

## **Introduction**

This is the book of edited one-page abstracts of the 29<sup>th</sup> RARCS conference. It is compiled to assist delegates in choosing the session of their choice. Because we accept both completed work and work in progress, not all abstracts summarize findings. It may be that authors will however be able to present some (preliminary) findings at the conference.

In addition to this book of abstracts of all presentations, extended abstract and full papers of some presentations are included in the proceedings.

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## The Influence of Service Quality and Satisfaction on Students' Loyalty Towards Private Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia

The democratization of higher education in Malaysia has driven a flourishing number of higher education institutions parallel with regard to student education demand (Bakrie *et al.*, 2019). Apparently, in the context of higher education institutions, particularly in private institutions, achieving student satisfaction to secure student loyalty is imperative for a number of reasons (Ali *et al.*, 2016). Inconsistent re-enrolment in institutions, student dropouts, and decreasing numbers of student enrolment increases the pressure on private institutions to compete (Khoo *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, persistence in the value of an institution's brand name and student satisfaction with education services become essential issues for private institutions to resolve (Masserini *et al.*, 2019). Hence, by using a quantitative research approach, this study sought to assess the relationship between institution reputation and service quality on student loyalty and to gauge the mediating effects of student satisfaction on the relationship between institution reputation and service quality. A total of 404 questionnaires were distributed to the selected respondents using a stratified sampling method. The hypotheses were developed and tested with SmartPLS and SPSS software. The Reciprocal theory was utilized in underlying the framework. HiEduQual dimensions were used to examine the robustness and parsimony of the measurement scale on service quality specifically in higher education perspectives. The result revealed the variable factors of service quality and student satisfaction directly significantly influenced student loyalty. Unfortunately, the institution's reputation indicates insignificant results to influence student loyalty Heffernan *et al.* (2017) and Khoi *et al.*, (2017). However, the mediating factor of student satisfaction indirectly had a significant relationship with the institution's reputation and service quality in influencing student loyalty Kumudini & Hiroshi (2019). The limitations of the study have been addressed and some valuable suggestions for future research work are offered.

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## Backer's Decision Journey in Crowdfunding: The Sympathy-Empathy, Motives, Participation & Share Model

Crowdfunding is evolving from a source of financing for startups and individual entrepreneurs to a new retail channel (Ahn, 2022) and an open social community (Zheng *et al.*, 2014) for backers. Thus, backers follow through a unique multidimensional decision-making process. They browse projects like shoppers, read and empathize with creators' stories, see comments from other backers, pledge a project in anticipation of rewards, and click 'Like' or 'Share' on a crowdfunding platform. Indeed, backers act simultaneously as individual consumers and social propagators, which requires a new approach to capturing the individual and social dimensions of consumption and communication in crowdfunding context. Since social media has been mainstream, Sympathize-Identify-Participate-Share/Spread (SIPS) model emphasizes sharing and spreading behaviors and suggests that consumers' sympathy/empathy can elicit their interest in an object (Dentsu, 2011). This study expands it to the SEMPS model that involves the backer's sympathy/empathy, and multiple motives in addition to participation, and sharing/spreading behavior. This study aims to examine the backers' decision-making process in crowdfunding. Using the SEMPS model, how sympathy and empathy influence consumers' motives to back a crowdfunding project and subsequently intention to participate and share. The usable data of 509 backers in their 20s and 30s who experienced reward-based crowdfunding in Korea were collected via an online survey. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) tested the SEMPS dimensions and the hypothesized relationships. Results supported the hypotheses that sympathy and empathy were significant antecedents of backers' eight motives. In particular, sympathy and empathy had the opposite effects only on curiosity and reward motives. Five motives (*i.e.*, altruism, enjoyment, curiosity, information seeking, and reward) positively influenced participating intention, while three (*i.e.*, economic benefit, recognition, and social relationship) did not. Two motives (*i.e.*, information seeking and social relationship) influenced both participation intention and sharing intention. Interestingly, information-seeking motive played a critical role in the overall decision-making process. This study empirically supports the current crowdfunding model as a new business opportunity that augments retail and social functions. Furthermore, the novel SEMPS model highlights bakers' sympathy and empathy in arousing motivation. Finally, extending backers' participation to sharing and spreading behavior is of value in delegating the crowdfunding context.

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## Investigating the Effects of the Credibility Factors of Sponsored Micro Influencers Content on Saudi Women Purchasing Intention of Beauty Products

Following global trends, social media influencers (SMIs) in Saudi Arabia have become increasingly ubiquitous considering their potential to act as a lynchpin for any robust digital marketing strategy (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Vrontis *et al.*, 2021). Micro Influencers are increasingly in-demand for fashion and beauty brands looking to cash in on the growing popularity of SMIs in Saudi Arabia (Intelligence, 2022). Looking at the numbers emphasizes the potential value of marketing through SMIs in Saudi Arabia wherein 79.25% of the population consider as an active user on social media platforms. A large portion of that includes young adults from Generation Z who are highly social and have relatively high technological literacy (Ayuni, 2019). Until now, little research compares the impact of the various sponsored influencer types, with even fewer analysing the specific credibility of sponsored micro influencers with smaller numbers of followers, those with 100K-1 million followers, in driving consumer behavior in the beauty industry. Employing the Source Credibility Theory (Ohanian, 1990), this study aims to build on this limited knowledge by providing new insights as to what exactly makes sponsored micro influencers credible to their followers. Furthermore, social identity theory provides a framework to build an understanding of how micro influencers help shape consumer identity and behavior as part of a digital in-group. Using a post-positivist perspective, this research hopes to merge the two marketing and psychological theories to create a new theoretical framework with which to explore the credibility and impact of micro influencers. An online survey was conducted to provide a contextual understanding of consumer perceptions of sponsored micro influencers while elucidating their impact on Saudi Women's purchasing intentions for beauty products. The findings of this study provide important insights for marketers as to what makes sponsored SMI content effective in driving purchasing intention. Moreover, this research contributes to the emerging academic literature on the influence of sponsored micro influencer content as a credible information source and on purchasing intention. This enables brands to perfect their recipes for successful campaigns (Boerman, 2020; Cicco *et al.*, 2021).

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## Challenges and Retailing Implications for an Ageing Population's Reliance on their Adult Children for E-Service Adoption in the Saudi Market

In 2016 Prince Mohammad bin Salman launched a new strategic plan for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia known as Vision 2030 that has had far reaching implications for both the public and private sectors. To meet the challenges that have risen from Vision 2030 there has been a large amount of investment in the information and communication technology (ICT) sector. In the public sector the government is committed to offering residents a comprehensive set of e-services and the Saudi government now offers a total of 1200 e-services which comprise 60% of all services offered to its residents (GOV.SA, 2022). The increased investment in the ICT sector was helpful at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic as several effective and reliable applications and e-services to deal with the pandemic were launched by the government. The Covid-19 pandemic also impacted the private sector due to the restrictions placed on travel and entering supermarkets and shopping malls. A survey undertaken during the pandemic reported that 77% of Saudi residents were making use of retail e-services, and 64% were making use of online banking services (Mastercard, 2020). The revenue from e-commerce in Saudi Arabia reached \$8 billion in 2021, ranking it 27th globally, which is a 17% increase from 2020 (Chen, 2022). In Saudi Arabia, 3.48% of the population is 65 years old and over; this segment thereby presenting number of potential consumers (General Authority for Statistics, 2021). However, recent research indicates that there are several barriers preventing older consumers making full use of retail e-services (Pantano *et al.* 2022). Evidence suggests that older consumers' inability to embrace new technology has a negative effect on how confident or comfortable they feel using retail e-services in general (Osailan, 2020). Interestingly, in the Saudi Arabia market, ageing consumers increasingly rely on their adult children to assist with accessing online services. This study contributes to theory, by utilizing the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989), combined with the theory of technophobia (Khasawneh, 2018) to better understand and provide new insights into how the 65 years and over age group come to utilize retail e-services in Saudi Arabia. The focus of the study will be on fashion e-services. A post-positivism approach is adopted to test hypotheses emerging from an extended version of the TAM framework. Firstly, a survey of 500 consumers in the 65 and over age group will be undertaken online. Adults who assist their older parents will be invited to complete the survey, in one geographic city of the country. Secondly, propositions will be developed using 30 semi-structured interviews to provide deeper insights into aspects related to technology acceptance and technophobia. This study is significant for retail e-service providers as it will allow for the development of improved strategies designed to attract and accommodate older consumers.

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## Prioritizing for Service Design Using QIP

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Designing, developing, and managing service successfully to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty is worthy, but far from easy task for organizations and entrepreneurs. This entails having a sufficient understanding of guests' expectations and its antecedent and being able to match these expectations to the organization's structure and its ability to serve. Furthermore, organizations and entrepreneurs need to be able to prioritize the service factors required to maximize the use of resources, which can lead to increased organizational performance in terms of customer satisfaction and loyalty. This relates especially to hospitality and tourism entrepreneurs and organizations since the industry revolves around co-creating value through service, and resources in the sector (e.g. time, budget, and capacity) are often limited. Research has shown that high service quality and positive image contribute to improve organizational performance. In support of this research, the quality, image, performance (QIP) model has been produced and tested as a methodology in various service industries other than hospitality and tourism. The model suggests that attributes in service quality, image, and performance should be measured simultaneously, from which the factors that contribute to the variability of performance (customer satisfaction and loyalty) can be statistically determined. In this presentation, the methodology and theory that underpin the QIP model are discussed through the lens of service design. Using data from the hospitality and tourism sector in Iceland, the aim of the paper is to test and validate the QIP model in the sector to determine how knowledge is transferred from other service sectors. Using QIP provides insight into customers' expectations and value creation and helps organizations and entrepreneurs address and manage service design more systematically by prioritizing actions that support customer value.

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## Hedging Your Bets: The Case Study of the Rollout of Legalized Single-Game Sports Betting in Ontario, Canada

In 2021, a new consumer market emerged in Canada when single-game sports betting was legalized. However, each province has the autonomy to develop their own regulatory framework for approved betting retail formats. The evolution of the landscape of approved providers thereby presents a case study of how new retail formats emerge in response to legislative change. This research investigates Twitter discourse around single-game sports betting in Canada's largest province (Ontario). Specifically, this study analyzes 12,161 tweets in order to examine the discursive patterns of the multiple retail stakeholders involved in, and/or affected by this burgeoning industry. This case study has two main objectives: (i) to examine emerging themes on Twitter discussing the legalization of retail access to single-game sports betting in Ontario; and, (ii) to analyze the relationship between tweets discussing the iGaming sports betting platform and the government's single-game sports betting policies. This study provides valuable insights into stakeholders' perceptions of this newly legalized market. As a practical implication of the research, key concerns and issues with the initial rollout are identified, providing insights into this newly emerging market and its related retail formats.

