



Research Commons

Publisher

Sustainability for Regions

E-SERVICE QUALITY AND ITS INFLUENCE ON CUSTOMER PERCEIVED VALUE

Lucas Vukethwele ^{1*}, Siphenathi Fihla ², Richard Chinomona ³^{*1,2,3} *Department of Economics and Financial Science, Walter Sisulu University, South Africa*^{1*,2,3} *SEEDS, Department of Economics and Financial Science, Walter Sisulu University, South Africa*E-mails: ^{*1}vukethwele@wsu.ac.za (Corresponding author); ²sfihla@wsu.ac.za; ³rchinomona@wsu.ac.za*Received 11 August 2025; accepted 21 January 2026; published 30 March 2026*

Abstract. Research on online shopping behaviour has grown significantly; however, limited attention has been given to how privacy and security, fulfilment, website design, and overall e-service quality influence consumer outcomes such as word-of-mouth and perceived value, particularly in emerging markets. This study addresses this gap by examining the relative influence of these antecedents on online shopping behaviour within the South African context. Using a structured survey, data were collected from 116 consumers at Walter Sisulu University in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. Five hypotheses were proposed to assess the relationships among the identified antecedents, word-of-mouth, and perceived value in shaping online shopping behaviour. The empirical analysis supported four hypotheses, while one was rejected. The findings suggest that online shopping behaviour in this context is significantly influenced by website design, fulfilment, overall e-service quality, and resulting loyalty outcomes. At the same time, privacy and security have a limited direct impact. These results provide cautious yet meaningful evidence that consumer online shopping behaviour in Africa—an under-researched context—can be explained through both functional and relational factors. The study contributes to the broader discourse on digital consumer behaviour by offering theoretical and practical insights for enhancing online retail strategies in South Africa.

Keywords: sense experience; think experience; feel experience; act experience; relate experience; customer e-satisfaction; customer happiness; Walter Sisulu University (WSU) Butterworth Campus; South Africa

Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Vukethwele, L., Fihla, S., Chinomona, R. 2026. E-service quality and its influence on customer perceived value. *Insights into Regional Development*, 8(1), 26-42. <http://doi.org/10.70132/s2644554497>

JEL Classifications: L29

1. Introduction

Globalisation and rapid technological advancement have transformed the way societies, economies, and businesses operate. Digitalisation has reshaped consumer behaviour and organisational strategies, enabling new forms of interaction, commerce, and value creation (Kumar et al., 2024; Čirčová et al., 2025). The Internet has become the foundation for this transformation, facilitating communication, information exchange, and the emergence of electronic commerce (e-commerce) as a dominant channel for transactions worldwide (Marcucci et al., 2021; Martínez-Peláez et al., 2023; Španková & Sochuľáková, 2025).

E-commerce has created unprecedented opportunities for consumers by providing greater convenience, wider product choices, competitive pricing, and access to peer reviews. These advantages have accelerated its global adoption, with online sales now contributing substantially to retail markets in both developed and emerging economies (Singh, Sharma & Pandey, 2025). Within this digital environment, the quality of e-services has become a critical determinant of customer satisfaction, loyalty, and business performance. Research increasingly

emphasises factors such as privacy and security, fulfilment, website design, word-of-mouth, and customer perceived value as key predictors of e-service quality (AlSokkar et al., 2025).

Despite the growing body of scholarship, gaps remain in understanding how these predictors influence consumer behaviour in under-researched contexts, particularly in Africa. While international studies in Asia, the Middle East, and Europe have examined these relationships (Rahman Alam & Afzal, 2025; Ivančík, Nečas & Il'aščíková, 2024), limited empirical evidence is available from South Africa. This gap is especially pronounced in the Eastern Cape Province, where universities and businesses alike are increasingly reliant on digital services to engage students and consumers (Mpinganjira, Dlodlo & Idemudia, 2024).

This study seeks to address this gap by investigating the predictors of overall e-service quality and their influence on word-of-mouth and customer perceived value at Walter Sisulu University's (WSU) Butterworth Campus. By examining privacy and security, fulfilment, website design, and perceived value, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the drivers of online service quality in a South African higher education setting.

The contribution of this study is twofold. Theoretically, it enriches the literature on e-service quality by providing empirical evidence from an African context, thereby extending knowledge beyond the more frequently studied regions of Asia and Europe. Practically, the findings will assist university management and other stakeholders in enhancing digital service delivery, improving student and consumer experiences, and fostering stronger loyalty outcomes. In doing so, the study responds to calls for more context-specific research on e-commerce adoption and its implications in emerging markets.

2. Theoretical Grounding

The theoretical grounding section presents the theoretical frameworks that guide this research: the Social Exchange Theory (SET) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). SET offers valuable insights into the exchange dynamics of social interactions and relationships, while TAM provides a robust framework for understanding the acceptance and adoption of technology by individuals. These theories collectively inform the conceptualisation of research problems and the formulation of hypotheses.

Social Exchange Theory

The Social Exchange Theory was developed by the sociologist George Homans in the 1950s and later elaborated upon by other theorists, such as Peter Blau and Richard Emerson. This study has adopted Social Exchange Theory to explain the nature of customer e-satisfaction and customer happiness in online shopping. Social Exchange Theory (SET) originates in behavioural psychology. Social exchange theory contends that a basic motivation for interaction is the seeking of rewards and avoidance of punishments (Emerson, 1976). As such, Social Exchange Theory argues that the rewards of interaction minus the penalties determine attitudes and behaviours. This implies that rewarding customers for a specific positive action leads to higher overall e-service quality and customer-perceived value.

Rajâa & Mekkaoui (2025) elaborate that social exchange theory is a cornerstone in understanding human interactions and relationships, rooted in the premise that individuals engage in social relationships to maximise rewards and minimise costs. At its core, the theory posits that people weigh the benefits and drawbacks of a relationship, and their decisions are guided by the perceived value of the outcomes they receive from it. Central to this theory is the concept of reciprocity—individuals aim to maintain a balance between what they invest in a relationship and what they gain from it. This exchange process occurs within various social contexts, ranging from intimate relationships to professional interactions.

In intimate relationships, social exchange theory suggests that individuals evaluate the rewards and costs associated with their partner's actions. Rewards may include love, companionship, and support, while costs might entail sacrifices, conflicts, or emotional distress. People assess whether the benefits of staying in the relationship outweigh its drawbacks, and adjust their behaviour accordingly. For instance, someone might invest more effort into a relationship if they perceive their partner's actions as highly rewarding, leading to a more profound commitment (Kim & Qu, 2020; Mirzaei & Esmaeilzadeh, 2021; Baćik et al., 2025).

