 European and Asian consumers through Alibaba e-commerce Platforms.	The study finds that culture affects the trust and influence on consumer behaviour. Asian consumers avoid uncertainty and risk; European consumers are more masculine and individualistic. They search for new and attractive website products that are unique from others.

Ismael et al. (2025)	The study followed the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), to determine the effectiveness of the social media content in pursuing consumers.	Quantitative approach	The data was collected from 412 Bangladeshi young users with an age gap between 18 and 30. MS Excel and PLS-SEM version 4 software were used to find relationships among variables.	The result was that the SMM indeed influenced the purchasing intentions of young consumers in Bangladesh. It depends on the content, marketing quality, influencer marketing, and the effectiveness of SMM.
Rahaman et al. (2022)	Information adaptation model (IAM) and the technology acceptance model (TAM).	Quantitative Approach	The online survey questionnaire was sent directly to a total of 432 University students in their university email, including a link to Google Form with a brief explanation of the study.	The results show that the eWOM plays a crucial role in influencing consumers' purchasing behaviour on social media. It also finds that quality and thoughtful use of eWOM by Business & Marketing could leverage the consumers' purchasing decisions.
Nabilla & Saputro (2025)	Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)	Quantitative approach	Quantitative, 100 sample size, case in Indonesia	The results show that social media marketing and online consumer reviews have a significant and positive impact on the buying decision and brand image. Moreover, brand image has a vital role to play in mediating the relationship between social media marketing, online consumer reviews, and purchase decisions.
Moeti et al. (2021)	Diffusion of Innovation Theory	cross-sectional approach	Quantitative research, 120 participants of sample size, Case of Limpopo province in South Africa.	The findings of this study perceived trialability was discovered to exercise a significant impact on the acceptance and online shopping usage, whereas relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, and external factors like security and awareness were not found to be significant factors in the acceptance and

				usage of online shopping in Limpopo province.
Vinerean et al. (2013)	Consumer socialization theory	Exploratory research	Quantitative, 236 sample size, case in Romania	According to the results of the study, marketers can enhance the performance of online advertisements by considering the novel psychographics groups of Engagers, Expressers, Informers, Networkers, and Watchers while adjusting strategies by major variables such as trust in information sources, privacy issues, and usage patterns of social media.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is structured into five chapters. The first chapter provides a background of the study and identifies research gaps. It introduces research questions and the objectives of the study and explains key terms. This chapter also provides the previous research study and the delimitation of the study. Lastly, it shows the overall structure of the thesis.

In the second chapter, there is a literature review that provides detailed information about the influence of social media marketing features and consumer features on online consumer purchase decisions. It also provides conceptualization and characteristics of business-to-consumer companies and provides detailed information about the several types of social media used by business-to-consumer companies and provides the model of the study.

The third chapter outlines the research methodology, which includes the research approach for choosing the approach, the choice of quantitative research method, data collection procedures with sampling technique, questionnaire development, operationalization of variables, data gathering process, responses, and method of data analysis. This chapter also presents the credibility of research.

Chapter four consists of empirical analysis and findings of the study, where an analysis of the data is presented with the help of SPSS software to get the comparative results of Finland and Nepal.

Lastly, chapter five outlines the discussion and conclusions of the study, which discussed the main empirical findings in relation with the existing literature and highlighted managerial implications, provided suggestions to the future research, and draws overall conclusions of the study.

2 Literature Review

This chapter consists of a literature review that compares the influence of SMM in developing countries like Nepal and developed countries like Finland by reviewing several related studies. The study highlights the role of SMM and E-commerce platforms (B2C) in online purchasing decisions. Online purchasing behaviour refers to the process of using the internet to make purchases of goods and services (Azhar et al., 2023). Nowadays, before making a purchasing decision, consumers are increasingly using social media to gather information (Azhar et al., 2023). Social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter have been regarded as a promotional launching platform for fashion firms (Kim & Ko, 2011). Social media allows companies to connect with consumers, interact with them, and evaluate their goods and services to address their specific needs to implement their marketing strategies and advertising approaches (Silva et al., 2020).

Online shopping was introduced by Michael Aldrich, “an English Innovator, Inventor, and Entrepreneur” in 1979 (Vaidya, 2019, P. 71). Online shopping started globally in 1995, when Amazon began to sell books online, and “an American Multinational Corporation” and eBay offered business-to-consumer and consumer-to-consumer online sales services (Vaidya, 2019, P.71). In the present expanding business environment, B2C companies' demand and range are growing (Dahal et al., 2025, p. 42). Numerous factors influence purchasing behaviour due to internet technology (IT), which have been identified by studies, especially in developing countries (Dahal et al., 2025, p. 43). Online shopping is flourishing in Nepal with the easy access to 3G and 4G Internet technologies provided by “local service providers” (Vaidya, 2025, p.72). In June 2014, Kaymu.com, owned by “Asia Pacific Internet Group”, began its operation in Nepal, but Pakistan-based e-commerce company Daraz took it over in July 2016. Later, in May 2018, a China-based company, Alibaba Group acquired Daraz and is using the B2C model to operate in Nepal (Vaidya, 2025, p.72). While in Finland, Finns enjoy purchasing online (Ou, 2025). From ordering goods to payment, Finns prefer online transactions over physical. According to

Ou X. (Statista, 2025), online shoppers are expected to increase to four million by 2029 in Finland. Approximately 80% of consumers in the age group between 25-44 consume online goods and services, making it the highest demographic population to participate in online shopping (Ou, 2025). Finnish businesses are also utilizing SM as their marketing strategy. SM platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok & X (Twitter) are used by Finnish retailers like S-Market, K-Citymarket, and Lidl to engage and attract customers in this competitive and digitalized business world (Maaroufi, 2025, p. 1).

In the present digitalized world, consumers make their purchases with just one click (Klami, 2022). SMM has enabled additional ways to offer, sell, attract, and interact with ad services to individuals (Ali et al., 2022). Consumers' buying intentions are influenced by advertisements on social media marketing and their desire for a shopping experience (Ismael et al., 2025). Not only consumers but also businesses are affected by social media (Klami, 2022). The importance of SMM in modern business is noticeable while looking at the studies made on retailers, which reveal that about 64% of retailers use SM to implement their marketing strategies and around 76% of retailers use SM channels to meet their business goals, such as rising sales by 20% (Maaroufi, 2025). So, businesses need to consider customers as significant as well as the impact of SM on them continuously (Kim & Ko, 2011). Similarly, consumers, on the other hand, can boost their productivity by conducting fast, easy, and fair online transactions with both domestic and international sellers (Huseynov & Yildirim, 2019).

2.1 Conceptualization and characteristics of business-to-consumer companies

This section provides overviews of business-to-consumer companies, with the definition of business-to-consumer companies, including their definition and characteristics.

2.1.1 Definitions of business-to- consumers companies

Business-to-consumer (B2C) e-commerce is a business that allows consumers to purchase goods and services online via the internet (Huseynov and Yildirim, 2019). B2C marketing communication is a demanding operational task (Zostautiene et al., 2025). E-commerce is commonly categorized into business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C), with B2C e-commerce utilizing the Internet as a retail medium and, in the latter scenario, as a medium through which products or services are delivered (Drigas & Leliopoulos, 2013). Both B2C and B2B companies are increasingly depending on SMM for their marketing activities to attract new customers while maintaining their existing ones (Silva et al., 2020). As the Internet is increasingly used, more businesses and individuals engage in e-commerce, where massive interactions between sellers and buyers through online transactions are the driving force behind the establishment and intricate nature of the e-commerce market (Tian et al., 2013, p. 205). Over the past years, the B2C e-commerce has increasingly become more popular among all groups of consumers because of the access to high-speed internet connection, smartphone and tablet devices, and increasingly user-friendly e-commerce websites (Faraoni et al., 2018, p. 575).

B2C e-commerce companies frequently cannot identify when and why they are losing customers and whether retention should be pursued since the customer data includes readily available demographic data and more challenging shopping behaviour information like time of purchase, intentions, preparation, and product attitudes (Xiahou & Harada, 2022). According to Brengman and Karimov (2012), the development of trust between consumers and e-retailers is a critical issue in e-commerce, and the study considered provides additional evidence on how the incorporation of different web communities into commercial websites will impact the initial levels of online trust among consumers to inform managers to apply social media more efficiently to achieve the best results. Earlier studies on the adoption of business-to-consumer e-commerce have given little focus to the issue of trust in information technology, but this study

specifically looks at the electronic channel and the merchant as important subjects of trust in a specific an e-commerce situation (Kim & Prabhakar, 2004).

B2C has become an increasingly important segment that is driving growth in the global e-commerce sector, providing new opportunities in many sectors, especially in supporting the development and change of the traditional manufacturing industries (Wei, 2022). B2C e-commerce involves making businesses sell directly to consumers, and this form of shopping has become the dominant model of shopping in China, and in this competitive market, businesses must depend on internal strengths and effective business models to generate higher customer value and remain ahead of their competitors (Chen et al., 2019). Electronic marketing is a good predictor of e-sales performance that enriches the companies to continuously monitor marketing activities to remain competitive in a highly dynamic market (Chen, 2024).

2.1.2 Characteristics of business-to- consumers companies

The wide use of (B2C) e-commerce, which offers numerous benefits to nations from interpersonal to economic, is essential for their development (Huseynov and Yildirim, 2019). E-commerce involves all the transactions requiring money and monetary goods (Malla, 2018). The e-commerce Europe projected B2C e-commerce turnover to €898 billion in 2025, elevating 7% growth rate over 2024 (Ecommerce Europe, 2025). According to E-commerce Europe (2025), the percentage of online shoppers remains constant to 79% from 2021 to 2025 in Finland. On the other hand, e-commerce is still in a progress phase in Nepal and expected to grow, but only 111 e-commerce platforms have been listed in the Department of Commerce, Supply, and Customer Protection, since the government requested mandatory listing this year 2082 B.S (Baral, 2025). The practice of “Facebook store” is also quite popular in Nepal, where goods and services are sold via Facebook or a platform rather than other sites (Vaidya, 2019). However, E-commerce can benefit more in emerging markets than in developed ones (Huseynov and Yildirim, 2019).

Some of the characteristics of business-to-consumer companies are listed below:

Open Market: The main characteristic is that it is open and limitless to the public. This implies that the entire information regarding the products or services that the company produces will be distributed to the community at large, making it easier for consumers to find information about products and enhance the quality of their online purchases (Zhou et al., 2018).

Effective and persuasive features/websites: E-commerce is using social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube for engaging customers and influencing their decisions (Zostautiene et al., 2025). For example, a website might succinctly promote a smartphone model with better image quality, which may draw the fascinated consumers, who then may share the product details while creating online content such as reviews and comments (Tanxebiński & Marciniak, 2022).

Direct Sale to End Consumers: B2C companies are characterized by transactions in which companies sell goods or services directly to individual end consumers instead of other businesses. This is a direct producer-to-consumer relationship, which is a fundamental feature of B2C commerce research (Ahi et al., 2022). Direct selling is a strategy where a manufacturer develops its own online store to sell products directly to consumers, like Boat Lifestyle, with its own online store selling products directly (Banerjee & Verma, 2025, p. 152).

Depending on Social Media Platforms to reach consumers: While making purchasing decisions, consumers nowadays look to social media platforms rather than traditional media (Faradhilla et al., 2024). In a survey by Silva et al. (2020), it was explained that awareness and involvement are the main objectives of the SMM platform implementation by B2C companies. Therefore, businesses such as B2C companies are now using social media platforms as a marketing tool to promote their products and services to influence consumers' purchasing decisions (Faradhilla et al., 2024). Although

B2C companies entirely depend on social media marketing (Iankova et al., 2019), they were akin to mixed models in multilateral and hierarchical channels rather than one-to-one.

2.2 Social media marketing and consumers' online purchase decisions

In this section, the author will define social media marketing (SMM), its importance to business-to-consumer companies (B2C), as well as define online consumer purchasing decisions and its significant in the context of e-commerce.

2.2.1 Definitions of social media marketing

Social media marketing is a wide, cross-functional strategy in which organizations incorporate social media frequently with other forms of communication to generate value to stakeholders and successfully attain their objectives through thoughtful decisions regarding the extent to which social media is widely used, open, and responsive to such use (Felix et al., 2016, p. 123). Social media marketing is a type of internet marketing, which seeks to promote brand awareness, online presence, and marketing communication goals by facilitating interactive information sharing and communication between users in social networking sites, social web applications, blogs, multimedia-sharing media, and virtual environments as different from traditional one-way and passive information transmission (Taubenheim et al., 2008).

Social media, which is Internet-based and online, has altered the consumer consumption pattern because it offers consumers alternative methods of seeking and evaluating goods and services along with the acquisition and purchasing of goods and services (Alves et al., 2016, p. 1029). Social media is actively used by customers to find information, advice, and recommendations. Simultaneously, advancements in the information technology field make it possible to disseminate information through different platforms, making it a major factor for the fast distribution of user-generated material, which assists in enhancing the corporate procedures (Żyminkowska &

Zachurzok-Srebrny, 2025). The research of Antczak, p. (2024, p. 331) reveals that consumers believe online product information to be credible and will read online product information before purchasing products, and their satisfaction with online shopping and products stimulates the switch from traditional shopping to online purchasing. Social media platforms have become an important part of marketing communications with customers in online marketplaces (Lamichhane et al., 2025). The social media channels have become a vital communication and source of information access, leading to the need to be vocal to be able to express individuals' opinions, viewpoints, and personal experiences on different issues that shape the thoughts, attitudes, and behaviours of their followers (Zaki et al., 2025, p. 1).

Nowadays, customers are becoming more knowledgeable in purchasing online products. However, there are some barriers to employing social media to reach consumers include the lack of appropriate scales to measure and analyse constructs of interest, the dynamism of the existing and new social media platforms and the application of social network analysis to analyse the flow of electronic word-of-mouth information and the effect of such information on consumer attitudes and behaviour (Dwivedi et al., 2020, p. 7). The research from Neupane (2020) states that Marketers in online marketing should have a clear idea of how to use social media to market their products to retain their existing consumers as well as attract more new customers. The marketing staff in the company may use the social media as the medium to increase the customer online repurchase intention for instance the marketing personnel could create and post high quality content that is engaging, informative and meets the needs and interests of the target audience and respond to comments and messages and feedback posted by customers on the social media in a timely manner(Zhou, 2023, p. 5).

Finland is especially useful regarding the technology use trends since it is a leader in the usage patterns of consumer technology (Koiranen et al., 2019). Like most of the Western European countries, Finland is considered an established information society, with mobile telephones, computers, and internet services being accessible and used over the

past two decades (Floridi, 2016). According to Statista (2025), Social Media Advertising in Nepal is experiencing a significant growth driven by increased internet penetration, growth in smartphone movement and the growing inclination of businesses to use digital marketing as a way of approaching consumers in an effective manner. Sularto and Kozlova (2025) indicate that the advertising programme, as well as the social media marketing, has a direct impact on the way individuals interact with advertisements and their purchase decisions on the internet. Companies need to consider social media marketing as a tool of reaching consumers and as a tool of developing trust and brand image (Moslehpour et al., 2021).

2.2.2 Importance of social media marketing for business-to-consumer (B2C) companies

Online advertising that harnesses social media platforms to meet branding and marketing communication objectives is known as social media marketing (Shrestha et al., 2023). Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok serve as key channels for social media marketing (SMM) initiatives as they allow companies to foster consumer interactions that increase sales, brand visibility, and consumer loyalty (Huo & Filieri, 2025). In a global context, social media has presented businesses with several advantages as well as challenges (Duque, 2017). Social media marketing (SMM) has grown so prevalent in contemporary society that it is impossible to ignore the business sector's immense marketing abilities, which enable companies to achieve extremely lucrative outcomes (Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2023). The examples of most famous tech-oriented companies like Microsoft, eBay, Amazon, and Alibaba serve as the most well-known examples (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi, 2012).

The report from 2016 shows a noteworthy 90% of marketers stated that social media (SM) was significant to their company, while just 41% believe they were able to track their social activities because it impacted how consumers and businesses communicate (Silva et al., 2020). E-commerce has the potential to benefit consumers and businesses more in emerging markets; in the meantime, it plays a vital role in progressing the

society and economy of developed ones (Huseynov & Yildirim, 2019). Business-to-Business (B2B), Business-to-Consumer (B2C), Business-to-Government (B2G), Government-to-Business (G2B), Government-to-Citizen (G2C), Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C), and Consumer-to-Business (C2B) are the most common and well-known e-commerce forms (Rahman, 2025). Regarding the relevance of financial measurements in SMM, it seems that revenue metrics are more essential for B2C companies (Silva et al., 2020).