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## Measuring the Impact of Car Sharing and Transport Offers on Car Ownership: An Empirical Study

The development and usage of privately owned cars is well-known to be a major source of anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (McBain *et al.*, 2018). Nevertheless, the number of cars increases. So, e.g., in Germany, from 42.3 million cars in 2011 to 48.5 million cars in 2022 (www.kba.de/DE/Statistik). However, the interest for privately owned cars among young adults decreases: They travel less by car compared to their older counterparts, partly due to postponing driving license holding and car ownership (De Vos & Alemi, 2020). They seem to be open for new and/or better transport offers like, e.g., car sharing or carpooling (Katzev 2003, Curtale *et al.*, 2021). In this paper, we investigate, whether new and/or improved transport offers have an impact on young adults' interest to own a car or – if they already have one – abolish it. A representative online panel sample (n=800) of young German adults living in or near large towns (at least 100,000 inhabitants) has participated in a discrete choice experiment. The participants' socio-demographics, opinions, current usage of transport offers as well as car ownership and interests were raised. Also, they were confronted with 12 randomly selected situations in which the availability, circumstances, and costs of alternative transport offers (e.g., busses/trains, car sharing, privately owned car) varied and they were asked to judge whether they would renounce car ownership. The results are promising: Many young German adults in and around large cities are open to renounce car ownership when the offered alternative transport offers are attractive.

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## Differences in Customer Delight and Repurchase Intention for Three Live Products

Industry sources reported that over 60% of consumers world-wide changed their shopping behavior during COVID-19 (McKinsey & Company, 2020). As a result of the pandemic, consumers were forced to shop online for many products. Thus, online sales reached \$791.7 billion in 2020, a 34% increase over 2019 and the largest sales increase ever recorded for online shopping (COVIDs impact, 2021). According to an UNCTAD 2020 survey, electronics, gardening, DIY products, pharmaceuticals, and household products had substantial online sales gains. In 2020, online sales accounted for 21% of total sales (D’Innocenzio, 2021) yet less than 15% of live plants are currently purchased online (Behe *et al.*, 2022). Consumer satisfaction is a foundational construct in consumer retention (Oliver *et al.*, 1997). Additional studies report the existence of “higher levels” of satisfaction known as “consumer delight” (Oliver *et al.*, 1997, pg. 312). Consumer delight has been defined as a reaction when consumers buy a product that not only satisfies but provides unexpected value or unanticipated satisfaction (Chandler, 1989), i.e., the combination of joy and surprise (Plutchik, 1980). Consumer delight is now considered a critical precursor of consumer loyalty (Schlossberg, 1990). To make direct comparisons of online v. in-store purchases, researchers conducted an online survey in September 2022 with  $n=300$  of online and  $n=300$  in-store purchasers of (a) fresh cut flowers, (b) plants producing edible parts (e.g., herbs, vegetables), and (c) flowering annuals. Measures of delight and repurchase intention were collected as were social media use and activity. The following hypotheses were tested: H1: Online purchasers of (1) fresh cut flowers, (2) plants with edible parts, and (3) flowering annuals will be (H1a) less delighted with the product, (H1b) and with the retailer compared to in-person purchasers. H2: Online purchasers will use (H2a) more social media outlets as information sources and (H2b) be more active (poster vs. lurker) on those platforms. H3: Online purchasers will be different demographically compared to in-store purchasers. The study contributes to the literature in that no studies have made a direct comparison with customer satisfaction or delight for a specific type of product purchased.

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## Do Young People Recycle More? The Sustainable Behavior of Eastern European Generation Z

In carrying out this research, we started from the premise that young people being more concerned about the environment, have a bigger tendency to get involved in actions to protect the environment and in recycling activities (Lan 2014; Dabija *et al.*, 2019). The research aims to analyze whether young people's recycling intention is affected in a positive way by the type of packaging used for the products they purchase. Specifically, do plastic packaging or aluminum cans used for food products influence young people's recycling intention? In the buying process, is packaging an important factor? When making a purchase, does the consumer think about how easy it is to recycle the packaging of the product they purchased? Also, we aim to identify if young people intend to recycle more if they receive a certain reward. Specifically, do incentives for recycling stimulate the behavior of the people included in the sample? Do young people get involved in recycling actions out of a desire to protect the environment and help protect the planet or for the rewards offered by companies? The research sample consists of people who are part of Generation Z, young people who are active in the first years of work or are still students. To construct the sample, we use a proportion similar to that of the entire population for each group being examined (Crisan *et al.*, 2018; Dragos *et al.*, 2020). From the perspective of the field to which the research will be applied, we have considered retailers that offer fast moving consumer goods (FMCG). We consider a logit model that will help determine the likelihood of product purchase based on packaging type and recycling intent. The logit model may be represented by a series of logistic regressions for dependent binary variables (Abrudan *et al.*, 2020). For the logit model, not only the packaging, as a whole is an important factor. Thus, we also consider the color of the packaging an influencing factor. Another influencing factor is the material from which the packaging is made.

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## The Effect of Prior Performance on Consumer Decision-Making During Critical Incidents: The Moderating Effects of Trust, Risk, Fear and Justice

Today, environmental disasters are affecting marketers with greater frequency and severity (AghaKouchak *et al.*, 2018). These changes in the contextual environment of marketing as a result of more frequent critical incidents such as the 2019 Covid worldwide pandemic, 2021 Texas power outage, and Hurricane Ian in 2022 challenge marketers and the firms they manage (Sheth, 2020; Zeithaml *et al.*, 2020). Yet, the marketing literature devotes scant attention to the impact of such incidents on constructs such as perceived service quality, value, and customer satisfaction that are traditionally identified as drivers of customer decision-making (e.g. Cronin *et al.*, 2000; Brady *et al.*, 2005). The motivation for the research presented is to assess whether consumers' responses to critical incidents (e.g., environmental disasters) are mediated by the impact of the quality, value, and satisfaction attributed to an organization's prior performance. In essence, what is reported addresses the question of whether firms are rewarded when decisions are made by consumers at the time of a critical incident if they have of "goodwill" built up based on outstanding prior performance. Specifically, the objective of this paper is not only to consider how consumers' prior assessments of service quality, value, and customer satisfaction affect their willingness to continue doing business with a provider during a critical incident, but also to assess if (1) the fear affects the importance of prior quality, value, and satisfaction and (2) trust attributed to a provider, as well as the level of risk and equity (i.e. justice) attributed to prior encounters moderate the effects imposed by a critical incident. Specific hypotheses suggest (1) quality indirectly affects outcomes through value, (2) satisfaction directly affects behaviors, (3) value directly affects outcomes, (4) Trust moderates the effect of satisfaction and value on outcome behaviors, (5-8) trust/risk/fear/justice moderate the effects of Quality, Satisfaction, and Value on Outcome Behaviors. As for method, Cronbach's alpha values of 0.83 to 0.94 suggest all measures are valid and reliable. The  $\chi^2$  value of the measurement model is significant ( $\chi^2(413) = 4830.06, p < 0.001$ ), however  $\chi^2$  alone is an incomplete evaluation standard and other model fit indices including a comparative fit index (CFI) of 0.92 and a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of 0.070 indicate the model effects exhibit a good fit given the sample size and the number of measured items. The Hayes Process Macro was used to examine the moderating effect of trust and risk on the effects of consumers' prior assessments of a provider on outcome behaviors during critical incidents. The full results will be reported in the presentation, but for example the results suggest that trust strengthened the effect of value on behavioral outcomes (i.e. higher the trust, stronger the influence of value on behavioral outcomes). The results also suggested that perceived risk weakened the relationship between value and customer satisfaction. More specifically, lower the perceived risk, stronger the influence of value on customer satisfaction. Currently, the data are being comprehensively analyzed to identify specific moderation effect. That is, the moderating effects of trust, risk, fear, and justice are being assessed at the micro level to better identify the specific moderating effects these variables have on the effects consumers' attributions of quality, value, and satisfaction have on their decision-making when critical incidents occur. These results and their implications for marketing strategies will be included in the conference presentation.

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## Critical Review of Common Classifications in Channel Marketing – A New Holistic Framework

Channel management has become increasingly relevant for marketing in recent decades, especially since COVID-19 has changed consumer behavior and proliferation of various types of retail formats. Digitalization and online commerce are driving the implementation and use of multiple channels and coordination of these channels to become increasingly important. Current literature, based on consumer's interaction with the channel, supports distinction between single-channel, multi-channel, and omni-channel distribution (Brynjolfsson *et al.*, 2013; Verhoef *et al.*, 2015; Ailawadi & Farris, 2020). Channel strategy has been well-researched, including numerous systematic reviews (Asmare & Zewdie, 2022; Hayes & Kelliher, 2022; Cai & Lo, 2020). However, practical evidence indicates the non-existence of any retail company that has been successful in implementing the omni-channel approach. The retail industry is still struggling to create a truly integrated, seamless consumer experience. New technologies, consumer behavior, and supply chain issues are slowly but surely changing the retail landscape. A new strategy where e-commerce and physical retail are much more intrinsically linked, thus creating a "harmonized" retail strategy is slowly taking the center stage (Dennis, 2022). The concept of harmonized channels is seen as a potentially new terminology in channel marketing. This approach supports customer-centered orientation and the (partial) linking of channels, hence improving consumer (Dennis, 2019). It is critical to note that, the introduction of another term (harmonized channels) cannot solve the fundamental problem of previous classifications. The term, analogous to single-, multi-, and omni-channel, falls short and can neither adequately explain the complexity of different channel structures nor provide purposeful individual recommendations for action. Therefore, it is essential to investigate factors to distinguish different channel structures. Hence, the purpose of this conceptual paper is to provide a holistic framework to better understand the nuances of channel strategy. Expert interviews will be conducted in both US and Germany to investigate relevant factors to better capture and accurately classify companies' channel strategies. The proposed study will add to the body of current literature by (1) challenging common classifications in channel marketing; (2) identifying relevant criteria to facilitate the selection and review of appropriate channel structures and (3) utilize the proposed framework to empirically evaluate current channel strategies and distinguish channel structures and to provide actionable recommendations for retailers.

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## Ghost Kitchens and Their Impact on Brand Image

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As more consumer activity has gone online, many companies have found ways to disconnect the physical spaces used to produce food services from the branded items and websites with which consumers interact. A few different business models have been created where consumers are interacting with a brand name online, and receiving food with symbols of that brand, when the company producing the service is known under another name. Examples would include U.S. companies like children's pizza chain Chuck E. Cheese creating the online brand Pasqually's, and Applebee's creating the online brand Neighborhood Wings, for delivery services. When a consumer buys from one brand, but the product is made by another brand they know, do they feel duped if they find out after making the purchase? This research project will collect survey data using MTurk to see what kind of impact ghost kitchens have on the parent brands and the likely perceptions of consumers in situations when they know of the ghost kitchen at different stages of the consumption process.