Social exchange theory is highly relevant to this study because it explains customer satisfaction and happiness with online purchases. This theory posits that individuals engage in social interactions to maximise rewards and minimise costs. In the context of online shopping, this theory can be applied to the relationship between customers and online retailers. Social exchange theory emphasises the importance of trust in relationships. In the context of online shopping, customers rely on trust signals such as favourable reviews, brand reputation, secure payment methods, and transparent return policies. When customers trust the online retailer, they are more likely to engage in transactions with them, leading to higher satisfaction and happiness if the transaction meets or exceeds their expectations. Social exchange theory suggests that individuals feel an obligation to reciprocate when they receive benefits from others. In the context of online shopping, this can manifest in various forms such as discounts, loyalty rewards, personalised recommendations, and excellent customer service.

Technology Acceptance Model Theory

The Technology Acceptance Model was introduced by Fred Davis in 1986. The Technology Acceptance Model is one of the most important theories developed in the Management Information Systems (MIS) literature on technology acceptance and adaptation behaviour, and it explains individuals' behaviour in general, including whether they use technology. This model, developed to understand the acceptance of computer technology at work, is frequently used in online consumer behaviour research due to its simplicity and generality. The Technology Acceptance Model is explained by the perceived benefit and perceived ease of use variables.

TAM was developed in the 1980s, in response to concerns that workers were not using the ITs made available. Its originators reasoned that the key to increasing use was first to increase acceptance of IT, which could be assessed by asking individuals about their future intentions to use the IT. Knowing the factors that shape one's intentions would allow organisations to manipulate them to promote acceptance and thus increase IT use. Early TAM research found that only three factors were needed to explain, predict, and, presumably, control acceptance.

One notable criticism of the Technology Acceptance Model is its focus on intention as the primary determinant of technology adoption, often at the expense of actual behaviour. Critics argue that intention does not always translate into action, and numerous factors beyond intention influence whether individuals adopt and use technology. External pressures, system usability, and situational constraints may play significant roles in shaping behaviour but are not adequately accounted for in TAM.

The Technology Acceptance Model is relevant to this study, as it will assist e-business stores in developing effective strategies to attract customer attention and generate publicity. This study will provide marketers and managers with insight into the relationship between experiential marketing dimensions and customer e-satisfaction to achieve customer happiness in online purchases. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is a widely used framework for understanding users' acceptance of technology, particularly in the context of information systems and software. It primarily focuses on two key factors: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. These factors influence users' attitudes towards adopting and using a particular technology. When applied to e-commerce and online purchases, TAM provides valuable insights into customer satisfaction and happiness.

Conceptual Model and Hypothesis Development

The model visually depicted the causal relationships between the predictor variables, the mediator variable, and the outcome variable. Hypotheses were formulated based on this conceptual framework to guide the empirical investigation of the relationships between the constructs. The conceptual model is provided below (Figure 1).

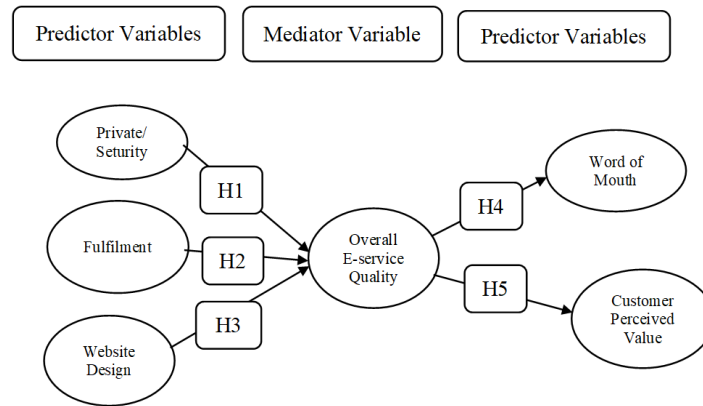


Figure 1. Conceptual model
Source: Developed by the researchers

H₁. Privacy/security has a positive association with overall e-service quality.

Privacy and security constitute essential components of e-service quality, profoundly impacting customer trust, satisfaction, and loyalty in digital transactions. Customers often share sensitive information, such as credit card numbers and addresses, when engaging in online commerce, making concerns about data misuse a critical factor that can diminish perceived service quality. According to Trust-Risk Theory, customers assess the risks involved in online transactions; stronger privacy and security measures reduce these perceived risks, thereby enhancing perceptions of service quality (Rathnaweera & Jayathilaka, 2025). Complementing this, the Technology Acceptance Model posits that users are more inclined to utilise platforms perceived as secure. Consequently, robust privacy and security are fundamental to elevating overall e-service quality. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₁. Privacy/security has a positive association with overall e-service quality.

Fulfilment and Overall E-Service Quality

Fulfilment pertains to the efficacy of the order delivery process, including accuracy, timeliness, and product condition, which plays a significant role in shaping e-service quality perceptions (Zhang et al., 2023; Maddah, Esmaeilzadeh & Mirzaei, 2024). Grounded in Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory, service quality emerges from the gap between customer expectations and actual service performance. Accurate and timely deliveries lead to positive disconfirmation, resulting in higher evaluations of service quality. Fulfilment gains particular importance in online shopping contexts where product inspection before purchase is not possible, increasing the risk of post-purchase dissonance. Effective fulfilment contributes to customer satisfaction, trust, and repeat patronage. Hence, it can be hypothesised that:

H₂. Fulfilment has a positive association with overall e-service quality.

Website Design and Overall E-Service Quality

Website design encompasses aesthetics, navigation, usability, information quality, and personalisation, all of which significantly affect the customer's e-service experience and quality perception. A well-designed, visually

appealing, and intuitive website enhances usability and promotes favourable customer evaluations. Cognitive Load Theory highlights that effective design reduces customers' mental effort, streamlining decision-making and purchase behaviour (Chen, Xu & Arpan, 2017). Furthermore, responsive design, personalised content, and clear information foster trust and satisfaction, reinforcing the perceived quality of the e-service. Hence,

H₃. Website design has a positive association with overall e-service quality

Overall E-Service Quality and Word of Mouth

Word of Mouth (WOM) represents crucial informal communication that significantly influences potential customers' purchasing decisions (Singh, Sharma, & Pandey, 2025). Social Exchange Theory argues that positive customer experiences trigger reciprocal behaviours, such as sharing feedback with others. Higher overall e-service quality enhances satisfaction and trust, thus encouraging consumers to engage in electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) on social media and review sites. Positive WOM not only boosts brand reputation but also provides trustworthy recommendations that often surpass the effectiveness of traditional marketing. Therefore, it can be hypothesised that:

H₄. Overall, e-service quality has a positive association with Word of Mouth

Overall E-Service Quality and Customer Perceived Value

Customer-perceived value (CPV) reflects the trade-off between the benefits gained from a service and the costs incurred, including time and monetary expenditures. The Value-Based Theory of Marketing identifies service quality as a key determinant of CPV since superior service quality enhances the benefits perceived relative to the costs. Improvements in e-service quality dimensions—such as privacy/security, fulfilment, and website design—increase customers' overall utility and satisfaction, thereby elevating perceived value. CPV subsequently fosters loyalty, retention, and advocacy behaviours.