The worldwide e-commerce sector was valued at \$6.3 trillion in 2026 and is estimated to grow to \$7.9 trillion by 2027, with over 2.67 billion people, approximately about 33% of the world's population is purchasing goods and services online (Rahman, 2025). While B2C adopt social media (SM) quickly as their strategy to communicate with consumers at lower rates (Iankova et al., 2019). According to Rahman (2025), active users of the well-known e-commerce companies, such as Amazon and Alibaba, were: Amazon 310 million, followed by Walmart in second place with 255 million, and Alibaba in third place with 903 million in 2024 (Rahman, 2025). While analysing financial matrix assessing operating SMM by B2C companies, it plays a second role, most likely to be a consequence of challenges in measuring the actual revenue produced by that advertisement (Silva et al., 2020). Furthermore, B2C companies tend to be more concerned with influence, customer satisfaction, engagement, awareness, and website access from social media platforms than financial indicators (Silva et al., 2020).

Some businesses allow users to access their websites with Facebook login and when consumers do like, share or comment on any Facebook post of a company page then such interactions will automatically appear on their personal feeds, which is a primary indicator of the overall success of their social media strategy (Kwok & Yu, 2013). Social media enables consumers to communicate with one another through social media which offers a WOM impact on companies (Kwok & Yu, 2013). To gain competitive advantage and successfully evaluate the competitive environment of the business, companies must not only monitor and analyze the content posted by customers on their

respective social media platforms but also read the textual content in their competitors social media platforms (He et al., 2013). There are several different kinds of posts and content that a business can utilize on their Facebook page to notify customers about several different products and offers that are accessible because Facebook is a two-way communication platform and making it useful for a company to get direct feedback from actual and potential customers(Chawla & Chodak, 2021).

2.2.3 Definition and importance of consumer's online purchase decisions

An online purchase decision is the decision that a consumer makes to purchase a product or service through the internet (Al-Hattami, 2021). While shopping, consumers take time and effort to accomplish various activities, and as the customer today is as time-starved as ever, and it is reasonable to think about the advantages of offering convenience online shopping (Duarte et al., 2018). As the Internet and smart devices are rising, the percentage of Internet consumption mode in the daily transactions of commodities is growing, and the number of online consumers is also quickly expanding each year. Consumers who follow the online product recommendation appear to use a recommendation not to reduce the search effort but to get additional information (Senecal et al., 2005).

Consumers prefer online purchasing than traditional retail because it is more convenient and flexible for shopping (Liu et al., 2022). Most consumers enjoy reading the reviews of other customers regarding the products or services offered by retailers before making their buying decisions (Fernandes et al., 2022). An online review is a topic that has gained significant attention in the literature in recent years, as its presence has been established to be significant while making the purchase (Korfiatis et al., 2012). Every online store offers online review options, to which consumers can leave their feedback about the product (Wrabel et al., 2022). E-commerce firms that desire users to be persuaded by reviews must possess relevant measures that ensure that reviews in general are taken to be credible (Changchit et al., 2021). Online shopping has remained

popular and improved customer experiences through the development of internet technology (Zhang et al., 2019). Though online platforms are made to facilitate an easier purchase, the findings imply that they need to persuade consumers to consider more choices through simple automated tools that minimize mental effort and make the decision-making process simpler and more attractive (Karimi et al., 2018).

Consumers' opinions towards products and services can be influenced by numerous factors, resulting in reviews, comparisons, choices, and purchases across a broad range of product kinds while making purchasing decisions (Phan & Nguyen, 2024). When it comes to their behavioural decision-making process, consumers frequently make unusual decisions (Tsatsou, 2021). In the present, consumers are becoming more suspicious of advertising and marketing techniques (Phan & Nguyen, 2024). So, to compete with their competitors' businesses that offer online goods and services, specially like tourism sectors, should prioritise gathering quick feedback, to improve their quality of services, which can also create positive word of mouth (Azhar et al., 2023). Consumers' purchasing decisions are significant to companies, whether it is B2B or B2C, as millions of people make several purchasing decisions every day, so many marketers focus on these decisions (Malla, 2018).

Over the past few years, many consumers have shifted to electronic commerce because of its benefits like easy shopping, affordability, and the ability to find a wide selection of goods which has fundamentally changed the way people perceive and transact in commercial activities (Yoon, 2002). One of the distinctive features of the online shopping environment is that they can be chosen to have extremely prominent level of interactivity (Häubl & Trifts, 2000). Online shopping usually allows consumers to make the right purchase decision by reading online reviews about the quality of the goods, the reputation of the seller, the speed of the service and delivery, the quality of courier delivery service and other details (Shao et al., 2014). Due to pandemic e.g. coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), the online business opportunity has been significantly expanded due to the implementation of social distancing, online order, shop closures, and other policies (Petcharat & Leelasantitham, 2021, p. 2). Today, anyone can visit the

web site of a company and get the additional information about a product. The development of the digital channel has enhanced the communication between the company and the consumers and channels like social media, search engines or email have assisted the latter in enhancing the value proposition by the companies and this has led the latter company to obtain the desired customers and raise the value attached to the consumer experience (Pires et al., 2022, p. 8). Social media, such as where users share with each other their experiences of shopping on a variety of platforms has undergone a massive information explosion over the past few years and the information processing capacity of the consumer is at a low level (Gao et al., 2012, p. 779).

Trivedi and Sama (2020) state that it is significant that influencers should make sure that they assist their followers with real and current product information, which raises the level of consumer engagement and, in addition, improves brand attitude. Online shopping is more attractive as it gives us an opportunity to make more purchases without spending our time and effort (Irawan, 2018, p. 115). More consumers are increasingly willing to shop online, and more companies are investing in online infrastructure (Roy & Datta, 2023). One of the most important emerging trends of technological transformations in marketing has been online shopping (Guo & Wang, 2024, p. 92). Companies can make the benefits of e-commerce information, like product details, images, and videos, include adding epistemic value by drawing consumers' attention and hence consequently influencing their purchase decisions (Wang & Li, 2023).

Online shopping also enhances the affordability of branded apparel since they have unique offers and cashbacks (Agrawal, 2023, p. 41). Social media provides the firms with a more favourable platform to advertise and earn brand trust and loyalty (Sohail et al., 2020). Companies must provide flash discounts, time-sensitive deals, and unique offers online to create a feeling of exclusivity and enthusiasm. This increases the excitement of discovery and purchase that increase the psychological value (Turkson et al., 2024).

2.3 Different types of social media used by business-to-consumer companies

Social media marketing (SMM) activities, with various forms, including blogs, podcasts, weblogs, social bookmarking, videos, pictures, and wikis (Kim and Ko, 2012), can be executed with considerable money and time, which helps companies to communicate with consumers in cost-effective ways (Iankova et al., 2019). According to Saravanakumar and Suganthalakshmi (2012), commonly used social media marketing tools are Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. In this section, some popularly adopted social media marketing tools by business-to-consumer (B2C) companies are outlined below:

2.3.1 Facebook

Facebook was founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, Eduardo Saverin, Andrew McCollum, Dustion Moskovitz, and Chris Highes (Maaroufi, 2025). The research conducted by Saravanakumar and SuganthaLakshmi (2012) shows that Facebook is one of the platform-specific priorities between 94% of research participants. They further mentioned that with 600 million potential customers on Facebook, businesses have taken to the platform and are actively testing out new communication techniques (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi, 2012). According to Iankova et al. (2019), compared to other business forms, such as business-to-business (B2B), business-to-consumer (B2C) prefer Broad-based consumption social media platforms such as Facebook. Though being more widely known, Facebook still maintains immense worldwide engagement and provides advertisements with an extensive selection to reach consumers in both developed and developing countries (Statista, 2025).

2.3.2 Instagram

Instagram was designed by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger (Maaroufi, 2025). It is an influential tool for marketers concentrating on visually appealing content (posting

photos and videos) (Ibrahim & Alijarah, 2023). According to Statista (2025), Instagram has been growing in popularity as a hub for social commerce, influencer marketing, and visual storytelling, making it particularly attractive to consumers, fashion influencers, and entertainment enterprises. Currently, Instagram is owned by Facebook (Meta) since 2012 (Maaroufi, 2025), which has more than three billion followers as of September 2025 (Statista, 2025). As Instagram enables users to communicate with each other, users can get to know each other more closely, which may develop into mutual trust, and this type of influence can impact consumers' purchasing decisions (Klami, 2022). However, Instagram is an effective social media marketing medium for customer acquisition of B2C businesses (Kumar & Masvood, 2022).

2.3.3 TikTok

TikTok, known as Douyin in China, was founded by a Chinese startup company, ByteDance, in 2016, which became popular among younger generations for "short-form video-sharing" (Maaroufi, 2025). It allows users to create and share videos on other social media platforms, which are mostly related to trending songs, memes, or dialogues (Sheak & Abdulrazak, 2023). Phan and Nguyen (2024) mention that, according to Statista (2020), TikTok was in the second position in the Android App and first in the iOS App Store throughout the pandemic. Both Instagram and TikTok are image-based platforms that allow users to create content about products or services and share it with followers and friends (Phan & Nguyen, 2024).

2.3.4 YouTube

YouTube is a social media platform that allows users to upload videos and audio to their channels that can be accessed all over the world (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi, 2012). The average number of interactions of YouTube videos increased approximately from 2.1 in 2023 to 2.36 in 2024, which shows increased user engagement (Tila, 2025). According to Statista research in October 2025, approximately 39.6% audiences were

engaged in YouTube (Statista, 2025). The results further show that YouTube has the strongest influence in Singapore, with 95.3% engaged users, and the lowest in Nigeria, with 23.3% penetration rate (Statista, 2025). Saravanakumar and SuganthaLakshmi (2012) stated that Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter are regarded as pillars for most social-media-based companies these days.

2.3.5 WhatsApp

WhatsApp is an effective social media marketing platform that allows users to promote, buy, and sell products cost-effectively online at any time (Badik et al., 2025). WhatsApp was introduced in 2009 by Brian Acton and Jan Koum and was later purchased by Facebook in 2014 (Maaroufi, 2025). Badik et al. (2025) examined the importance of WhatsApp in boosting SME sales and further explained that WhatsApp consists of several features that can enhance sales at an affordable price. According to Statista (Vailshery, 2025), with 57 million downloads, WhatsApp was the most popular chat and messaging app in June 2025, gaining about 25.8 million downloads in the same month. WhatsApp's marketing capabilities are enhanced by several features that include networks, direct communication, and status updates, which are essential for sales of goods and services (Badik et al., 2025). It allows users to exchange texts, photos, videos, and voice messages in addition to facilitating audio and video calling (Vailshery, 2025).

2.4 SMM and consumer features driving consumers' online purchase decisions

In this section, the study will cover some key social media features influencing consumers online purchasing decisions, focusing on social media features such as Informativeness, perceived relevance, and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) as well as consumers features such as attitude towards online purchasing, security of buying online, price sensitivity, and trust that can drive consumers' online purchasing decisions.

2.4.1 Social media features driving consumers' online purchase decisions

With the advancement of technology, various social media platforms have emerged to let consumers connect electronically (Rahaman et al., 2022). This advancement in communication technology also causes consumers to rely on social media marketing while making purchasing decisions (Faradhilla et al., 2024). However, the previous researchers have concentrated on the social media features like perceived reliance, information quality, interactivity, and eWOM (Rahaman et al., 2022; Huseynov & Yildirim, 2019; Faradhilla et al., 2024) individually or considering some of them. They have not considered all in one paper; therefore, in this section, the author is taking four features of SMM, i.e., Informativeness, Perceived reliance, Interactivity, and eWOM that drive consumers' online purchasing decisions, which are explained below:

Informativeness

According to Rahaman et al. (2022), "information quality" (IQ) refers to the user's impression of whether information attribution meets their preferences or specific requirements. Social media marketing is an internet-based social platform designed to communicate and connect with the public, stakeholders, suppliers, and company rivals by providing information (Faradhilla et al., 2024). So, providing high-quality information through social media platforms elevates consumer perception of its use and value, which leads to better decisions when making purchases (Rahaman et al., 2022). Rahaman et al. (2022) also state that when consumers get reliable information through social media about products and services, it can improve their buying decisions as it increases their options. Kim and Ko (2011) provide the data in their paper, which states that according to DEI Worldwide (2008), 70% consumers use SMM to get information, where 49% of consumers decide to purchase because of the information found online. These findings show a positive relationship between informativeness and consumers' online purchase decisions. So, based on the above discussion following hypothesis could be derived:

H1: There is a positive relationship between Informativeness and Consumers online purchase decisions in Nepal and Finland.

Perceived relevance

Perceived relevance can be defined as the mediation that is associated between social media marketing and purchasing intention, at the same time, the entertainment and consumer engagement as social media marketing elements that play role in boosting buying intention through trust and perceived quality (Hasan & Scorpianti, 2022). Companies that embrace modern technologies experience gain several advantages, particularly in the processing and handling of payments (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi, 2012). According to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), people develop a positive perspective towards embracing current information technology when they believe it is helpful and easy to use (Huseynov & Yildirim, 2019). Therefore, Consumers are more inclined to use the social media marketing platform or an information technology platform that is perceived as easy and straightforward to use (Huseynov & Yildirim, 2019). The findings by Huseynov and Yildirim (2019) indicate that customers of all groups who perceive online buying as easy and compatible with their lifestyle develop a positive attitude regarding online shopping. Which shows a positive relationship between perceived relevance and consumers online purchase decisions. Thus, from the above discussion following hypothesis could be formulated:

H2: There is a positive relationship between Perceived relevance and Consumers online purchase decisions in Nepal and Finland.

Interactivity

According to Steuer (1992, p. 84), Interactivity refers to the degree to which the user can modify an allocated environment's dimensions and design both the layout and content of the virtual environment in real-time. In another word, Interactivity is a crucial

feature of social media that plays a significant role in building brand trust (Faradhilla et al., 2024). Interactivity as a concept was visualized as the potential of a firm to allow the stakeholder to share and exchange a pool of information with other parties in a virtual manner (Hanaysha, 2022). When consumers have a good motive to buy, a brand's friendly character likely to boosts the purchase (Hasan & Scorpianti, 2022). Faradhilla et al. (2024) further explain that social media Interactivity helps to create positive purchasing decisions in consumers, either directly or indirectly through brand trust. They also state that when a brand trust grows between consumers in a target market, it is easy for companies to communicate their intended messages and establish a favourable impression. The empirical proof of a positive relationship between Interactivity and consumers' online purchase decisions can be supported by this example: In the comment section of TikTok, user interactions with the company or among themselves over content that attracts their attention serve as evidence of brand recognition and positively impact buying decisions (Sheak & Abdulrazak, 2023). So, from the above discussion following hypothesis could be formulated:

H3: There is a positive relationship between Interactivity and Consumers online purchase decisions in Nepal and Finland.

Electronic word of mouth (eWOM)

The internet has provided consumers with a chance to expand their information search and sharing opportunities before or after an online purchase (Matute et al., 2016). Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) refers to reviews or comments about products and services that are widely available on internet platforms (Rahaman et al., 2022). eWOM spreads through a virtual environment, where information spreads extremely fast, and reviews are shared with more people (King et al., 2014). When giving online feedback and reviews (eWOM) grounded on product description, self-relevance may motivate consumers to search for further information about the product (Tanxebiński & Marciniak, 2022). In the present global business world, social media has enabled

consumers to generate electronic word of mouth (eWOM) through product and service reviews, feedback, and blogs on multiple social media platforms (Rahaman et al., 2022). eWOM plays a significant role in influencing consumers' purchasing decisions.

The empirical study on social media influence by Duque (2017, p. 84) shows that seven out of ten participants expressed their willingness to purchase furniture through online platforms by the end of the interview, who were having negative attitude towards buying through social media first, which shows the positive effect of WOM on buying decisions. Nuseir (2019) states that eWOM significantly affects consumers' intentions to make online purchases and their perceptions of brands. Likewise, the empirical study of Aslam et al. (2019) also suggests that eWOM has a positive impact on purchase intention. So, from the above discussion, the following hypothesis could be developed:

H4: There is a positive relationship between eWOM and consumers' online purchase decisions in Nepal and Finland.

