# How to make value with digital marketing tools in a luxury brick-and-mortar store

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This study examined the impact of digital marketing tools on customer visit intentions for small luxury businesses in the home and furnishing sector. These businesses are seeing a decline in showroom visits and cannot sell products online due to the need for in-person experiences with high-touch, customizable items. Management recognizes the need to enhance the online customer journey to boost showroom visits. Using a multi-method approach, a survey and A/B testing were conducted. The survey assessed whether informational, entertaining, and relational content influenced visit intentions, while A/B testing evaluated the effect of call-to-action buttons on visits. Findings revealed that entertaining content increased visit intentions when the brand's perceived image was positive, but informative and relational content did not. A strong correlation between perceived brand image and visit intention was observed, while call-to-action buttons had no effect. A promising strategy to enhance the online environment and attract customers to physical luxury stores is to cultivate a positive online perceived brand image. When customers perceive the brand positively, engaging content such as inspirational images of the store can motivate them to visit.

*Keywords:* Call-to-action button | webrooming | consumer decision-making process | visit intention | intention to buy | perceived brand image

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Small luxury businesses in the home and furnishing sector face the challenge of declining customer visits to their showrooms. With the rise of online sales, people visit physical stores less frequently (Danziger, 2021). Despite this trend, these luxury stores are unable to transition their sales online due to the need for in-person experiences with high-touch, customizable items. Customers rely on tactile interaction to gauge quality and design, and the complexity of customization further hinders online transactions. Luxury showrooms, known for their immersive experiences and expert guidance, play a vital role in enhancing customer confidence and ultimately driving sales. Consequently, management acknowledges the importance of drawing online customers to offline showrooms.

Understanding how customers interact with companies across various touchpoints and channels is crucial for shaping their journey throughout the purchase cycle. The total customer experience is dynamic, spanning pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). These customer journeys are no longer confined to a single channel, they offer a holistic shopping experience through the integration of online and offline channels, known as the omnichannel strategy (Mosquera et al., 2018). Hence, retailers are increasingly exploring optimal integration between online and offline shopping experiences. Customers can engage with a company online through social media profiles or its website. Given the significant influence of social media on home design, it is crucial for luxury showrooms to understand how to leverage it effectively to attract customers to visit them (Cottrell, 2019). Similarly, websites play a vital role in influencing customers to visit physical stores. One commonly used tool on websites to prompt action is the Call-to-Action buttons (CTAs) (Bardsen, 2022). Therefore, this study investigates the efficacy of digital marketing tools, including social media content and CTAs, in drawing customers to a luxury brick-and-mortar store specializing in home and furnishing products. The overarching goal is to enhance the online customer journey and increase the visit intention to showrooms.

While extensive research has been conducted on social media's influence on consumer trust, loyalty, and purchase intention, much of this exploration has been centered around e-commerce stores. Additionally, existing studies predominantly focus on websites and their CTAs within the context of online retail. There is a significant void in the literature when it comes to understanding the impact of digital marketing tools on consumers' intentions to visit offline luxury retail stores, particularly those that are unable to conduct online transactions. As highlighted by Sahu et al. (2021), there is a need for further studies in the domain of strategy

formulation to effectively manage webrooming behaviors. These studies ought to explore the impact of different types of social media content on visit intention. Additionally, research should focus on examining CTAs on websites, aiming to facilitate omnichannel retailing. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by examining the influence of these digital marketing tools in webrooming to support the online customer journey and increase the visit intention. The research question is:

"How can small luxury brick-and-mortar stores in the home and furnishing sector, which lack online selling capabilities, successfully attract customers through digital marketing tools?"

To address this research question, there are sub-questions formulated. In a luxury market setting, a typical customer journey begins with passive exploration of design ideas and inspirations, often through social media, leading to the first sub-question: "What types of social media content are most effective in attracting customers to luxury brick-and-mortar stores in the home and furnishing sector?". As customers decide to shop for luxury bathrooms, they actively seek targeted information via websites, where effective call-to-action buttons guide them to download resources or request consultations, addressing the second sub-question: "How effective are call-to-action buttons on websites in attracting customers to luxury brick-and-mortar stores in the home and furnishing sector?". Customers evaluate options by visiting showrooms and comparing online, leading them to choose one company. They then have multiple consultations with designers to finalize their purchase. In the post-purchase stage, customers receive product delivery and guidance.

To address these questions, quantitative research is done in a small luxury sanitary retailer. It is a sanitary retailer specializing in high-end bathroom designs and offering a wide range of luxurious bathroom products and tiles for the entire house. The research incorporates two studies: a survey and a/b testing. A survey is utilized to determine which type of social media content most effectively influences the willingness to visit a showroom, marking the first stage of the conversion funnel. Additionally, A/B testing is conducted on this small sanitary retailer's website. This experiment compares two versions of the website: one with only a contact form and another featuring CTAs. Data for this analysis is gathered from Google Analytics, WordPress, Outlook, and Simar, representing the second stage of the conversion funnel.

This research offers valuable insights and recommendations for small luxury businesses in the home and furnishing sector aiming to enhance their online presence and drive showroom

visits and sales. By exploring digital marketing tools and their role in managing webrooming, this study enriches existing customer journey frameworks and contributes to the understanding of webrooming and omnichanneling theories in today's digital landscape.

The structure of this thesis is organized as follows: Chapter 2 presents the theoretical background. Chapter 3 offers a comprehensive exploration of the first study on social media content, covering methodology, data collection, and results. Chapter 4 then delves into the second study, which assesses the impact of CTAs, detailing its methodology, data collection, and results. Chapter 5 includes a discussion that addresses the implications and limitations of the studies. Finally, the thesis concludes with a summary of the findings in Chapter 6.

# 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter provides a conceptual foundation for the research study, offering a framework that guides the analysis and interpretation of the data. The chapter explores existing theories, models, and concepts that form the foundation for the research question and objectives.

# 2.1 Customer journey

Customers engage with companies across various touchpoints and channels, shaping their journey throughout the purchase cycle. The total customer experience is dynamic, spanning pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages. It incorporates past experiences and external factors, with touchpoints both within and beyond the company's control (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). The customer behavior examined in this research is known as webrooming, where the initial research is conducted online using a mobile device, but the product is ultimately purchased in-store (Wolny & Charoensuksai, 2014).

Extensive research explores customer journeys, yielding multiple models. Lemon and Verhoef (2016) outline a purchase cycle with three stages, while other models like AIDA (Barry, 1987) and Buying Behavior (Howard & Sheth, 1969) offer additional perspectives. One widely recognized and frequently cited model is the five-stage consumer decision-making process from (Engel et al., 1978). This theory encompasses the following stages: need recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase, and post-purchase evaluation.

However, these models often fail to capture the complex behaviors exhibited across multiple channels. To address this limitation, Molenaar (2016) introduced an online consumer behavior model that combines the buying stages with a non-linear array of touchpoints present during the decision-making process. This model reflects "shopping 3.0," where consumers use diverse channels for information gathering and shopping. While this model is very usefull, it is important to note that this model lacks a link with mobiles and social media. The model by Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) provides an understanding of the role each channel plays at different stages of the customer journey. Furthermore, Karimi (2013) highlights the significance of non-linearity in decision-making within a multi-channel context and proposes an alternative Purchase Decision-Making Process model. This model reflects a more dynamic nature of multi-channel decision-making.

The study integrates the stages introduced by Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) due to their significant strong alignment with mobile technology and social media. Additionally, these stages offer extensive adaptability and can be tailored to fit the needs of any company.

According to Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014), digital marketing tools such as CTAs and social media content are predominantly used during the information search and evaluation stage. For a visual representation of the customer journey in the luxury bathroom buying process, along with an explanation of the customer journey theory based on Wolny and Charoensuksai's model (2014), refer to Figure 1.

### 2.1.1 Conversion funnel

According to Park (2023) to enhance the customer journey and maximize conversions, it is essential to examine the conversion funnel. Conversion funnels provide marketers and salespersons with a structured approach to lead potential buyers through sequential steps towards making a transaction. Marketing funnels typically adhere to the AIDA model, which stands for Awareness, Interest, Desire, and Action. However, these stages can be streamlined into a three-step model for easier comprehension: Top of the funnel (TOFU) represents the awareness stage, Middle of the funnel (MOFU) signifies the consideration stage, and Bottom of the funnel (BOFU) denotes the conversion stage (Hotjar, 2023). Both models aim to guide consumers through distinct checkpoints in their purchasing journey (Park, 2023). The concept is conceptualized in 1898 by Elias St. Elmo Lewis, an American business tycoon, writer, and advertising expert, who defined the sequence that clients follow when making purchasing decisions (Osunwa et al., 2022).

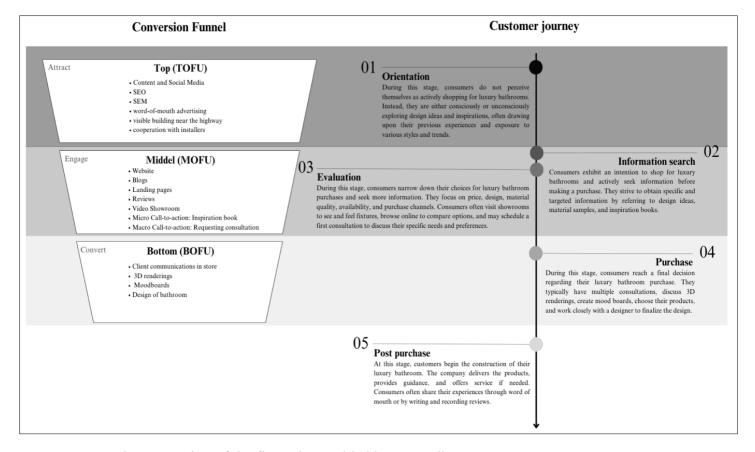
Each stage of the the Top, Middle, and Bottom Conversion Funnel focuses on specific content and strategies tailored to attract, engage, and convert prospects effectively (Gozali et al., 2022). In the top of the funnel stage, marketers aim to attract potential customers and generate interest through increased website traffic and brand visibility. As prospects move into the middle of the funnel, the focus shifts to retaining their interest and guiding them towards conversion with engaging and helpful content. Finally, at the bottom of the funnel, customers decide whether to make a purchase, and strategies are employed to remove barriers and provide compelling reasons for choosing the brand (Gozali et al., 2022).

Within this research, social media content serves as the top of the funnel, focusing on creating awareness among prospects. CTAs on the website represent the middle of the funnel, aimed at generating interest in the products or services offered. As prospects engage with these CTAs and express an intention to visit the store, they progress towards the Bottom of the funnel. During this stage, customers physically visit the store, where sellers engage with them and endeavor to persuade them to make a purchase. Figure 1 illustrates the adaptation of the

conversion funnel to the luxury bathroom company, detailing the strategies employed at each stage alongside a visualization of the customer journey.

Figure 1

Customer journey and conversion funnel for purchasing a luxury bathroom



*Note.* A larger version of the figure is provided in Appendix A.

## 2.2 Visit intention

A lot of studies only focused on the online world and therefore did not measure visit intention in regards to the physical store. Little insight exists into the effects an online channel can have on an offline retailer. This is notable since consumers often use online and offline channels interchangeably while shopping (Moes & Van Vliet, 2017). However, Tourism research extensively focuses on the concept of visit intention. In tourism, the intention to visit primarily involves directly paying for the vacation. In luxury stores, the intention to visit might not always result in an immediate purchase. However, both share similarities primarily because both involve a decision-making process driven by experiential factors. In luxury stores, customers often visit with the intention of experiencing the brand's ambiance, exploring high-quality products, and indulging in a luxurious shopping experience (Atwal & Williams, 2009).

Similarly, in tourism, individuals plan visits to destinations with the expectation of experiencing new cultures, attractions, and leisure activities (Lee et al., 2007). Both scenarios involve a desire for gratification and enjoyment and the promise of a memorable experience. Research indicates that online content has a significant impact on people's decisions to visit specific destinations (Pop et al., 2022). According to a study conducted by American Express Travel, a staggering 75% of respondents reported that social media content played a key role in inspiring them to visit particular places (Nandi, 2023). Interestingly, numerous studies highlight that the intention to visit a destination can differ based on the online platform used to access information (Molinillo et al., 2018). Additionally, research suggests that social media is utilized as a knowledge-seeking tool (push factor), consequently influencing the intention to visit a destination (Viet Hoang et al., 2021). Back et al. (2020) proposes that, in the face of challenges from online shopping, offering virtual tours of physical stores can be an effective marketing strategy for online consumers. This approach enhances brand equity and, consequently, increases the likelihood of consumers intending to visit the physical store (Baek et al., 2020). In the context of this research, visit intentions refer to the perception of visiting a store at a given time (Florensi, 2022) and the defined concept is "the willingness to visit a store."