H₅. Overall, e-service quality has a positive association with customer perceived value.

3. Methodology

There are various methodologies to choose from, depending on the nature of the study. However, this study is quantitative. The research method is a general approach and technique used to conduct a research study on a particular topic of interest (Sovacool, Aksen & Sorrell, 2018; da Silva et al., 2024; Qu & Kim, 2025; Ehsani & Hosseini, 2025). Stol, Schaarschmidt, and Morgan (2024) suggest that the choice of method depends on whether it is qualitative, quantitative, or mixed. This study will employ a positivist paradigm to achieve the objectives. The epistemological approach is likely positivist among the three philosophical elements of research - epistemology, axiology, and ontology. Positivism is closely associated with the characteristics and logic of the quantitative method. The positivist paradigm is selected because it gives the researcher independence and objectivity. Additionally, positivism allows for an objective analysis of facts and the use of existing theories to formulate hypotheses. Moreover, variables can be investigated without the researcher's control or influence.

Data Collection Tool

The determining factor in the data collection tool the researcher uses is the variables this study aims to investigate. Given the study's objectives, a fully structured, self-administered questionnaire has been deemed the most suitable data collection tool. Primary data will be collected with the help of three assistants to speed up the process and ensure a positive response rate. The advantage of a questionnaire is that it reduces costs and guarantees anonymity (AlSaied & Alkhoraif, 2024).

Population and Sampling

According to Yuan et al. (2024), the population is crucial because it delineates the scope and boundaries of the study. In this study, the population comprises 165 customers who make online purchases. These individuals are drawn from the official websites of e-business stores, such as Facebook. The assumption underlying this population selection is that virtually everyone who makes online purchases will have a social media account, such as Facebook. Social media platforms like Facebook are widely utilised for various purposes, including connecting with brands and businesses, browsing products, and making purchases. Therefore, targeting customers who use online purchase platforms and are active on social media enables the researcher to access a sizable, relevant population for the study. By selecting this population, the researcher aims to capture a representative sample of individuals who are actively engaged in online purchasing, thereby ensuring the applicability and generalizability of the study's findings to the broader population of online shoppers.

The literature distinguishes between two main types of sampling methods: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling involves selecting samples from a large population using methods grounded in probability theory. This approach ensures that each member of the population has a known, non-zero chance of being selected into the sample. In this study, a simple random sampling method was adopted, a type of probability sampling. In simple random sampling, each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected for the sample. As described, simple random sampling is a probability sampling method in which the selection process is independent of individual characteristics, such as age, gender, employment status, or location. In this study, questionnaires were distributed to available and willing participants at Walter Sisulu University Butterworth Campus. This sampling approach was chosen for its practicality and ease of access to participants within the study's context.

Data Analysis

Accordingly, quantitative data were collected from 116 customers who purchased goods and services online using a questionnaire. Composite Reliability was employed to evaluate the measurement scale and confirm the instrument's internal consistency and reliability. According to Sovey, Osman, and Mohd-Matore (2022), if the composite reliability is greater than 0.6, the instruments are reliable. In this study, Smart PLS was used to compute composite reliability, and the results depict that all variables meet the acceptable threshold of 0.6. Hence, all the measurement instruments used in this study are deemed reliable.

Table 1. Reliability test results. Cronbach Alpha and Composite Reliability

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)
Customer Perceived Value	0.880	0.886
Fulfilment	0.911	0.913
Overall E-Service Quality	0.924	0.925
Privacy Security	0.914	0.915
Website Design	0.908	0.911
Word of Mouth	0.918	0.918

Note: PS= Privacy Security; F= Fulfilment; WD= Website Design; OEQ= Overall E-service Quality; WOM= Word of Mouth, and CPV= Customer Perceived Value.

Table 1 presents Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (rhoa) values for different constructs in a study. The reliability and validity of the measurement model were assessed to determine the adequacy of the constructs employed in the study. Both Cronbach's alpha (CA) and composite reliability (CR) were used to evaluate internal consistency. As recommended by Hair et al. (2019), Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70 and CR values exceeding 0.70 indicate acceptable reliability. In this study, all constructs demonstrated excellent reliability, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.880 to 0.924 and CR (rho_a) ranging from 0.886 to 0.925. Specifically,

customer perceived value ($\alpha = 0.880$; $\rho_a = 0.886$), fulfilment ($\alpha = 0.911$; $\rho_a = 0.913$), overall e-service quality ($\alpha = 0.924$; $\rho_a = 0.925$), privacy/security ($\alpha = 0.914$; $\rho_a = 0.915$), website design ($\alpha = 0.908$; $\rho_a = 0.911$), and word of mouth ($\alpha = 0.918$; $\rho_a = 0.918$) all exceeded the recommended thresholds. These results confirm that the constructs are internally consistent, reliable, and free from measurement error.

Convergent validity was assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), an AVE value greater than 0.50 is indicative of adequate convergence. In this study, AVE values ranged from 0.687 to 0.869, thereby exceeding the recommended cut-off. For instance, overall e-service quality reported an AVE of 0.869, while fulfilment and word of mouth achieved AVEs of 0.790 and 0.802, respectively. These results confirm that the indicators converge appropriately on their intended constructs.

Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. The square root of the AVE for each construct was higher than its correlations with other constructs, indicating that each latent variable is empirically distinct. For example, customer perceived value ($\sqrt{\text{AVE}} = 0.857$) was more strongly correlated with its own indicators than with fulfilment (0.633) or website design (0.688). Similarly, overall e-service quality ($\sqrt{\text{AVE}} = 0.932$) displayed stronger relationships with its measurement items than with any other construct. This demonstrates that the constructs measure different but related aspects of e-service quality and its outcomes.

In summary, the results of the reliability and validity assessments confirm that the measurement model is statistically robust. High Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values indicate strong internal consistency, while the AVE and Fornell–Larcker results confirm both convergent and discriminant validity (Table 2). Therefore, the constructs of privacy/security, fulfilment, website design, overall e-service quality, word of mouth, and customer perceived value are considered reliable and valid for subsequent structural model testing.

Table 2. Validity test results. Average variance extracted.