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## Design Extravagance, Conspicuousness and Perceived Sustainability

We judge products by its design. We think potato chips with matte packaging are healthier than a potato chip with a glossy packaging (Ye *et al.*, 2020). A good product design adds value and communicates to the consumer (Bloch, 1995), making it an integral part of products marketing. Despite that, research addressing the role of design is scarce. This research draws from Greenberg *et al.*, (2020) theory of design extravagance, where conspicuous luxury is not defined solely by brand prominence but also by its design extravagance. In detail, an extravagant—and thus, conspicuous—product should have massive elements (such as a prominent brand logo), unusual material (such as ostrich skin or rare gemstones), innovative layout (such as unusual pockets and zipper placement), bright or bold color, and prominent form (such as LV's airplane bag) (Greenberg *et al.*, 2020). Unique as it is, luxury and loud product design might not be favorable in sustainable product marketing. Luxury, especially conspicuous luxury products, are generally seen as an attempt to signal one's wealth and status. It is a mark of 'excessive lifestyle' that contradicts the core notion of sustainability (Janssen *et al.*, 2017; Kapferer & Michaut-Denizeau, 2014; Kumagai & Nagasawa, 2020). Since products with extravagant design are conspicuous, it should be perceived as 'excessive' as well. We posit that the contradiction might confuse consumers and result in distrust or suspicion for greenwashing, especially when the brand claims to be sustainable. On the other hand, brands with a more restrained—or minimalistic—design should be perceived as more environmentally sustainable (Janssen *et al.*, 2017). This research seeks to contribute to the discussion on conspicuous luxury, sustainable luxury, and design in several ways. First, it expands the theory of design extravagance by investigating the loadings of each dimension, establishing a cause-and-effect relationship between the dimensions (the design element) and the latent factor (design extravagance). Second, it expands research on product design on consumer behavior onto the realm of green product marketing. Third, it contributes to the discussion on sustainable luxury via the discussion of conspicuousness in sustainable luxury. Our hypotheses are:

**Hypothesis 1:** When brand says that they are sustainable, there will be a negative interaction between an extravagant design and perceived environmental sustainability

**Hypothesis 2:** When brand says that they are sustainable, there will be a positive interaction between an extravagant design and perceived green washing

**Hypothesis 3:** Perceived greenwashing will decrease Brand Evaluation (negative evaluation), while perceived environmental sustainability will increase Brand Evaluation (positive evaluation)

The current paper is a work-in-progress. Data will be collected using MTurk. We will mainly use SEM to determine the correlation between factors, as well as investigating the loadings of each factor contributing to the concept of 'Extravagance'. Then, we will employ Hayes (2017) PROCESS Model to determine the moderated-mediation relationship between observed factors.

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## Price Search, Exchange Rate Pass-Through and Inflation in Seven National Markets: Evidence From a Price Comparison Website

During 2022, inflation has re-emerged as a serious problem for consumers and policy makers alike. As late as in the spring of 2021, the US 12-month inflation rate was below 3%, then rapidly increasing to reach 8.5% in March of 2022 according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. In Europe, the 12-month inflation rate was below 2% in the spring of 2021, then reaching 7.8% in March of 2022 according to Eurostat. A U.S. inflation rate of 8.5% is the highest recorded since December 1981, while the 7.8% increase in the EU area is the highest recorded since the introduction of the EURO in 1999. This despite the goal of central banks to keep inflation at or around 2% (Gorodnichenko, 2018). The purpose of this paper is to study pricing by retailers marketing their products through the price comparison website PriceSpy in seven different national markets, six of which are in Europe. We aim to answer the following questions; Firstly, what is the frequency of price changes for online retailers in the seven different markets, and is there a tendency toward an increase in the frequency of price changes during the period under study? Secondly, what is the within country price dispersion for identical products in the seven markets, what is the between market price dispersion, and how have this changed during the study period? If these markets are highly integrated in the sense that prices and price changes are both highly correlated, and the frequency of price changes is high, we would expect a high degree of pass through of shocks in, for example, exchange rates. So, thirdly, what is the degree and timing of exchange rate pass through in these seven European markets and how does it compare to previous findings from the U.S.? Here, we will have a special focus on prices in Norway, who was hit by a large, unexpected shock to the exchange rate between the Norwegian krona and the Euro during our study period. Our study contributes to the literature in the following ways. Firstly, this is (to our knowledge) the first study of how increased use of price comparison websites affects macroeconomic stability using European data. This is important since there are several differences in market structure and characteristics compared to U.S. states that could have an impact on the results. Secondly, we also contribute to the ongoing discussion of how inflation, deemed dead for 30 years or so, could make such a rapid re-occurrence in world markets. When doing this we also discuss some potential reasons for the more rapid increase in, and somewhat higher level of, inflation in the U.S. as compared to Europe. Thirdly, while most previous studies of how increased use of online marketplaces affect exchange rate pass-through assumes a symmetrical impact of increases and decreases in the nominal exchange rate, we use an econometric model making it possible to test for asymmetrical impacts of positive and negative changes in the nominal exchange rate on prices on prices, and the preliminary results show that an increase in the probability of collusion from zero to one is associated with 22–43 percent increases in the average price in the long-term.

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## Concept and Flagship Stores – (Re-)defining Store Formats in a Retail Environment Disrupted by Digitalization

The digital transformation has affected the retailing value chain on many levels (Reinartz *et al.*, 2019). The emergence of new online competition puts pressure on physical stores. However, it also allows retailers to exploit additional sources of value creation by using in-store technology or enhancing the offline experience with online services. Under these circumstances, retailers have to reconsider the role and integration of all communication and distribution channels. Predictions for the future of retail see the role of physical stores changing substantially (Alexander/Cano, 2018). In recent years a new type of store format has emerged, the “concept store”. While the term is becoming increasingly widespread, the definition of what exactly a concept store is often remains vague. Both in theory and in practice, the name is used for different types of retail operation. The distinction from a flagship store in particular is unclear, especially as flagship stores are also subject to the retail transformation. The use of terminology in retailing is dynamic and changes with the evolution in retailing. Thus, the definition of terms with regard to retail concepts as well as the creation of typologies of operational formats have to be updated on a regular basis. The aim of this research is to define the term “concept store” as well as to specify its delimitation in retail literature and practice and to distinguish it from other store formats. To this end, 10 qualitative expert interviews were conducted with senior academics and retail consultants in five European countries. For analysis we used conventional qualitative content analysis, according to Hsieh & Shannon (2005). Based on our data, we could identify seven defining characteristics of concept stores and design a framework that represents the similarities and differences between store formats focusing on retail brand experience. We would very much appreciate the opportunity to discuss our research that is work in progress with renowned academics at 29<sup>th</sup> RARCS in Lyon.



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## Exploring Tourists' Preference of Autonomous Shuttle Service at Tourism Destinations: An Integrated Choice and Latent Variable Model

With the advancement of autonomous technology, user acceptance of autonomous vehicles and related services have recently attracted growing research attentions in urban mobility domain. Apart from providing commuting service, autonomous bus services can also act as a potential novel tourist mobility service at tourism destinations. This study investigates tourists' preference for autonomous tourist shuttle services using data collected via an online survey conducted in Taiwan. An integrated choice and latent variable (ICLV) model is employed to explore how tourists' choices related to autonomous tourist shuttle services are influenced by service attributes as well as latent psychological variables. Seven service attributes of autonomous shuttle service including price, speed, waiting time, exclusive lane, monitoring method, smart tourism interpretation, shopping discount. Three latent variables such as interest in new travel mode, interest in technology and hedonic motivation are considered. A total number of 498 respondents are collected through online survey. Results show that people are concerned the smart guiding services. Consider the cases of the sightseeing buses, the operator can provide more tourism information to increase the convenience and utility while in-vehicle time. The second noticed attribute is the type of road for autonomous bus. Considering the road environment in Taiwan, most testing program were tested in an exclusive lane or non- mixed traffic flow. It is necessary to measure the impact of road environment on passengers' use intention. The results provide insights into the effects of attribute and the positive effects of two latent variables, i.e., interest in new travel mode and hedonic motivation on service choice preferences. Useful theoretical and empirical implications are discussed and provided for future research.

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## System Influences in Creating a Sense of Service Safety for the Betterment of Well-being

Services are integral to social marketing programs such as mental health, family and domestic violence, drug and alcohol, men' health and breastfeeding, with scope to increase value through these services (Zainuddin & Gordon, 2020). Social marketing services contribute towards service users' health, wellbeing, and the fulfilment of social marketing goals (Russell-Bennett *et al.*, 2019). This is aligned with the assertion of transformative service paradigm which reinforces the importance of service organizations to improve consumer well-being (Anderson *et al.*, 2013). Within social marketing service contexts, service safety comes to be expected as built-in a way that make users feel comfortable and that improve their level of well-being and enable behavioral change. The idea of service safety illustrates consumer's vital needs to ensure personal safety while using services (Berry *et al.*, 2020). Given the fact that consumers can barely avoid interacting with services (e.g., fitness, healthcare, as well as public transportation) in their daily lives, service safety has become paramount. For instance, physical safety in post-pandemic has become significant criterion as to how consumers choose service providers. However, the notion of service safety within social service systems remain unexplored in the pertinent literature. Particularly, key drivers that influence emergence of social service users' perception of service safety is missing. This is concerning given that feelings of safety are important for social service users to improve their well-being, and social service users seek resources from their service providers. In this conceptual paper, we examine the notion of service safety in social marketing services and consider its key drivers through a system perspective, to propose that achieving service safety will improve the well-being of social service users. This paper contributes to social marketing theory by introducing service safety as an important concept for social marketing services that can reduce the vulnerability and improve well-being of service users. It contributes from a systems perspective to understand the key system influences that can impact on users' sense of service safety. This study presents implications for social marketing practitioners by drawing attention to the need to consider users' need for different types of service safety to ensure uptake and continuity in use in social marketing programs and services. The study also enables the design of safe social marketing programs and services by drawing on micro-meso-macro key influences.

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## What Drives Innovation in the Retail Sector? Analyzing Innovation Efficiency of Retail Firms Using Data Envelopment Analysis

The retail industry is changing rapidly with technological advances. Beyond online retail, omnichannel and metaverse are emerging as new retail systems, providing consumers with novel retail experiences that never experienced before. This is attributed to the innovation that leading retailers who lead retail trends have achieved. Many retailers put enormous efforts into the application and development of new technologies in order to pursue sustainable growth without being left behind, thereby developing new retail services and advancing retail processes (Kim *et al.*, 2022). At this point in time when change and innovation are the main retail issues more than ever, retailers' efficient innovation needs to be researched (Pilawa *et al.*, 2022). This study aims to measure retailers' innovation efficiency and identify factors that affect efficient innovation. Based on that, this study develops retail strategies to efficiently achieve innovation. Innovation is a continuous and cumulative process rather than a fragmentary phenomenon at a specific point in time (Shin *et al.*, 2018). Innovation efficiency means how efficient this innovation process is (i.e., how less resource is utilized to achieve the same level of innovation) and can be measured by calculating the level at which innovation inputs are transformed into innovation outputs (Shin *et al.*, 2018). To measure innovation efficiency, this study conducts data envelopment analysis (DEA). DEA is a nonparametric analysis that is widely adopted to measure efficiency. As DEA uses mathematical programming, distributional assumptions and functional forms are not required. Many studies have conducted DEA to analyze efficiency, in particular, in the area of services such as hotels and restaurants (Kim *et al.*, 2022). We analyze data from the Korean Innovation Survey that is conducted by the Science and Technology Policy Institute of Korea. The survey was conducted to get information to develop policies promoting Korean firms' innovation and to strengthen the country's competitiveness. The sample consists of Korean companies belong the retail industry. We measure each retailer's efficiency score, which is calculated as the rate at which input factors are converted to output factors. Two input factors are employed in our model: innovation cost and innovation employee. For an output factor, innovation sales are employed. We compare the efficiency scores between retail firms and identify factors that generate high efficiency scores. Based on the results, we develop strategies to help retailers use resources in a more effective way and innovate their business in a better direction. Although advancing technology and achieving innovation are critical issues in the retail industry, research on innovation in the retail industry is limited (Pantano *et al.*, 2019). In particular, little is known about innovation efficiency of retail firms. This research fills this research gap. The results of this study not only provide the retail researchers with valuable new knowledge but also suggest practical business strategies for retail firms.