#### 2.3 Social media content

Building upon the previous paragraph, research underscores the significant impact of social media content on visits to specific destinations (Nandi, 2023; Pop et al., 2022). Social media serves as a platform for seeking knowledge, acting as a "push factor" that influences individuals' intention to visit a destination (Viet Hoang et al., 2021). Effective social media content marketing is pivotal in attracting consumers to brands (Monteiro Pinho, 2022). Content marketing involves creating, publishing, and distributing online information to convert audiences into customers. Moreover, research by Goh et al. (2013) has revealed positive relationships between social media content and firm-level sales.

Furthermore, recent studies have sought to clarify various aspects of firms' interactions on social media platforms. For instance, Kwon et al. (2021) investigated the effects of four social media content characteristics—authenticity, consensus, usefulness, and aesthetics—on restaurant patrons. The study found that usefulness is the most crucial characteristic, influencing both cognition-based and affect-based attitudes, subsequently impacting brand attitude and behavioral intentions.

Moreover, the study of Moran et al. (2019) explored how digital marketers can adapt and leverage specific elements of brand communications to enhance consumer-brand engagement. It found that rich media content, such as photos and videos, significantly boosts consumer-brand engagement compared to static or lean content. Consumers are more likely to click, like, comment on, and share rich brand content.

Schulze et al. (2014) investigated the reach of viral marketing campaigns shared through social media, specifically examining different sharing mechanisms. They looked at the impact of unsolicited messages, messages with incentives, direct messages from friends, and broadcast messages from strangers on the reach of high-utility versus low-utility Facebook apps. Their findings indicate that direct messages from friends and broadcast messages from strangers are particularly effective for promoting high-utility (utilitarian) products, while unsolicited messages and messages with incentives are less effective.

Monteiro Pinho (2022) utilized the categorization framework proposed by Dolan et al. (2016), classifying social media content into Information, Entertaining, Remunerative, and Relational groups. Informational content provides resourceful information relevant to the purchase decision and consumption experience, while Entertaining content aims to transmit sensations of enjoyment and amusement. Remunerative content satisfies users' needs through monetary incentives, prizes, or giveaways. Relational content facilitates social interactions, catering to users' desire for integration, a sense of belonging, and connections with friends, family, and society in general. Monteiro Pinho (2022) investigated the impact of Instagram and Facebook content marketing on consumer engagement and website sales conversion. The findings highlight the importance of relational content for increased engagement. Dolan et al. (2016) found that consumers engage online when motivated by informational needs, often through actions like clicking links, reading details, and using multimedia features.

While previous research has highlighted the positive impact of content types on engagement and sales, as well as the influence of social media on visit intention to travel destinations, there is limited research specifically examining the types of content that positively affect visit intention to stores. To address this gap, the theoretical model from Dolan et al. (2016) will be used for this study because it focuses on the type of messaging and is applicable across all social media platforms, emphasizing the facilitation of engagement behavior. Additionally, the content will primarily consist of photos, as Moran et al. (2019) found that consumers are more likely to click, like, comment on, and share rich brand content such as photos. Remunerative content is excluded from the study because it pertains to a luxury context, which typically does not target price-sensitive customers. Based on the literature, I propose the following hypothesis regarding the research question:

**H1:** Consumers who encounter informational content on social media, compared to entertaining or relational content, are more likely to express an intention to visit a luxury brickand-mortar store.

#### 2.4 Call-to-action buttons

Internet usage, browsing through website elements, and searching for information online have become integral parts of the customer decision-making process. The term "Call-to-action buttons" (CTAs) refers to the desired action that users are prompted to take on a website. One key performance indicator for website components is the click-through rate, which indicates how well the CTA attracts users and whether it is relevant. CTAs can take the form of text, symbols, pictures, or other graphical elements, most commonly presented as hypertext links, banners, or buttons (Petr & Habarta, 2019). These buttons can vary from prompts like "Continue reading" to "Pay here" (Bardsen, 2022).

Recent studies collectively provide insights into the impact of CTAs on online consumer behavior. Handayani et al. (2018) study shows a positive influence of CTAs on consumers' impulsive purchases but suggests a limited impact on perceived enjoyment. Corcos and Hodara (2023) underscore that CTAs function as tools encouraging specific user actions, contributing to an action-oriented framing. The absence of clicking may lead to user frustration, reinforcing the pivotal role of CTAs in guiding user behavior. The study by Zalmanson et al. (n.d.) found that CTAs on websites have a positive causal effect on user conversion rates, thereby increasing the likelihood of users becoming paying customers. Exposure to CTAs significantly boosts conversion rates, a single CTA increased conversion to premium subscriptions by approximately 30% (Zalmanson et al., n.d.).

By not incorporating effective CTAs in your marketing campaigns, you are potentially missing out on substantial revenue opportunities. According to Berezhnaya (2016), CTAs are crucial elements on a page that generate leads, and they should be visible at first glance. A well-crafted and strategically placed CTA can make the difference between a visitor bouncing off your website or taking the desired action. Even the smallest details, such as color, placement, or text, can have a significant impact (Vora, 2023). Vora (2023) highlights several examples of the positive influence of a good CTA. For instance, Wordstream indicates that emails with a single CTA can increase clicks by over 371% and sales by around 1617%. Michael Aagaard, an optimization consultant, increased a landing page's conversion rate by 304% by placing the CTA button at the bottom. PartnerStack boosted its conversion rate by nearly 112% by changing the CTA content on its main page from "Book a demo" to "Start now." According to VWO, a

CTA surrounded by fewer elements and more white space can increase the conversion rate by 232%. Additionally, customers are 16 times more likely to share news about their purchase on social media if they see a CTA on the post-purchase page. Moreover, Hanane et al. (2023) study highlights the importance of clear content and counterparty identification in CTA strategies for effective conversion among Algerian internet users.

CTAs are pivotal in shaping online consumer behavior, directly affecting conversion rates and revenue prospects. Their influence extends to guiding user decisions and actions. It stands to reason that the presence of CTAs on a business website could positively influence consumers' requesting a consultation for a luxury brick-and-mortar store. It can be expected that an effective CTA would lead to a higher likelihood of consumers seeking consultations and ultimately visiting the physical store. Based on the literature, I propose the following hypothesis regarding the research question:

**H2:** The presence of call-to-action buttons on a business website have a positive effect on the consumers' visit intention in a luxury brick-and-mortar store.

#### 2.4.1 Macro and micro conversions

In webdesign, there are two distinct types of conversions: macro and micro. CTAs play a crucial role in driving both macro and micro conversions on a webpage (Bardsen, 2022). Micro conversions encompass various interactions such as visiting specific pages, browsing through multiple pages, clicking buttons or links, watching videos, or subscribing to blog feeds. These actions are relatively minor and require minimal effort to accomplish. On the other hand, macro conversions involve significant actions like making a purchase, scheduling an appointment, or subscribing to a paid service. Micro conversions could be a persuasive technique to guide users into macro conversions, as they guide users towards engaging in more substantial conversions (Soonsawad, 2013).

Various scholars highlight the importance of using this persuasive technique for effective digital marketing. Ash (2008) suggests two approaches to enhance conversions. The first involves consolidating input fields onto one page, labeling it as an "instant one-step" action for immediate gratification. The second approach entails breaking up the process into multiple pages, each featuring a small, non-threatening micro-action, which leads the visitors to the ultimate goal. According to Srivastava an Manohar (2020) macro conversions are inherently fewer than micro conversions. Emphasizing micro conversions may yield immediate successes, yet if these metrics do not contribute substantively to the overarching context, the entire

undertaking lacks strategic direction. The higher the alignment between micro goals and macro goals within the funnel, the significantly increased probability of identifying a variation that leads to success. Zohra and Barman (2020) also acknowledge that a significant proportion of visitors might not complete a macro conversion on a website, but visitors signify heightened interest through micro conversions. Saleh and Shukairy (2010) as well underscores the interdependence of micro and macro conversions, stating that micro conversions lead to macro conversions. Saleh and Shukairy (2010) too clarifies the distinction between macro and micro conversions, noting that while macro conversions represent overall or ultimate conversions, micro conversions encompass smaller steps a visitor must take to achieve a macro conversion.

While these scholars primarily focus on ecommerce websites, Saleh and Shukairy (2010) emphasizes that to enhance macro conversions on any website, the most effective approach is to elevate micro conversions. Based on the literature, I propose the following hypothesis regarding the research question:

**H3:** The micro actions have an strengthing effect on the relationship between call-to-action buttons and visit intention.

#### 2.5 Purchase intention

Consumer purchase intention refers to the intention to make a purchase, irrespective of the individual's past purchase history with related organizations (Ahmed & Raziq, 2017). Behavioral intention, as defined by Ajzen (1991) represents an individual's willingness to engage in a specific behavior. According to Ahmed and Raziq (2017), purchase intention is a widely utilized dimension of behavioral intention and a key indicator of effective e-retailing procedures. Hussain and Ali (2015) investigated the impact of atmosphere on consumer purchase intention within international retail chain outlets in Karachi, Pakistan, and found that atmospheric factors such as cleanliness, scent, lighting, and display/layout positively influence consumers' intention to make purchases. Amy Chu May et al. (2019) explored factors influencing the choice of shopping malls and found a positive correlation between visit frequency and purchase intention. Behe et al. (2013) discovered that the total duration of a visit in a store heightened the likelihood of making a purchase, particularly for more engaged consumers who spend extended periods examining products.

In luxury bathroom stores, customers often spend one to two hours per visit, and purchasing decisions typically require multiple visits, as one consultation is often not enough to finalize a decision. When consumers request consultations via CTAs, they are likely to visit

the showroom and experience positive atmospheric elements firsthand, further enhancing their intention to purchase. Therefore, integrating findings from various studies, it is logical to hypothesize that the visit intention generated through CTAs has a positive effect on the intention to buy in a luxury brick-and-mortar store. Based on the literature, I propose the following hypothesis regarding the research question:

**H4:** The visit intention generated through call-to-action buttons have a positive effect on the intention to buy in a luxury brick-and-mortar store.

# 2.6 Perceived brand image

According to Keller (2003), brand image is an important concept in marketing. Keller defines brand image as the perceptions of a brand, shaped by the brand associations stored in consumer memory. These associations encompass attributes, benefits, and attitudes derived from the consumer's experiences with the brand. Park et al. (1986) assert that brand image is the comprehension consumers gain from the complete array of brand-related activities undertaken by the organization. Effective marketing communication programs establish a positive brand image by associating the brand with strong, favorable, and distinctive attributes that resonate with the target audience. Brand associations form through various channels: direct experiences, information conveyed by the organization or other sources, word-of-mouth, and assumptions or inferences from the brand's name, logo, or affiliation with entities such as a company, country, distribution channel, or specific person, place, or event (Bosch et al., 2006).

The relationship between perceived brand image and its influence on visit intention in stores has not been extensively explored in existing literature. There remains a gap in understanding how the perception of a brand impacts consumers' intentions to visit physical retail locations. However, in the tourism sector, researchers have extensively examined the concept of perceived brand image on destinations. Both tourism and luxury showrooms heavily prioritize the overall experience they offer, sharing similarities in their reliance on experiential factors. Customers visit luxury stores seeking the brand's ambiance, high-quality products, and a luxurious shopping experience (Atwal & Williams, 2009). Similarly, tourists plan visits to destinations expecting new cultures, attractions, and leisure activities (Lee et al., 2007). Both scenarios aim to provide gratification, enjoyment, and a memorable experience.

The decision-making process and behavioral intentions are significantly influenced by the destination image. Empirical studies have consistently shown that the affective aspect of the destination image plays a pivotal role in shaping the intention to visit and subsequent satisfaction (Kim et al., 2009; Phillips & Jang, 2007). Studies focusing on destination image have consistently found a positive correlation with the intention to visit (Alfandi & Marco, 2021; R. Liang & Zhang, 2012). The connection between destination image and visit intention has been repeatedly established by numerous researchers (Allameh et al., 2015; Huang et al., 2014).

In general, a brand with a positive image possesses the ability to eliminate risks that potential customers may face when making their decisions (Rodríguez Molina et al., 2013). Aghekyan-Simonian et al. (2012) explores the impact of product brand image and online store image on consumers' perceived risks and intentions to purchase apparel online. They find that product brand image directly influences online purchase intentions and also indirectly reduces various perceived risks associated with online shopping. Research on the relationship between brand image, perceived risk, and purchase intention in the food and beverage industry reveals that a positive brand image correlates with improved brand perception, thereby enhancing consumers' purchase intention (Hung, 2018).