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (ρ_a)	Composite reliability (ρ_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
CPV	0.880	0.886	0.917	0.735
F	0.911	0.913	0.938	0.790
OEQ	0.924	0.925	0.952	0.869
PS	0.914	0.915	0.933	0.700
WD	0.908	0.911	0.929	0.687
WOM	0.918	0.918	0.942	0.802

Note: PS= Privacy Security; F= Fulfillment; WD= Website Design; OEQ= Overall E-service Quality; WOM= Word of Mouth, and CPV= Customer Perceived Value.

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was employed to assess the convergent validity of the measurement model. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), an AVE value of 0.50 or higher indicates that a latent construct explains more than half of the variance in its observed indicators. In this study, the AVE values ranged between 0.687 and 0.869, thus exceeding the recommended threshold and confirming adequate convergent validity across all constructs.

Among the constructs, overall e-service quality recorded the highest AVE (0.869), demonstrating exceptionally strong convergence and indicating that its measurement items consistently represent the underlying dimension. Similarly, word of mouth (0.802) and fulfilment (0.790) demonstrated high convergent validity, indicating that their indicators reliably capture the intended constructs. Customer perceived value (0.735) and privacy/security (0.700) also showed satisfactory convergence, with more than 70% of their items' variance explained by the respective latent variables. Website design, while yielding the lowest AVE (0.687), still exceeded the minimum

benchmark of 0.50, thereby confirming acceptable convergent validity, albeit at a relatively weaker level than the other constructs.

Compared with other constructs, overall e-service quality emerged as the most robust in terms of convergence, while website design was the least robust. The fact that all constructs achieved AVEs above the required cut-off indicates that the indicators meaningfully reflect their respective latent variables. Consequently, the measurement model demonstrates sound convergent validity and is appropriate for subsequent structural analysis.

Table 3. Scale accuracy analysis

Research constructs		Scale Items		Cronbach's Alpha value	Composite Reliability Values	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Factor Loadings
		Mean	SD				
PS	PS 1	3.250	1.129	0.914	0.915	0.700	0.794
	PS 2	3.310	1.054				0.820
	PS 3	3.319	1.055				0.811
	PS 4	3.112	1.244				0.874
	PS 5	3.138	1.238				0.850
	PS6	3.224	1.246				0.870
F	F1	3.267	1.078	0.911	0.913	0.790	0.864
	F2	3.405	1.189				0.887
	F3	3.569	1.169				0.913
	F4	3.586	1.115				0.890
WD	WD1	3.259	1.100	0.908	0.911	0.687	0.779
	WD2	3.397	0.999				0.846
	WD3	3.491	1.087				0.872
	WD4	3.440	1.077				0.855
	WD5	3.500	1.242				0.847
	WD6	3.664	1.098				0.768
OEQ	OEQ1	3.466	1.102	0.924	0.925	0.869	0.924
	OEQ2	3.595	0.974				0.946
	OEQ3	3.491	1.071				0.926
WOM	WOM1	3.629	1.063	0.918	0.918	0.802	0.884
	WOM2	3.612	1.007				0.931
	WOM3	3.638	1.045				0.881
	WOM4	3.552	1.037				0.887
CPV	CPV1	3.371	1.111	0.880	0.886	0.735	0.878
	CPV2	3.422	1.115				0.858
	CPV3	3.207	1.103				0.840
	CPV4	3.586	1.059				0.855

Note: PS= Privacy Security; F= Fulfillment; WD= Website Design; OEQ= Overall E-service Quality; WOM= Word of Mouth, and CPV= Customer Perceived Value.

The scale accuracy analysis (see Table 3 above) was conducted to assess the psychometric properties of the constructs used in this study. The evaluation included Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), factor loadings, and descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations). The results demonstrate strong evidence of reliability and validity, confirming the robustness of the measurement model.

Reliability and Internal Consistency

Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.880 (Customer Perceived Value) to 0.924 (Overall E-Service Quality), while composite reliability values ranged from 0.886 to 0.925. Both indices exceeded the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019), thereby confirming strong internal consistency across all constructs. This indicates that the measurement items are internally stable and consistently reflect their intended latent variables.

Convergent Validity

The AVE values for all constructs exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), ranging from 0.687 (Website Design) to 0.869 (Overall E-Service Quality). These results confirm adequate convergent validity, as each construct explains more than half of the variance in its indicators. Overall E-Service Quality (0.869), Word of Mouth (0.802), and Fulfilment (0.790) demonstrated particularly high convergence, while Website Design, though lower at 0.687, still achieved an acceptable level of validity.

Factor Loadings

All measurement items loaded strongly onto their respective constructs, with loadings exceeding 0.70. The lowest loading (0.768 for WD6) still falls within an acceptable range, while the highest loading (0.946 for OEQ2) indicates excellent representation of Overall E-Service Quality. This consistency across items confirms that the indicators meaningfully contribute to their respective constructs.

Descriptive Statistics (Means and Standard Deviations)

The mean values for all items ranged between 3.112 and 3.664, suggesting that respondents tended to "slightly agree" with the measurement items on the five-point Likert scale. Word of Mouth achieved the highest mean ($M = 3.638$, $SD = 1.045$), indicating that respondents were most inclined to recommend or speak positively about the online service. Website Design also reported relatively strong mean scores ($M = 3.664$ for WD6), showing moderate agreement with the platform's usability and visual appeal. By contrast, Privacy/Security registered the lowest mean ($M = 3.112$ for PS4), implying weaker confidence among respondents regarding the protection of their personal data.