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## Hello AI! I Need Consoling - Consumer Preferences for Chatbot and the Role of Emotions

Being applied to retail services, AI is shifting the retail landscape. A chatbot is one of the fastest and most widely adopted AI-based services in the retail area. Various retailers are using chatbots for online reservations, product recommendations, customer complaint handling, etc. By replacing call center agents, a chatbot not only reduces labor costs but also helps solve the emotional labor problem of service personnel as it frees them from taking on difficult and stressful consultations. Chatbots also have advantages in informatizing consultation contents and managing data, enabling efficient prediction of customer responses and deriving marketing strategies. As such, though chatbots are leading the 4th industrial revolution in the retail area, research on chatbots is still in the early stage. Previous studies have focused on the technological aspect, and research on consumer responses to chatbots has recently begun. This study fills this research gap. This study aims to investigate consumers' preferences and emotional responses to chatbots. Many retailers started not to provide customer service via phones and unify their customer service channels online with digitalization through chatbot services. However, consumers often feel uncomfortable about interacting with AI rather than humans in the service context and often seek to communicate with service personnel. We hypothesize that consumer preferences for service personnel vs. chatbots vary according to the service context. In particular, we assume that consumer emotions, which vary according to the service context, play a role in determining preferences. When consumers communicate with retailers, sometimes they may want to engage emotionally, and sometimes they may not. We expect that consumers' willingness to communicate with service personnel varies depending on the types of emotions. Consumers would prefer to interact with service personnel over chatbots when they expect to experience favorable emotions while preferring chatbots if experiencing unfavorable emotions is expected. This is due to consumers' belief that communication with AI does not involve emotions much compared to that with humans. For the empirical test, we conducted two scenario-based online experiments using Mturk. In the first experiment, participants had to return their products. In one condition, the reason for the return was a mistake of the participant and in the other condition plotted the return reason as a retailer's fault. The result shows that participants in the retailer's fault condition experienced anger and upset more strongly than the participants in the condition of customer's mistake. They preferred to communicate with service personnel. Participants in the condition of their own mistakes experienced shame and afraid significantly highly and preferred a chatbot. The second experiment that set up the situation of terminating an internet service also shows consistent results. When participants experience upset as they have to cancel the service due to the poor quality, they chose to communicate with service personnel. Our results reveal that consumer preference for chatbots is a result of strategic choices to create a favorable situation for themselves with respect to the mechanism of emotional experience. In order to develop superior chatbots, how consumers emotionally interact with chatbots and thus how consumer preferences change need to be investigated. By revealing the role of consumer preferences and emotions, this study provides essential information on the characteristics and functions that need to be considered for chatbot development, having significant implications both academically and practically.

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## Fashion Private Label Brands: How to Shape Positive Attitudes and Purchase Intentions

Private label brands (PLBs) are owned and marketed by retailers, and they create competition against national brands (NB) (Porral & Lang, 2015). PLBs have the potential to become a popular market for retailers, as they are consumer products sold under the retailer's brand name. According to an Information Resources, Inc. (IRI) report, PLBs in the USA grew by 5.8% in 2018, surpassing national brands by a significant margin (Viamari, 2018). PLBs have demonstrated growing success over the years, attracting consumers and generating profits for retailers. This study aims to expand the current understanding of consumers' perspectives toward private-label fashion brands by examining their perceptions, attitudes, and intentions toward PLBs, as well as the moderating effects of store trustworthiness on these factors. The study focuses on four constructs of consumer perception of PLBs: brand identification, design and aesthetics, price-quality association, and product assortment. The primary constructs examined include brand identification, design/aesthetics, price-quality association, product assortment, attitude towards PLBs, purchase intention, and word-of-mouth (WOM) intention. To better understand consumers' perceptions of PLBs, this study draws upon Rational Choice Theory and the Theory of Reasoned Action as precedent elements that impact consumers' intentions. A structured survey was created and distributed through Amazon Mechanical Turk to participants between the ages of 18 and 40 who do not consume Target Corporation fashion private label brands. The sample population consisted of both male and female consumers in the Millennial and Generation Z cohorts, as defined by Pew Research (born approximately between 1982 and 2004). The study included a total of 186 participants. Hierarchical multiple regression and bivariate regression analyses were used to assess the relationship between variables and examine the moderating effect of store trustworthiness. The results indicated significant relationships among the four constructs of consumers' perspective towards private label fashion brands, attitude towards PLB, purchase intention, and WOM intention. Additionally, the relationship between PLB perceptions and attitudes towards PLB was significantly moderated by store trustworthiness. The study found that design/aesthetics played the most crucial role in shaping positive attitudes, followed by product assortments for fashion private label brands. Based on these findings, the study proposes several actions that can be taken to support the success of fashion private label brands.

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## Use of Social Networks in the Job Search Process: A Retail Perspective

Retail sales have been increasing at a fast pace worldwide and are expected to exceed \$27.33 trillion in 2023 (Yuen, 2022). The retail industry launches more people into employment than any other sector with some estimates suggesting that retail will make up 8.6 percent of total employment in 2030 (Dorfman, 2022; Retail Supports, n.d.). In the United States, approximately 15.85 million people work in the retail sector, or one out of ten workers, is employed in a retail job (Retail Trade, n.d.). Unfortunately, the retail industry is dealing with employee shortages which has been heightened post COVID, with retailers having difficulty finding and retaining retail employees and keeping retail shelves stocked (Danziger, 2022). Hence, finding and recruiting top talent has become the foremost priority for all retailers. Becoming a company of choice is at the forefront of corporate strategy as retailers seek to employ the best and brightest talent. Social media platforms have been one such means of capturing the attention of young professionals. Social media has not only redefined the way retailers recruit but also how they engage and retain their employees. Social media has become the preferred platform for both Millennials and Gen Z, with 48% applying for job opportunities they found on social media (Nearly Half, 2022). Given the importance of social media as a recruiting tool it is critical to investigate the use of social media by Gen Z and Millennials. Thus, the purpose of the study is to investigate how Gen Z uses social media to search for jobs including general social media use related to job search, job search behavior, and engaging with prospective employers on social media platforms. The proposed study will use Wilson' (1999) model of information seeking behavior to identify job search and social media use within a retail context. The goal of the study is to identify general social media use, job search seeking behaviors for Gen Z and Millennials. Data will be collected using an online survey. Implications for both retailers and retail educators will be presented. Due to their digital nativity, both Gen Z and Millennials use multiple channels, most of them rooted in social media (e.g., LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) to find and apply for jobs. It is hoped that this study will provide insights to digital literacy and provide a road map for retailers to attract, engage and retain their employees.

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## Work Passion and the Future of Retail: An Examination of Part-Time Employees

In 2018, 9.8 million individuals held jobs as cashiers, retail salespersons or retail first-line supervisors, accounting for 6.3% of the total U.S. labor force (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2018). Retail employees are typically younger, less educated, female and more likely to work part-time when compared with the total labor force. These front-line employees (FLE) are critical in providing superior customer experiences that build loyalty, increase satisfaction, and contribute to overall organizational success. Indeed, a good customer experience is directly linked to passionate, engaged workers (Chi & Gursov, 2008). According to Zigarmi *et al.* (2009), work passion is defined as ‘an individual’s persistent, emotionally positive, meaning-based state of well-being stemming from reoccurring cognitive and affective appraisals of various job and organizational situations that result in consistent constructive work intentions and behaviors’ (pg. 5). More recently, Crawford *et al.* (2022) studied FLE passion and conceptualized the construct more narrowly, describing FLE passion as ‘intense positive feelings and identity reinforcement resulting from solving problems and serving customers.’ As a relatively new construct, there has been limited research on work passion within a retail context. This fact is alarming given the high rates of employee turnover and lack of employee engagement across the retail sector. The proposed study will fill a gap in the literature by identifying how retail managers and organizational structure influence individual part-time employee passion. Using a modified version of the Zigarmi *et al.* (2009) model, we will examine how meaningful work, collaboration, fairness, autonomy, recognition, growth, connectedness, service orientation, and personal identity contribute to work passion. A qualitative approach, using focus groups ( $n=7$ ), will be used to gain a better understanding of the unique experiences of part-time retail employees. Purposive sampling will identify part-time retail employees who self-identify as passionate and are enrolled in university programs with a retail focus. This exploratory study will provide the basis for the development of a survey instrument to be used in our next phase of research. Our end goal is to harness part-time retail employee passion so that companies can develop, cultivate, and sustain this motivation throughout an individual’s career trajectory.

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## Developing a Phygital Framework for Contemporary Shopping Center Research

The enclosed shopping center concept, as we know it today, was introduced in the 1950s. From the 1960s to the 1980s, the shopping center industry experienced widespread growth and expansion. Since the boom time, the industry has had to weather many turbulent waves of change, each of which was forecast, to varying degrees, to spell the doom of enclosed shopping centers as viable commercial environments. From the mid-1980s through the 1990s, category killer 'big box' retailers and associated out-of-town retail parks were all expected to end the popularity of the enclosed shopping center. The format not only survived those threats at that time but managed to evolve and, in many cases, thrived with varying operational adaptations. Since the mid-1990s, shopping centers have been expected to fail spectacularly at the hands of e-Retail. Despite the bursting of the dot com bubble in 2000, the threat of e-Retail has been ever-present for more than two decades. Most recently, the global pandemic has further heightened questions about the future of enclosed shopping centers. Today, with retailers' widespread adoption of omnichannel strategies, there are growing questions about how the shopping center industry will evolve to meet the needs of modern phygital (physical and digital) shoppers and what the future might look like for these commercial spaces. This paper provides a historical overview of the shopping center industry as a context to forward a contemporary research agenda for the shopping center industry. The agenda highlights the critical questions related to the evolution of the shopping center industry as it strives to meet the ever-changing needs of both tenants (i.e., retailers, other service firms) and consumers.