While the relationship between perceived brand image and visit intention in physical retail stores is understudied, research in tourism and online shopping suggests that a positive brand image enhances visit intentions and mitigates perceived risks. Considering the focus on delivering outstanding experiences in both tourism and luxury retail sectors, it is logical to suggest that a favorable perceived brand image enhances consumers' intention to visit a luxury brick-and-mortar store. Therefore, drawing from the literature, I posit the following hypothesis regarding the research question:

**H5:** A more favourable perceived brand image has an positive effect on the consumers' visit intention in a luxury brick-and-mortar store.

# 2.7 Demographic factors

Post-COVID, the social media behavior of each generation has evolved, leading to demographic-level distinctions among age groups. These differences provide valuable insights for marketers, guiding decisions on the most effective platforms and tactics to engage their audiences (Target Internet, 2023). Moreover, studying the effects of demographics on marketing strategies is valuable for client conversion and contributes to creating buyer personas for enhanced marketing and sales efforts.

Andereck and Nyaupane (2011) proposed that fundamental demographic factors play a significant role in shaping behavior patterns. Factors including age, gender, income, educational

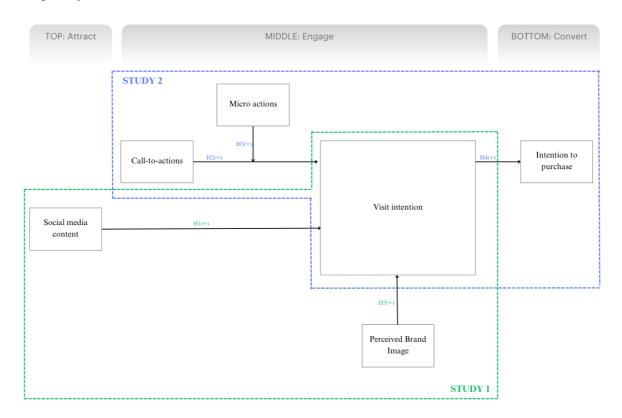
level, and family literacy, contribute to the personality and perception of each person (Nguyen, 2021). Nkgome et al. (2019) study demonstrated that supermarket visits are influenced by gender, age, and income. Steiner (2000) confirms that women tend to shoulder a greater responsibility for shopping activities compared to men. Additionally, Van Droogenbroeck highlights that women continue to predominantly manage grocery shopping responsibilities in modern times. They engage in more stops for specialty foods, engage in comparison shopping, and make stops for various goods. Schulze (2021) states that younger individuals are inclined to shop online more frequently compared to older individuals. Additionally, Lokhande (2022) suggests that older customers tend to favor brick-and-mortar stores. They often have more leisure time for traditional shopping and value in-person interactions. Despite this preference, older customers also utilize online platforms to gather information and are often knowledgeable when making purchases at physical stores. Sharma (2012) demonstrates that individuals with higher incomes are more likely to visit shopping malls. Malalgoda and Lim (2023) corroborates this finding, suggesting that consumers with higher incomes tend to frequent shopping malls more often than those with lower incomes. It is important to note the distinctions between grocery shopping, mall shopping, or online shopping and luxury shopping. However, given the limited availability of demographic data in luxury brick-and-mortar stores, we will utilize these factors as the foundation for our analysis.

#### 2.8 Theoretical model

Based on the discussed theoretical framework and research gap, the following conceptual framework is constructed (see Figure 2). The relevant hypotheses are presented in Table 1.

Figure 2

Conceptual framework



**Table 1** *Hypotheses from Study 1 and Study 2* 

Hypothesis	Study
H1: Consumers who encounter informational content on social media,	Study 1
compared to entertaining or relational content, are more likely to express	
an intention to visit a luxury brick-and-mortar store.	
<b>H2:</b> The presence of call-to-action buttons on a business website have a	Study 2
positive effect on the consumers' visit intention in a luxury brick-and-	
mortar store.	
H3: The micro actions have an strengthing effect on the relationship	Study 2
between call-to-action buttons and visit intention.	
H4: The visit intention generated through call-to-action buttons have a	Study 2
positive effect on the intention to buy in a luxury brick-and-mortar store.	
H5: A more favourable perceived brand image has an positive effect on	Study 1
the consumers' visit intention in a luxury brick-and-mortar store.	

# 3. STUDY 1: Impact of Social media content on Visit intention

#### 3.1 Method

This section details the methodological approach of the study, including the research design, materials, procedure and data collection.

# 3.1.1 Research design

A survey was utilized to investigate the impact of various types of social media content. The survey aimed to identify the most effective messaging type (content) that draws customer to a luxury brick-and-mortar store. Additionally, through this survey, the potential influence of perceived brand image on visit intention via social media platforms is explored. The primary survey data facilitated the examination of hypotheses 1 and 5, as well as the addressing of subquestion 1. The survey was chosen as the preferred method because the objective was to obtain an overview rather than delve into an in-depth exploration of consumer behavior. This approach also aligned with the goal to generalize the results (Chrysochou, 2017).

#### 3.1.2 Materials

The materials used in this study included a structured survey questionnaire and three different types of social media posts. The survey was created using the online tool "Qualtrics". To ensure ethically responsible research practices, the study adhered to the BMS Ethics Committee rules and received approval from the committee.

**Survey Questions.** The variables and the corresponding questions that were used in the survey questionnaire are based on the operationalization (Table 2 below) and are adapted from existing frameworks. The questionnaire used can be found in the appendix B.

 Table 2

 Operationalization of Social Media Content, Perceived Brand Image and Visit Intention

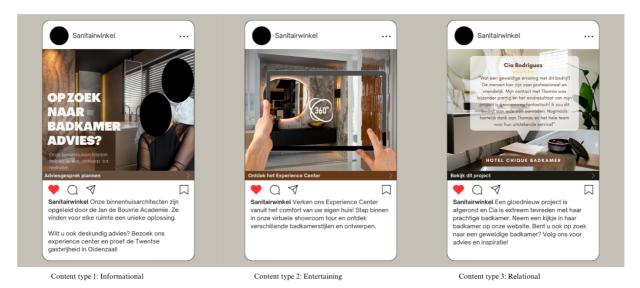
Variable	Definition	Description	Questions
Independent V	Variables		
Social Media	Four types of	The most	Questions measured on a 5-point Likert
Content	social media	effective	scale (1-strongly disagree, 5-strongly
	content:	messaging	agree):*
	Information,	type to attract	<ul> <li>This post is easy to understand</li> </ul>
	Entertaining,	consumers to	• This post is original
	Remunerative,	visit the luxury	<ul> <li>This post is refreshing</li> </ul>
	or Relational		• This post is relevant

-		brick-and-	I enjoy this post
		mortar store	<ul> <li>I feel good when I see this post</li> </ul>
			<ul> <li>I have some expectations from the</li> </ul>
			post
			<ul> <li>I find this post interesting</li> </ul>
			<ul> <li>This post an help me in achieving</li> </ul>
			my goal to visit a bathroom store
			<ul> <li>This post is useful when searching</li> </ul>
			for a bathroom store
			<ul> <li>This post gives me inspiration</li> </ul>
			<ul> <li>The post encourages me to like it</li> </ul>
			<ul> <li>The post encourages me to take it</li> <li>The post encourages me to comment</li> </ul>
			to it
			• The post encourages me to visit the
			website of the company
			<ul> <li>The post encourages me to make an</li> </ul>
			appointment with the company
			• The post encourages me to share this
			post with others who are in search of
			a bathroom
			Adapted from (Aladwani, 2017; J. Kim
			et al., 2012; Mohammad et al., 2020)
			*The above questions will be posed for each post: Informational, Entertaining, Remunerative, or Relational.
Perceived	The	A good or bad	Questions measured on a 5-point Likert
Brand image	perceptions of	image of the	scale (1-strongly disagree, 5-strongly
8	a brand	company	agree):
			<ul> <li>This company has personality</li> </ul>
			<ul> <li>This company is interesting</li> </ul>
			This company gives me a good
			feeling
			• I think this brand stands out among
			other competing brands
			• I perceive this company as a
			company that provides good value
			for money
			• I perceive this company as a luxury
			bathroom company
			• I perceive this company as friendly

			<ul> <li>I perceive this company as exciting</li> <li>I perceive this company as welcoming</li> <li>I perceive this company as reliable</li> </ul>
			Adapted from (Choirisa et al., 2021; Nyadzayo et al., 2015)
Demographic factors	Socioeconomic information expressed statistically	Statistic Socioeconomic information that makes a difference on the visit intention	<ul> <li>Demographic Data:</li> <li>What is your age?</li> <li>Which gender do you identify most with?</li> <li>What is the highest level of education you have completed?</li> <li>Which group does your annual income fall under?</li> </ul>
Dependent va	riable		
Visit intention	The willingness to visit a store	Average scores on the preference for visiting the store	<ul> <li>Questions measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1-strongly disagree, 5-strongly agree):</li> <li>I would visit this bathroom store rather than any other bathroom store</li> <li>I can see myself visiting this bathroom store</li> </ul>
			Adapted from (Choirisa et al., 2021; S. H. Liang & Lai, 2023; Tussyadiah, 2016)

Content types. Three types of social media posts were shown to the respondents: one focused on informational content, another on entertaining content, and the third on relational content. The informational post provided details about the designers their professional background to showcase their expertise. The entertaining post offered an online 3D tour of the showroom, providing engaging and amusing material. The relational post featured an excellent review of a project, encouraging users to follow for more inspiration and fostering connections and interactions among users. Visual representations of these posts are presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3
Visual representation of the three posts



Note. A larger version of the figure is provided in Appendix C.

#### 3.1.3 Procedure

At the start of the questionnaire, respondents were provided with an introduction to the research and were requested to provide their consent. The first part of the survey delved into the respondent's preferred platform for seeking inspiration. Subsequently, respondents were directed to review one of three social media posts. The statements associated with the posts assess the collective sentiment towards the post and intention to visit upon seeing the post. The three social media posts were randomized for each respondent. Following this, they were prompted to share their opinion about a bathroom company, reflecting their perceived brand image. Subsequently, to maintain respondents' attention, the survey concluded by gathering demographic data, including gender, age group, highest level of education, and income.

In the first two sections, respondents expressed their level of agreement or disagreement with the statements provided. To assess responses to the statement-related questions, a Five-Point Likert Scale was employed. This scale provided respondents with options to choose between 'Strongly disagree – Disagree – Neither Agree nor Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree'. According to Joshi et al. (2015), the Five-Point Likert Scale stands as one of the most fundamental and commonly utilized psychometric tools in educational and social sciences research. Regarding neutrality, employing a symmetric scale allows respondents to select responses in a balanced and symmetric manner in either direction, thereby averting distortion of results (Joshi et al., 2015). To make the data for quantitative analysis more comprehensible,

open-ended questions were mostly excluded. However, an exception was made for a single open-ended question inquiring about customers' preferences for online content when searching for a bathroom, followed by a request for any additional feedback from participants. The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions, including both individual questions and blocks of similar questions, primarily using Likert-Scales. The estimated time to complete the survy wass around five minutes. Participants could conveniently take the survey online at any time within a period of two weeks, using any internet-enabled device.

#### 3.1.4 Data collection

Data were collected between April 2 and April 15, and the survey was distributed using an anonymous link and QR provided by Qualtrics. Prior to data collection, a pilot testing phase was conducted with a small sample to ensure the clarity, comprehensibility, and face validity. Which identified and addressed any minor issues, such as the addition of a progress bar for improved user experience.

The survey was distributed through channels such as facebook and LinkedIn. Additionally, a poster featuring information about the survey was strategically placed at local establishments including hairdressers, physiotherapy clinics, and the luxury sanitairy retailer. Furthermore, the survey was promoted on SurveySwap to access a wider audience. The online survey was chosen as the most suitable method for this study due to its focus on the online environment, which are primarily accessed by internet users. Since I could not directly survey customers of the bathroom company, a case format was utilized, allowing respondents to envision themselves searching for bathrooms. To maintain confidentiality, the survey was conducted anonymously, and participation was entirely voluntary. After a two-week period, the survey was closed as planned and deemed sufficient responses were collected.

**Participants.** The sampling stage of the survey was a non-probabilistic method, incorporating convenience and snowball sampling. The questionnaire was filled out by a total of 183 participants. Of all these participants, 45 did not finish the questionnaire. The reliability of the scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, revealing a high internal consistency with a coefficient of .945. Item-total correlations ranged from .462 to .783, indicating strong associations between individual items and the overall scale score. Removing any single item had minimal impact on the scale's reliability, affirming its consistency and effectiveness in measuring participants' perceptions.

In examining the demographic characteristics and responses among respondents who received different content stimuli, several noteworthy findings emerge. Firstly, concerning

perceived brand image, participants generally rated it positively, with mean scores ranging from 3.643 to 3.833 on a scale of 1 to 5. Interestingly, the relational group displayed the highest mean score. Visit intention scores also reflected a generally positive outlook, even though slightly lower, with mean scores ranging from 3.075 to 3.375. Notably, participants in the entertaining group demonstrated the highest mean score for overall opinion of the posts.