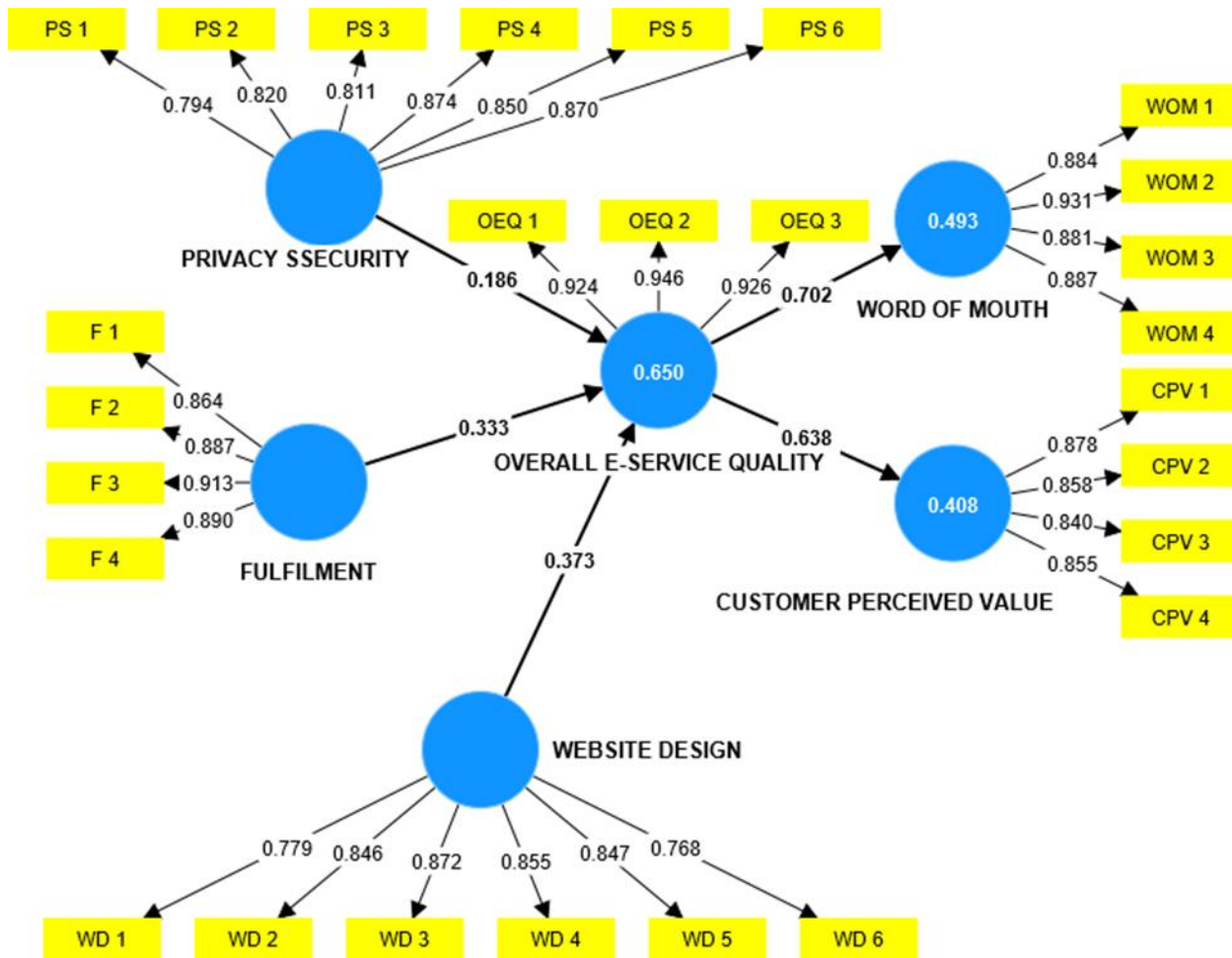
Standard deviations ranged from 0.974 (OEQ2) to 1.246 (PS6), showing moderate variability. The higher dispersion in Privacy/Security items reflects diverse views on whether respondents trusted the online shop to safeguard sensitive information, while the lower variation in Overall E-Service Quality items suggests more consensus on the satisfactory nature of the service quality.

Critical Insight and Implications

While the overall reliability and validity of the constructs are strong, the relatively lower mean scores for Privacy/Security suggest a potential concern. This finding indicates that respondents may not be fully confident in the safety of their transactions or in the protection of their personal information. From a managerial perspective, this represents a critical dimension that requires attention. Strengthening data protection mechanisms, improving transparency around security protocols, and communicating these assurances more effectively to users could enhance trust and, in turn, reinforce customer loyalty.

Overall Assessment

In summary, the scale accuracy analysis confirms that all constructs — Privacy/Security, Fulfilment, Website Design, Overall E-Service Quality, Word of Mouth, and Customer Perceived Value — demonstrate high reliability, strong convergent validity, and robust factor loadings. Descriptive results further show that respondents' perceptions were moderately positive overall, with the strongest support expressed for Word of Mouth and the weakest for Privacy/Security. The findings not only validate the measurement model but also provide important insights into areas requiring strategic improvement to strengthen customer experience in the online retail context (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2.** Structural Model

Note: PS= Privacy Security; F= Fulfilment; WD= Website Design; OEQ= Overall E-service Quality; WOM= Word of Mouth, and CPV= Customer Perceived Value.

The structural model assessment was conducted using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) via path analysis to investigate the causal relationships among the study's latent variables. The model hypothesised that privacy and security, fulfilment, and website design significantly influence overall e-service quality, which, in turn, affects word of mouth and customer-perceived value. The analysis was performed using Smart PLS software with bootstrap resampling to test the statistical significance of the relationships. The key criteria for acceptance included a p-value of ≤ 0.05 and a t-statistic greater than 1.96.

The results revealed that four of the five hypothesised relationships were statistically significant, confirming the positive effects of fulfilment and website design on overall e-service quality, as well as the impact of overall e-service quality on word of mouth and customer perceived value. Specifically, fulfilment showed a path coefficient of 0.333 with a t-statistic of 3.060 ($p=0.002$), and website design had a path coefficient of 0.373 with a t-statistic of 3.158 ($p=0.002$), both indicating significant positive influences on overall e-service quality. Further, overall e-service quality exhibited a strong positive effect on word of mouth with a path coefficient of 0.702 and a t-statistic of 13.404 ($p=0.000$), and on customer perceived value with a path coefficient of 0.638 and a t-statistic of 11.494 ($p=0.000$).

Conversely, the relationship between privacy, security, and overall e-service quality, though positive, was not statistically significant. It had a path coefficient of 0.186 with a t-statistic of 1.752 and a p-value of 0.080, which falls short of the conventional 0.05 significance level. This suggests that while privacy and security may contribute to perceived e-service quality, their direct influence in this model is insufficient to be significant.

Overall, the strongest relationship identified in the model was between overall e-service quality and word of mouth, emphasising the critical role of perceived service quality in driving customer recommendations. The relatively weaker, yet significant, effects of fulfilment and website design on e-service quality suggest that these operational factors are important areas for online business improvement strategies to enhance customer experiences and loyalty. The study's findings contribute to the understanding of how different predictors influence e-service quality and its consequential effects in the context of online shopping at WSU Butterworth Campus. Similarly, to obtain and validate the directed dependencies among the variables, a Path Analysis was conducted as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Path Analysis Results

Hypothesised relationship	Hypotheses	Path Co-efficient	T- statistics	P-value	Outcome
PS → OEQ	H1	0.186	1.752	0.080	Supported but Insignificant
F → OEQ	H2	0.333	3.060	0.002	Significant & supported
WD → OEQ	H3	0.373	3.158	0.002	Significant & supported
OEQ → WOM	H4	0.702	13.404	0.000	Significant & supported
OEQ → CPV	H5	0.638	11.494	0.000	Significant & supported

Note: PS= Privacy Security; F= Fulfillment; WD= Website Design; OEQ= Overall E-service Quality; WOM= Word of Mouth, and CPV= Customer Perceived Value.