2.4.2 Consumer features driving consumers' online purchase decisions

The broad adoption of internet networks and rapid development of technology have led to the rise of the global economy and changed buyers' behaviour (Dahal et al., 2025). There might be numerous factors that drive consumers' online purchase decisions. So, in this section, the study will explore some of the consumer features for online purchasing decisions.

Attitude towards online purchasing

Attitude towards online shopping refers to the feeling and beliefs held by an individual's regarding purchasing products or services via the Internet (Al-Kan hateeb et al., 2023, p. 4). In an online shopping scenario, consumers will be inclined to have positive attitudes towards purchasing products online when they believe that the devices or tools linked

to the internet are simple to use (Nguyen et al., 2019). Even though the attitude of a person is influenced by their beliefs, performing a certain behaviour may become a critical factor of behavioural intention where the theory of reasoned action assumes that subjective norms contribute to the intention foundation (Zendehdel et al., 2015, p. 4). From the study of Irshad and Ahmad (2019), it implies that advertisements and brand pages that contain good informative contents on social media are significant to fashion retailers because they positively impact consumer attitudes towards social media marketing and online shopping intentions.

Due to the widespread use of the internet and online shopping, people have less concerns about complexity and are primarily interested in whether they find online shopping easy, positive, and suitable to their everyday lifestyle (Zendehdel et al., 2015, p. 9). However, there are individuals with a positive attitude towards online shopping due to the convenience, a variety of options, and in most cases lower price, while others might be worried about the safety of transactions on the internet, quality of goods, or lack of physical touch on the product prior to their buying (Al-Khateeb et al., 2023, p. 4). According to Tran and Nguyen (2022), Attitude towards online shopping positively affected customers' intention to purchase online. Similarly, the empirical study of Irshad and Ahmad (2019) also demonstrated that attitude towards social media marketing positively influences the online purchase intentions of consumers. Thus, from the above discussion following hypothesis could be formulated:

H5: There is a positive relationship between Attitude and Consumers online purchase decisions in Nepal and Finland.

Security of buying online

Security is a crucial attribute in the success of e-commerce, and the security concerns have affected consumer behaviour (Miyazaki & Fernandez, 2001). Risks related to online shopping receive limited attention despite their significant impact on e-commerce

(Miyazaki & Fernandez, 2001). One of the primary reasons why web users are not shopping online is due to security concern as people are afraid to shop online due to the lack of security and privacy as they would like to be sure that all their sensitive data is safe and well secured (Nepomuceno et al., 2014). The perception of risks held by the customers would only be reduced when they believe that the online group-buying site has offered them adequate protection to assure them that their personal data will not be compromised, and their online transaction is secure (Li & Yuan, 2018, p. 593). Consumers get to know how valuable the goods are compared to the features of the site which provide product information quality, ability to transact and deliver as well as competent service quality (Ariffin et al., 2018).

Security is one of the key concerns for both customers and retailers because it relates to the protection of financial and sensitive data when delivering online and the verification of authenticity and identity of the sender (Changchit et al., 2018). Empirical study of Celliers et al. (2025) indicates that perception of information privacy and information security influences perception towards online purchasing. Thus, from the above discussion, the following hypothesis could be formulated:

H6: There is a positive relationship between Security and Consumers online purchase decisions in Nepal and Finland.

Price Sensitivity

Price sensitivity is the primary mechanism used to determine optimal price levels for maximising revenue and profit (Rahmani & Kordrostami, 2023). Price sensitivity is the reaction of consumers toward price variation, where consumers who are price sensitive tend to mostly favour low prices, and they cannot afford a product when they believe that it is expensive or not worth the purchase (Alavi & Ahuja, 2013, p. 40). In terms of the relative effects of perceived price, Kim et al. (2012) findings showed that the effect on purchase intention is greater among repeat customers compared to potential

customers. The companies hoping to compete in the e-marketplace need to be aware of the kind of customers they are dealing with and build their strategies around attracting new e-customers and retaining the existing ones (Hernández et al., 2010, p. 970). Consumers who are very price sensitive may be exposed to more product related content to enhance the perceived value attached to the product and diminish their price sensitivity by sharing more product-related information, attributes, and plans with product and price evaluations (Alavi & Ahuja, 2013, p. 46).

According to Kim et al. (1999), Shopping Intensity and Price Sensitivity are positively and significantly correlated with each other. The empirical research by Yuen et al. (2022) states that price consciousness is observed to positively affect social media marketing and online purchase intention. Consumers target lower prices and are willing to invest time on social media to search for lower-priced products (Yuen et al., 2022). Thus, from the above discussion, the following hypothesis could be formulated:

H7: There is a positive relationship between Price sensitivity and Consumers online purchase decisions in Nepal and Finland.

Trust in online platforms/Sellers

Trust can be defined as the degree to which consumers are willing to believe in sellers claims and actions that affects buying decisions (Hasan & Scorpianti, 2022). Trust plays a vital role in various aspect of life particularly in business or personal financial transactions (Dutta & Bhat, 2016). Trust can be created when users see any social media platform as trustworthy and effective, when they find the website's dashboard to be user-friendly, attractive, and responsive, which may help to grow trust, resulting in buying (Dahal et al., 2025). Furthermore, Dahal et al. (2025) emphasized that in addition to boost consumers satisfaction, effective digital operation generates cognitive trust, which is the perception of believing the system delivers outcomes quickly and efficiently. Trust becomes more crucial for consumers because e-commerce transactions are riskier

than traditional offline transactions (Dutta & Bhat, 2016). Social media marketing (SMM) platforms like Instagram allow users to interact with one another; in this way, members get to know each other better, which might build mutual trust and lead to influencing consumers' purchasing decisions (Klami, 2022). Trust is an essential feature of consumer behaviour in the e-commerce setting and it is also among the main requirements influencing purchase intention (Garg & Kumar, 2021, p. 55).

The research determined that the impulse purchase orientation, as well as earlier experience of online purchase and online trust, have a substantial influence on purchase intention of the customer (Thamizhvanan & Xavier, 2013). The empirical research by Yoon (2002) states that trust has a positive relationship with the online purchase decision. Similarly, Mahliza (2020) demonstrates that trust has a positively effect on online purchase decision, which indicates that the more the consumer trusts the seller, which is expressed by the competence, benevolence, and integrity of the seller, the greater the consumers' purchase decision. Thus, from the above discussion, the following hypothesis could be formulated:

H8: There is a positive relationship between Trust and Consumers online purchase decisions in Nepal and Finland.

2.5 Model of the study

In this study, the conceptual model is based on the literature reviewed to explore the influence of social media marketing features such as informativeness, perceived relevance, interactivity, and electronic word of mouth and consumer features such as attitude toward online purchasing, perceived security, price sensitivity and trust on consumer's online purchase decisions in Nepal and Finland. In this study, social media marketing features and consumers features are treated as independent variables

whereas consumer online purchase decisions are treated as dependent variables. The conceptual framework for this study is shown below:

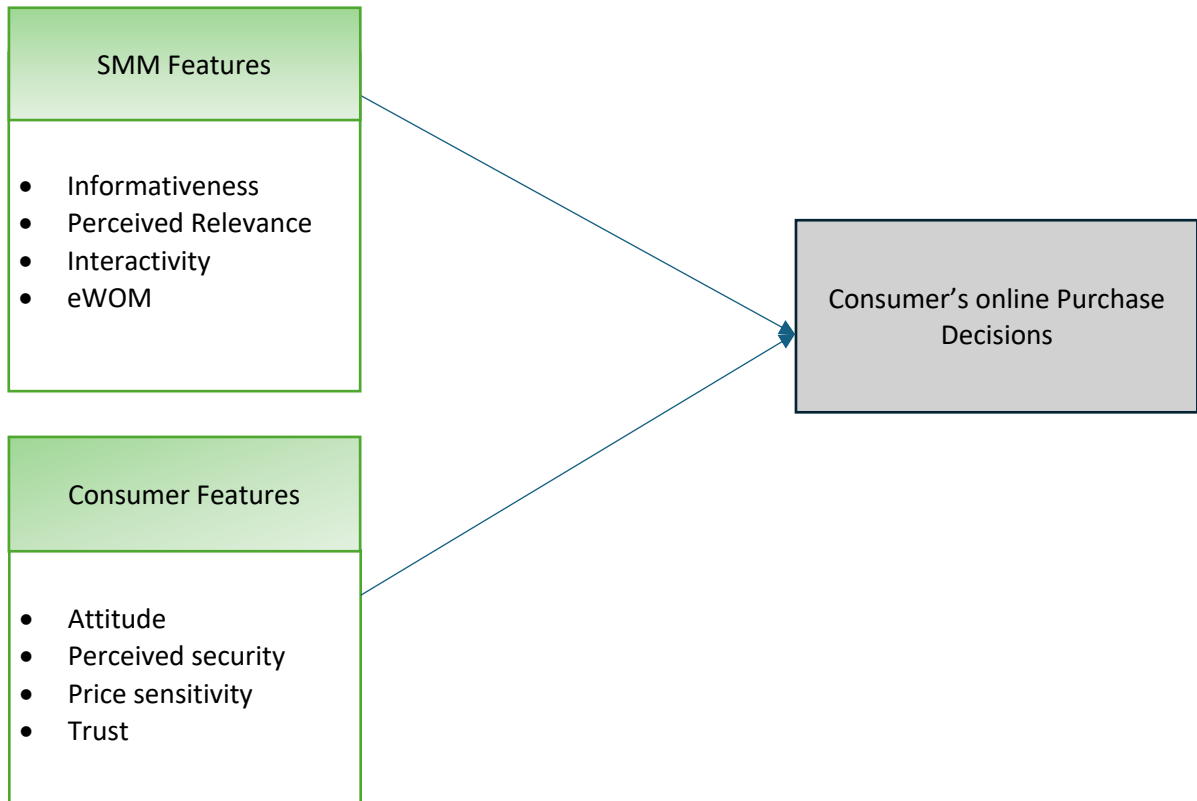


Figure 1. Model of the Study

This framework supports the empirical comparison between Finland and Nepal. The research has been undertaken in response to the increasing role of social media marketing influencing consumer online purchase decisions in an increasingly digital world market. Although many researchers have focused on a single country or developed countries, this study adopts a comparative perspective using Nepal and Finland to analyze the influence of social media marketing on consumers' online purchase decisions. The comparison of these two countries may help to better understand how contextual factors influence the reaction of consumers to social media marketing.

3 Research Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology of research applied in the study along with the reasoning behind those choices. Research methodology is a systematic set of rules and principles that are used to design, conduct, and analyse a research study. Research methods are considered as all those methods or techniques which are applied in the conduction of research (Kothari, 2004). It includes research approach, Choice of quantitative research methods, data collection and research credibility is used to obtain validity and reliability of research.

3.1 Research approach

Research approach is a strategy and process that extends to general prediction to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Chetty, 2024). The main two important types of research approach that are commonly used are Deductive approach and Inductive approach (Saunders et al., 2007). Inductive reasoning proceeds on specific observations towards generalizations and theory and this is also called “bottom-up” approach (Sachdeva, 2009). Whereas the deductive research method is a theory-testing method because the research begins with an existing theory and proceeds to data gathering and empirical testing (Saunders et al., 2007).

This study follows a deductive approach because research is based on empirical research for exploring the relationship between SMM features, consumer features, and consumers’ online purchase decisions in Nepal and Finland. This required hypothesis testing and empirical investigation, which is aligned with a deductive approach. This research employs a structured questionnaire and quantitative data analysis, which is associated with a deductive approach. Therefore, a deductive approach is suitable for the study to achieve the objectives of this research.

A deductive approach is used to develop a theory, the creation of a hypothesis, and a research strategy formulated to test the hypothesis (Saunders et al., 2007). The key feature of the deductive approach is that concepts must be operationalised to allow quantitative measurement (Saunders et al., 2007). Deductive qualitative research enables the investigator to apply existing theory to test meanings, processes, and stories behind interpersonal and intrapersonal phenomena (Fife & Gossner, 2024, p. 1). Deductive theory testing is typically identified with a positivist paradigm of scientific research and with quantitative research methods of social sciences (Bitektine, 2008).

3.2 Choice of quantitative research method

Quantitative research refers to the mode of testing objective theories through the study of the relationship of variables, where the researcher measures the variables by use of statistical techniques (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Quantitative research involves the application of mathematical operations to analyse data collected, which provides a statistical overview that relates to the research questions, objectives, and aims (Rangaswamy & Rizkyanovli, 2023). Quantitative researchers are deductive in testing theories that construct defences against bias and control against alternative or counterfactual explanations and attempt to generalize and replicate the results (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

This study adopts quantitative research methods to examine the empirical relationship between the social media marketing features and consumer features on online purchase decisions in Nepal and Finland. A quantitative research design was used because the purpose of the study was to collect data from a large sample to generalize the study findings and to test the model and hypotheses of the research. A quantitative approach is appropriate for empirical analysis of relationships and for statistical testing. So, the quantitative research method is suitable for this study.

3.3 Data collection

The data collection process starts once the research problem and plan are well- defined. At this point, the researcher must remember the two types of data collection, which are primary and secondary data collection, and decide the most suitable method in the study (Kothari, 2004, p. 95). Primary source refers to original and first-hand information or material that is directly gathered by the researcher in some way, such as a survey, interview, or observation, or even a log, and includes unedited data about the phenomenon under study (Sachdeva, 2009, p. 109). Whereas ,secondary sources are the information that has already been gathered and documented by someone else for various purposes and then researchers use those existing sources for their study (Sachdeva, 2009, p. 109).

In this research, the primary source of data was collected from a structured questionnaire online. The questionnaire was developed from Webropol. A survey was done by distributing a questionnaire among the consumers of Nepal and Finland, where responses were collected online. The data collection process was consistent as the respondents in both countries were using the same questionnaire. This study aims to collect data from consumers who have experience in using social media and with online shopping, which was made possible by an online survey to gather information about consumers in Nepal and Finland regarding online purchases.

3.3.1 Data sampling

Sampling refers to the act of choosing a sample of individuals or objects out of a larger population to represent that population as accurately as possible without bias and generalizability (Slater & Hasson, 2025a, p. 660). The choice of a sampling method helps to maximize representativeness of the sample to the population under study to assist in reducing selection bias and enhancing internal validity of a study (Slater & Hasson, 2025b). The population of this study consists of the customers of Finland and Nepal who

use social media and are involved in online shopping. It is not possible to cover the entire target population from Nepal and Finland, so a sample was taken from both countries to represent the target group.

The selection of sampling is the most important part of the study. The proposed study uses purposive sampling, which is a technique of non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling (or non-random sampling) offers a variety of other methods to make a set of selections depending on your subjective judgement (Saunders et al., 2007, p.226). The purposive sampling technique was used for both countries. The purposive sampling technique was selected because the research targets consumers who use social media and have experience of online shopping. Purposive or judgmental sampling allows you to use your judgement to choose cases which will help to best answer your research questions and achieve your objectives (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 230). The researcher assists in picking the participants through the judgment of the researcher based on a clear inclusion criterion (Slater & Hasson, 2025a, p. 684).

3.3.2 Questionnaire development

A well-designed questionnaire is essential to collect the right data, while an efficient one ensures that the data are gathered in a stable manner (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 364). At the beginning of the questionnaire, you must clarify clearly in brief the reason why you want the respondent to fill out the survey (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 383). Most Self-administered questionnaires are supplemented by a covering letter which explains the purpose of the survey. This is the introduction of the questionnaire that a respondent is expected to consider (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 382). In this study, the first page of the questionnaire contains a cover letter explaining the aim and purpose of the study.

In this research, the author has used a structured questionnaire. The structured questionnaires are easy to administer and cheap to analyse (Kothari, 2004, p. 102). The questionnaire was developed from Webropol, where the questionnaire was classified

into five sections: Section A, B, C, D, and E. Section A includes background information. Section B includes social media marketing features, and sections C and D include the consumer features and online purchase decision, and the last section is E, which includes voluntary information. This entire section of the questionnaire is used to measure the influence of social media marketing on online purchase decision with the consumer from Finland and Nepal. The questions used mostly five-point Likert scale responses. These ranges from strongly agreed to strongly disagree where 1 = “strongly disagree”, 2 = “disagree”, 3 = “neutral”, 4 = “agree” and 5 = “strongly agree”.