Examining demographic factors revealed additional insights. Age distribution indicates a diverse sample, with a relatively even distribution across different age groups. However, older participants (>55 years) seem slightly underrepresented in comparison to younger age groups, particularly in the Relational sample. Gender distribution shows a predominance of females across all samples, particularly pronounced in the Entertaining sample, where females comprise 65.9% of participants. In contrast, males are relatively underrepresented across all samples. Income distribution reveals a varied socioeconomic profile among participants, with a notable proportion preferring not to disclose their income. Education levels indicate a relatively high level of education attainment among participants, with the majority having completed higher education (Secondary Vocational Education, Higher Professional Education).

Platform preference among participants varies, with a notable preference for Pinterest across all samples, followed by Instagram and Facebook. Twitter and LinkedIn have lower usage rates among participants. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics.

In addition to the multiple-choice questions, participants were asked one open-ended question about their preferences for internet searches when looking for new bathrooms. Their primary concern was obtaining information on bathroom costs, followed by seeking examples, inspiration, and current trends. Participants particularly expressed a desire for diverse bathroom styles to draw inspiration from. While delivery times and warranty information were mentioned less frequently, they were still considered sufficiently important.

**Table 3**Descriptive statistics of Study 1: Impact of Content type and Perceived Brand Image on Visit Intention

	Whole	sample	Informa sample	ational	Relatio	nal sample	Enterta: sample	ining
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Perceived Brand Image	3.728	.702	3.700	0.648	3.833	0.504	3.643	0.913
Visit Intention	3.728	.965	3.075	1.059	3.375	.911	3.186	.918
Overall opinion of post	3.213	.903	3.456	.839	3.516	.708	3.841	.708
Overall opinion of post			3.430	.039	3.310	.700	3.041	.700
	<u>N</u>	Percent	<u>N</u>	Percent	<u>N</u>	Percent	<u>N</u>	Percent
Age								
18-34	37	26.8	8	18.6	12	27.3	17	38.6
35-54	41	29.7	15	34.9	14	31.8	12	27
>55	36	26.1	12	27.9	11	25	11	25
Gender								
Male	32	23.2	8	18.6	13	29.5	11	25
Female	80	58.0	27	62.8	24	54.5	29	65.9
Non-binary	1	.7	1	2.3				
Prefer not to say	1	.7	1	2.3				
Income								
Under €25.000	17	12.3	5	11.6	7	15.9	5	11.4
€25.000 - €49.999	19	13.8	5	11.6	8	18.2	6	13.6
€50.000 - €74.999	25	18.1	7	16.3	9	20.5	9	20.5
€75.000 - €99.999	16	11.6	8	18.6	5	11.4	3	6.8
€100.000 - 149.999	5	3.6	1	2.3	2	4.5	2	4.5
€150.000 or more	6	4.3	4	9.3	1	2.3	1	2.3
Prefer not to say	26	18.8	7	16.3	5	11.4	14	31.8
Education								
No Degree	1	.7	1	2.3				
HS	25	18.1	7	16.3	10	22.7	8	18.2
SVE	34	24.6	15	34.9	11	25	8	18.2
HPE	42	30.4	10	23.3	13	29.5	19	43.2
UE	12	8.7	4	9.3	3	6.8	5	11.4
Platform								
Facebook	50	36.2	17	39.5	8	18.2	21	47.7
Instagram	71	51.4	22	51.2	21	47.4	25	56.8
Pinterest	102	73.9	29	67.4	38	86.4	31	70.5
Youtube	26	18.8	8	18.6	9	20.5	8	18.2
X (Twitter)	3	2.2	2	4.7	1	2.3	0	0
Tiktok	27	19.6	7	16.3	12	27.3	6	13.6
LinkedIn	4	2.9	0	0	2	4.5	2	4.5

#### 3.2 Results

In this section, the findings from the statistical analysis are examined to address the research questions and corresponding hypotheses. IBM SPSS version 28.0 was used to analyse the data. To be able to discover the effect of the independent variables 'Content type' and 'Perceived Brand Image' on the dependent variable 'Visit Intention', a correlation and regression analysis were conducted. These analyses allow the inclusion of control variables, enabling the effects of age, gender, education, and income to be accounted for, ensuring accurate assessment of the primary relationships. This provides a more straightforward and detailed approach, particularly when dealing with multiple continuous control variables (Bhandari, 2023). Table 4 presents the correlation results among Content type, Perceived Brand Image, and the controlling demographic variables. Table 5 displays the outcomes from univariate models assessing Visit Intention. For this analysis, the baseline for the content type was set as informational content. We excluded respondents who were youngest in age, had the lowest education level, and those with the lowest income or who preferred not to disclose their income. This decision was made because older individuals and those with higher incomes are more likely to visit luxury bathroom stores at a faster rate, aligning with the focus of our study. Moreover, the significant correlations of the demographic control variables are discussed in Appendix D.

 Table 4

 Results Correlation of Content type, Perceived Brand Image and Demographics

Va	riables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Visit Intention	1						
2	Content	.031	1					
	Type							
3	Perceived Brand Image	.390**	.080	1				
4	Age	203*	174	323**	1			
5	Gender	092	110	283**	.143	1		
6	Education	134	.083	219*	120	.072	1	
7	Income	247**	.063	196*	.276**	.253**	.072	1

<sup>\*\*.</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

<sup>\*.</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Table 5**Results from univariate models of Visit Intention

	M1	M2	M3
	Control variables	Control variables +	Control variables +
		Content Type	Content Type +
			Perceived Brand
			Image
Intercept	3.614 (0.259)***	3.405 (0.307)***	1.090 (0.631)
Content Type****			
Entertaining Content		0.189 (0.114)	0.216 (0.107)*
Relational Content		0.035 (0.078)	0.008 (0.072)
Perceived Brand Image			0.550 (0.134)***
Demographic Controls			
Age			
35-54	-0.610 (0.241)**	-0.606 (0.241)**	-0.423 (0.229)
>55	-0.623 (0.244)**	-0.600 (0.245)**	-0.262 (0.242)
Gender			
Female	0.211 (0.210)	0.237 (0.210)	0.309 (0.196)
Education			
Secondary Vocational			
Education	-0.119 (0.276)	-0.079 (0.276)	-0.075 (0.256)
Higher Professional			
Education	-0.385 (0.256)	-0.367 (0.257)	-0.180 (0.243)
<b>University Education</b>	-0.376 (0.356)	-0.339 (0.356)	-0.098 (0.336)
Income			
€50.000 - €74.999	0.206 (0.249)	0.188 (0.248)	0.099 (0.336)
€75.000 - €99.999	0.068 (0.286)	0.086 (0.288)	-0.100 (0.272)
€100.000 - 149.999	0.696 (0.477)	0.656 (0.475)	0.660 (0.442)
€150.000 or more	0.086 (0.437)	0.160(0.441)	0.206 (0.410)

<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup> Baseline: Informational

# 3.2.1 Impact of Content type on Visit Intention

In examining the influence of social media content type on the intention to visit luxury brick-and-mortar stores, two statistical methods were employed: correlation analysis and regression analysis. The correlation analysis revealed no significant association between content type (informational versus entertaining or relational) and visit intention, r(129) = .031, p = .724. To deepen our understanding, regression analysis was conducted, incorporating

control variables (age, gender, education, and income) to ensure the independence of the relationship between the independent variable (content type) and dependent variable (visit intention) from external factors. With the inclusion of content type variables (informational, entertaining, relational) and control variables (age, gender, education, and income), the model exhibited limited explanatory power,  $R^2 = .122$ , F(12, 101) = 1.174, p = .312, confirming that content type does not significantly influence visit intention. Therefore, based on our analysis, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, suggesting that informational content on social media, compared to entertaining or relational content does not have a significant effect on the intention to visit a luxury brick-and-mortar store. Consequently, Hypothesis 1 is not supported.

However, in regression model 3, with the inclusion of the independent variable perceived brand image alongside the control variables and the independent variable content type, the explanatory power rose to  $R^2 = .249$ , F(13, 100) = 2.556, p = .004. Notably, the variable "content type: entertaining" exhibited a significant positive effect, with a coefficient  $\beta = .211$  and a significance level of p = .046.

# 3.2.2 Impact of Brand Image influence on Visit Intention

The investigation into the effect of perceived brand image on consumers' visit intentions to luxury brick-and-mortar stores utilized both correlation and regression analyses. The correlation between perceived brand image and visit intention was found to be significantly positive, r (114) = .390, p < .001, indicating a strong relationship between these variables. In the regression analysis, the inclusion of perceived brand image in Model 3 significantly improved the model's explanatory power. Perceived brand image had a substantial positive effect on visit intention, with a beta coefficient of  $\beta$  = .402 and a highly significant impact (p < .001). This model explained a significant proportion of the variance in visit intention,  $R^2$  = .249, F(13, 100) = 2.556, p = .004. Based on our analysis, we reject the null hypothesis, indicating that a more favorable perceived brand image does have a significant effect on consumers' visit intention in a luxury brick-and-mortar store. Consequently, Hypothesis 5 is supported.

# 3.2.3 Conclusion results Study 1

In conclusion, the results demonstrated the impact of social media content type and perceived brand image on consumers' intentions to visit luxury brick-and-mortar stores. Regarding content type, neither correlation nor regression analyses showed a significant influence on visit intention, suggesting that no single content type significantly affects the intention to visit these stores. However, perceived brand image had a significant positive effect

on visit intention, indicating that a more favorable brand image does influence consumers' visit intentions. Interestingly, when perceived brand image was included alongside the control variables and content type, the "entertaining" content type showed a significant positive effect on visit intention.

# 4. STUDY 2: Impact of Call-to-action buttons on Visits

#### 4.1 Method

This section details the methodological approach of the study, including the research design, materials, procedure and data collection.

# 4.1.1 Research design

Study 2 employs a quantitative approach, specifically utilizing A/B testing. The primary goal of A/B testing is to evaluate the impact of a new change, which is a controlled experiment (Gui et al., 2015). The A/B testing tested if the CTAs on a website have an effect on the visits compared to a website that only has a contactform. The comparison is made between an old and a new website. The old website lacked CTAs, while the new website incorporated strategically placed buttons throughout, including pop-ups and integrated buttons. This comparison tested hypothesis 2. There were two types of CTAs used: "Request a consultation" (macro action) and "Download the inspiration book" (micro action). The inspiration book (micro action) may indirectly influence visit intention, a relationship tested through hypothesis 3. In addition, it is possible to assess if the visit translates into a sale at a later stage by examining the quotation in a sales software, thereby testing hypothesis 4. By implementing this research method, hypotheses 2, 3, and 4 were tested and the first sub-question could be answered.

# 4.1.2 Materials

The data for this study was collected using three main platforms: Simar, Outlook, and WordPress. Besides that also google analytics was used to gather the daily visitors. Google Analytics is a web analytics service that tracks and reports website traffic and user behavior (Google, n.d.). To provide an overview, Table 6 is listed with the operationalization of the variables. To ensure ethically responsible research practices, the study adhered to the BMS Ethics Committee rules and received approval from the committee.

 Table 6

 Operationalization of variables study 2: Impact of Call-to-action buttons on Visit intention

Variable	Definition	Description	Data Source	<b>Definition Data Source</b>
Independent vari	iable			
Call-to-action button	The desired action that users are prompted to take on a website	The total number of used micro and macro buttons per day	WordPress	WordPress is an open- source content management system (CMS) used for creating and managing websites and blogs
Inspiration book (micro action)	The inspiration book that can be downloaded of the website	Number of downloaded PDFs per day	WordPress	(WordPress, n.d.).
Contact request (macro action)	A request to a consultation in the showroom	Number of requests per day	WordPress	_
Dependent varia	ble			
Visits	The number of visits	Number of calendar appointments from the CTA's	Outlook	A personal information manager software by Microsoft that includes email, calendar, task management, and contact management features (Microsoft 365, n.d.)
Sales	The number of offers	Number of accepted offers	Simar	A ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) software for the kitchen and bathroom sectors of the interior industry, including tools for administration, accounting and design (Simar, n.d.).

# 4.1.3 Procedure

The research methodology comprised several sequential stages: Initially, daily visitor metrics for the years 2023 and 2024 were retrieved from Google Analytics (appendix E provides a screenshot of the Google Analytics interface). Subsequently, data regarding requested

consultations and inspirational book downloads per day was recorded from WordPress (appendix F offers a visual representation of the website, while appendix G displays WordPress data). Further, each consultation was cross-checked in the Outlook agenda for both websites to confirm scheduled appointments. Lastly, Simar records were scrutinized to ascertain if consultations (visits) led to sales, with a screenshot of the Simar platform included in appendix H.