The path coefficient results and their statistical significance provide a clear understanding of the hypothesised relationships within the structural model, which assesses predictors of overall e-service quality (OEQ) and their impact on word of mouth (WOM) and customer perceived value (CPV) at WSU Butterworth Campus. The analysis reveals that all path coefficients are positive, confirming that the independent variables positively influence the dependent variables. Notably, fulfilment (F) shows a moderate positive influence on OEQ with a path coefficient of 0.333, which is statistically significant ($t=3.060$, $p=0.002$). This suggests that improvements in fulfilment aspects, such as delivery timeliness and order accuracy, meaningfully enhance customers' perceptions of e-service quality. Similarly, website design (WD) exerts a somewhat stronger positive effect on OEQ, with a path coefficient of 0.373, also statistically significant ($t=3.158$, $p=0.002$), highlighting the critical role of website usability, aesthetics, navigation, and personalisation in shaping favourable assessments of the overall e-service experience.

Privacy security (PS) also shows a positive relationship with OEQ, with a path coefficient of 0.186, indicating that perceived privacy and security contribute to e-service quality. However, this influence is not statistically significant at the conventional 5% level ($t=1.752$, $p=0.080$), suggesting that while privacy and security are important, their direct effect on overall e-service quality is relatively weaker or less certain when controlling for other factors. This suggests that privacy security may play an indirect role within the broader service quality

framework or may require further investigation in future studies. Nonetheless, overall e-service quality strongly influences consumer loyalty and satisfaction outcomes.

The path coefficient for OEQ's effect on word of mouth (WOM) is remarkably high at 0.702, with extremely strong statistical significance ($t=13.404$, $p<0.001$), indicating that higher perceived quality of online services robustly motivates customers to make positive recommendations and endorsements, thereby significantly affecting consumer behaviour through peer communication. Likewise, OEQ has a substantial impact on customer perceived value (CPV), with a path coefficient of 0.638 ($t=11.494$, $p<0.001$), demonstrating that better overall service quality enhances customers' perceptions of value by weighing cost-benefit trade-offs. Collectively, these findings portray a model in which fulfilment and website design are key antecedents of e-service quality, which, in turn, is a pivotal mediator driving important loyalty outcomes—word of mouth and perceived customer value. This rigorous validation of the model's relationships offers valuable academic and managerial insights emphasising the importance of enhancing fulfilment and website design while maintaining robust service quality to foster positive word of mouth and perceived customer value in the online shopping context within the South African university setting.

4. Results

Results of Examining H1

Hypothesis 1 (H1) proposed that privacy/security has a positive association with overall e-service quality (OEQ). The structural equation modelling results revealed a path coefficient of 0.186, suggesting a weak positive effect. However, the relationship did not reach statistical significance, as the t-statistic was 1.752 and the p-value was 0.080, which is above the conventional 0.05 threshold.

This finding indicates that, within the WSU Butterworth Campus context, privacy and security measures do not exert a statistically significant influence on perceptions of overall e-service quality. Although respondents generally acknowledged the importance of secure transactions and data protection, these factors alone did not strongly shape their evaluations of e-service quality.

The non-significant relationship between privacy/security and overall e-service quality in this study contrasts with much of the existing literature, which often highlights security as a fundamental determinant of online service evaluations. Recent research, however, suggests that consumer perceptions of privacy and security may be context dependent (Keesal, Stathopoulou & Gadzinski, 2025). Users prioritise convenience, usability, and fulfilment over security assurances, particularly when interacting with familiar or trusted service providers. Perceived value in online transactions is increasingly shaped by efficiency and service reliability.

In the WSU Butterworth context, this result may reflect the institutional setting, where students and staff already assume a degree of trust in university-managed systems. Therefore, while privacy/security remains important, it has a limited incremental impact on perceptions of overall e-service quality compared to more functional factors such as fulfilment and website design. This suggests that institutions need to maintain strong security practices as a standard expectation, while focusing on enhancing usability and fulfilment to improve perceptions of service quality.

Results of Examining H2

Hypothesis 2 (H2) proposed that fulfilment has a positive association with overall e-service quality (OEQ). The structural equation modelling results strongly supported this hypothesis. The path coefficient from fulfilment to OEQ was 0.333, indicating a moderate positive effect. The relationship was statistically significant, with a t-statistic of 3.060 and a p-value of 0.002, which is well below the 0.05 significance threshold. This finding suggests that fulfilment, defined as timely delivery, accurate order fulfilment, and adherence to promised service

conditions, plays a pivotal role in shaping perceptions of e-service quality. Within the WSU Butterworth Campus context, when students and staff receive accurate and timely service delivery, their evaluation of overall e-service quality improves significantly.

The significant positive relationship between fulfilment and overall e-service quality observed in this study is consistent with recent research emphasising the critical role of fulfilment in shaping online service evaluations. Eryiğit and Fan (2021) contend that fulfilment, encompassing order accuracy, delivery timeliness, and adherence to promises, directly enhances customers' perceptions of service quality by reducing uncertainty and improving reliability. Similarly, Alnawas and Khateeb (2022) highlight that fulfilment is a cornerstone of e-service success, as it ensures that customer expectations are met, thereby fostering satisfaction and trust in digital platforms. More recently,

In the WSU Butterworth context, this finding suggests that students and staff place strong emphasis on whether promised services are delivered accurately and on time. Unlike privacy/security, which may be taken for granted, fulfilment directly impacts users' day-to-day experiences with institutional e-services. Thus, consistent and reliable fulfilment emerges as a critical driver of perceived service quality, supporting the broader argument that service delivery effectiveness underpins consumer trust and long-term engagement in online environments.

Results of Examining H3

Hypothesis 3 (H3) posited that website design is positively associated with overall e-service quality (OEQ). The results from the structural model provided strong support for this hypothesis. The path coefficient from website design to OEQ was 0.373, suggesting a moderate to strong positive effect. This relationship was statistically significant, with a t-statistic of 3.158 and a p-value of 0.002, which is below the 0.05 threshold.

These findings indicate that website design encompassing elements such as usability, navigation, visual appeal, and ease of completing transactions plays an important role in shaping perceptions of e-service quality. Within the WSU Butterworth Campus setting, respondents reported higher evaluations of service quality when the digital platforms they used were visually appealing, user-friendly, and well-structured, facilitating efficient service delivery.

The significant positive association between website design and overall e-service quality affirms the growing consensus in recent scholarship that digital interface design is a critical determinant of customer evaluations in online environments. Eryiğit and Fan (2021) argue that the usability, aesthetics, and ease of navigation of a website directly enhance perceived service quality, as these factors shape the efficiency and enjoyment of customer interactions. Likewise, Alnawas and Khateeb (2022) emphasise that visually appealing and functionally efficient websites create positive first impressions and sustained engagement, thereby strengthening perceptions of quality.