Lastly, the questionnaire was pilot tested with six participants to ensure its clarity, wording, and relevance before actual data collection. This is carried out to ensure the validity of data. The questionnaire should be pilot tested before using it to collect data, as the aim of the pilot test is to refine the questionnaire so that there will be no issues when answering the questions by the respondents, and there will be no issues in data recording (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 386). The significance of pilot testing is to assess the suitability of the instrument to the study sample, to assess the internal consistency of items, and to improve or modify questions, format, and instructions (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

3.3.3 Operationalization of variables

In this study, independent variables include social media marketing features and consumer features, while the dependent variable is the online purchasing decision. Social media marketing features consist of variables like informativeness, perceived relevance, interactivity, and electronic word of mouth, and consumer features consist of variables like attitude toward online purchasing, perceived security, price sensitivity, and trust on consumers’ online purchase decisions are variables to measures. It is important to put this concept into measurable indicators in terms of structured questionnaire items. The measures of the variables are shown in the table below:

Table 2.Operationalization of variables

Variables	Measures	Sources
Informativeness	<p>a) Social media marketing provides complete information about products and services.</p> <p>b) I find social media marketing accurate about the products on online.</p> <p>c) social media marketing helps me understand the products features that I have been searching for through online.</p>	(Rahaman et al., 2022)
Perceived Relevance	<p>d) Social media marketing provides complete product information relevance to my needs.</p> <p>e) I find products that align my interest through social media marketing platforms.</p> <p>f) Social media marketing advertisements help me find products and services I need.</p>	(Rahaman et al., 2022 ;Turkson et al., 2026)
Interactivity	<p>g) Social media marketing helps me interact with various brands quickly.</p> <p>h) I find social media marketing platforms easy to communicate with sellers.</p> <p>i) I find social media marketing platforms easy to read and give feedback.</p>	(Huo & Filieri, 2025)
eWOM	<p>j) I read online reviews and feedback before making orders.</p> <p>k) I find online feedback helpful to make my purchasing decision.</p> <p>l) Social media marketing recommendations meet my needs</p>	(Malla, 2018; Klami, 2025)
Attitude toward online purchasing	<p>m) I have a positive attitude towards buying products online.</p> <p>n) I enjoy buying products and services online.</p> <p>o) I find social media marketing helpful and enjoy services online.</p>	(Malla, 2018; Kalmi, 2022)
Perceived Security	<p>p) I feel secure while making online payments.</p>	(Celliers et al., 2025; Nepomuceno et al., 2014)

	<p>q) I know my personal information is secured while doing online purchasing.</p> <p>r) I believe online platforms secures costumers data.</p>	
Price Sensitivity	<p>s) I compare prices before buying products online.</p> <p>t) I prefer buying products online when there are any discounts or offers available.</p> <p>u) Reasonable prices strongly influence my purchasing decision.</p>	(Malla, 2018; Rai & Sherpa, 2024)
Trust	<p>v) I find social media marketing advertisement trustable.</p> <p>w) I believe Online purchasing platforms are reliable.</p> <p>x) I trust Online sellers and their promise to exchange or refund.</p>	(Kalmi, 2022)
Online Purchasing Decision	<p>y) I often purchase online after watching advertisement on social media platforms.</p> <p>z) I am interested in seeing online reviews and buying online in the future.</p> <p>aa) I enjoy surfing social media platforms and making my purchasing decisions.</p>	(Rai & Sherpa, 2024; Kalmi, 2022)

3.3.4 Data gathering process and responses

The pilot testing of the questionnaire was done on 17th -18th of February, after pilot testing on the 20th of February the online questionnaire link was generated and distributes among the respondents of Nepal and Finland for data collection. In this research primary data were collected from structure questionnaire. The questionnaires were made using webropol and were distributed through an online survey using social media platforms such as Facebook, Messenger, WhatsApp, and email. To ensure that the data collected from Finland and Nepal and from the consumers using social media platforms, respondents were asked the approximate time they spent on social media

platforms and their residence. After more than 2 weeks of data collection finally on 12th march authors collected 202 responses from the respondent of Nepal and Finland.

Primary data were collected using the online survey to ensure online accuracy, traceability, and efficiency. In this study, an online questionnaire was chosen because the consumers were from two different countries, and an online questionnaire made it possible to collect data from consumers who were geographically located in the two different countries.

3.3.5 Method of data analysis

The term analysis can be defined as the calculation of some measures and the search of patterns of relationship existing between data-groups (Kothari, 2004, p. 122). Quantitative data analysis allows for establishing statistical links between variables to advanced statistical modelling, which range from making basic tables or diagrams that display the frequency of occurrence to employing statistics like indicators to permit comparisons (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 406).

The data were gathered from the Webropol online survey, where editing and coding of the data were done, and finally inserted into software called IBM SPSS Statistics 31 version for analysis. The collected data was analyzed using software (SPSS). The analysis includes descriptive statistics, Confirmatory factor analysis, and multiple regression. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data of demographic characteristics that occurred in the sample. It is used to calculate the percentage distribution of the demographic information provided by respondents in the first section. For Confirmatory factor analysis, the Cronbach Alpha method of internal consistency was used to compute the reliability of the measures of the variables of the study using the various questionnaire items administered to respondents. Multiple regression analysis was used to explore the relationship of factors driving consumers' online purchase decisions in Finland and Nepal.

3.4 Research credibility

Research credibility is the overall trustworthiness and rigor of research so that findings correspond to reality without bias or error (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). To make the research credible, the reliability and validity of the data should be evaluated. Valid and reliable constructs explain that the data collected represent the theoretical generalities being studied accurately, which is important in drawing meaningful conclusions about the research (An & Ngo, 2025, p. 12). In a quantitative research study, the credibility can be ensured from the validity and reliability of the study, which are discussed below:

3.4.1 Validity

Validity is the degree of measuring instrument to measure what it is designed to measure, as well as reflecting true differences amongst those measured (Kothari, 2004). Establishing the validity of an instrument helps experimenters to identify whether an instrument might be a good one to use in survey research (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Content validity refers to the extent that a questionnaire or a measurement tool addresses all the significant sections of the topic you are trying to examine (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 366). Content Validity assesses the extent to which items chosen to measure a construct that may give a sufficient and representative sample of all the items that could be used to evaluate the relevant concepts in question (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008).

Construct validity is the capability to make decisions based on evidence gathered from various studies that apply a specific measuring instrument (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008). Construct validity is evaluated by analysing the relationship between the measure under evaluation and variables that are known to correlate or have a theoretical correlation with the construct that the instrument is measuring (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008). The pattern of correlations is expected to have evidence of construct validity. In this research, most questions that were adopted in the questionnaire were

developed based on an academic source, and most had been applied in previous research. This ensures the validity of the constructs. Further, the questionnaire was pre-tested, and feedback was accommodated to enhance the validity of questions.

3.4.2 Reliability

Reliability is the degree to which data gathering methods or analysis processes will produce consistent results (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 149). Reliability is the extent of accuracy or precision of measurement of a research instrument (Kumar, 2019). Reliability is the quality of a measuring device to yield the same results when measured repeatedly, and although reliability is a prerequisite of validity, a reliable instrument does not necessarily imply validity (Kothari, 2004). The internal consistency of a scale is assessed by using a Cronbach alpha (α) value, which ranges between 0 and 1, with values of .7 to .9 being optimal (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Reliability means accuracy, stability, and predictability of a research instrument, where the more reliability, the more is the accuracy (Kumar, 2019). In this research, various methods were used to enhance the reliability. Before data collection, pilot testing of the questionnaire was done to identify any errors or confusion to enhance clarity and make the questions easy to understand. An internal consistency was evaluated by using Cronbach's alpha. All the variables value greater than the recommended benchmark of 0.7, indicating acceptable reliability.

Therefore, standardizing questionnaires with clear guidelines helps to minimize confusion and errors in responding. And measuring variables with alpha values having items above the recommended level results in increased reliability and consistency outcomes of the study.

4 Empirical analysis and findings

This chapter presents the empirical analysis of data collected from questionnaires and discusses the findings of the study. It consists of demographic characteristics and confirmatory factor analysis. Finally, data analysis is presented.

4.1 Demographic characteristics

This section will present the data analysis, which was collected through an online survey from the Finnish and Nepali respondents with their demographic characteristics. A comparison between Finnish and Nepali consumers regarding the influence of SMM on online purchasing decisions was analyzed using a country-specific sample. The data obtained were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 31 software to get in-depth knowledge of different demographic characteristics. So that the results can distinguish differences and similarities between the consumer demographic characteristics of the two countries.

For this study, a total of 202 respondents participated by filling the online questionnaire, among which the total number of respondents from Nepal was 110, and the total number of respondents from Finland was 92. Even more, in this study, the respondents were categorized based on their demographic factors, which include age, gender, employment status, monthly income, education, online purchase frequency, time spent on social media, and the most used social media platform for online purchasing. These demographic characteristics play a crucial role in making a comparison between Finnish and Nepali consumers. The results presented below were obtained using IBM SPSS Statistics 31 version, which shows the demographic characteristics of Finnish and Nepali consumers.

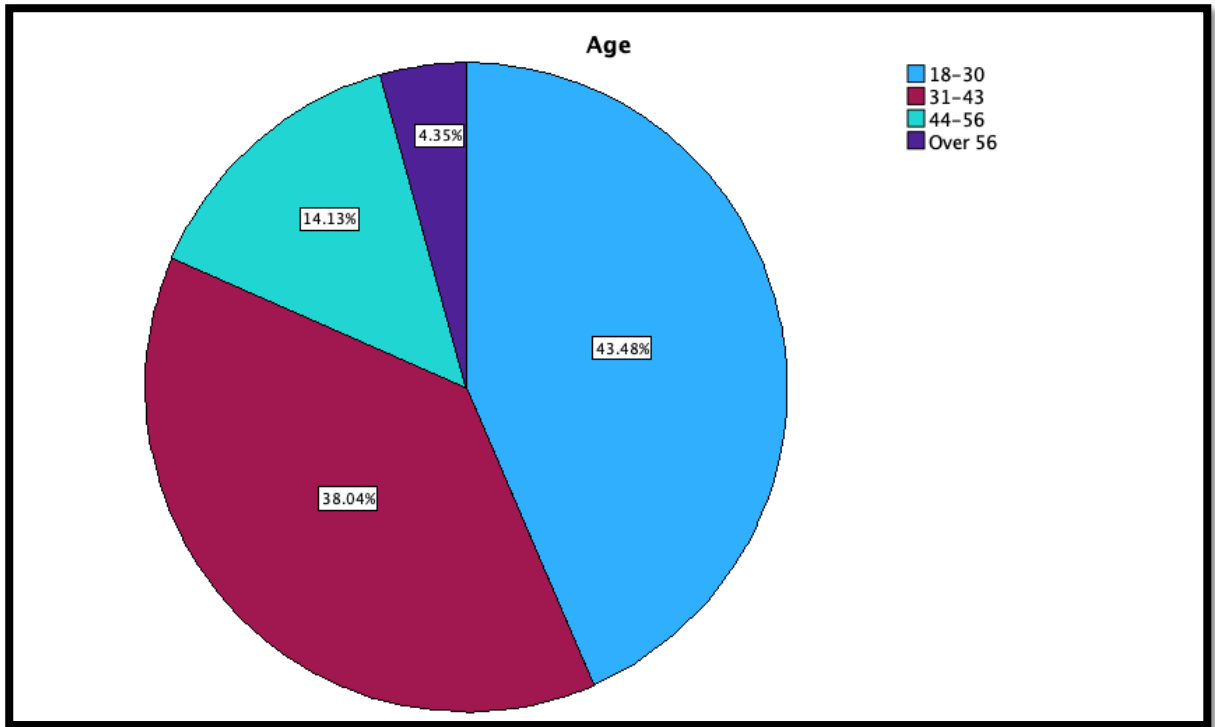


Figure 2. Age Distribution of Finnish Respondents

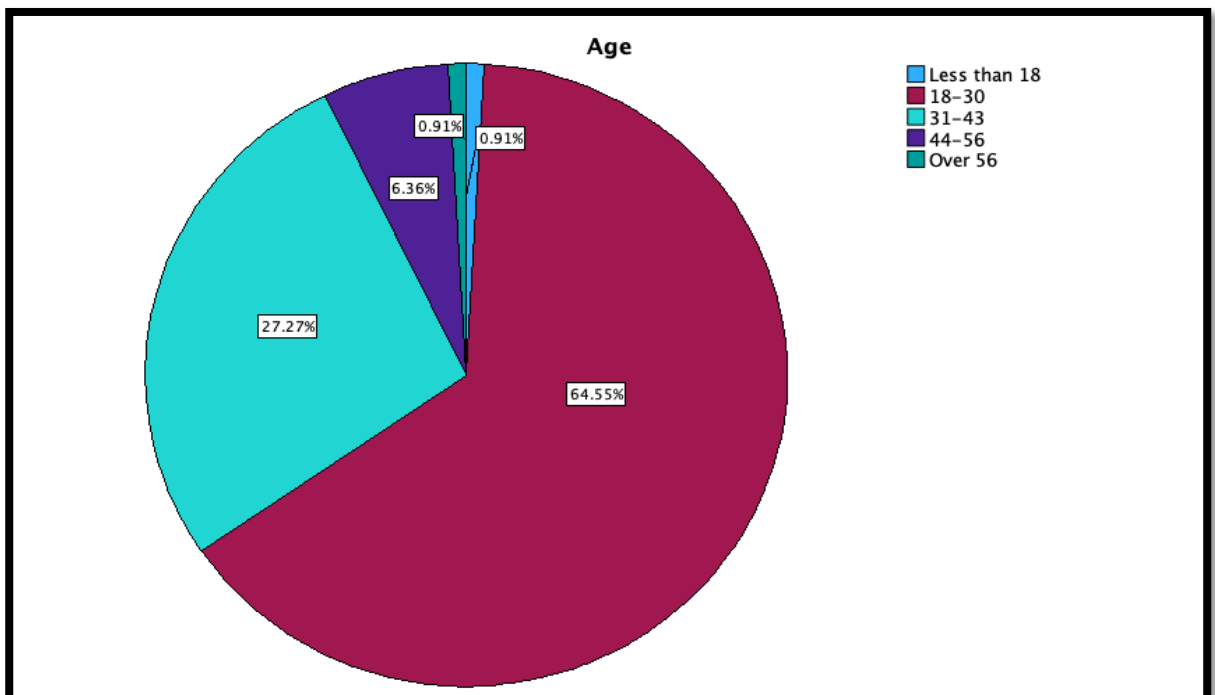


Figure 3. Age Distribution of Nepali Respondents

Figure 2 presents the age distribution of Finnish respondents, which shows that many of the respondents were in the younger age group. In particular, 43.48% of the respondents were between 18 to 30 years old (n=40) which represents the largest portion of the sample in age group followed by 38.04% age group of 31 to 43 years old (n=35), 14.13% of respondents in age groups 44 to 56 years old (n=13) and the smallest group of respondents was from age over 56 (n=4) with 4.35%. Overall, the results indicate that Finland sample is dominated by youthful age groups, and it should be taken into consideration that youthful age groups are more active in social media and can be more influenced by social media marketing in their online purchases.

Similarly, Figure 3 presents the age distribution of Nepali respondents, which shows that out of 110 respondents, the age group between 18 to 30 years old is the major group of participants with 64.55% (n=71) respondents, which is followed by age groups between 31 to 43 with a total 27.27% (n=30) respondents. In figure 3, the smallest group of participants is of the age group below 18 and over 56 years old, with 0.91% (n=1) respondents for both groups, respectively.

Based on the results, the respondents of the age group between 18 and 30 years old are the leading age group both in Finland & Nepal, with 43.48% (n=40) respondents from Finland, and 64.55% (n=71) respondents from Nepal, indicating the major consumers who purchase online. The results also show similarity to the following respondents' age group: the second-leading age group was 31 to 43, followed by 44 to 56. However, there was a difference between the age groups above 56 and under 18. It shows that respondents in the age group above 56 in Finland were 4.35% (n=4), which, on the contrary, is only 0.91% (n=1) in Nepal. Also, no respondents participated in the age group below 18 from Finland, whereas only 0.91% (n=1) of respondents were from Nepal.