#### 4.1.4 Data collection

Data collection was carried out within a company specializing in luxury bathrooms and tiles available through their brick-and-mortar store. The time horizon for the A/B testing phase of this study was set at a minimum of twelve weeks, ensuring an adequate duration for users to interact with the website and for patterns to emerge. However, the testing period did not exceed sixteen weeks to strike a balance between capturing sufficient data and minimizing the potential influence of external factors that may fluctuate over an extended period (Kohavi et al., 2020). The old website without CTAs was active until October 2023, and the new one with CTAs has been active since November 2023. The comparison focused on the months between January to March, representing the first part of the high peak sales period for this company. The periods for analysis were from January 1 to March 31, 2023, for the old website, and from January 1 to March 31, 2024, for the new website. During data collection, a presence was maintained in the showroom, engaging as a hostess with customers that came in without appointment. Visitors were queried about their referral source, facilitating insight into their journey.

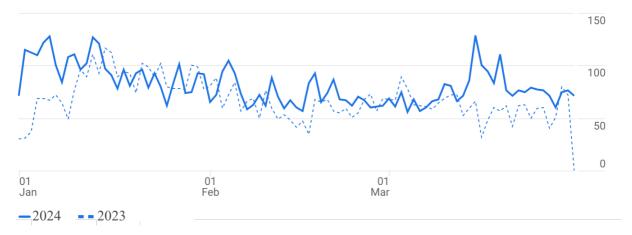
Sampling. The data of the experiment was gathered through Non-Probability sampling. The sampling was based on the high peak sales period for the company, in this way a bigger sample was gathered. A larger sample size improves the precision, generalizability, statistical power, and robustness of research findings, making them more reliable and applicable to the broader population (Perekalin, 2023). Sampling was specifically conducted for the old website from January to March 2023 and for the new website in 2024 to enable comparison of similar high peak sales periods. This approach constitutes longitudinal data collection, where data is gathered over time from the same subjects or units, allowing for the observation of changes or trends within those subjects or units across the specified time periods.

The old website attracted a total of 6,129 visitors during the period, with a minimum of 30 visitors on the slowest day and a maximum of 117 visitors on the busiest day, averaging approximately 68.1 visitors per day. In contrast, the new website experienced higher traffic with a total of 7,351 visitors, a minimum of 56 daily visitors, a maximum of 129 visitors, and an

average of 81.67 daily visitors. Figure 4 presents the daily visitor counts for both websites, distinguishing between the new website (2024) and the old website (2023).

Figure 4

Daily visitors of new (2024) and old (2023) website



In terms of conversions, there were 6 contact forms filled out on the old website requesting a consultation during the 90-day period, leading to a click-through rate of 0.098. The new website featured call-to-action buttons used 225 times over the 90-day period, including 209 downloaded inspiration books (micro-actions) with a mean of approximately 2.32 per day, and 16 requested consultations (macro-actions) with a mean of approximately 1.45 per day. The new website's click-through rate was notably higher at 3.061. An overview of these descriptive statistics is shown in Table 7.

 Table 7

 Descriptive statistics of Study 2: Impact of Call-to-action buttons on Visit intention

Ver	rsion A	Vers	sion B		
Old website v	vith contactform	New website with Call-to-Actions			
Period	January –march 2023	Period	January–March 2024		
<b>Total Days</b>	90	<b>Total Days</b>	90		
<b>Total Visitors</b>	6129	<b>Total Visitors</b>	7351		
<b>Daily Visitors</b>		Daily visitors			
Min	30	Min	56		
Max	117	Max	129		
Mean	68.1	Mean	81.67		
SD	18.8	SD	18.40		
<b>Conversions total</b>	6	<b>Conversions total</b>	225		
Daily requested		Daily Downloaded			
consultations	6	Inspiration books	209		
		(micro actions)			
Min	1	Min	0		
Max	1	Max	8		
Mean	1	Mean	2.32		
SD	0	SD	1.71		
		Daily requested			
		consultations (Macro			
		actions)	16		
		Min	1		
		Max	3		
		Mean	1.46		
		SD	0.82		
CTR	0.0979	CTR	3.0608		
Sales from		Sales from			
conversion	2	conversion	9		

# 4.2 Results

In this section, the findings from the statistical analysis are examined to address the research questions and corresponding hypotheses. IBM SPSS version 28.0 was used to analyse the data. To investigate the impact of the variable 'Call-to-actions' on 'Visits,' an independent samples t-test is initially conducted to compare the means between the two websites, determining if a significant difference exists. Subsequently, a correlation analysis provided a brief overview of the relationship between the variables, elucidating the direction and strength of their association. Finally, regression analysis offers a comprehensive understanding by

quantifying the relationship between variables, accounting for the influence of other variables. Similarly, to explore the effect of 'Visits' on 'Sales,' the Chi-square test of independence was employed to assess whether a relationship exists between the two variables. Following this, a correlation and regression analysis were conducted. Table 8 presents the correlation results among website, visitor and time. Table 9 displays the outcomes from univariate models assessing Visits and Sales. The upcoming paragraphs focus on the results from testing the hypotheses. Interestingly, beyond the hypotheses, a significant negative correlation was observed between visits and sales in this correlation analysis, r (17) = -0.560, p = 0.019. Moreover, the significant correlations of the demographic control variables are discussed in Appendix D.

**Table 8** *Results Correlation of Website Version, Visitor and Time* 

Va	riables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Visits	1					
2	Sales	560*	1				
3	Website Version	.114	.383	1			
4	Daily Visitors	054	.414	.344**	1		
5	Day of week	.059	091	.006	009	1	
6	Month	.029	.061	.000	411**	.047	1

<sup>\*\*.</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

<sup>\*.</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Table 9**Results from univariate models of Visit Intention and Intention to Buy

	M1	M2
	Visits	Sales
Intercept	011 (.258)	.121 (.1.134)
Website Version		
New Website	.165 (.104)	.508 (.297)
Control Variables		
Daily Visitors	001 (.003)	.005 (.018)
Day of week		
Maandag	.172 (.179)	187 (.294)
Dinsdag	.319 (.179)	
Woensdag	.059 (.179)	1.159 (.423)
Donderdag	.220 (.180)	248 (.353)
Vrijdag	.192 (.178)	200 (.297)
Zaterdag	.186 (.179)	387 (.469)
Month		
January	020 (.130)	006 (.413)
February	.167 (.118)	576 (.271)
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001		

## 4.2.1 Impact of CTAs on Visits

Hypothesis 2 aimed to investigate whether the presence of CTAs on a business website have a positive effect on the consumers' visits in a luxury brick-and-mortar store. To assess this, data was collected on the number of consultations categorized by the type of website (contact form or CTA) To test the hypothesis an independent samples t-test, correlation and regression analyses were conducted. The independent samples t-test is suitable for comparing conversion rates between Website 1 and Website 2 because it is designed for comparing means of continuous variables between two independent groups, making it ideal for analyzing quantitative outcome measures like conversion rates. Levene's test showed unequal variances between groups (F = 9.032, p = 0.003), violating the assumption of equal variances. Therefore, the results with equal variance not assumed indicate no significant difference in visits between Website 1 (M = 0.10, SD = 0.38), lacking CTAs, and Website 2 (M = 0.24, SD = 0.82), featuring CTAs, t(178) = -1.526, p = 0.130). For the table of the independent samples T-test, refer to Appendix I. Secondly, the correlation analysis revealed that there was no significant correlation between the presence of CTAs on the website and visits, t(180) = 0.114, t(180) = 0.129. At last, the

regression analysis further explored this relationship with control variables (daily visitors, day of the week and, month). The regression model for visits did not yield statistically significant results,  $R^2 = 0.060$ , F(10, 169) = 1.074, p = 0.385. The presence of CTAs did not show a significant effect on visits. Based on our analysis, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, suggesting that the presence of CTAs on a business website may not have a significant effect on consumers' visits in a luxury brick-and-mortar store. Consequently, Hypothesis 2 is not supported.

# 4.2.2 Strengthening effect of Micro-Actions

Hypothesis 3 aimed to investigate whether downloading the inspiration book (micro actions) compared to requesting a consultation (macro actions) have an strengthing effect on the relationship between CTAs and visit intention. Due to the limited number of respondents who engaged in both downloading the inspiration book (micro action) and requesting a consultation (macro action), further analysis to investigate the strengthening effect of micro actions compared to macro actions on the relationship between CTAs and visits was not feasible. Only three participants completed both types of actions, rendering the sample size insufficient for meaningful statistical analysis. This limitation highlights the need for larger sample sizes or alternative methodologies to explore this hypothesis effectively.

# 4.2.3 Impact of Visits generated through CTAs on Sales

Hypothesis 4 aimed to investigate whether the visits generated through CTAs has a positive effect on the sales in a luxury brick-and-mortar store. To assess this, data was collected on the number of consultations categorized by the type of website (contact form or CTA) and whether they bought something or not. For consultations initiated through the contact form, two individuals bought something, while four individuals did not make a purchase. On the other hand, for consultations initiated through the CTAs, nine individuals made a purchase, and seven individuals did not buy anything. To test the hypothesis a Chi-square test of independence, correlation and regression analyses were conducted. The Chi-square test for independence was chosen as the analysis method due to its suitability for examining the relationship between categorical variables. The results revealed that there was no significant association between the visits generated through CTAs and sales,  $\chi 2$  (1, N = 2) = 2.000, p = .157. For the table of the Chi-square test for indepence, refer to Appendix J. Secondly, the correlation analysis revealed no significant correlation between visits generated through CTAs and sales, r (17) = 0.383, p = 0.130. At last, the regression analysis further explored this relationship with control variables

(daily visitors, day of the week and, month). The regression model for sales showed that the visits generated through CTAs did not have a statistically significant effect,  $R^2 = 0.790$ , F(9, 7) = 2.926, p = 0.085. Despite the positive coefficient for, indicating a potential positive effect on sales, the result was not statistically significant at the conventional alpha level of 0.05. Thus, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, suggesting that visits generated through CTAs did not positively influence the sales in the luxury brick-and-mortar store, as hypothesized. Consequently, Hypothesis 4 is not supported.

## 4.2.4 Additional Analysis

Due to both hypotheses not being supported, an additional analysis was conducted to determine if adding CTAs to a website impacted conversion rates. Therefore, another independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the conversion rates between the two websites. Firstly, Levene's Test for Equality of Variances assesses whether the variances of the conversion rates in both groups are equal. The assumption of equal variances is violated (F = 160.418, p < .001). With equal variances not assumed, the significant t-value, t(178) = 12.646, p < .001, indicates a substantial difference in conversion rates between the two website designs, with Website B having significantly higher conversion rates (M = 3.17). For the table of the independent samples T-test, refer to Appendix K. Thus, the new website with CTAs exhibits significantly higher conversion rates compared to the old website.

## 4.2.5 Conclusion results Study 2

In conclusion, the study demonstrated the impact of CTAs on consumers' visits and the effect of visits on sales at luxury brick-and-mortar stores. The results showed no significant effect of CTAs on consumers' visits, leading to the rejection of Hypothesis 2. Additionally, there was no significant positive effect of visits generated through CTAs on sales, leading to the rejection of Hypothesis 4. Interestingly, a significant negative correlation was observed between visits and sales. Furthermore, the additional analysis indicated that despite the unsupported hypotheses, the presence of CTAs did impact the conversion rates.

### 5. DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate the effects of digital marketing tools such as CTAs and social media content too increase visit intention to showrooms. It was anticipated that encountering informational content on social media, compared to entertaining or relational content, would lead to a higher expression of intention to visit luxury brick-and-mortar stores. Additionally, a more favorable perceived brand image was expected to positively influence consumers' visit intentions in luxury brick-and-mortar stores. Furthermore, it was expected that the visits generated through CTAs would have a positive effect on the sales in luxury brick-and-mortar stores. Finally, the inclusion of CTAs on business websites was expected to enhance consumers' visits towards luxury brick-and-mortar stores. Downloading inspiration books (Micro actions) were expected to strengthen the relationship between CTAs and visit intention.

### 5.1 Discussion of results

Beginning with Study 1, the research aimed to determine the most effective messaging type for attracting customers to a luxury brick-and-mortar store. Furthermore, this study delved into the impact of perceived brand image on visit intention through social media platforms. The survey results regarding the effectiveness of various types of social media content in attracting customers to luxury brick-and-mortar stores yielded no significant impact on visit intention. The findings indicate that informative content is not preferred over entertaining or relational content. This contrasts with theoretical expectations, which propose that consumers primarily engage with online content driven by informational needs, such as clicking links, reading details, and utilizing multimedia features (Dolan et al., 2016; Monteiro Pinho, 2022). This phenomenon may stem from consumer skepticism or fatigue towards informative promotional content on social media platforms, which is increasingly perceived as advertisements. While advertisements may not pose a significant obstacle for e-commerce stores, luxury brick-and-mortar stores may require a different strategy, given the higher investment involved and the inability to make impulse purchases typical of e-commerce products.