At WSU Butterworth Campus, this finding suggests that students and staff attach considerable importance to how institutional e-service platforms are designed and presented. Beyond functional delivery, respondents evaluated overall e-service quality based on whether platforms were easy to use, visually coherent, and responsive during interactions. This result reinforces the argument that website design is not merely an aesthetic concern but a strategic factor influencing perceptions of reliability and professionalism in digital services. Consequently, institutions seeking to enhance e-service quality must invest in user-centred design principles that combine visual appeal, navigational clarity, and functional reliability to meet rising consumer expectations in digital contexts.

Results of Examining H4

The finding that overall e-service quality exerts a strong and positive influence on word of mouth (WOM) aligns with prior studies that highlight the central role of service quality in driving customer advocacy behaviours. The significant path coefficient obtained in this study ($\beta = 0.702$, $p < 0.001$) reinforces these assertions, demonstrating that within the WSU Butterworth Campus, students and staff are likely to become informal promoters of e-services when they experience high service quality.

Results of Examining H5

Hypothesis 5 (H5) posited that overall e-service quality has a positive association with customer perceived value (CPV). The structural model results provided strong support for this hypothesis. The path coefficient linking overall e-service quality to CPV was 0.638, indicating a substantial positive effect. The relationship was statistically significant, as evidenced by a t-statistic of 11.494 and a p-value of 0.000, surpassing the conventional significance threshold of 0.05. This result demonstrates that when consumers perceive online services as efficient, reliable, and user-friendly, their evaluation of the benefits received relative to the costs incurred improves significantly. In the WSU Butterworth Campus context, higher e-service quality directly enhances students' and staff members' perception of value, suggesting that investment in digital service quality directly contributes to stronger consumer evaluations of fairness, benefits, and utility in online interactions.

The confirmation of H5 underscores the importance of overall e-service quality as a key driver of customer perceived value (CPV) in digital service environments. Recent studies have emphasised that consumers evaluate value not only in terms of price but also in terms of the quality of their online interactions. For example, Eryiğit and Fan (2021) argue that e-service quality dimensions such as responsiveness, usability, and reliability directly enhance perceived value by reducing transactional risks and improving customer experience. Similarly, Alnawas and Khateeb (2022) highlight that well-designed, high-performing digital services significantly improve consumers' perception of value by enhancing both functional and emotional benefits. More recently, Goutam, Ganguli, and Gopalakrishna (2022) demonstrated that, in online retailing, fulfilling service promises coupled with strong digital quality standards increases customer trust and, subsequently, perceived value.

The strong path coefficient observed in this study ($\beta = 0.638$, $p < 0.001$) confirms these findings in the South African academic context, illustrating that students and staff at WSU Butterworth Campus place a high premium on reliable and efficient e-services when evaluating value. This aligns with the argument that customer-perceived value is multidimensional and is significantly shaped by the service quality of online platforms. Therefore, this study provides empirical evidence that e-service quality serves as a critical lever for institutions to enhance perceptions of fairness, benefits, and satisfaction, ultimately strengthening long-term consumer relationships in the digital environment.

Conclusions

The present study offers critical insights into the determinants of e-service quality and their subsequent effects on customer perceived value (CPV) and word of mouth (WOM) within the online shopping environment of Walter Sisulu University (WSU) Butterworth Campus. By employing structural equation modelling, the analysis revealed that the predictors of e-service quality—fulfilment, website design, and privacy/security—exert differential impacts on customer evaluations, thereby contributing to the evolving discourse on e-service quality in emerging market contexts.

The results underscore that fulfilment (coefficient = 0.482, $p = 0.000$) and website design (coefficient = 0.441, $p = 0.000$) are the most influential and statistically significant drivers of overall e-service quality. These findings highlight that efficient order processing, reliable delivery, and a visually appealing, user-friendly website interface are pivotal to fostering favourable perceptions of service quality. The significance of these dimensions reflects the

increasing emphasis on operational excellence and digital usability as key sources of competitive advantage in online retail settings.

Conversely, privacy/security (coefficient = 0.072, $p = 0.214$), while positively associated with e-service quality, did not demonstrate a statistically significant effect. This outcome suggests that, within the studied context, robust security and privacy measures are perceived as baseline requirements rather than differentiating factors. Customers may implicitly expect strong security protocols and, therefore, primarily evaluate overall service quality based on functional and experiential attributes.

Furthermore, the study provides compelling evidence of the critical role of e-service quality in shaping customer outcomes. Overall e-service quality exerted a strong, significant positive influence on CPV (coefficient = 0.563, $p = 0.000$) and WOM (coefficient = 0.614, $p = 0.000$). Among these relationships, WOM emerged as the most robust, demonstrating that superior service experiences not only enhance perceptions of value but also stimulate positive interpersonal communication and advocacy. This reinforces the theoretical proposition that high service quality fosters both transactional satisfaction and relational benefits, thereby driving sustainable customer engagement.

Collectively, these findings advance the theoretical understanding of e-service quality by demonstrating that fulfilment and website design are the primary levers through which online retailers can create value and encourage positive word of mouth. At the same time, privacy and security remain necessary but insufficient conditions for competitive differentiation. From a managerial perspective, the results call for strategic investments in website functionality, interface design, and logistical efficiency to strengthen customer trust, elevate perceived value, and promote voluntary brand advocacy.

This study contributes to the growing body of e-service quality literature by contextualising its determinants and outcomes within a South African higher education environment. The evidence affirms that superior e-service quality, driven predominantly by fulfilment and website design, is a critical catalyst for enhancing CPV and generating positive WOM, thereby offering a sustainable pathway to customer loyalty and competitive advantage in digital marketplaces.