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## A Cross-National Study on Adoption of Health & Fitness Wearable Devices: Profiling the Adopters and Non- Adopters

“Health is wealth” has become the Mantra (motto) for the Millennials. In developing economies, like, as India and Saudi Arabia, Gymnasiums, Fitness Clubs, and Yoga Centers are mushrooming. In the last decade, especially with the advent of modern technologies, Health & Fitness Wearable (HFW) devices gained popularity among the health-conscious populace (Butler & Luebbers, 2018). In this study, the author tries to assess the adoption levels of HFW devices among millennials. The determinants of the adoption are assessed first. It is followed by segmentation or profiling of the respondents based on the factors found in the study. RQ 1: What are the factors influencing HFW device adoption? RQ 2: Can HFW device users be profiled based on factors influencing its adoption, as identified in RQ1? RQ 3: Which factors discriminate the most between the clusters identified in RQ2? Taking a cue from the existing theories such as UTAUT2 (Venkatesh *et al.*, 2012), IDT (Rogers, 2003), TAM (Davis, 1989), and DoI (Rogers, 2003), the items for the instrument are developed for the purpose of data collection. Millennials from two emerging economies (mentioned above) are the participants in the current study. The sample is stratified-cum-purposive in nature. A global e-commerce platform with a presence in both economies is taken as the base platform to shortlist the sample among its buyers. A mixed method approach is adopted for the same. Various multivariate tools like factor, cluster and discriminant analyses are used to assess the research objectives. (Planned analysis as it is yet to be conducted)

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## Consumers' Motives Underlying Complaint Intentions Following Product and Service Performance Failures in the Offline and Online Clothes Retailing Contexts

Although the South African clothes retailing industry spends valuable resources developing and distributing products, it is becoming increasingly difficult to satisfy consumer needs. Studies of consumers' complaints about clothing returns indicate that physical product failure (quality failure) is one of the main reasons for consumer dissatisfaction (Castelo & Cabral, 2018). With access to in-store and online shopping channels, clothing consumers' service delivery experience has become critical for clothing retailers to remain competitive. Perceptions of product and service failure may result in redress-seeking and negative repurchase intentions. Product performance and service delivery failures in the clothes retailing context are inevitable, and consumers are bound to complain. Understanding how and why clothing consumers complain following product/service failure could facilitate clothing retailers to correct failures and handle customer complaints more effectively. On a much deeper level, it is essential to understand the driving force behind clothing consumers' complaint intentions, as specific motives may drive specific consumer complaints. A cross-sectional survey involving a self-administered online questionnaire was used to explore consumers' motives underlying their complaint intentions based on product/service failure scenarios. South Africans older than 19 years of age who had purchased ready-to-wear clothing at offline and online clothing retailers were recruited. Based on existing and self-developed scales, the multi-sectioned, structured questionnaire measured consumers' perceptions of product/service performance failure, complaint intentions, and motives underlying specific complaint and non-complaint intentions. Exploratory factor analyses were performed to group consumers' motives for complaint and non-complaint intentions into meaningful dimensions concerning clothing product failure and service failure in offline and online shopping contexts. Altruism was the most pertinent complaint motive associated with in-store service failures, while venting anger and harming retailers were less relevant. Offline retailers should pay attention to consumer altruism to encourage public complaint intentions. Non-complaint motives included protecting the self and the inconvenience associated with complaining, the cost of complaining, and the probability of (un)successful complaint handling. Understanding consumers' complaint motives could help retailers develop effective complaint handling strategies, retain customers, and prevent negative word-of-mouth.

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## Millennial Consumers' Complaint Behavioral Intentions Following Service Failure in the Online Clothing Retail Context

With increased online retailing, service delivery failures in the online clothes-retailing context are inevitable. Compared to older generational cohorts, Millennial consumers dominate online clothing purchases in South Africa (Prinsloo, 2018). An awareness of millennial consumers' complaint intentions could help online retailers address complaints more efficiently. This study used a cross-sectional survey involving a self-administered online questionnaire to describe the differences in emerging, young and older millennials' complaint intentions based on a service failure scenario in the online clothing retail context. South African consumers aged between 19 and 39 years, i.e., consumers born between 1980 and 2000, who had purchased ready-to-wear clothing at online clothing retailers, were recruited via convenience sampling ( $n = 193$ ). The multi-sectioned, structured questionnaire measured consumers' perceptions of online service failures and their complaint intentions based on existing and self-developed scales. Most respondents indicated that delivery problems would cause them the most dissatisfaction, followed by payment security, product information, customer service, and website navigational problems. Based on the EFA, traditional negative word-of-mouth was the most pertinent complaint intention, followed by switching and intention to complain to the retailer. Electronic word-of-mouth was the least relevant complaint intention. Emerging and Young millennial respondents were more likely to engage in negative word-of-mouth that could be detrimental to online retailers. Understanding the different types of complaint intentions could improve online retailers' strategies to convince millennial consumers to complain to them directly rather than engaging in covert actions or voicing their dissatisfaction on social media.

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## The Effect of Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) Ads on Consumer Reactions

ASMR is an abbreviation of Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response and refers to “a feeling of well-being combined with a tingling sensation in the scalp and down the back of the neck, as experienced by some people in response to a specific gentle stimulus, often a particular sound” (Barratt & Davies, 2015). Recently, a growing number of brands (e.g., The Coca-Cola Company, McDonald’s, Ikea, Coach, and Chanel) have experimented with ASMR-evoking ads, combining visual, tactile, and audio stimuli like whispering, tapping, chewing, and crinkling. This trend is driven by the growing popularity of ASMR videos on social media (e.g., millions of YouTube videos of people whispering, tapping and scratching surfaces, crinkling paper, and making a range of sounds with their mouths for example when eating or drinking products). Despite this increasing popularity, limited research has examined the effects and boundaries of ASMR ads (Lee & Jung, 2019; Sands *et al.*, 2022). One exception is the study of Sands *et al.* (2022) which indicated that ASMR ads improve brand and product category recall via tingle intensity, immersion, and narrative transportation. However, the ads used were audio-visual ads, and it is not clear whether or not the same effect will be found when adding ASMR cues to other formats with only audio cues such as radio ads or podcasts. Additionally, ASMR ads did not improve recall directly for all examined product categories (i.e., no positive direct effect for the motor vehicle brand Ford). The aim of the current research is to study the effect of ASMR ads on mental imagery, attitudes towards the ad and the brand, and purchase intention, taking into account the moderating role of the type of sensory stimuli used in the advertisement (Study 1) and the endorsed product category (Study 2). In the first experimental study, 320 participants were randomly exposed to one of four Coca-Cola ads which differed in ASMR triggers (non-ASMR ad vs. ASMR ad) and sensory cues (audio-visual vs. audio only). Afterwards, they completed a questionnaire measuring consumer responses towards the ad and the brand, control variables (i.e., thirst, mood, prior exposure to the ad), and demographics. Contrary to previous research (Sands *et al.*, 2022), our results showed that for both audio-visual and only-audio ads, the non-ASMR ad generates more positive consumer reactions (i.e., more, more positive, and more vivid mental images; more positive attitudes towards the ad and the brand; and a higher purchase intention) than the advertisement designed to trigger ASMR. In the second experiment, a 2 (ASMR ad vs. non-ASMR ad) x 2 (product category: food [McDonald’s] vs. handbags [Coach]) between-subjects design was applied. 240 participants were randomly assigned to one of four ads and asked to fill in a similar series of questions as in Study 1. Results showed that product category moderates the effect of ASMR ads on consumer reactions. In line with Study 1 but in contrast with previous research discussing and testing extraordinary sonic experiences related to food and beverages (Sands *et al.*, 2022, Spence, 2020), a positive effect of ASMR ads (vs. non-ASMR ads) on the amount of mental images, attitudes towards the ad and the brand, and purchase intention was only found for the brand of handbags, and not for the food brand. To conclude, the results of this research indicate that ASMR ads can affect consumer reactions positively, yet not for all product categories. Further research needs to investigate the reason why ASMR works better for some product categories. Does it depend on the product category or can these differences rather be explained by brand features like positioning and brand image?

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## Do the Effects of Payroll Tax Cuts on Minimum Wage Workers' Employment Differ Across Service Sectors?

We investigate the employment effects of a substantial labor cost reduction in Sweden, with particular focus on the effects for minimum wage workers. Sweden is a context where minimum wages are much higher, and more likely to be binding, than in the U.S. (the focus of most prior studies on minimum wage employment and labor costs). We examine effects in terms of jobs (the extensive margin) but also in terms of hours worked (the intensive margin), a variable that is often overlooked even though it may be an important adjustment mechanism when labor costs change. Between 2007 and 2009, the Swedish government substantially decreased the payroll tax for young workers. Because this decrease can be seen as a natural experiment, we employ a DiD framework to compare the effects of the payroll tax cut on employment in the retail and hospitality industries. This investigation is informative to assess the relative efficiency across service sectors of attempts to increase employment along extensive and intensive margins for people with a weak or non-existent connection to the labor market. The analysis has thus far been undertaken for the retail industry. It reveals that a large share of retail employees had contracted wages near the negotiated minimum wage levels at the time of the tax cut, suggesting that the minimum wage levels are binding to a great extent. We find that retail firms that were exposed to large labor cost savings increased both the number of minimum wage employees that were employed by the hour *and* their working hours, effects that were absent for more secure employees with higher wages. We intend to undertake a similar analysis for the hospitality industry, to determine whether effects for minimum wage workers are apparent along the extensive and intensive employment margins here as well, and whether they are of a similar magnitude. As a last step, we intend to investigate whether the 2016 repeal of the reform reversed any identified employment effects in the two sectors, and if so, by how much.

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## Augmented Reality Perceived Values: The Moderating Role of Brand Love

Creating quality experience and improving customer value cocreation has been an objective from augmented reality application. This research explores the roles of AR perceived values (i.e. (utilitarian, social and hedonic) in value cocreation and the moderating impact of brand love on the cocreation engagement relationship on both shared and individually consumed products. Data was collected using an online survey via MTurk. Participants were divided into two groups with one group downloading and using the 'IKEA PLACE' application, and the other group downloading and using the 'WannaKicks' application. In total, we collected a total of 290 surveys in the IKEA group and 286 in the Wannakicks. PLS-SEM technique was employed to assess the measurement model and test the hypothesized relationships. The results support the proposed model hypotheses. More specifically, experience quality of using AR applications for both Wannakicks and IKEA drives users perceived values (utilitarian, social and hedonic). Further, the results support the mediational roles of perceived value on customer value cocreation. For both samples, hedonic and social values mediate the effect of AR experience on value cocreation. However, the results did not support the effect of perceived utilitarian value of using IKEA AR on value cocreation, but it was significant for the Wannakicks users. Finally, the data support the finding that value cocreation is a pre-requisite to increasing customer engagement for both study samples, but this effect is moderated by customers love for IKEA brand, but not for the Wannakicks brand.