Furthermore, the findings underscore the significant impact of a positive perceived brand image on visit intention, aligning with existing theoretical frameworks. Studies by Alfandi and Marco (2021) and Liang and Zhang (2012) support the notion that a favorable brand image positively influences visit intentions. These results highlight the crucial role of perceived brand image in shaping consumers' intentions to visit luxury brick-and-mortar stores on social media. This emphasizes the importance for luxury companies to utilize social media to showcase content that cultivates a positive brand image, and consequently encourages

potential customers to visit their stores in the near future.

Moreover, the findings suggest that customers with a positive perceived brand image significantly enhance the impact of entertaining content on their intention to visit the store. This finding is consistent with the theory proposed by Baek et al. (2020), which suggests that providing virtual tours of physical stores can serve as a potent marketing strategy for online consumers, heightening the likelihood of consumers intending to visit the physical store. Interestingly, while informational and relational posts, offering consultations with highly educated designers and showcasing projects with positive reviews, respectively, did not produce significant results, the entertaining post featuring a 3D-tour of the store was effective. 3D-tour of these kinds of stores showcase inspirational examples of possible home designs, providing customers with a visually immersive experience of what the store has to offer. This aligns with the theory of Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014), that customers active on social media are in the first phase of the customer journey, possibly not yet thinking about visiting a luxury brickand-mortar store but rather seeking inspiration online. This is confirmed by the responses of the respondents who were asked what they preferred to see when searching online for bathrooms. Predominantly, they expressed a desire for inspiration regarding bathroom designs. Therefore, social media content should focus on sharing inspirational posts with visually appealing images or videos from the store, rather than posts specifically informing customers about consultations. Inspirational content has the potential to evoke a desire to experience similar beauty firsthand, prompting individuals to seek out the real-life counterpart, as customers are eager to translate visually captivating content they discover on social media platforms into real-life experiences. Additionally, these appealing images of the store might positively influence the perceived brand image, which in turn enhances the intention to visit.

Examining study 2, the research aimed to investigate the impact of CTAs on visits to a luxury brick-and-mortar store. Additionally, it sought to determine whether these visits, generated through CTAs, had a positive effect on sales in the luxury brick-and-mortar store. The presence of CTAs had an insignificant effect on visits, suggesting that individuals visiting a website with CTAs are not influenced to visit the store by the presence of these buttons. Instead, CTAs may primarily serve as convenient tools for scheduling appointments for customers who already intend to do so, rather than as persuasive elements. However, Corcos and Hodara (2023) stress that CTAs are designed to prompt specific user actions, emphasizing an action-oriented approach. The lack of significance in this context may imply that this theory is applicable primarily to online environments and may not extend to offline environments.

Those browsing the website but not yet inclined to make a store visit are in a different

phase of the customer journey, harboring different needs that prompt them to step foot into the store. This is further evidenced among customers who both downloaded the inspiration book and requested a consultation, only three individuals did both within a short period. This disparity confirms that customers downloading the inspiration book are in an entirely different phase of the customer journey compared to those interested in requesting a consultation. Customers desiring a consultation might even skip the step of downloading the inspiration book. This does not correspond with the theories of Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) and Gozali et al. (2022), which indicate that digital marketing tools, such as CTAs like requesting consultations, are primarily employed during the middle stages of the funnel, specifically during the information search and evaluation phases of the customer journey. The findings show that the two types of CTAs occur in different stages. The macro CTA, requesting a consultation, happens in the evaluation and purchase stage (bottom of the funnel), while the micro CTA, downloading the inspiration book, mostly occurs during the orientation and information search stages (Top and middle of the funnel).

Although the CTAs did not directly influence store visits, other findings indicate that integrating CTAs into a website, rather than solely relying on a contact form, is beneficial for conversions. The clear visibility of CTAs prompts faster and more conversions. Additionally, these customer contacts obtained through the CTAs can be used for email marketing, enhancing customer retention efforts.

Furthermore, the A/B testing experiment revealed that visits generated through CTAs did not significantly impact sales. This finding contradicts theoretical expectations, which suggest a positive correlation between visits and sales (Amu Chu May et al., 2019). Customers arriving via CTAs showed no difference in their purchase intentions compared to other customers. The decision to purchase luxury items typically involves various touchpoints, such as social media, reviews, word-of-mouth, and multiple physical store visits. The CTAs on the website is merely one of many contributing factors and may not play a decisive role in the purchasing process.

Moreover, the unexpected negative correlation between visits and sales suggests a deviation from the initial hypothesis. In this scenario, as visits increase, sales decrease within the sample. It may suggest that the clicks generated are not effectively translating into purchase interest. Despite driving traffic to the website, these visitors may not be converting into paying customers. This discrepancy could potentially stem from attracting the wrong audience to the website. It is possible that the messaging or targeting of the CTAs is not resonating with the intended customer base, leading to a disconnect between visitor expectations and the products

or services offered. If targeting or messaging is ineffective, it could lead to a situation where CTAs are frequently used but sales remain low. Additionally, this negative correlation may stem from factors beyond the website, such as external changes in the broader economic landscape or industry trends. Currently, for instance, the construction industry experienced another challenging year. By the end of 2023, nearly one in five construction companies reported insufficient work, as revealed by a survey conducted by Bouwunie on January 19, 2024. Consequently, many customers may be seeking inspiration but hesitating to make purchases. This hesitation may be reflected in the statistics: 209 people downloaded an inspiration book, whereas only 16 requested a consultation. Moreover, the customer journey in a luxury bathroom store can be lengthy, with some customers requiring initial consultations that span several months to a year before making a purchase. Consequently, visits that do not result in immediate sales may extend far beyond the testing period of this research.

Lastly, the demographic control variables of both studies revealed several significant correlations, the interpretation of these findings are discussed in Appendix D. Understanding these correlations can assist in customizing marketing strategies to better align with the needs and preferences of diverse demographic groups.

## 5.2 Research and practical implications

This study contributes to existing knowledge by investigating the effectiveness of social media content and website features in attracting customers to luxury brick-and-mortar stores and influencing their visit intention and purchase behavior. The integration of a novel dataset tracking customers across online and offline touchpoints in their customer journey contributes to a deeper understanding of consumer behavior along this journey. This comprehensive approach aids in conceptualizing the increasingly complex customer journey, particularly given the intertwining nature of digital and physical channels in today's retail landscape.

For instance, the study enriches existing customer journey frameworks, such as those proposed by Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014), by outlining the stages of the journey and how CTAs are used in each. Notably, the findings make clear that customers tend to interact with inspirational content, such as downloading an inspiration book, during the initial information-seeking and orientation phase, while engagement with CTAs for consultation requests becomes more prominent as customers actively explore in-store options during the purchase phase.

Moreover, the study's results contribute to the theory that micro conversions lead to macro conversions. The findings suggest that customers who engage in micro actions are in a different phase of the purchasing process compared to those undertaking macro actions. The duration between these phases varies depending on the type of product being purchased, with luxury items typically involving a longer consideration period.

Furthermore, the research contributes to the theory of webrooming by shedding light on online-to-offline consumer behavior patterns. Specifically, a positive perceived brand image emerges as a significant driver for transitioning from online browsing to offline engagement, with aesthetically appealing store content playing a pivotal role in facilitating this transition.

Additionally, the categorization framework introduced by Dolan et al. (2016) gains enrichment from the discovery that informational content does not consistently supersede entertaining or relational content. Particularly in luxury retail settings, preferences diverge, with customers often seeking out entertaining content that evokes inspiration.

Moreover, this study contributes to the perceived brand image theory by demonstrating that a positive perceived brand image enhances the intention to visit luxury brick-and-mortar stores.

Finally, there has been limited research on visit intention in luxury brick-and-mortar stores. This paper serves as a foundational starting point for further exploration into the transition of visit intentions from online to offline channels.

The study's findings have practical implications for marketers and retailers in the luxury sector. For instance, it provides a clear guidance for the bathroom company's marketing strategy. By understanding the impact of social media content, the company now knows what types of posts to prioritize. Rather than solely running campaigns that invite users to request consultations, the company should focus on entertaining content and content that enhances the perceived brand image. This approach is crucial for creating visit intentions among social media users. Moreover, the study confirms that CTAs are effective in facilitating faster conversions, but it highlights a distinction between two types of actions. The CTA to request a consultation should be used as a facilitator, as customers using this CTA are already convinced to visit the store. On the other hand, the company needs to place greater emphasis on engaging users who download the inspiration book, as they represent potential customers. To encourage these customers to visit, the company can implement targeted email marketing campaigns. Personalized online interactions, such as tailored emails, invitations, or exclusive online content, are likely to be more effective in the luxury market. By leveraging these insights, the bathroom company can enhance its online presence and drive more customers to its physical stores. However, these findings are not only applicable to luxury bathroom stores but also relevant to other luxury stores in the home and furnishing industry that have showrooms.

As an entrepreneur in online marketing, integrating the insights from this study can

substantially enhance service offerings. Understanding the nuances of consumer behavior in luxury retail allows for more tailored and effective marketing solutions. The study's findings on social media content and website features provide a solid foundation for advising clients on optimizing their online presence, enhancing brand perception, and engaging customers more effectively. This application of the study's insights can help improve online engagement and drive more traffic to physical stores.

#### 5.3 Limitations

The limitations of this study encompass several aspects that may impact the comprehensiveness and generalizability of the findings. Firstly, the survey design concentrated solely on visit intention rather than actual behavior, potentially limiting the accuracy of the results in reflecting individuals' real-life actions. Secondly, due to privacy concerns and the company's interests, individual customer participation was not feasible, potentially compromising the representativeness of the sample. Employing a case format instead of directly surveying customers may have introduced biases and limitations. Additionally, the survey responses obtained from participants may be subjective and influenced by social desirability bias, potentially affecting the reliability of the data. The use of convenience sampling may further introduce sampling and self-selection biases, hindering the the generalizability of the findings.

Moreover, the short duration of the a/b testing period might have limited the sample size, particularly considering the longer purchasing cycle associated with bathroom investments. Unmeasured variables, such as website design and external factors, could also influence visit intention but were not accounted for in the analysis. Furthermore, the utilization of WordPress as a data source for a/b testing presents limitations as it provides aggregated data without specific insights into individual customer behaviors. Additionally, the study did not systematically collect and analyze data on customers who visited the store without making an online request. Moreover, the dependent variable consisted of count data with numerous zeros. Traditional regression models, designed for continuous metric variables, may not be suitable for this type of distribution. Instead, alternative models like zero-inflated models, specifically tailored for count data with excess zeros, could provide a more appropriate analysis approach.

Furthermore, it's important to note that the findings are based on luxury brick-and-mortar stores with showrooms, which may not fully translate to other luxury brick-and-mortar stores. Finally, the research primarily focused on the top and middle of the funnel, potentially

overlooking critical aspects of the customer journey. These limitations should be taken into account when interpreting and applying the findings of this study.

### 5.4 Future research

Future research endeavors could address several key areas to further advance our understanding of consumer behavior in luxury brick-and-mortar stores. Firstly, overcoming limitations associated with sample size and representativeness is crucial. Employing larger and more diverse samples would not only enhance the generalizability of findings to broader populations but also improve the external validity of the research. Secondly, exploring the effectiveness of alternative research methodologies, such as surveys or interviews with real visitors of the store, could provide more nuanced insights into consumer behavior. This approach could shed light on the negative correlation observed between visits and sales. Longitudinal studies are also essential to track participants' behavior over time and assess the long-term impact of social media content and website features on visit intention and purchase behavior. Given the prolonged customer journey in these types of stores, conducting studies spanning longer durations would be beneficial.

Moreover, future research could delve into specific aspects identified in the current study. Given the influence of entertaining content on visit intention, further exploration is warranted to delve into the specific types of entertaining content that resonate with individuals and effectively prompt them to visit. Since we discovered that a positive perceived brand image influences visit intention, it is essential to explore what types of content can foster this positive perception. Specifically, focus on examining aesthetically pleasing images of the store. For the second study, investigate additional factors on a business website that might encourage people to visit a store. Specifically, analyze micro actions such as customers downloading inspiration books to understand what further incentives are needed to persuade them to visit the store. Overall, addressing these avenues for future research would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior in luxury brick-and-mortar stores and provide practical insights for businesses looking to enhance their online and offline marketing efforts.

### 6. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the effects of digital marketing tools such as call-to-action buttons (CTAs) and social media content too improve the coversion rate and increase visit intention to showrooms. With the use of a survey and a/b testing research design, this study was conducted to answer the main research question: "How can small luxury brick-and-mortar stores in the home and furnishing sector, which lack online selling capabilities, successfully attract customers through digital marketing tools?". Although the results of this research presented mostly insignificant effect, the study still contributes to the current field of research on online marketing and luxury stores. To address the main research question, we begin by exploring two sub-questions.