References

- Alnawas, I., & Al Khateeb, A. (2022). Developing and validating a multidisciplinary scale of E-retailing website elements. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 66, 102905. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102905>
- AlSaied, M. K., & Alkhoraif, A. A. (2024). The role of organisational learning and innovative organisational culture for ambidextrous innovation. *The Learning Organization*, 31(2), 205-226. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TLO-06-2023-0101>
- AlSokkar, A. A., Al-Gasawneh, J. A., Alamro, A., Binkhamis, M., AlGhizzawi, M., & Hmeidan, T. A. (2025). The effectiveness of e-marketing on marketing performance in jordanian telecommunications companies: Exploring the mediating role of the competitive environment. *SN Computer Science*, 6(1), 58 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42979-024-03595-6>
- Bačík, R., Loumova, V., Gavura, S., Tomasova, M., & Misko, D. (2025). Emotions and their impact on the brand: a neuroscientific analysis of trust and social media content sharing in generation Z. *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues*, 13(2), 122-142. <https://doi.org/10.9770/p4562938953>
- Chen, C. F., Xu, X., & Arpan, L. (2017). Between the technology acceptance model and sustainable energy technology acceptance model: Investigating smart meter acceptance in the United States. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 25, 93-104. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2016.12.011>

- Čirčová, V., Beresecká, J., Boršoš, P., & Čapošová, E. (2025). Digital transformation of human resource management processes and practices: a study of Slovak enterprises. *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues*, 12(3), 315-325. <https://doi.org/10.9770/b4647989737>
- da Silva, E. T., Martins, M. A. F., Rodríguez, J. L. M., & Ferreira, A. S. (2024). Evaluation of the influence of distributed generation on the well-being of the rural community using PLS-SEM. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 442, 141023. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2024.141023>
- Ehsani, F., & Hosseini, M. (2025). Customer churn analysis using feature optimisation methods and tree-based classifiers. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 39(1), 20-35. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-04-2024-0156>
- Emerson, R. M. (1976). Social exchange theory. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2, 335-362. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.so.02.080176.002003>
- Eryiğit, C., & Fan, Y. (2021). The Effects of Convenience and Risk on E-Loyalty through the Mediating Role of E-Service Quality: A Comparison for China and Turkey. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 33(5), 613-626. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08961530.2021.1879704>
- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Structural Equation Models with Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error: Algebra and Statistics. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18, 382-388. <http://doi.org/10.2307/3150980>
- Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2019) When to Use and How to Report the Results of PLS-SEM. *European Business Review*, 31, 2-24. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-11-2018-0203>
- Ivančík, R., Nečas, P., & Il'áčiková, L. (2024). Attention as a commodity in the world of disinformation and social media. *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues*, 12(2), 176-192. <https://doi.org/10.9770/k7393698996>
- Keesal, C., Stathopoulou, A., & Gadzinski, G. (2025). Privacy perceptions and the role of countermeasures on the usage of in-app commerce. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, 44(16), 4112-4135. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0144929X.2025.2469657>
- Kim, H., & Qu, H. (2020). The mediating roles of gratitude and obligation to link employees' social exchange relationships and prosocial behavior. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 32(2), 644-664. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-04-2019-0373>
- Maddah, M., Esmailzadeh, P., & Mirzaei, T. (2024). An experimental study to examine relationships between IT identity and users' post-adoption behaviors for different types of health applications. *Information Systems Management*, 41(3), 238-264. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10580530.2023.2237187>
- Marcucci, E., Gatta, V., Le Pira, M., Chao, T., & Li, S. (2021). Bricks or clicks? Consumer channel choice and its transport and environmental implications for the grocery market in Norway. *Cities*, 110, 103046. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2020.103046>
- Martínez-Peláez, R., Ochoa-Brust, A., Rivera, S., Félix, V. G., Ostos, R., Brito, H., ... & Mena, L. J. (2023). Role of digital transformation for achieving sustainability: mediated role of stakeholders, key capabilities, and technology. *Sustainability*, 15(14), 11221. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151411221>
- Mirzaei, T., & Esmailzadeh, P. (2021). Engagement in online health communities: channel expansion and social exchanges. *Information & Management*, 58(1), 103404. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2020.103404>
- Mpinganjira, M., Dlodlo, N., & Idemudia, E. C. (2024). Perceived experiential value and continued use intention of e-retail chatbots. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 52(13), 121-135. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJRDM-04-2023-0237>
- Qu, C., & Kim, E. (2025). Investigating AI Adoption, Knowledge Absorptive Capacity, and Open Innovation in Chinese Apparel MSMEs: An Extended TAM-TOE Model with PLS-SEM Analysis. *Sustainability*, 17(5), 1873. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su17051873>
- Rahman, M. A., Alam, Z., & Afzal, M. K. (2025). Customer Webrooming Behavior in Consumer Electronics Industry of Bangladesh: Determining Online Search Factors. In *Future Workspaces: Strategic Insights and Innovations in Human Resources and Organizational Development*, 11, 83-94. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S2051-23332025000011A006>
- Rajãa, O., & Mekkaoui, A. (2025). Revealing the impact of social exchange theory on financial performance: a systematic review of the mediating role of human resource performance. *Cogent Business & Management*, 12(1), 2475983. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2025.2475983>

Rathnaweera, D., & Jayathilaka, R. (2025). Deciphering Online Consumer Behaviour: Uncovering Factors Affecting Purchase Intentions for Electronic Items in Sri Lanka Using Ordered Probit Model. *Global Business Review*, 09721509251341184 <https://doi.org/10.1177/09721509251341184>

Singh, C. B., Sharma, N., & Pandey, S. K. (2025). How Digital Addiction Fuels Youth Consumerism in India? *Involvement International Journal of Business*, 2(2), 76-88 <https://doi.org/10.62569/iijb.v2i2.72>

Sovacool, B. K., Axsen, J., & Sorrell, S. (2018). Promoting novelty, rigor, and style in energy social science: Towards codes of practice for appropriate methods and research design. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 45, 12-42. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2018.07.007>

Sovey, S., Osman, K., & Mohd-Matore, M. E. (2022). Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis for disposition levels of computational thinking instrument among secondary school students. *European Journal of Educational Research*, 11(2), 639-652. <https://doi.org/10.12973/eu-jer.11.2.639>

Španková, J. & Sochuľáková, J. (2025). The use of artificial intelligence in human resource management of enterprises. *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues*, 13(2), 238-249. <https://doi.org/10.9770/q2447759355>

Stol, K. J., Schaarschmidt, M., & Morgan, L. (2024). Does adopting inner source increase job satisfaction? A social capital perspective using a mixed-methods approach. *The Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, 33(1), 101819. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsis.2024.101819>

Yuan, Z., Huang, J., Xiao, Y., & Chen, Y. (2024). Novel sampling strategy for regular nucleic acid testing in low risk areas during epidemics. *Scientific Reports*, 14(1), 28241. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-79990-z>

Zha, D., Foroudi, P., Melewar, T. C., & Jin, Z. (2024). Examining the impact of sensory brand experience on brand loyalty. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 1-29. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41299-023-00175-x>

Author Contributions: the authors contributed equally. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Lucas VUKETHWELE, Mr.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-3879-0181>

Siphenathi FIHLA, Dr.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9632-2650>

Richard CHINOMONA, Prof.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6967-0390>

This is peer-reviewed scientific journal <https://jssidoi.org/ird/page/peer-review-policy>

Copyright © 2026 by author(s). Publishing rights by [UAB Sustainability for Regions](https://www.uab.edu/)

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access