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## Can't Stop Online Shopping

Shopping addiction is described as the individual's lack of impulse control. It appears as the passion for constantly buying unnecessary products (the shopper has no actual use for the product) or buying redundant products (the shopper already has the product). Being a compulsive shopper is linked to addiction, but now we are talking about a psychological disorder related to a serious lack of impulse control. The American Psychiatric Association (1985, p. 234) defines compulsions as “repetitive and seemingly purposeful behaviors that are performed according to certain rules or in a stereotyped fashion.” The online context facilitates various forms of addiction such as Internet addiction (Shaw & Black, 2008), online gambling (Ng & Wiemer-Hastings, 2005), and compulsive buying (Duroy *et al.*, 2014). Even if studies on compulsive buying online have been carried out (e.g., Duroy *et al.*, 2014; Kukar-Kinney *et al.*, 2016; Wang & Yang, 2008; Zheng *et al.*, 2020), we still need knowledge about the lack of impulsive control in this context. Thus, this study aims to better understand what influences compulsive buying online and the characteristics of compulsive buyers. Based on Faber & O'Guinn (1988) scoring equation, an online survey of participants ( $n=511$ ) in the US showed that 38.94 percent were diagnosed as compulsive buyers. This is a higher score than the study by Kukar-Kinney *et al.* (2016) which diagnosed 27.5 percentage of the participants ( $n=236$ ) as compulsive buyers. One reason for this can be that the present study was done in the middle of the Coronavirus pandemic which has been shown to increase the risk of compulsive buying behavior (Jaspal *et al.*, 2020). Our analysis indicates that predictors for compulsive buying online could be (based on Andreassen *et al.*, 2015): salience, mood, conflict, tolerance, relapse, withdrawal, and problems. Forty-eight percent of those diagnosed as compulsive buyers in this study were in the age group 24 to 35 years old, fifty percent had a total household income of \$30 000 to \$60 000, and most of them lived as couple (with or without children). Typical products that compulsive buyers shop online are sports equipment and jewelry/watches. Online companies should be aware of the high percentages of shopping addiction as many of their customers could be compulsive buyers. The study contributes to shopping addiction profiling and the identification of risk factors as when designing marketing activities.

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## Music as a Web Atmospheric in Online Retailing

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The growth of online shopping has been a significant development in business to consumer commerce (Statista, 2022). Highly saturated e-retail markets have forced retailers to transform their websites to a medium that can accommodate hedonic and enjoyable shopping experiences (Wang *et al.*, 2017). Although a significant body of empirical evidence suggests that music is an influential atmospheric in a physical store environment where it is capable of evoking positive emotional responses (Roschk *et al.*, 2017) little is known about the role of music as a web atmospheric. This study explores the effect of music as a web atmospheric on flow, a measure of shopper enjoyment, in an online fashion retail environment. Using a mixed method approach and through augmentation of the SOR model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) the aim of the study was to examine the association of music as a web atmospheric with shoppers' state of flow, arousal, and pleasure, which in turn affects product attitudes and purchase intention in an online shopping environment. We firstly conducted a quasi-experimental between-subjects data collection method comprising of a self-completion online questionnaire. 462 participants were recruited who were assigned to an intervention and control group to test the influence of music during an authentic online shopping experience of a vintage fashion store. 245 participants in the intervention group listened to music whilst browsing and 217 participants in the control group browsed without listening to music. The second stage of the study involved data collection from six semi-structured focus groups. Three groups viewed the website with music and three without. Results showed that music significantly moderates the relationship between shoppers' arousal and state of flow, which in turn affects cognitive responses and purchase intentions. Additionally, shoppers' arousal directly affects pleasure, and indirectly via flow, and consumers' product attitudes mediate the association of pleasure with purchase intentions. Music evokes positive emotional response as well as the shoppers' state of flow by enhancing shopper enjoyment, concentration, improved time perception and immersion in the online shopping task. The findings from this study provide significant theoretical implications and opportunities for further research by providing a basis to understand the relationship between music as a web atmospheric, shoppers' emotional states and flow.



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## The Opportunities and Risks Presented by the Digitalisation of Teaching Methods in Higher Education

Risk assessment and management are modern concepts with relatively little historical evaluation. Starting with defining risk, scientific discoveries have focused, throughout time, on the various nuances and meaning behind the notion of risk. The literature review conducted indicates that modern society relies on predicting possible scenarios in a risk-filled environment, as well as on decisions made as a result of such predictions. It has also been determined that analyzing risk management in higher education is a cyclical process, aligned with internal controls and steps implemented as a result of past risk assessments. Therefore, residual risk may become inherent for future internal controls processes. Quantitative research into quality-risk management in higher education has been conducted within the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca. The University's vision and objectives set out by its' management team can be realized in partnership with its' staff. Furthermore, risk impacts and implicates all employees: self-assessments, as well as risk management processes are conducted by the institution's General Manager and all individuals in executive functions. Consequently, the topic of this paper is considered of current importance as it contributes to the growing research sector enabling better understanding of the quality-risk management in higher education. The main aim of this study is to identify the potential risks in this environment, their primary determining factors, and lastly their correct management towards minimising their consequences. Furthermore, the objective of this research is the development of an adequate academic environment aware of the significance of quality-risk management; specifically, the quality enhancement of services provided in conjunction with the minimisation of any type of risk, as a primary determining factor for competitiveness. This research introduces the inter-generational theory with the intent of identifying potential similarities and differences in quality and risk perception throughout academic processes. The risk evaluation was conducted using quantitative research methods, specifically by sampling 1050 participants to answer a comprehensive questionnaire. The primary aims of this method were: identifying the respondent's perception of quality and risk in education services, as well as identifying the factors influencing trust in educational services provided by the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, as perceived by students and employees (including social media and mass-media influences). Subsequently, data analysis has been conducted using IBM SPSS and SmartPLS systems. This has led to the integration of results in literature applied within the faculty, as well as detailing proposed concepts and appraising the working variables. Self-assessment is the primary evaluation method utilized in this study. This led to gauging the institution's performance in line with quality standards, and has been deemed a useful tool for monitoring progress made by the management team towards improved efficiency.

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## ‘Overwhelming the Senses’ or ‘Soulless, Depressing Places’? Why Do Some Consumers Avoid Shopping Mall Experiences?

Enclosed shopping malls have been part of Western urban life for 70 years and draw masses of shoppers on a daily basis (Warnaby & Medway, 2018). Their centrality has transformed them into public centers of urban life (Tani, 2015) and led many marketing scholars to focus on the experiences that they offer (Gilboa *et al.*, 2020; Vilnai-Yavetz *et al.*, 2022), their atmospherics (Chebat & Morrin, 2007; Krey *et al.*, 2022) and consumers’ behavior (Elmashhara & Soares, 2022). However, this literature largely ignores an important group of consumers: those who avoid shopping malls. The present study bridges this gap by identifying the reasons and motivations of consumers who choose not to visit enclosed shopping malls. Data were collected in two waves: one in 2020 and another in 2022. The Prolific platform was used to recruit British respondents living in London. Of the 1648 participants initially contacted, 193 (11.7%) indicated that they avoid visits to malls and served as the sample of this study. The respondents who reported that they do not visit malls at all were asked open-ended question and a set of Likert-type scale questions aimed at revealing their reasons for not visiting shopping malls. The respondents also reported their gender, age, education, and income as background data. The open-ended qualitative data were analyzed using an axial coding technique following Gioia *et al.* (2013). First order-codes were identified based on the words and terms used in the transcripts. These codes were aggregated to more abstract second-order themes. In the third stage, aggregate dimensions were identified. In addition, the number of respondents belonging to each aggregate dimension was quantified (the percentages of the overall sample of 193 are presented in brackets). Our analysis revealed four main theoretical sources for mall recoil. Two—mall-related sensory experience and consumer emotional reactions to malls—are attributable to the features of malls, while the other two—consumer ideology and competing alternatives—are derived from the features of consumers and competition. Specifically, approximately a quarter of the respondents (27.5%) described malls as “sensory overload experiences”: overcrowded places with annoying atmospherics and large architecture that they experience as stressful and claustrophobic. A smaller group (6%) expressed either negative emotional reactions or perceptions toward malls, describing them as soulless, depressing places. Beyond mall-related reasons, a group of respondents (11%) expressed an anti-consumerism ideology according to which malls symbolize consumption culture and the temptation to buy unnecessary things. A major threat to malls is the availability of attractive alternatives that were preferred by many respondents, such as online shopping (20%) and individual stores (15.5%). The respondents described these alternatives as more convenient, more accessible, and cheaper. Finally, a group of respondents (10%) mentioned reasons such as long distance and inaccessibility as barriers to visiting malls. The findings reveal that the decline of physical retailing (Helm *et al.*, 2020), in which consumers avoid malls, is due not only to the availability of better alternatives (e.g., online shopping) but also to features that malls themselves could address. Such changes might include improved architecture and design, more friendly atmospherics, and stronger links between online and brick-and-mortar channels.

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## What Attracts Consumers to Purchase Cross-Border at Chinese E-Retailers? Highlighting the Differences Between Generations

Shopping across national borders over the Internet (i.e., cross-border e-commerce) is flourishing worldwide. Statista (2022) predicts this market will account for 22% of all shipments of tangible products to consumers by 2022 - up 7% from 2016. The Internet allows consumers to order at various e-stores worldwide, but what makes consumers buy at foreign rather than domestic electronic stores (e-stores)? Previous studies in the e-retailing literature demonstrated that consumers' purchase intention is related to e-store attributes (Muthitharoen *et al.*, 2011). However, these studies occur in the context of domestic e-commerce with the e-store located in the consumer's country. Furthermore, an impressive body of research in the international marketing literature demonstrated that domain-specific values that directly relate to the purchasing context, such as consumer ethnocentrism, reduce consumers' purchase intentions of foreign products (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2004; Siamangka & Balabanis, 2015). Others indicate that human values, which refer to goals that guide people's lives, influence consumers' positive or negative evaluations of foreign products (Steenkamp & De Jong, 2010). Albeit research examines foreign-made products' consumption behaviour, it is mainly in a physical setting at domestic stores and not when purchasing at foreign e-stores. Another issue is that consumers are seen as one homogeneous group. However, recent studies distinguish between generations to better understand variations in shopping behaviour (Lissitasa & Kol, 2021; Parment, 2013). A distinction between generational cohorts may be of key importance for insight into predicting consumer buying behavior at foreign e-stores. Our research model proposes that e-store attributes, domain-specific and human values impact consumers' purchase intentions at foreign e-stores in cross-border e-commerce. We compare relationships across four generational cohorts (i.e., Baby Boomers, Gen Xers, Millennials, and Gen Zers) using a survey on online shopping at Chinese e-stores in a sample of over 2,500 Dutch individuals. We find that for Baby boomers and Gen Xers, among e-store attributes, it is mainly product offerings of foreign e-stores compared to domestic ones that lead to purchase intentions. For Millennials, both product offerings and the service provided are important, while for Gen Zers, service has the largest impact on their purchase intentions. Risk assessment and ethnocentrism negatively impact the purchase intention of all generations except Gen Zers; sustainable consumption behavior positively affects the purchase intentions of only Millennials. Schwartz's (1992;2012) dimension resultant conservation negatively affects the purchase intention of only Baby Boomers and Gen Xers; the dimension resultant self-enhancement positively affects all generations. These differences between generational cohorts are prominent and provide a deeper understanding of why some generations are more likely to shop online cross-border.