The first sub-question examines the types of social media content that effectively attract customers to luxury brick-and-mortar stores specializing in home furnishings. The findings indicate that neither informative nor relational content significantly draws customers to these stores. However, when customers have a positive perception of a brand's image, entertaining posts can enhance their intention to visit. Furthermore, a more favorable perceived brand image influences visit intentions, suggesting that cultivating a positive online brand image is crucial, surpassing the impact of specific content types.

The second sub-question investigates the effectiveness of CTAs on websites in attracting customers to luxury brick-and-mortar stores in the home and furnishing sector. Findings indicate that the macro CTA for requesting a consultation does not directly prompt store visits. Instead, it serves to schedule appointments for customers already intending to visit. Customers in need of encouragement to visit the showroom are in a different stage of the customer journey than those interacting with this CTA. These customers typically interact with the micro CTA, downloading the inspiration book.

To address the main research question, it is clear that an overarching, highly effective solution for attracting customers through digital marketing tools remains elusive. Nevertheless, one promising approach that can enhance the online environment and effectively draw customers to physical stores is the development of a positive online perceived brand image. If customers have a positive perceived brand image, entertaining content such as inspirational images of the store can encourage them to visit. Customers who are already interested in visiting can use a CTA to request a consultation. However, customers who need more inspiration can use an other CTA to download the inspiration book. Surfing social media and downloading the inspiration book represent the orienting stage of the customer journey, while requesting a

consultation signifies the evaluation and purchase stage. Further investigation is needed to determine how to effectively influence customers who download the inspiration book to visit the store, moving them from the orienting stage to the evaluation and purchase stage in the customer journey, also referred to in the conversion funnel as progressing from the Top to the Bottom.

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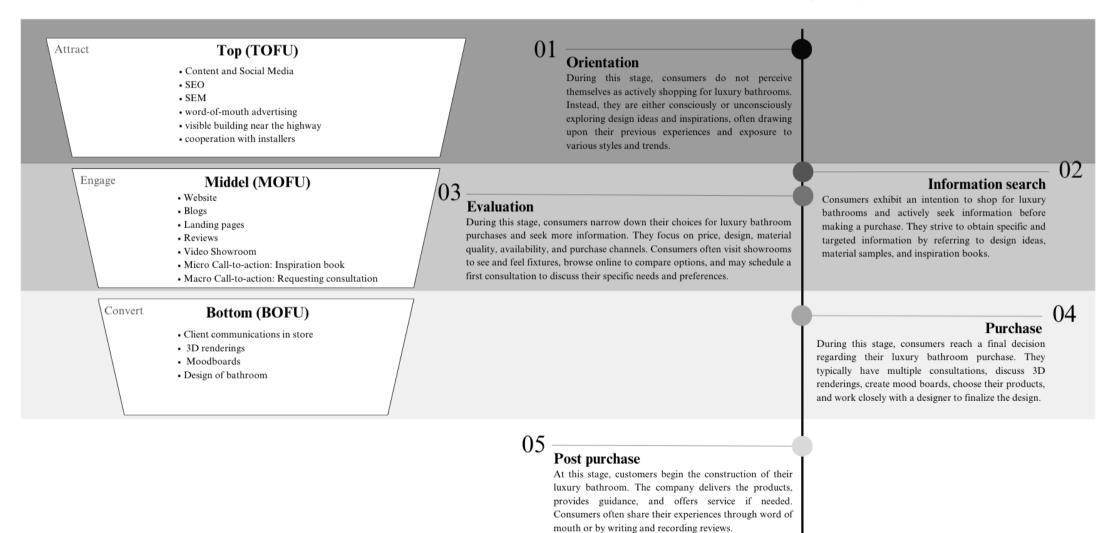
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# Appendix A

STUDY 1: Survey Impact of Social media content on Visit intention.

## **Conversion Funnel**

# **Customer journey**



# Appendix B

STUDY 1: Survey Impact of Social media content on Visit intention.

Start of Block: Introduction + informed consent

Dear Participant,

I hereby invite you to participate in the research for my **Master Thesis** focusing on **digital marketing in luxury brick-and-mortar stores.** You are kindly requested to answer a few questions, which is expected to take **approximately 5 minutes**.

Please read the following information carefully

Your data will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Rest assured, no personal information will be collected during this study. Your responses will be anonymous and used solely for academic research purposes as part of the Master Thesis for the Double Degree in Communication Science and Business Administration.

**Your participation** in this research is entirely voluntary. You have the freedom to withdraw from the study at any point. Additionally, within three months of the study's completion, you will have the option to receive a summary of the research findings by sending email to the address provided below.

If you have any **questions** or require further information, please feel free to reach out too: s.herst@student.utwente.nl

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you in advance for your assistance with this research, I greatly appreciate it!

Kind regards,

Serena Herst

Please indicate your choice below:
Yes, I voluntarily consent to participate in this study. I understand that I can refuse to
answer questions and withdraw from the study at any time without providing a reason.
(1)
No. I do not wish to participate in this study (2)
O No, I do not wish to participate in this study (2)
Skip To: End of Survey If Please indicate your choice below: = No, I do not wish to participate in this study
End of Block: Introduction + informed consent
Start of Block: Introduction Social Media Posts
Imagine: You are looking for a new bathroom with high quality and a luxurious
appearance. You are browsing the internet, searching for ideas and inspiration for this
bathroom. With this in mind, please answer the following questions:
, results and the second of th
Q1 What specific information would you like to find online when considering a new
bathroom?
Page Break ————

would you ty	ypically use? Please select all that apply (or only 1)
	Facebook (1)
	Instagram (2)
	Pinterest (3)
	X (Twitter) (4)
	Youtube (5)
	Tiktok (6)
	LinkedIn (7)
End of Block:	Introduction Social Media Posts
Start of Block	: Informational content
Page Break	

Q2 When looking for ideas and inspiration for a bathroom, which social media platform

Now, you're looking for a bathroom store that meets your preferences. While scrolli through social media, you come across an advertised post from a bathroom store. Pl review the following post carefully before answering the questions.					
Q3 Please read t	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
This post is easy to understand (1)	0	0	0	0	0
This post is original (2)	0	0	0	0	0
This post is refreshing (3)	$\circ$	$\circ$	$\circ$	0	0
This post is relevant (4)	0	0	0	0	0
Page Break —					

After gathering inspiration, you know what you want: a luxurious hotel bathroom.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I enjoy this post (1)	0	0	0	0	0
I feel good when I see this post (2)	0	0	0	0	0
I have some expectations from the post (3)	0	0	0	$\circ$	0
find this post interesting (4)	0	$\circ$	$\circ$	$\circ$	$\circ$

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
This post can help me in achieving my goal to visit a bathroom store (1)	0	0	0		0
This post is useful when searching for a bathroom store (2)	0		0		0
This post gives me inspiration (3)	0	0	0	0	0

\_\_\_\_\_

Q6 Please read the following statements and select the most suitable answer

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
The post encourages me to like it (1)	0	0	0	0	0
The post encourages me to comment to it (2)	0	0	0	0	0
The post encourages me to visit the website of the company (3)	0	0	0	0	0
The post encourages me to make an appointment with the company (4)		0		0	
The post encourages me to share this post with others who are in search of a bathroom (5)		0		0	
ı					

Page Break —

Q7 Please read t	the following sta	atements and se	elect the most sui	table answer	
	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I would visit					
this bathroom store rather					
than any other	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
bathroom					
store (2)					
I can see					
myself					
visiting this	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
bathroom					
store (3)					
Page Break —					

Q8 On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, please rate your impression of this company based on the post you just viewed.
O 0 (0)
O 1 (1)
O 2 (2)
O <sub>3</sub> (3)
O 4 (4)
O 5 (5)
O 6 (6)
O 7 (7)
O 8 (8)
O 9 (9)
O 10 (10)
End of Block: Informational content

Page Break

After gathering inspiration, you know what you want: a luxurious hotel bathroom. Now you're looking for a bathroom store that meets your preferences. While scrolling throug social media, you come across an advertised post from a bathroom store. Please review t following post carefully before answering the questions.						
Q3 Please read t	the following sta Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)	
This post is easy to understand (1)	0	0	0	0	0	
This post is original (2)	0	0	0	$\circ$	0	
This post is refreshing (3)	0	0	0	$\circ$	0	
This post is relevant (4)	0	$\circ$	$\circ$	$\circ$	$\circ$	

Page Break ——

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I enjoy this post (1)	0	0	0	0	0
I feel good when I see this post (2)	0	0	0	0	0
I have some expectations from the post (3)	0	0	0	0	0
find this post nteresting (4)	$\circ$	$\circ$	$\circ$	$\circ$	$\circ$

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
This post can help me in achieving my goal to visit a bathroom store (1)	0	0	0	0	0
This post is useful when searching for a bathroom store (2)	0	0	0		0
This post gives me inspiration (3)	0	0	0	$\circ$	0

\_\_\_\_\_

Q6 Please read the following statements and select the most suitable answer

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
The post encourages me to like it (1)	0	0	0	0	0
The post encourages me to comment to it (2)	0	0	0	0	0
The post encourages me to visit the website of the company (3)	0	0	0	0	0
The post encourages me to make an appointment with the company (4)	0	0	0	0	0
The post encourages me to share this post with others who are in search of a bathroom (5)	0	0		0	0

\_\_\_\_\_

Page Break —

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I would visit his bathroom store rather					
han any other bathroom store (2)	0	0	0	0	0
I can see myself visiting this bathroom store (3)	0	0	0	0	0

**End of Block: Entertaining Content** 

Start of Block: Relational Content	
Page Break	

Now, you're looking for a bathroom store that meets your preferences. While scrolling through social media, you come across an advertised post from a bathroom store. Please review the following post carefully before answering the questions.								
Q3 Please read t	the following states Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Plect the most sui Neither agree nor disagree (3)	table answer  Somewhat  agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)			
This post is easy to understand (1)	0	0	0	0	0			
This post is original (2)	0	0	0	0	0			
This post is refreshing (3)	0	$\circ$	0	$\circ$	$\circ$			
This post is relevant (4)	0	0	0	$\circ$	$\circ$			
Page Break —								

After gathering inspiration, you know what you want: a luxurious hotel bathroom.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I enjoy this post (1)	0	0	0	0	0
I feel good when I see this post (2)	0	0	0	0	0
I have some expectations from the post (3)	0	0	0	0	0
find this post interesting (4)	$\circ$	$\circ$	$\circ$	$\circ$	$\circ$

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
This post can help me in achieving my goal to visit a bathroom store (1)	0	0	0		0
This post is useful when searching for a bathroom store (2)	0	0	0		0
This post gives me nspiration (3)	0	0	0	0	0

\_\_\_\_\_

Q6 Please read the following statements and select the most suitable answer

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
The post encourages me to like it (1)	0	0	0	0	0
The post encourages me to comment to it (2)	0	0	0	0	0
The post encourages me to visit the website of the company (3)	0	0	0	0	0
The post encourages me to make an appointment with the company (4)	0	0		0	0
The post encourages me to share this post with others who are in search of a bathroom (5)	0		0	0	0
bathroom (5)					

Page Break ——

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I would visit					
this bathroom store rather					
than any other	$\bigcirc$		$\bigcirc$		$\bigcirc$
bathroom					
store (2)					
I can see					
myself					
visiting this	$\circ$		$\bigcirc$		
bathroom					
store (3)					

Q8 On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, please rate your impression of this company based on the post you just viewed.
O o (o)
O 1 (1)
O 2 (2)
O <sub>3</sub> (3)
O 4 (4)
O 5 (5)
O 6 (6)
O 7 (7)
O 8 (8)
O 9 (9)
O 10 (10)
Page Break ————————————————————————————————————

End of Block: Relational Content
Start of Block: Perceived Brand Image
Timer Timing
First Click (1)
Last Click (2)
Page Submit (3)
Click Count (4)
The following picture is the website of a bathroom company known
. Please review the picture before moving forward.
n n 1
Page Break

Q9 Please read the following statements and select the most suitable answer for the company presented in the previous page.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
This company has personality (1)	0	0	0	0	0
This company is interesting (2)	0	0	0	0	0
This company gives me a good feeling (3)		0	0		0
I think this brand stands out among other competing brands (4)		0		0	
I perceive this company as a company that provides good value for money (5)		0		0	0
I perceive this company as a luxury bathroom company (6)		0	0	0	
I perceive this company as friendly (7)		0	0	0	

I perceive this					
company as	$\circ$		$\circ$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
exciting (8)					
I perceive this					
company as	$\circ$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
welcoming (9)					
I perceive this					
company as	$\circ$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
reliable (10)					
Page Break —					