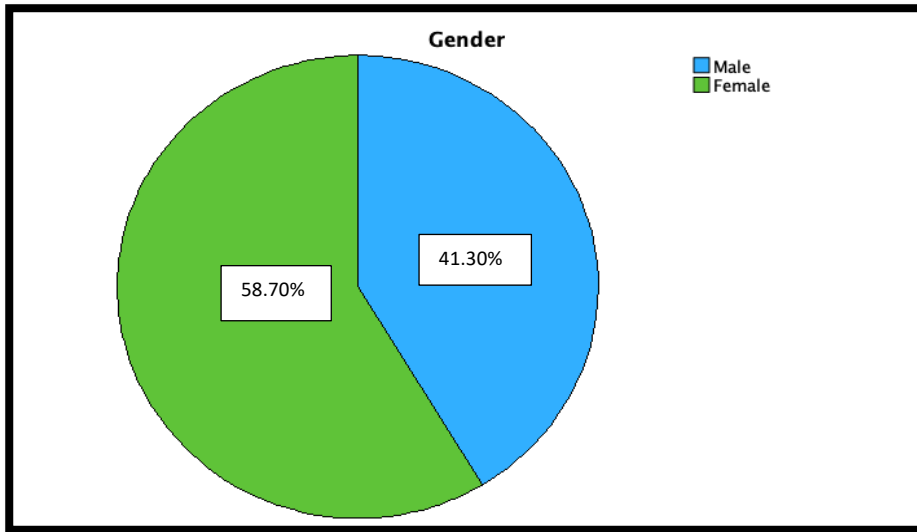


Figure 4. Gender Distribution of Finnish Respondents

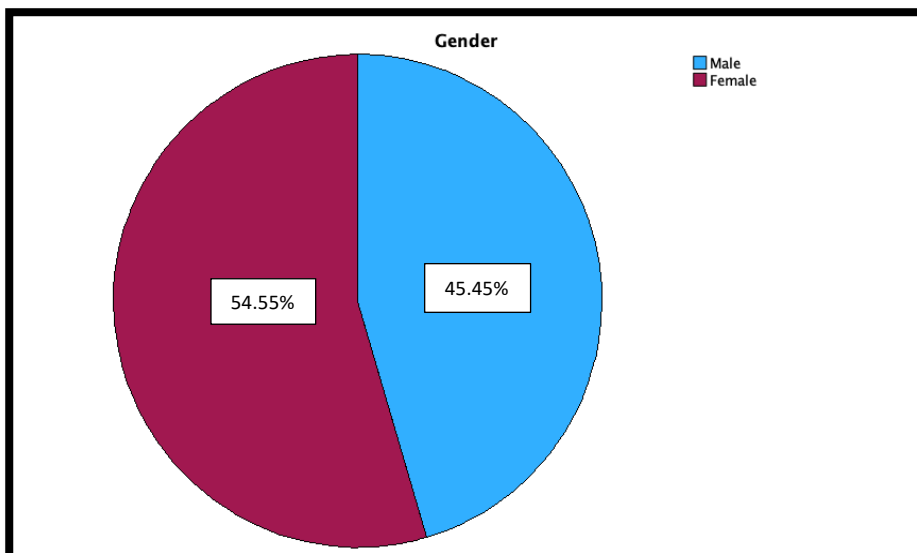


Figure 5. Gender Distribution of Nepali Respondents

Figure 4 indicates the gender distribution of the Finnish respondents, which shows that female respondents outnumbered male respondents. Female respondents consist of 58.70% ($n=54$), whereas male respondents were 41.30% ($n=38$) out of the total Finnish respondents ($n=92$). Similarly, in Figure 5, out of 110 respondents from Nepal, 54.55% ($n=60$) were female respondents, and 45.45% ($n=50$) of respondents were Male respondents. This shows that, whether in Finland or in Nepal, Female consumers are more active in using SM Platforms and online purchasing than Male consumers.

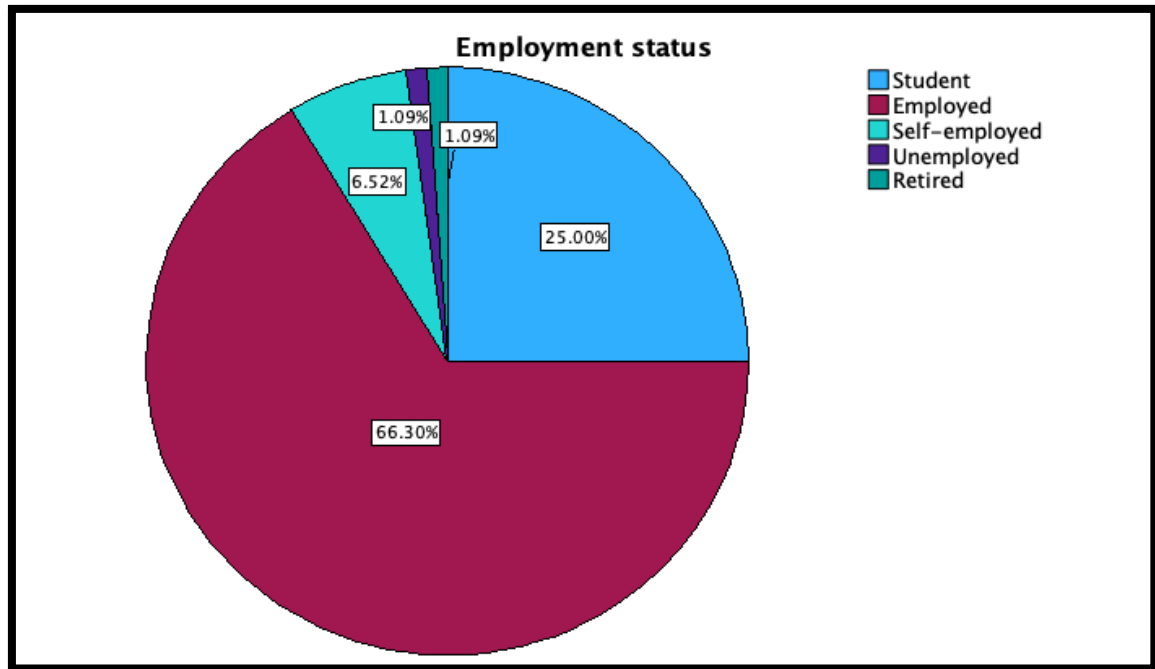


Figure 6. Employment status of Finnish Respondents

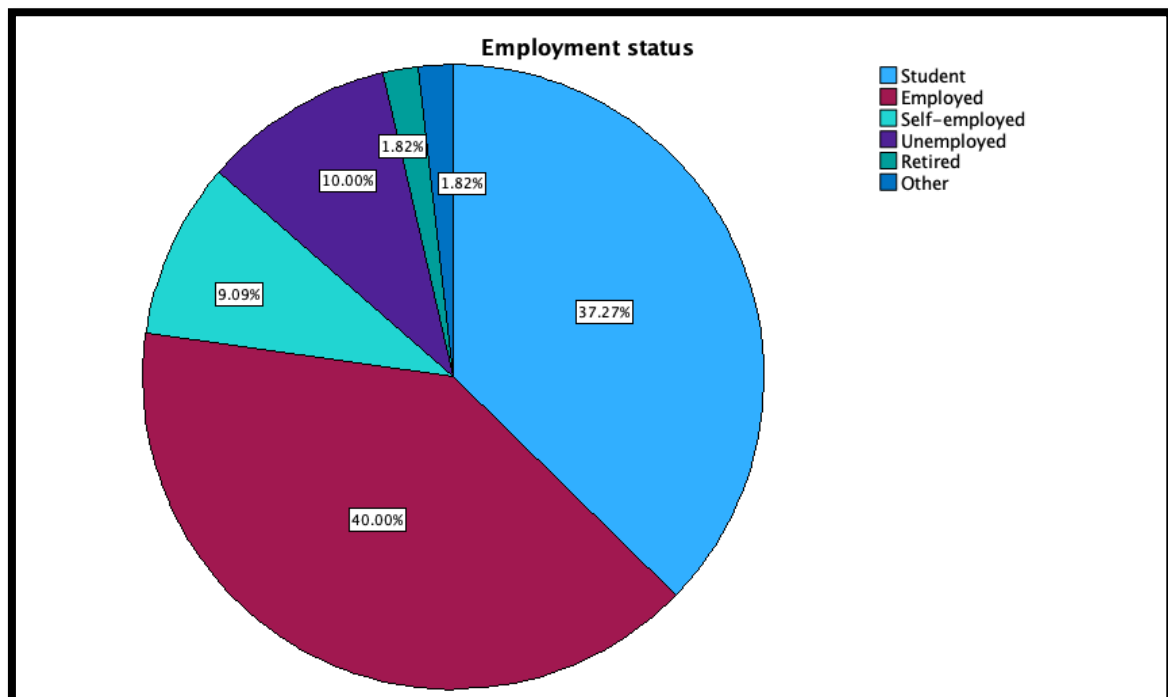


Figure 7. Employment status of Nepali Respondents

Figure 6 displays the employment status of the Finnish respondents, which shows majority of respondents were employed with 66.30% (n=61), whereas in Figure 7, the

highest number of respondents from Nepal is also employed with 40.00% (n=44). Both results show the employment status of students is the second leading group, with Finland 25.00% (n=23) and Nepal 37.27% (n=41). However, self-employed respondents tend to be in third place with 6.52% (n=6) in Finland, but unemployed respondents from Nepal with 10.00% (n=11) outnumbered self-employed respondents slightly, which is 9.09% (n=10). In addition, it shows that retired consumers tend to be the last or the smallest group of respondents for employment status in both Finland and Nepal, followed by 1.82% (n=2) respondents with employment status other than retired, respectively.

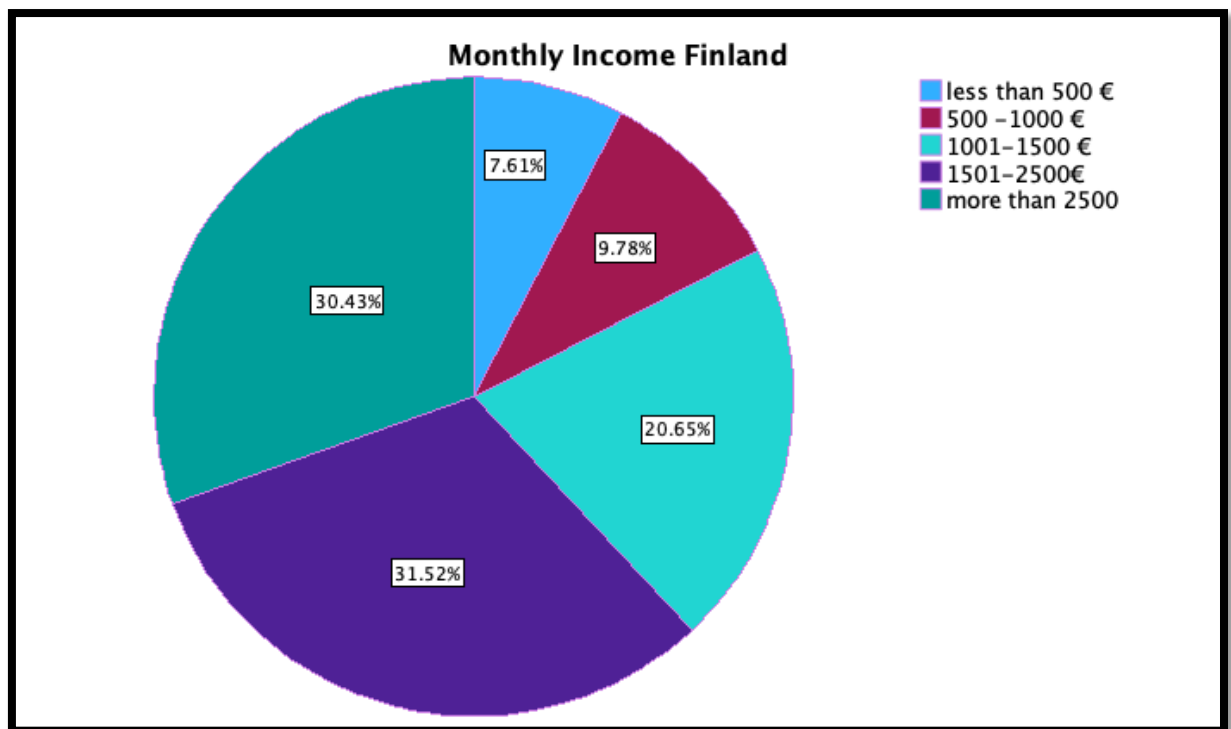


Figure 8. Monthly Income of Finnish Respondents

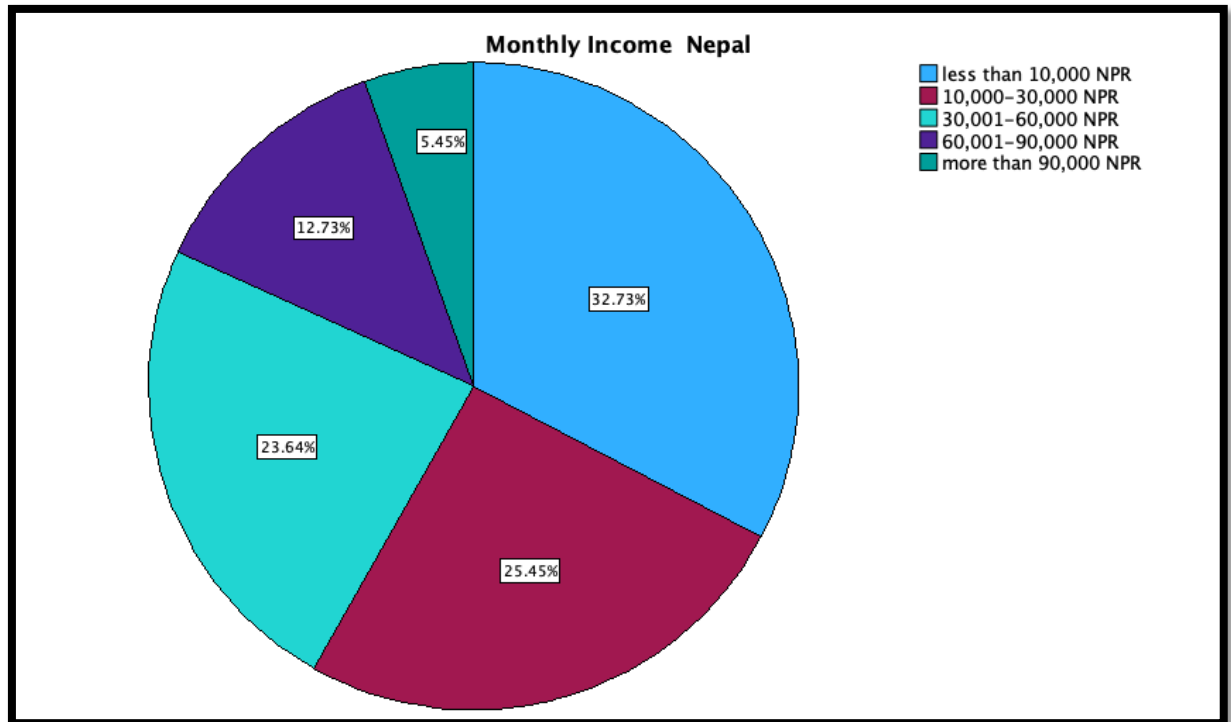


Figure 9. Monthly Income of Nepali Respondents

In Figure 8, the monthly income of Finnish respondents is presented, which shows that the highest group of respondents is 31.52% (n=29) with an income range of 1501 euros per month. Followed by 30.43% (n=28) of respondents who have a monthly income of more than 2500 euros per month. However, in the case of Nepali respondents presented in Figure 9, most of the respondents, with 32.73% (n=36), have less than NPR. 10000 monthly incomes, followed by 25.45% (n=28) respondents who have a monthly income of NPR. 10000 to NPR 30000. Based on this result, it indicates that the maximum number of respondents with a per-month income falls under the minimum range determined for this study from Nepal, whereas in Finland, respondents have a maximum income per month (i.e., 1501 to 2500 & above 2500 euros per month) determined for this study.