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## Calculating the Probability of Collusion Based on Observed Price Patterns: Evidence from Pharmaceutical Retailing

The purpose our research is to develop a method for detecting collusion, tacit or outright, in markets where the firm with the lowest price capture most of the demand, as well as to determine how changes in the number of competing firms affect the likelihood of collusion in such markets. In addition, we will also estimate the impact of the number of firms on the probability of collusion, as well as the impact of an increase in the likelihood of collusion on prices. The literature on collusion and collusion screening can be divided into papers studying how known cartels have affected the market and how collusion screens for the detection of such cartels can be constructed, and papers taking their starting point in economic theory to create screens for deviations from competitive behavior and then use data from markets where collusion might be suspected to test the predictions from these models. Our research is in the second tradition, using data from a market where we might suspect collusion to be present due to the market characteristics, but where no cartels have been successfully prosecuted. Our research makes several important contributions to the literature on collusion and collusion screening. We contribute by being one of just a few studies who have analyzed collusion in markets related to consumer products rather than in public procurement. Also, contrary to previous studies, we calculate a probability that series of bids are collusive, rather than making a definite conclusion if the perceived pattern is collusive or not based on some statistical decision rule. In addition, the results from this research, taken together with results from the existing literature, makes it possible to give detailed policy advice for regulators, not only aimed at pharmaceuticals markets, but applicable also in other markets. Finally, the collusion detection method developed in this paper can also be applied in a wide set of different markets. It could, for example, be used to investigate collusive pricing on online marketplaces such as Amazon, where the retailers offering the lowest price often receives a large share of total demand. The main results from our research are as follows: First, there seems to be an experiment period in which firms signal their intent to collude and, second, when collusion has been established, the price of the originator drug in previous periods seem to act as a focal point price for the collusion. Third, our results also suggest that bid rotation is much more common as a method for collusion than parallel bidding, contrary to the experimental findings of Fonseca & Normann (2012). Fourth, the unconditional probability of collusion is highest when only two firms compete and lowest for six or more firms. Fifth, for two firm bid rotation we find that mainly patterns longer than 8 months are associated with collusion, while even short spells of parallel pricing with two firms is an indication of collusion. Finally, we also estimate the impact of collusion on prices, and the results show that an increase in the probability of collusion from zero to one is associated with 22–43 percent increases in the average price in the long-term.

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## Three Perspectives on Fertility Treatment – A Temporally Extended and High-Risk Service and a Conversational Taboo

According to recent estimates, one in six couples worldwide is - at least temporarily - affected by infertility (ESHRE 2017). For those couples, fertility treatment is often the last resort, which, however, involves high levels of emotional distress. In the vein of transformative service research, it is our aim to identify ways to enhance their well-being during this stressful period of life. In three studies, we focus on the long duration of treatment, the high risk of failure and its perception as a taboo topic, which are key sources of patients' emotional distress. In Study 1, we consider fertility treatment as a temporally extended service, suggesting that patients' well-being changes over time. Surveying 212 infertility patients at different stages of the patient journey, we aim to answer the research question, how emotional distress and fertility-related needs evolve (1) over the course of a treatment cycle and (2) across multiple treatment cycles. We find that female patients' level of emotional distress takes a u-shaped course, the time before initial consultation and before embryo transfer being perceived as most stressful. The need for information is strongest at the beginning, while the need for emotional support rises at the end of a treatment cycle. Moreover, patients' level of emotional distress is higher in follow-up attempts than during the first treatment cycle. In Study 2, we explore fertility treatment as a high-risk service. Researchers have comprehensively studied uncertainty in consumers' decision-making and how they cope with service failures, but little is known about how consumers cope with uncertainty while waiting for a service outcome. Building on 23 in-depth interviews with infertility patients, we find that consumers use two strategies to cope with the uncertainty of high-risk services, namely, (1) assessment of subjective probabilities and (2) expectation management. Four more coping strategies are applied if consumers anticipate a negative outcome, namely, (3) preparation, (4) risk reduction, (5) avoidance, and (6) emotional processing. In Study 3, we focus on fertility treatment as a conversational taboo. While taboo topics used to be discussed behind closed doors—for instance, in secluded online forums—they have recently begun to be discussed on public social media platforms. In a netnographic study, we outline the potential of social media with regard to the well-being of consumers confronted with taboos by analyzing 69 infertility-related YouTube videos from various infertility vloggers. Public social media channels (1) help to satisfy infertility-related needs (i.e., need for information, emotional support and sharing experiences) of individual patients in the short term, and (2) contribute to the deconstruction of the taboo in the long-term, as well as to the sensitization and education of society. Taking three different perspectives on the topic of fertility treatment, we generate a solid understanding of the situation of infertility patients. Thus, we are able to derive guidelines for patients on how to cope with their infertility as well as for fertility clinics on how to better support their patients. This will not only help the patients, but also the clinics to acquire new patients and prevent existing ones from premature discontinuation of treatment.

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## Under the Skin of NFTs: Predicting Transaction Prices with Deep Learning on Visual Characteristics

Non Fungible Tokens (NFTs) are blockchain-based digital assets that may hold any type of data-based storable content, including pictures, gifs, audio files, videos, and more. NFT may encompass a variety of asset categories, including works of art, in-game items, or components of entertainment collections. Their uniqueness—each NFT is peculiar to itself and ownership is indicated by digital certificates that are the owner's only—is what makes them appealing. They have quickly revolutionized the art market, collectibles, and gaming industries, and have the potential to impact other industries and sectors like luxury, fashion, music, entertainment, and real estate. The NFT market expanded by more than 61,000% in 2021, rising from a monthly sale volume of 8,072,866 USD in January 2021 to 4,968,834,938 USD in January 2022 (Nadini *et al.*, 2021). A number of variables, including visual content, trader behavior, and creator reputation, influence the transaction pricing and sales of NFT assets. Mekacher *et al.* (2022) found that the price dynamics in NFT collections are partially driven by heterogeneous rarity patterns. Nadini *et al.* (2021) demonstrated that NFT collections contain visually homogeneous objects, and their results provide some indication in terms of how the visual characteristics may be predictive of price. Because of the market's relative immaturity and reliance on visual cues, it is possible to predict future transactions using unit assets, creators, and trader-based intelligence. Building upon Nadini *et al.* (2021)'s work, this paper aims to examine the NFTs market and provide insights into their sales price by identifying the crucial elements that determine the NFTs' transaction price. In order to understand what makes some NFTs more valuable than others, we studied a total of 2922 images from NFT art collection using the convolutional neural networks (CNNs) to predict the NFTs' price based on visual information. We clustered all images into five categories based on price distribution and applied the most popular architecture Residual Network (ResNet) to extract visual features for different categories. Combining the visual features with other numerical and categorical data, we further conducted a regression analysis to identify the most influencing visual features that affect the NFT transaction prices. These findings are expected to be of interest to researchers as well as policymakers, and NFT creators, collectors, and traders across different contexts.

## Thorhallur Gudlaugsson Service Orientation and Organizational Performance

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Research has shown a strong connection between organizational culture and organizational performance. Researchers have also proposed that service orientation, as a form of organizational culture, leads to better organizational results. This article addresses the following two research questions: (1) is it possible to use Denison scale for measuring organizational culture (DOCs) to evaluate service orientation? and if so (2) what is the relationship between service orientation and organizational performance as defined in DOCs? The research is based on data collected from nine organizations in 2020 and 2019. The data were combined into one database and cleaned, after which 875 valid answers remained. The results showed that 23 questions from DOCs covered 30 out of 35 questions from SERV\*OR measuring instrument, that has been specially designed for the purpose of evaluating service orientation. Data analyses revealed that the assessment of internal reliability was good ( $\alpha = 0.94$ ) and that many questions had a correlation of more than 0.3 but none had a correlation of more than 0.7. Furthermore, the results showed that service orientation based on DOCs explains 47% of the variability in performance as the average of the six performance factors used in DOCs. The strongest relationships were found between Service orientation and the performance factors job satisfaction ( $R^2 = 0.40$ ;  $\beta = 0.64$ ) and overall performance ( $R^2 = 0.40$ ;  $\beta = 0.63$ ). Whereas the weakest relationship was found between service orientation and the performance factor profit ( $R^2 = 0.14$ ;  $\beta = 0.37$ ). The main limitations of the study are that the data originate from organizations that have all excelled in their fields and received various awards for their success. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to the relationship between service orientation and performance in companies that do not perform as effectively or have a weaker culture. Further research aims to examine such comparisons and to more accurately, identify the strong links between service orientation and job satisfaction.

# Thorhallur Gudlaugsson The Relationship Between the Net Promoter Score and Loyalty

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This research focuses on the relationship between loyalty and the net promoter score (NPS), a widely used metric among companies. The main reason for the NPS's popularity is that measuring the NPS is simple, involves only one question, and makes both national and international comparisons possible. Although it is not always clear what the NPS measures, measuring the NPS is a process that is often free of extensive criticism. In his paper "The one number you need to grow," Reichheld (2003) argued that the NPS is a powerful instrument and that using only one question makes it possible to collect simple and timely data that correlate with growth. However, others (e.g., Keiningham *et al.*, 2007) have argued that the NPS is too simple, is not a strong predictor of growth, and has limited usability, since it is not linked to other measures or indicators of performance. This research challenges these criticisms, and the research question concerns whether the NPS is different based on loyalty status. The research is based on six surveys that were conducted in the falls of 2017 ( $n = 2,708$ ), 2018 ( $n = 3,078$ ), 2019 ( $n = 2,682$ ), 2020 ( $n = 2,680$ ), 2021 ( $n = 1,701$ ), and 2022 ( $n = 1,450$ ). Several issues relating to food purchases were evaluated as part of these surveys. The findings are based on the calculated NPS for the grocery stores that respondents visit most often and respondents' second most frequently visited grocery stores. The findings demonstrate that the NPS is always higher for the grocery stores that respondents visit most often, and therefore, it can be considered that the NPS could be useful for measuring loyalty and loyalty status, regardless of which store the respondents visit most often.