Q10 What is viewed?	the main focus of based on the webpage you just
$\bigcirc$	is primarily a construction materials supplier. (1)
$\bigcirc$	is known for its expertise in luxury tiles. (2)
$\bigcirc$	focuses on delivering exclusive and unique bathrooms of high quality. (3)
End of Block:	Perceived Brand Image
Start of Block:	Ending Question
Q11 Can you media post? 	give any additional feedback regarding the bathroom company and the social
End of Block:	Ending Question
Start of Block:	Demographic Data Questions
Page Break	

Please answer the following questions
Q12 What is your age?
O 18-24 (1)
O 25-34 (2)
O 35-44 (3)
O 45-54 (4)
O 55-64 (5)
○ 65 or older (6)
Q13 Which gender do you identify most with?
O Male (1)
O Female (2)
O Non-binary (3)
O Prefer not to say (4)

Q14 What is the highest level of education you have completed?
O No Degree (1)
O High school or equivalent (2)
O Secondary vocational education (3)
O Higher professional education (Associate degree) (4)
O Higher professional education (Bachelor's degree) (5)
O Higher professional education (Master's degree) (6)
O University education (Bachelor's degree) (7)
O University education (Master's degree) (8)
O University education (Doctoral degree) (9)

Q15 Which group does your annual income fall under?
○ Under €25.000 (1)
○ €25.000 - €49.999 (2)
○ €50.000 - €74.999 (3)
○ €75.000 - €99.999 (4)
○ €100.000 - 149.999 (5)
○ €150.000 or more (6)
O Prefer not to say (7)
End of Block: Demographic Data Questions

### **Appendix C**

### Visual representation of the three posts



Content type 1: Informational

Content type 2: Entertaining

Content type 3: Relational

#### Translation of content type 1

- Account name: Sanitairy retailer
- Title in picture: Looking for bathroom advice?
- Sub title in picture: Our interior designers will help you from design to realization
- CTA: Schedule a consultation
- Caption of post: Our interior designers are trained by the Jan de Boucrie Academy.
   They find a unique solution for every room. Would you also like expert advice? Visit our experience center and taste Twente hospitality in Oldenzaal!

#### Translation of content type 2

- Account name: Sanitairy retailer
- CTA: Discover the Experience Center
- Caption of post: Explore our Experience Center from the comfort of your own home!
   Step inside our virtual showroom tour and discover different bathroom styles and designs

#### Translation of content type 3

- Account name: Sanitairy retailer
- Text in picture: What a great experience with this company! The people here are very professional and friendly. My contact with Thomas was very pleasant and the result of my project is simply fantastic! I would recommend the company to everyone. Many thanks again to Thomas and the whole team for their excellent service!
- Sub title in picture: Hotel Chique Bathroom
- CTA: View this project
- Caption of post: A brand new project has been completed and Cia is extremely pleased with her beautiful bathroom. Take a look at her bathroom on our website. Are you also looking for a great bathroom? Follow us for advies and inpiration!

### Appendix D

Results and interpretation of demographic control variables

#### Results demographic control variables

Results from the demographic control variables in Study 1 showed significant negative correlations between age and annual income with visit intention (Age: r (114) = -0.203, p = 0.031; Annual income: r (114) = -0.247, p = 0.008). Further regression analysis underscored age as a significant demographic factor, particularly with specific age groups (35-54 and >55) displaying notable negative impacts on visit intention. Additionally, significant negative correlations were found between perceived brand image and age (r (114) = -0.323, p < 0.001), gender (r (114) = -0.283, p = 0.002), education level (r (114) = -0.219, p = 0.019), and income (r (114) = -0.196, p = 0.037). Notably, Age group exhibited a significant positive correlation with income (r (114) = 0.276, p = 0.003), while gender identity showed a significant correlation with annual income (r (114) = 0.253, p = 0.007). In Study 2, a significant positive correlation was observed between daily visitors and website version (r (17) = 0.344, p < 0.01), while a significant negative correlation was found between month and daily visitors (r (180) = -0.411, p < 0.01).

#### **Interpretation of results**

The demographic control variables offer valuable insights into the factors influencing brand perception, visit intention, and website effectiveness. Understanding these correlations can help tailor marketing strategies to better meet the needs and preferences of different demographic groups. The findings from Study 1 reveal several significant correlations between demographic variables and perceived brand image, visit intention, and income levels. Notably, age shows a negative correlation with perceived brand image and visit intention, suggesting that younger individuals tend to view the brand more favorably and are more inclined to visit. This could be attributed to younger people's greater receptivity to modern marketing techniques and brand messaging. The brand's image and products may align better with the values, lifestyle, or aesthetics favored by younger demographics, who are often influenced by social media and digital platforms where the brand maintains a strong presence.

Gender also influences perceived brand image, with variations between genders suggesting that females tend to perceive the brand more positively. This might suggest that the brand's appeal differs between males and females, possibly reflecting varying interests or preferences within the industry. For instance, females may show a stronger affinity for the home

and furnishing industry compared to males.

Education and annual income show interesting patterns with perceived brand image. Higher education levels correlate with a less positive perception of the brand, while lower-income groups perceive the brand more positively. This might be because individuals with lower education and income levels are less accustomed to the brand's standards and may find them aspirational. Conversely, those with higher education and income, who are more familiar with luxury brands, may be more critical due to their greater experience with similar offerings.

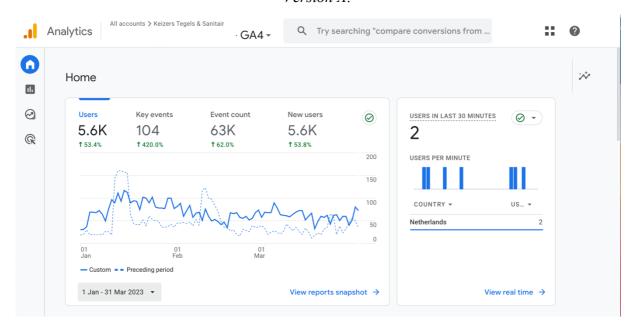
Income also correlates with age and gender. Older participants tend to have higher incomes, likely due to longer work experience, more promotions, and raises over time. Additionally, the correlation between income and gender may reflect disparities in job roles, industries, and the persistent gender pay gap, with one gender possibly earning more than the other.

In Study 2, the correlation between daily visitors and website type suggests that the new website version is more effective at attracting visitors. This effectiveness could be due to enhanced user experience, improved content, or better search engine optimization. The negative correlation between months and daily visitors indicates seasonal variations in visitor numbers, with certain months experiencing lower traffic. This could be attributed to post-holiday periods or weather-dependent behavior, as people might be more inclined to visit showrooms during bad weather.

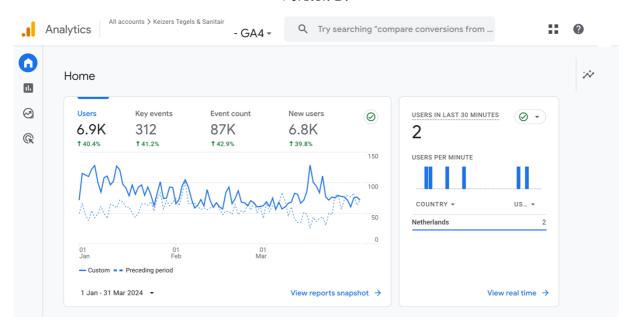
# **Appendix E**

## Screenshots Google Analytics

#### Version A:



### Version B:



# **Appendix F**

### Screenshots website

### Version A:

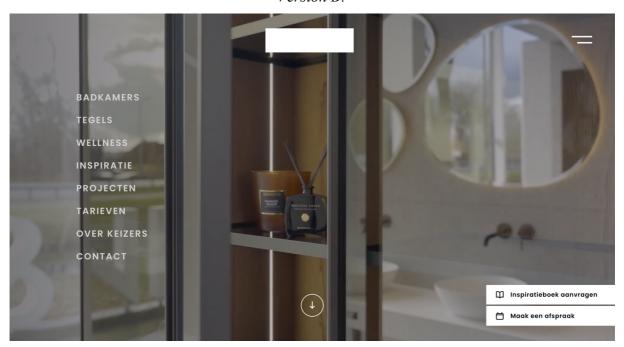
#### = Menu



Al 90 jaar <u>uw</u> maatwerkspecialist.

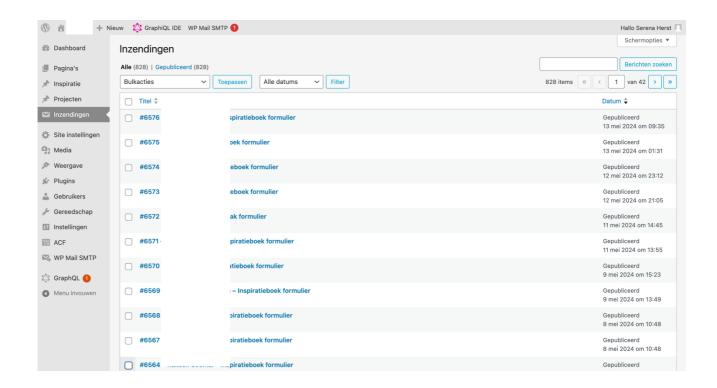
Keizers is 24 t/m 27 dec, 31 dec. en 1 jan. gesloten. U bent van harte welkom op 28 t/m 30 dec voor de inspiratie dagen in ons <u>Experience</u> Center.

### Version B:



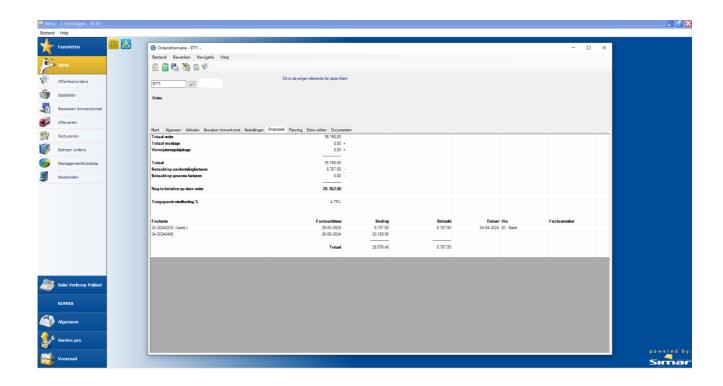
## Appendix G

#### Screenshot WordPress



# Appendix H

### Screenshots Simar



Appendix I

Independent Samples T-Test of Study 2: Impact CTAs on Visits

## **Group Statistics**

			Standard	Std. Error Mean
Group	N	Mean (M)	Deviation (SD)	(SEM)
Website 1	90	0.100	0.381	0.040
Website 2	90	0.245	0.816	0.086

## **Independent Samples Test**

	Levene's Test for			
	Equality of	t-test for Equality		
	Variances	of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df
Conversion Rate	9.032	0.003	-1.526	178
			-1.526	126.017

## **Independent Samples Effect Sizes**

			95% Confidence
	Standardizer	Point Estimate	Interval
Conversion Rate			
Cohen's d	0.637	-0.227	-0.520 to 0.066
Hedges' correction	0.640	-0.227	-0.518 to 0.066
Glass's delta	0.816	-0.178	-0.470 to 0.116

Appendix J

Chi-square test of independence of Study 2: Impact Visits generated through CTAs on Sales

Test	Value	df	Asymptotic	Exact Sig. (2-	Exact Sig. (1-
			Significance	sided)	sided)
			(2-sided)		
Pearson Chi-	2.000	1	.157		
square					
Continuity	.000	1	1.000		
Correction a					
Likelihood	2.773	1	.096		
Ratio					
Fisher's				1.000	.500
Exact Text					
N of Valid	2				
Cases					

a Computed only for a 2x2 table.

**Appendix K**Independent Samples T-Test of Study 2: Additional analysis

## **Group Statistics**

Website	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Conversionrate Website 1	90	3.1650	2.37430	.25027
Conversionrate Website 2	90	.0000	.00000	.00000
Contact Forms Website 1	90	.07	.251	.026
Contact Forms Website 2	90	.00	.000	.000

## **Independent Samples Test**

	Levene's Test for Equality of	
Test	Variances	t-test for Equality of Means
	F	Sig.
Conversionrate_MacroMicro	Equal variances assumed	160.418
	Equal variances not assumed	
Contact_Forms	Equal variances assumed	29.491
	Equal variances not assumed	

# **Independent Samples Effect Sizes**

			95% Confidence
Measure	Standardizer	Point Estimate	Interval
Conversionrate Cohen's d	Pooled SD	1.67888	1.532 - 2.235
ConversionrateHedges'			
correction	Pooled SD	1.68600	1.525 - 2.226
Contact Forms Cohen's d	Pooled SD	.177	.081670
Contact Forms Hedges'			
correction	Pooled SD	.178	.080667