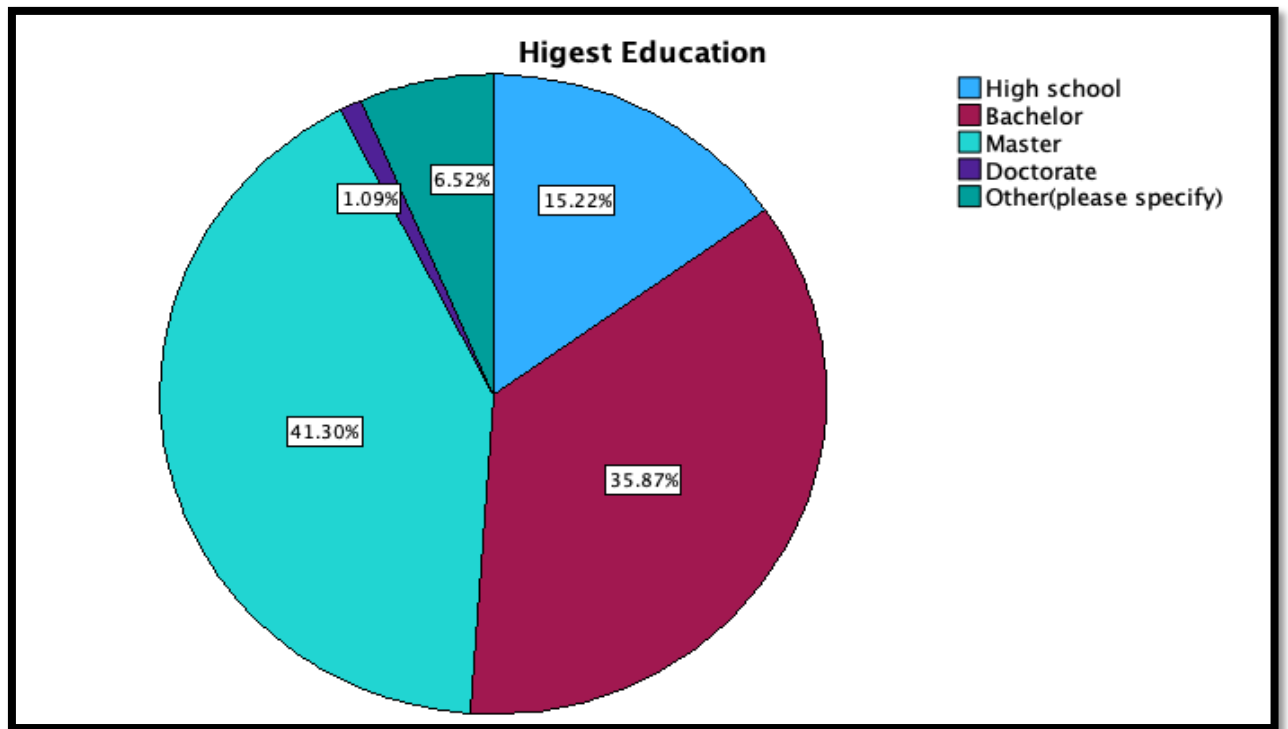


Figure 10. Highest Education of Finnish Respondents

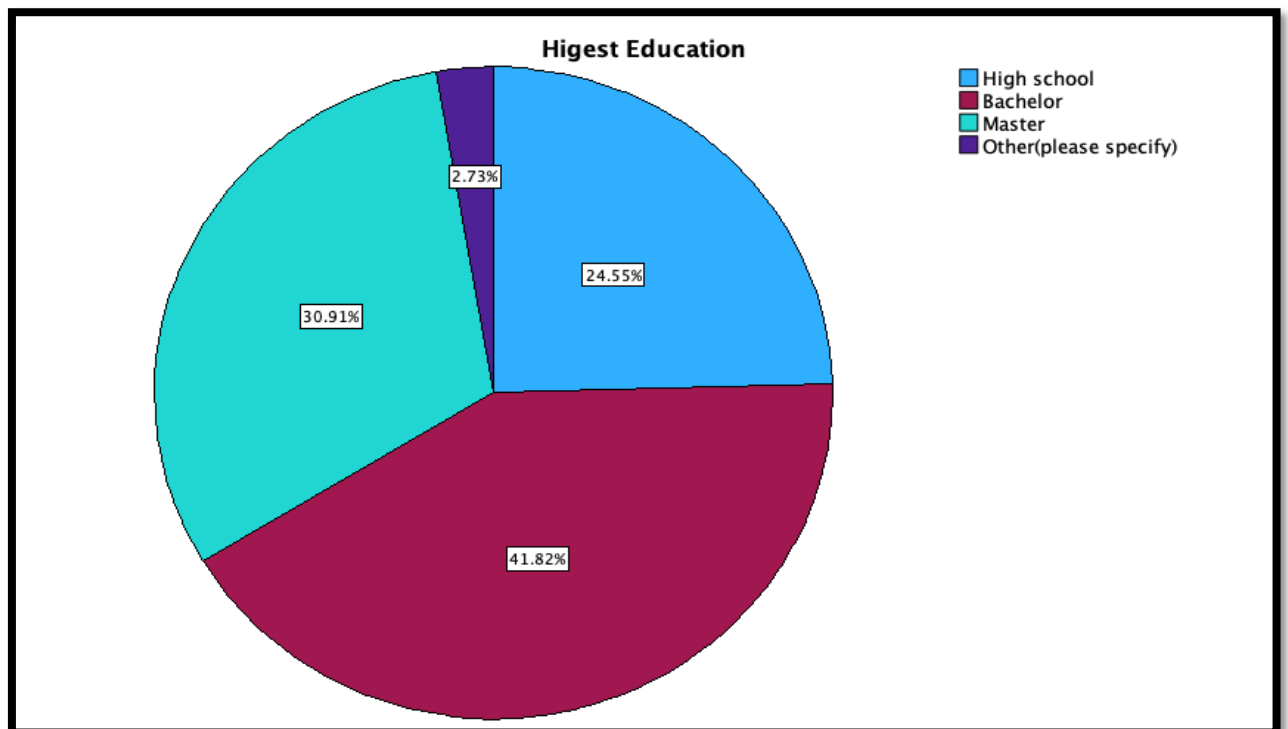


Figure 11. Highest Education of Nepali Respondents

In Figure 10, the highest level of education of Finnish respondents is presented, which shows that the leading group of respondents' education level is master's degree with 41.30% (n=38) of participants, followed by the group of respondents have educational level of bachelor's degree with 35.87% (n=33) participants. This can be taken as the group of respondents with a master's degree is highly involved in using SM platforms and purchasing online more than the respondents from other educational levels.

Similarly, in Figure 11, the highest level of education of Nepali respondents is presented in a pie chart. According to the results, the largest group of respondents has a bachelor's degree, as indicated in the figure, with 41.82% (n=46), which is followed by 30.91% (n=34) of respondents with a master's degree. So, based on these results from Finnish and Nepali respondents, it can be interpreted that respondents with an educational level of master's degree in Finland are the leading group of respondents, while in Nepal, participants with a bachelor's degree are the main group of respondents.

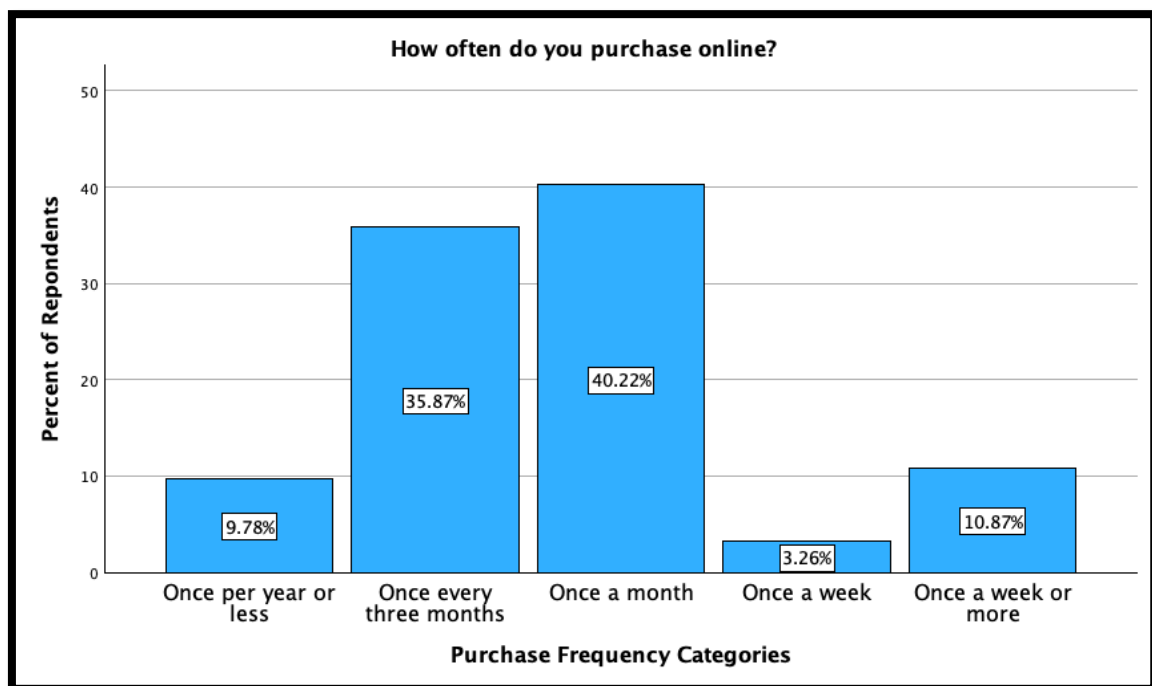


Figure 12. Online Purchase Frequency Categories of Finnish Respondents

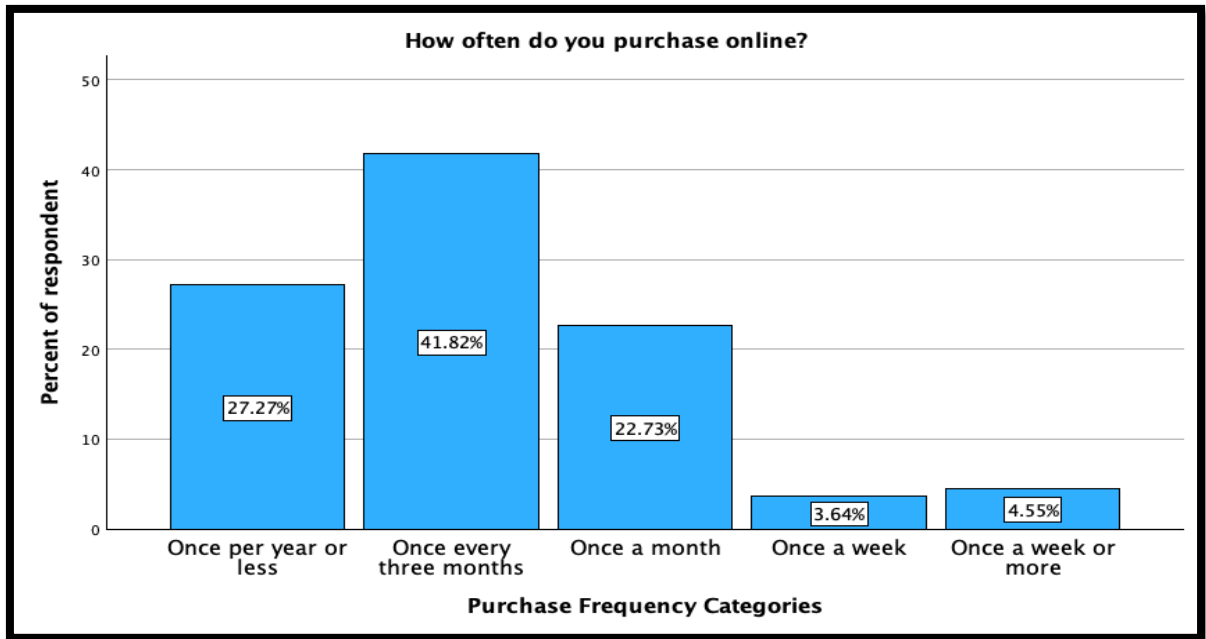


Figure 13. Online Purchase Frequency Categories of Nepali Respondents

Figure 12 presents the online purchase frequency of Finnish respondents, whereas Figure 13 presents the online purchase frequency of Nepali respondents. The results show that Finnish respondents enjoy purchasing online once a month, with 40.22% (n=37) of respondents; however, Nepali respondents purchase online once every three months, with 41.82% (n=46) of respondents. In contrast, 27.27% (n=25) of Nepali respondents purchase online once per year or less, compared to only 9.78% (n=9) of Finnish respondents who would like to purchase online once per year or less, indicating Finnish respondents enjoy purchasing online more than Nepali respondents.

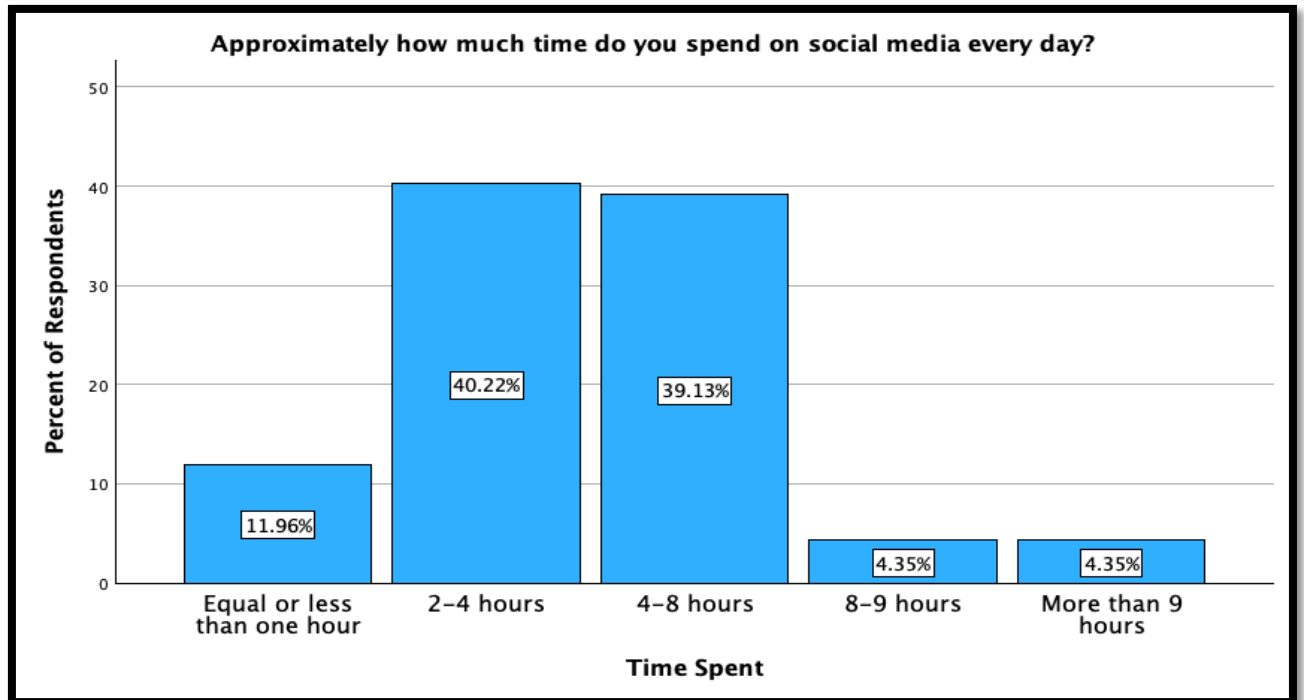


Figure 14. Time spent on social media every day by Finnish Respondent

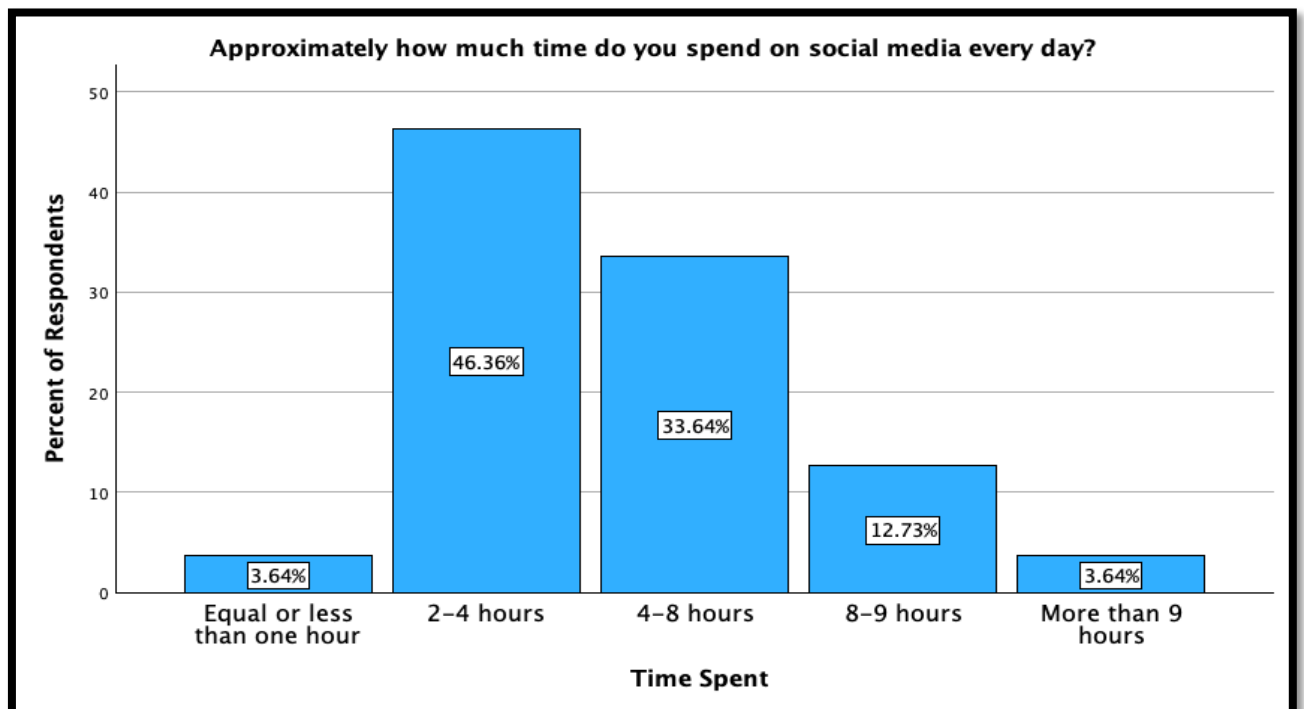


Figure 15. Time spent on social media every day by Nepali Respondents

In Figure 14 above, the time spent on social media every day by Finnish respondents is presented, which shows that most Finnish respondents spend about 2 to 4 hours a day

in SM, with 40.22% (n=37) of respondents. The result further shows that 39.13% (n=36) of Finnish respondents spend about 4 to 8 hours surfing the SM platform a day. However, respondents who spend 8 to 9 hours or more than 9 hours a day on the SM platform are the same as 4.35% (n=4) of respondents, respectively.

Figure 15 presents the time spent on social media every day by Nepali respondents, which shows that the prior group of respondents from Nepal spent 2 to 4 hours a day on SM platforms, where 33.64% (n=37) of respondents spent 4 to 8 hours per day. The results further show that respondents who spent equal to or less than one hour and more than 9 hours are equal with 3.64% (n=4). From figures 14 and 15, it can be predicted that Finnish respondents who spent a maximum of 8 to 9 hours, 4.35% (n=4), are lower than the Nepali respondents who spend 8 to 9 hours a day (i.e., 12.73%).

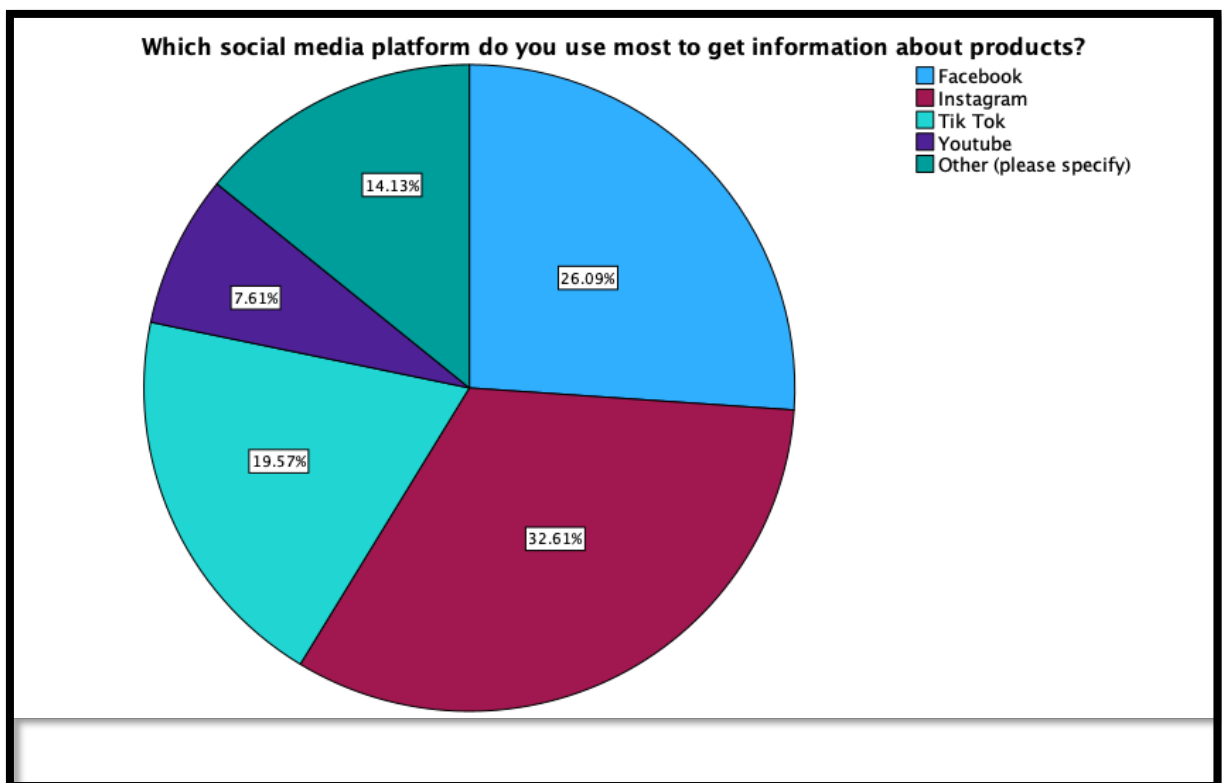


Figure 16. Most used social media platform by Finnish Respondents

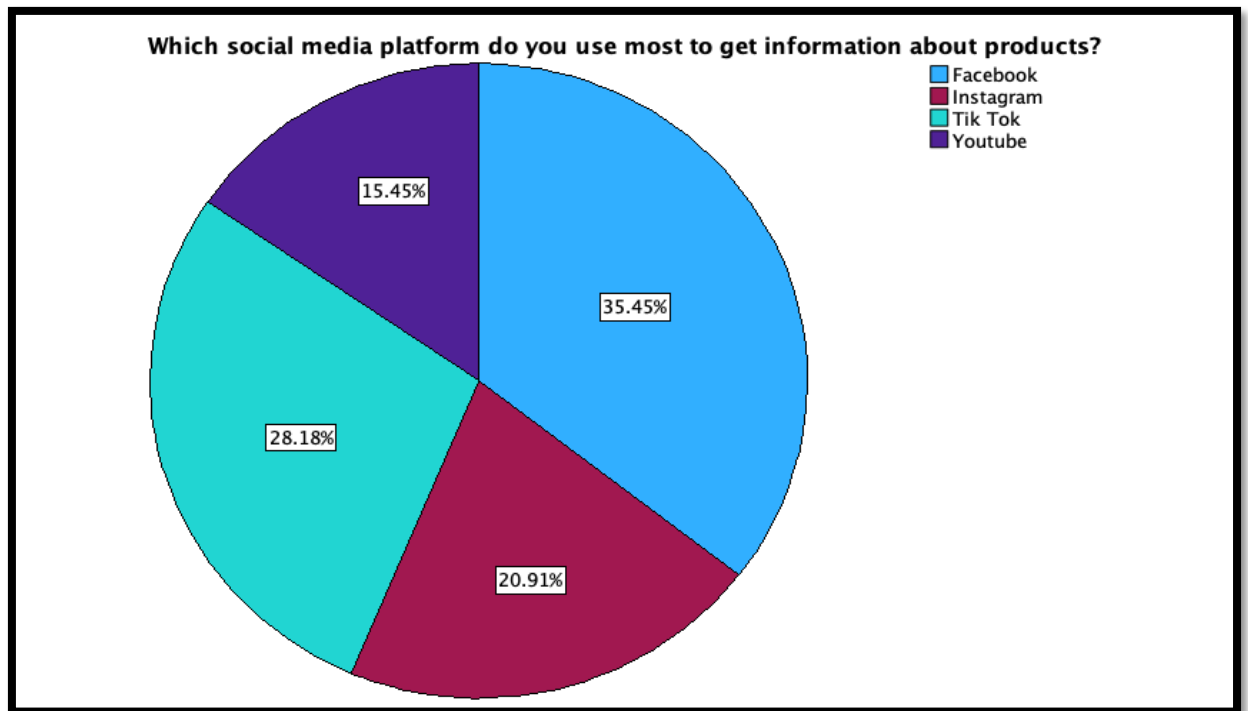


Figure 17. Most used social media platform by Nepali Respondents

In the above figure 16 shows the most used social media platform by Finnish respondents, while Figure 17 shows the most used social media platform by Nepali respondents. According to the results shown in Figure 16, Instagram is the most used social media platform by Finnish respondents, with 32.61% (n=30) of respondents, followed by Facebook with 26.09% (n=24). The result also indicates Finnish respondents prefer other social media platforms. For Nepali respondents, Facebook is preferred as the most used social media platform, with 35.45% (n=39) respondents, followed by TikTok with 28.18% (n=31). This suggests that respondents from Finland and Nepal prefer different social media platforms when making online purchasing decisions influenced by SMM.

4.2 Confirmatory factor analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis is formulated as an assumed measurement model, which is formulated and studied by the investigator to examine the connections between the

latent variables and the observed variables. Also, it examines how the latent variables explain covariances between a set of observed variables (Sureshchandar, 2023, p. 284). This study adopted confirmatory factor analysis rather than exploratory factor analysis, as the measures of constructs were taken from a previous empirical study.

Table 3.Confirmatory factor analysis (Finland and Nepal sample)

Construct	Items	Included/Removed	Finland (Alpha)	Nepal (Alpha)
Informativeness (INF1, INF2, INF3)	1	Inc.	0.805	0.757
	2	Inc.		
	3	Inc.		
Perceived Relevance (PR1, PR2, PR3)	1	Inc.	0.7	0.726
	2	Inc.		
	3	Inc.		
Interactivity (INT1, INT2, INT3)	1	Inc.	0.808	0.722
	2	Inc.		
	3	Inc.		
eWOM (EW1, EW2, EW3)	1	Inc.	0.744	0.766
	2	Inc.		
	3	Inc.		
Attitude toward online purchasing (ATT1, ATT2, ATT3)	1	Inc.	0.782	0.758
	2	Inc.		
	3	Inc.		
Perceived Security (PS1, PS2, PS3)	1	Inc.	0.81	0.836
	2	Inc.		
	3	Inc.		
Price Sensitivity (PRS1, PRS2, PRS3)	1	Inc.	0.773	0.828
	2	Inc.		
	3	Inc.		
Trust (TR1, TR2, TR3)	1	Inc.	0.757	0.756
	2	Inc.		
	3	Inc.		

Online Purchasing Decision (OPD1, OPD2, OPD3)	1	Inc.	0.829	0.718
	2	Inc.		
	3	Inc.		

From Table 3, it can be observed that all the constructs of Nepal and Finland samples have a Cronbach alpha value ranging from 0.7 to 0.836, which indicates that the measuring scales exhibit strong internal consistency in both samples. This validates the reliability of the scales to be used in further factor analysis and hypothesis testing.

4.3 Data analysis

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to test the given hypothesis in the study. Multiple regression analysis is a model with more than one independent variable and one dependent variable (Mustillo et al., 2018, p. 1282). The absolute value of beta indicates the ranking of importance of the independent variables, where the variable with the highest beta will be comparatively the most important independent variable (Uyanık & Güler, 2013, p. 239). This analysis is important to see the relationship between dependent and independent variables.

Table 4. Results of regression analysis

Independent Variables	Online Purchase Decision (Finland)		Online Purchase Decision (Nepal)	
	Beta (P-value)	Result	Beta (P-value)	Result
Informativeness	.137 (.196)	H1: NS	.125 (.158)	H1: NS
Perceived relevance	.118 (.254)	H2: NS	.123(.274)	H2: NS
Interactivity	.087 (.397)	H3: NS	-.052 (.579)	H3: NS
eWOM	-.099 (.221)	H4: NS	.274 (.004) ***	H4: S
Attitude	.486 (.001) ***	H5: S	.253(.005) ***	H5: S

Perceived security	-.118 (.188)	H6: NS	.033 (.715)	H6: NS
Price sensitivity	-.003(.976)	H7: NS	.223(.008) ***	H7: S
Trust	.291(.004) ***	H8:S	.006 (.949)	H8: NS
Construct R²	.610		.533	
Significance: *** $p \leq 0.01$, ** $p \leq 0.05$, * $p \leq 0.1$				

To reach the aim of this paper, the author tested eight hypotheses using regression analysis. The results of multiple regression analysis are presented in Table 4 above, which shows how all these factors influence the online purchasing decisions of Finnish consumers and Nepali consumers. The R² values for the dependent variable in both models are .610 and .533, which suggests that the independent variables explain 61.0% and 53.3% of the variance in the dependent variable in both models.

The hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 are not supported in the context of Finland and Nepal, which shows that 'informativeness', 'Perceived relevance', and 'interactivity' do not enhance the consumers' online purchase decisions in Finland and Nepal. The results for H4 partially support ($\beta = 0.274$; $p=0.004$) the notion that eWOM enhances the Nepali consumers' online purchase decisions, thus indicating partial support, whereas eWOM does not enhance the Finnish consumers' online purchase decisions. Thus, 4 does not show significant relations among consumers in the inland. As expected in H5, attitude towards purchasing online enhances the Finnish and Nepali consumers' online purchase decisions, thus indicating support for H5 in Nepal ($\beta = 0.253$; $p=0.005$) and Finland ($\beta = 0.486$; $p =0.001$). However, against expectations, Finnish and Nepali perceived security does not enhance the online purchase decisions. Thus, H6 is rejected for both Finland and Nepal. The results for H7 support the notion that 'price sensitivity' enhances the Nepali consumers online purchase decisions, thus indicating a significant relation ($\beta = 0.223$, $p = 0.008$), whereas H7 doesn't indicate a positive relation between 'price sensitivity' and consumers online purchase decisions in Finland, thus indicating partial support. Similarly, the results for H8 partially support the notion that 'trust' enhances

the Finnish consumers' online purchase decisions ($\beta = 0.291$, $p = 0.004$), thus indicating partial support, as it is not significant for Nepal.

From the overall analysis, it shows that social media marketing features like informativeness, perceived relevance, and interactivity do not show a positive significant relationship with consumers' online purchase decisions in both countries, while eWOM shows a significant relationship with consumers' online purchase decisions in Nepal but not in Finland. This shows that Nepali consumers' online purchase decisions are influenced by online reviews and recommendations. Whereas consumer features such as attitude are the most reliable predictors of online purchase decisions, as it is significant in both countries. Price sensitivity is only significant in Nepal, which indicates that Nepali consumers' online purchase is also influenced by price sensitivity. Trust factor is only significant in Finland, which shows that Finnish consumers trust sellers when purchasing online. While perceived security is not significant in both countries, which demonstrate that this factor does not have a major influence on the online purchase decisions of consumers in both countries.

5 Discussion and conclusions

This chapter presented the empirical results and findings of the study. The key empirical findings of the study are discussed to answer the research questions. It also discussed the managerial and theoretical implications with directions for future research. And finally, the limitations of this study are presented.

5.1 Discussion about key empirical findings

This study aims to answer the research question of this paper, which is “**How do social media marketing (SMM) influence consumers’ online purchase decisions?**” where four Social media marketing features, such as Informativeness, perceived relevance, interactivity, and eWOM, along with Consumers’ features such as attitude, price sensitivity, perceived security, and trust were taken as independent variables to determine their influence on the dependent variable, which is Consumers’ online purchasing decision. In this study, eight hypotheses were tested using the multiple regression analysis, where the results are presented in the table below:

Table 5.Results of the hypothesis test

S. N	Hypothesis of the Study	Empirical results
1.	<i>H1: There is a positive relationship between Informativeness and consumers' online purchase decisions in Nepal and Finland.</i>	<i>Not Supported</i>
2.	<i>H2: There is a positive relationship between perceived relevance and consumers' online purchase decisions in Nepal and Finland.</i>	<i>Not Supported</i>
3.	<i>H3: There is a positive relationship between Interactivity and consumers' online purchase decisions in Nepal and Finland.</i>	<i>Not Supported</i>
4.	<i>H4: There is a positive relationship between eWOM and consumers' online purchase decisions in Nepal and Finland.</i>	<i>Partially Supported (Only in Nepal)</i>
5.	<i>H5: There is a positive relationship between Attitude and consumers' online purchase decisions in Nepal and Finland.</i>	<i>Supported</i>

6.	<i>H6: There is a positive relationship between Security and consumers' online purchase decisions in Nepal and Finland.</i>	<i>Not Supported</i>
7.	<i>H7: There is a positive relationship between price sensitivity and consumers' online purchase decisions in Nepal and Finland.</i>	<i>Partially Supported (Only in Nepal)</i>
8.	<i>H8: There is a positive relationship between Trust and consumers' online purchase decisions in Nepal and Finland.</i>	<i>Partially Supported (Only in Finland)</i>

The empirical findings of this study are based on multiple regression analysis, which was analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 31 version, demonstrating the influence of social media features and consumer features on the consumers' online purchase decision in Nepal and Finland. The regression analysis results reveal that the R^2 values for the dependent variable in both models are .610 and .533, which suggests that the independent variables explain 61.0% and 53.3 % of the variance in the dependent variable in both models, which is good explanatory power for both countries.

The findings show that social media marketing features like informativeness, perceived relevance and interactivity do not have a significant impact on consumers' online purchase decisions in both countries, meaning that these factors do not influence the consumers' online purchase decisions in Finland and Nepal. In prior studies, authors have explored that factor such as informativeness, perceived relevance and interactivity lead to better purchasing decisions and help brands to create a positive relationship with consumers (Rahaman et al., 2022; Hasan & Scorpianti, 2022; Faradhilla et al., 2024). However, the results of this study show that no positive impact of these factors on consumers' online purchasing decisions can be attributed firstly because country-specific samples were used. It can be explained as all the participants in this study are from two specific countries, which is Finland and Nepal, and the respondents are specially those who purchase online goods and services. Secondly, consumers from Finland and Nepal may have varied perceptions and interests while buying online.

The findings further show that another social media marketing feature, eWOM, was found to have a significant impact on consumers' online purchase decisions in Nepal but not in Finland. This means Nepali consumers are more influenced by online reviews, recommendations, and online feedback. This can be attributed to the fact that Nepali consumers prefer to take suggestions and feedback from their friends, family members, or previous consumers' comments while making online purchasing decisions. In prior studies, researchers have explored the positive impact of eWOM and suggested that eWOM significantly affects online purchasing decisions (Nuseir, 2019; Aslam et al., 2019; Duque, 2017). Further, Rahaman et al. (2022) findings stated that a high-quality, credible, and easy-to-use eWOM is vital to determine whether consumers adopt eWOM on social media and decide on online purchasing. Therefore, the outcomes show that there is no significant impact of eWOM on online purchasing decisions in Finland; this may be due to the low quality, uselessness, and non-credibility of eWOM on social media marketing perceived by Finnish consumers.

Similarly, the findings from consumer features indicate that attitude is the most reliable predictor of consumer online purchase decisions, as it is significant in both countries, which means consumer online purchase is more prevalent among consumers of both countries who have a positive attitude toward online shopping. Related results have been reported by researchers like Irshad and Ahmad (2019) and Tran and Nguyen (2022). Attitude toward online purchase influenced the consumers' online purchase decision. Nguyen et al. (2019) find that consumers' positive attitude to buy online is generated when websites are convenient-oriented and easy to interact with. That means when consumers feel comfortable and easy to buy online goods, they tend to purchase more online. So online sellers are endeavoring to design attractive and effective websites with easy access that affect purchasing intention directly or indirectly via the attitude of consumers.

Furthermore, perceived security is not a significant predictor, indicating that it does not have a major influence on consumers' purchasing decisions in both countries. The result

of this paper, that perceived security may not be a major predictor of determining consumers' online purchasing decisions, can be supported by the evidence and findings of prior studies. The research by Celliers et al. (2025) found that information security influences perception towards online purchasing consumers, as consumers feel concerned with privacy, safety of their payments, and data security. However, Miyazaki and Fernandez (2001) discuss and provide supporting results explaining that although consumers are concerned about security, it is less prevalent for high-experience users or other online purchasing transactions. This can be attributed as, though perceived security may affect consumers' intention, it is not effective on consumers with long-term experience using social media platforms and purchasing online.

Moreover, the finding shows that price sensitivity is significant only in Nepal, which indicates that Nepali consumers' online purchasing decisions are also influenced by price sensitivity, but not for Finnish consumers. This suggests that the factor price may be significantly impactful in emerging countries like Nepal. In a prior study, Yuen et al. (2022) concluded that price sensitivity has a significant positive impact on online purchasing decisions influenced by social media marketing, and consumers prefer to search for low-price products online. However, Alavi and Ahuja (2013) stated in their paper that consumers exhibit various behaviours, and one of them is those kinds of consumers who prefer the benefits and services provided by the brand or seller rather than the brand name and price. This reason might be applied to Finnish consumers, and the result of this study from Finnish consumers is the evidence that price may not be the primary factor driving consumer online purchasing decisions.

Likewise, the findings show that consumer feature trust is only significant in Finland, which shows that Finnish consumers have trust in sellers when purchasing online. In the study of Dutta and Bhat (2016), it is found that trust can be the primary factor that impacts consumer online purchasing decisions. Dutta and Bhat (2016) further stated that trust, attitude, and intention to purchase may vary from consumer to consumer according to their characteristics and may not relate to social media marketing and

sellers. On the other hand, in developing countries like Nepal, the development of a digital ecosystem is yet to be advanced, so consumers tend to have low trust in online platforms (Dahal et.al., 2025). This means that consumers in Nepal are still not fully trusting social media marketing and online platforms. This can prove the relevance and support the outcomes that trust is not a significant factor determining consumers' online purchasing decisions in Nepal.

Finally, the overall result of the study suggests that female consumers of the youthful age group are more active in using SM Platforms and involved in online purchasing than male consumers in both countries, Nepal and Finland. The results show that Instagram is the most used social media platform in Finland, and Facebook is the most used social media platform in Nepal to get information about products online. Out of all eight independent variables, only the independent variable attitude was found to have a statistically significant effect on consumers' online purchasing decisions in both countries, Finland and Nepal. Similarly, consumers' online purchasing decisions are influenced by eWOM and price sensitivity among Nepali consumers, whereas trust in sellers significantly influenced the Finnish consumers' online purchase decisions. Both Nepali and Finnish consumers seem to decide to buy online depending on their attitude toward online purchases. Therefore, although social media marketing features have an influence on consumer online purchase, consumer features are seen to have a greater influence on consumer online purchase decisions. Nepali consumers' online purchase decisions are influenced by attitude, eWOM, and price sensitivity, whereas Finnish consumers' online purchase decisions are influenced by attitude and trust, which reflects the difference in consumer online purchase decisions in both countries.

5.2 Theoretical contributions

In the Web2.0 era, the rapid development of social media has been made possible by the rapid expansion of the Internet. Most businesses use social media platforms for

marketing their products, due to which social media marketing strategies have emerged (Garg & Kumar, 2021). Previous studies have found a positive influence of social media marketing on consumers' purchasing decisions (Shrestha et al. 2023; Rai & Sherpa, 2024) and an increase in purchasing through SMM (Klami, 2022). This study adds to existing literature by providing deep insights into consumers' purchasing behaviour, which consider only online buying decisions analyzed through variables derived from SMM features and consumer features.

However, many studies have examined factors such as Trust, interactivity (Hasan & Scorpianti, 2022), eWOM information impact (Rahaman et al., 2022), and attitude to online shopping (Huseynov & Yildirim, 2019). Regarding the influence of social media marketing on consumers' purchasing decisions in Nepal and Finland, this study categorizes these variables into SMM features and consumer features. The findings of this study suggest that consumers' purchasing decisions to buy online tend to be driven and influenced more by consumer features like attitude rather than SMM features, which was found in this study in consumers of both countries, Finland and Nepal. The result further shows that consumers from different countries prefer different social media platforms with different purchasing behaviour driven by distinct factors. In the context of Nepal, consumers tend to be influenced by variables such as eWOM and Price sensitivity, while Finnish consumers' buying decisions depend on their attitude and Trust. This shows that more nuanced studies on consumers' online purchasing decisions, examining other refined variables, are required for the understanding of consumers' online purchasing decisions.

Moreover, this also shows the contribution of the study on existing theories on consumer behaviour, consumer behaviour driven from diverse cultural perspectives, and the technology acceptance model theory. This study reviews existing literature on different social media platforms in the context of B2C companies. It also extends the knowledge on the factors influencing the online purchasing in two vastly different countries, which helps to discover the purchasing behaviour of consumers from Finland

and Nepal. These findings enhanced the insight into consumers' purchasing decisions in specific settings, geographical differences, and revealed the effectiveness of SMM features and consumer features. While prior studies focus on country-specific context, this study explores consumers' buying decisions from emerging and developed countries' perspectives. Therefore, this study might add additional knowledge to future literature regarding consumers' online purchasing decisions.

5.3 Managerial implications

This study examines the influence of social media marketing on online purchasing decisions of consumers in different geographical scenarios. The study offers a few managerial implications that can be useful for companies and consumers seeking to improve their online buying and selling activities or experience. Firstly, companies in developing countries like Nepal can improve their online selling by maintaining an effective price online with adequate information about their product and services on social media marketing. In Nepal, consumers' online purchasing decisions are affected by the estimated price online. As per the result, consumers in developing countries like Nepal tend to compare the prices on online platforms rather than making quick purchasing decisions. This also indicates that offering flexible shipping charges, discounts, and other charges that meet the affordability and price sensitivity of consumers could increase the number of online buyers in developing countries. The findings show that it will not only boost online selling but also influence the online purchasing decisions of consumers through social media marketing.

Further, in developing countries like Nepal, companies should focus on social media marketing features such as eWOM, which may help companies and consumers communicate in the form of comments, reviews, and ratings. The up-to-date Interaction with its present and potential consumers helps companies to analyze future demands and prepare further marketing strategies. The results, especially outcomes from Nepal,

highlight that consumers enjoy surfing through social media marketing, seeing the reviews and ratings of the products and services they want to purchase before making purchasing decisions. Consumers in developing countries such as Nepal seem to consider peer reviews and suggestions rather than depending on advertisements. Additionally, the penetrating growth of internet and smartphone users in developing countries forecasts the strong impact of eWOM to increase online purchasing decisions of consumers in developing countries.

Whereas, in developed countries such as Finland, the result shows that consumer trust and attitude are significant factors that determine the online purchasing decision. This shows that companies should emphasize securing their consumers' data and save them from cyber hacking and misuse of their data. This is incredibly significant, especially in the present business environment, where internet hacking is increasing with the advancement of technology. Consumers' trust is an integral factor that influences online purchasing decisions, while price might not be a significant factor in determining the online purchasing decision of consumers in developed countries, unlike in developing countries. On the contrary, an extremely low price may raise concern about the quality of the product in developed countries with low trust towards sellers. According to the results, consumers' trust in social media marketing increases when companies or sellers stay true to their promises to refund or exchange goods or services and satisfy consumers' needs. This may also influence the positive attitude of consumers towards online purchasing.

5.4 Directions for future research

Despite the valuable insights offered by this study regarding how social media marketing features and consumer-related features affect online purchasing decisions in Nepal and Finland, there are various areas that could be explored in the future.

Firstly, future research could use a qualitative study or a mixed method approach, as a quantitative approach measures the empirical relationship between the variables but does not include the in-depth study of customer emotions, encouragement, and personal experience to purchase online. So, future researchers could use the qualitative interview method or the focus group to obtain a deeper study on social media marketing on online purchase decisions of consumers. Applying this approach would enhance the reliability and generalizability of the research.

Secondly, to extend the comparative framework in future research by including more countries of other economies and cultures. Only a comparison between Nepal and Finland is useful in contrasting a developing economy and a developed economy, but including more countries can increase cross-cultural generalizability. The researchers might also incorporate cultural dimensions, including individualism, uncertainty avoidance, or power distance, to explain consumer reactions to social media marketing.

Thirdly, future studies may be more specific toward product groups or industries. The impact of social media marketing can vary on the fashion industries, electronic industries, beauty products, or service-based industries. The deeper analysis of industry-specific differences would give more focused managerial insight and results.

Finally, this study uses a purposive sampling technique because of time constraints and the availability of respondents, which can restrict the ability to generalize the results to larger consumer groups. So, probability sampling methods are suggested to future researchers to undertake studies on the effects of social media marketing on consumers in their decision-making in online purchases. It is advisable for future researchers to use probability sampling methods using a large and more heterogeneous sample to enhance the validity and the generalizability of the study results in terms of social media marketing and online purchasing behaviour.

5.5 Limitations

This study has several limitations despite its managerial and theoretical implications for the influence of social media marketing features and consumer features driving consumers' online purchase decisions in Finland and Nepal. Firstly, this study is based only on quantitative data with a structured questionnaire, where this approach provides the ability to conduct statistical analysis and generalization of the study, which may restrict the level of insight into the motivation and emotion of consumers. Whereas structured questionnaires lack flexibility, as all respondents are provided with the same set of predetermined questions, restricting respondents to predetermined answers that may not fully capture their actual opinions or experiences.

Secondly, the sample size of this study is small. Even though these respondents were enough to perform a statistical test and hypothesis testing, the sample size might not be representative of the entire population of online consumers in Nepal and Finland. This sample size is quite limited to draw generalized information regarding the online consumers of entire population of Nepal and Finland.

Thirdly, due to time constraints, this study used a purposive sampling technique to select respondents who use social media actively and have experience with online purchasing in Nepal and Finland. The purposive sampling method is also a non-probability method where not every individual of the population has an equal opportunity of being incorporated in the study. It is a technique where respondents are identified based on certain characteristics that are of interest to the research objectives. The study sample can concentrate too much on highly engaged or regular users and underrepresent occasional users, which might affect the strength of relationships observed between social media marketing features and online purchase decisions. This may cause a risk of sampling bias.

Fourthly, the research only considers selected social media marketing features like informativeness, perceived relevance, interactivity, and electronic word of mouth, and consumer features like attitude, perceived security, price sensitivity, and trust. The research model did not include other crucial factors like brand reputation, quality of delivery services, ease of use of the website, or convenience of payment, which also influence the perception and action of consumers as well. These variables were not included, which narrowed the scope of the study.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Regression Analysis (Finland)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.781 ^a	.610	.572	.608

a. Predictors: (Constant), Trust, eWOM, Interactivity, Price sensitivity, Perceived security, Perceived relevance, Attitude, Informativeness

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.047	.454		.104	.918
	Informativeness	.155	.119	.137	1.302	.196
	Perceived relevance	.136	.118	.118	1.149	.254
	Interactivity	.083	.098	.087	.851	.397
	eWOM	-.118	.096	-.099	-1.233	.221
	Attitude	.533	.112	.486	4.780	<.001
	Perceived security	-.115	.087	-.118	-1.327	.188
	Price sensitivity	-.003	.118	-.003	-.030	.976
	Trust	.355	.118	.291	3.006	.004

a. Dependent Variable: Online purchase decision

Appendix 2. Regression Analysis (Nepal)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.730 ^a	.533	.496	.487

a. Predictors: (Constant), Trust, Price sensitivity, Informativeness, Attitude, eWOM, Interactivity, Perceived security, Perceived relevance

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.237	.332		.713	.478
	Informativeness	.122	.086	.125	1.423	.158
	Perceived relevance	.115	.104	.123	1.101	.274
	Interactivity	-.053	.096	-.052	-.556	.579
	EWOM	.264	.090	.274	2.937	.004
	Attitude	.228	.080	.253	2.840	.005
	Perceived security	.025	.068	.033	.366	.715
	Price sensitivity	.186	.069	.223	2.691	.008
	Trust	.006	.088	.006	.065	.949

a. Dependent Variable: Online purchase decision