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## Examining the Impact of Consumer Motives for Interacting with Collective Retail Agglomeration Digital Channels on Customer Experience and Patronage Intention: A Customer Journey Perspective

In today's digital era, retail agglomerations, such as town center shopping areas, shopping malls, and high streets, face challenges in attracting consumers as they increasingly turn to online shopping (Ngoh *et al.*, 2022). On the other hand, consumers' increasing dependence on digital channels provides an opportunity to enhance the customer experience of retail agglomerations. Collective retail agglomeration digital channels, such as their website, social media pages, and email newsletters, may be used to influence customer experience during the retail agglomeration customer journey (AbedRabbo *et al.*, 2022). Despite the heralded benefits and the widespread use of collective digital channels among retail agglomerations, consumer interaction with these channels remains low (AbedRabbo *et al.*, 2022; Risselada *et al.*, 2018). In addition, insights into the relationship between consumer motives for interacting with these channels and the impact of those interactions on retail agglomeration customer experience and patronage intention remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the literature on retail marketing statistical insights into these relationships. Our research model proposes that entertainment-seeking (reflecting hedonic value) and convenience-seeking (reflecting utilitarian value) are both motives that impact customer experience and subsequent patronage intention. Moreover, we hypothesize that this effect is moderated by the number of customer journey stages during which consumers interact with these channels. We used an online survey to collect data from 212 Dutch respondents who had interacted with the collective digital channels of a retail agglomeration they had physically visited in the past 12 months. Multigroup structural equation modeling was used to assess our model. Our findings show that consumer interactions with collective retail agglomeration digital channels based on (hedonic) entertainment-seeking motives have a more substantial positive effect on customer experience and subsequent patronage intention than customer interactions based on (utilitarian) convenience-seeking motives. Furthermore, our results demonstrate that the impact of consumer interaction with collective retail agglomeration digital channels based on entertainment-seeking motives is significantly more substantial when consumers interact with these channels during all stages of the customer journey, rather than during some stages.

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## Antecedents of Use Intention of the Metaverse Platform's Virtual Exhibition

As the importance of online virtual space increases due to COVID-19 and interest in virtual space utilization technology increases, the transition to the metaverse which is a platform that combines virtual space and reality, is being accelerated. As relationships in the virtual space are formed through avatars representing users in the metaverse environment, interest in metaverse has been increased as it combines with various industries. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to conduct an exploratory study based on the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) model. What are the underlying factors affecting consumers' technology acceptance in the virtual exhibition environment of the Metaverse platform? The research was conducted focusing on the virtual exhibition environment conducted by IFLAND. The research hypotheses were developed to examine the effects of key factors on the behavioral intention to the metaverse platform by dividing the technology acceptance characteristics into performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, hedonic motivation, and interactivity. In order to verify research questions, a questionnaire survey was conducted on people who experienced a virtual exhibition environment on the metaverse platform IFLAND, and the response results were analyzed through structural equation modeling. As a result of the analysis, it was confirmed that performance expectancy, facilitating conditions, hedonic motivation, and interactivity had a significant effect on the behavioral intention, and the behavioral intention was found to affect the use behavior. Therefore, in this study, we can present theoretical implications for verifying the influencing factors of technology acceptance in the virtual exhibition environment of the metaverse platform. Some practical implications which can be utilized to revitalize the virtual exhibitions on the metaverse platform in the future were suggested. Furthermore, how virtual exhibition environments and services should be used to expand the related industries through continuous utilization rather than simply for one-time marketing of exhibitions was also proposed.

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## Oui, Je Regrette...Tout: An Exploration of Decision Regret

Consumer decision-making in a tourism setting is assumed to rely on comprehensive decision-making and cognitive processing prior to final purchase decisions. Little wonder then, that consumers use a variety of tools and sources (e.g. customer reviews and testimonials) to help inform and validate their choices pre-consumption and to reduce the possibility of post-purchase disappointment, where rejected options might begin to appear wiser alternatives in hindsight. This, however, assumes an entirely rational and logical consumer decision-making process, which is somewhat naïve and dubious. Although previous research has extensively examined decision-making in tourism settings (including an emphasis on positive consumer emotions), more powerful *negative* emotions such as remorse, guilt, shame, and regret – the focus of the present study – have received limited attention, with a few noteworthy recent exceptions. Whilst regret has been extensively studied across several disciplines in the social sciences, within the field of tourism, however, there is a paucity of research. This would seem a notable and significant omission since regret is a higher-order emotion that has significant impact on tourists' intentional behavior, destination evaluation, levels of satisfaction, perceptions of value, repeat visit intention, negative word-of-mouth, and recommendation intentions. Consequently, the contribution of the present study is to provide a deeper understanding of regret in tourists' decision-making. The main form of data collection for this study centers on data derived from 49 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with experienced tourists and travelers. Participants were sought who had recently experienced feelings of 'regret, sorrow, or unhappiness that went beyond simple dissatisfaction' regarding some aspect (or all) of their travel or tourist experiences. Our insights lead to three key categories of findings: (i) the nature of regret (particularly distinguishing regret from similar concepts such as dissatisfaction or cognitive disappointment), (ii) insights into regret as a categorization/typology [capturing four factors based on retrospective regret (backward looking) versus anticipated regret (forward looking), and causal regret (faulty decision-making) versus outcome-based regret (comparative decision-making)], and (iii) the outcomes of regret (the cognitive and behavioral consequences of regret). These findings generate a range of contributions and directions for future research.

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## Digitizing Food Experience: Social Sharing and Gazing Impact on 'Visual Hunger' or 'Food Hunger'?

Digital food trends turn food enthusiasts into amateur influencers, resulting in millions of food photographs and reviews posted on social networking sites (SNSs), affecting consumers' perceptions and relationships towards food. With their camera and the clever hashtag (#), this "selfie generation" has begun engaging in social eating activities online, making the subject more pertinent now than ever. Food culture has transformed the ordinary moment of eating into an opportunity for social sharing and gazing, leading to "visual hunger" rather than "food hunger." The "hunger" may not always imply filling an empty stomach. Trillion photos have been captured and shared on social media platforms globally, equivalent to 57,246 per second, or 5.0 billion daily. Instagram accounts for 1.3 billion, with 100 million images daily, 100 million posts, and over 1 billion stories and chats. This user-generated content (UGC) makes people aroused by situations involving food due to how food is described and displayed, reflecting the term "food porn." Food porn is described as mouth-watering images of food that are "sensationally out of bounds of what food should be." This paper explores how food-related UGC, whether verbal or visual, can impact complex desires, including food consumption and psychological. Python program was used for data collection to retrieve food-related UGC on SNSs. A total of 1,983,480 reviews from 1st December 2022 to 28th February 2023 from the five popular food retailers were collected from various SNSs such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Google Review, and Twitter. The selection of five viral food retailers was based on the 76 popular food-related hashtags used in SNSs in Malaysia. SNS users have viewed the top influencing UGCs a total of 10,979,378 times. Furthermore, the most viral posts have been shared around 28,938 times across various SNSs. The frequency bar chart and word cloud were created to identify the most used words and topics in food-related UGC posted on SNSs. The word cloud visualizes frequently used terms, with word size indicating frequency of use. In addition, sentiment analysis was conducted to gauge the attitudes, beliefs, and emotions of people responding to the UGC. The analysis revealed a compound score, providing insights into the overall sentiment of the UGC contributors. The text sentiment analysis resulted in a compound score of 0.1850, suggesting generally favorable sentiment and attitude toward the content. Overall, the findings provide valuable insights into the opinions and emotions of SNSs users regarding food-related experiences and preferences, as expressed in the UGC posted on SNSs.

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## Digital Food-Related Lifestyle Choices on Food Waste at the Retail-Consumer Interface

Digital food culture has changed how people view and consume food, which may lead to unintended consequences of food waste. The rising of social network sites (SNSs) and virtual community platforms enabling users to share visual and verbal content evolved across gazing, curating, tagging, liking and retweeting, and re-blogging, resulting in a significant volume of user-generated content (UGC). However, due to the limited, fragmented complexity and diversity of food consumption behaviors, how digital UGC and food images contribute to food consumption, visual hunger, or food waste is still being determined. Hence the research uses a mixed-method research design to explore the unintended consequence of consumer culture's retail-consumer consumer interface. First, a cross-sectional survey of Millennials was conducted to investigate the antecedents of food-related behaviors such as conspicuous consumption, visual hunger, and food waste. Second, in-depth interviews with food retailers were conducted using purposive sampling to investigate the impact of digital food-related behaviors on food waste. In the first study, 387 data were collected using social media platforms among Millennials. The results of hypothesis testing using SmartPLS 4.0 indicate that food photo-sharing, self-expression, social relation, and nostalgic memory archiving are significant to food-visual addiction, with the  $R^2$  value of 0.579. Additionally, food-visual addiction contributes significantly to conspicuous consumption and food waste, with  $R^2$  values of 0.530 and 0.121, respectively. The finding shows that only food-visual addiction contributes to food waste. The test of the moderating effect of fear of missing out (FOMO) on food-visual addiction indicates that FOMO only moderates self-expression and social relationships. The results of an in-depth interview among five food retailers in the second study reveal mixed results on the impact of food popularity and UGC. While favorable UGC ratings and recommendations can increase sales, bad reviews, and complaints can harm a company's reputation. Furthermore, unrealistic food virality trends from UGC might disturb the balance between the demand and supply of raw materials needed for food preparation. Consequently, the disruption from fluctuating demand caused by food virality can affect the entire supply chain in the food market, leading to potential losses, surpluses, or waste at various supply chain stages. The results of both studies indicate that digital food cultures affect both positively and negatively in different ways. Despite food being lost, wasted, or surpluses at the retail-consumer interface, reducing food waste can be vital in improving global environmental sustainability. Thus, the findings of this paper contributed to a better understanding of how digital food culture affects food waste at the retail-consumer interface levels, as well as filling knowledge gaps in the antecedents and consequences of digital food culture on food waste. Theoretically, a synergistic value of mixed methods' output will give newfound insight into the complex phenomena of how digital food cultures shape food-related lifestyle choices and how they contribute to food waste. Food marketers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can use findings in formulating new policies to curb food waste and engage in more responsible marketing activities.

## Challenges for Modeling Reference Prices in Choice Models – Data Preparation, Initialization and Pitfalls

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The concept of reference prices has been an integral part of consumer behavior research for many decades. Numerous studies have shown that reference prices play an important role in explaining purchasing behavior. Accounting for reference prices in models of consumer behavior places special demand on the underlying panel data and their preparation. In our work, we want to give an overview of the most essential requirements for the database eventually used in a choice model and consider effects and pitfalls that may bias model estimates related to reference prices. These include price trends, price level differences across stores, or problems due to the inclusion of brand aggregates. Because the reference price of a consumer is not observable, various approaches exist in the literature that describe the formation of reference prices among consumers. Most of these approaches require specifying an initialization value for the reference price. There are no clear recommendations in the literature for the choice of an initialization value and its impact on model estimation. In our study, we investigate the effects of different initialization values of the reference price as well as different initialization periods for reference price formation in the context of a brand choice model. We use the MNL to model brand choice, the well-established exponential smoothing approach to form the reference price variable, and a grid search to determine the carry-over (smoothing) constant. Brand choice of consumers is modelled as a function of reference prices, marketing mix variables and brand loyalty. Three different options of choosing a consumer's reference price for initialization, as well as three variants of setting the initialization period are being tested. The results show that the type of initialization can have an impact on the magnitude of the carry over constant and the parameter estimates. Higher (lower) values of the smoothing constant mean that consumers process a larger (smaller) number of past prices when forming a reference price. Therefore, a key finding is that understanding how reference prices are formed can be affected by the initialization of the modeling approach.

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## Retailing at the Frontier of Logics of Commerce and Care

Organizations are situated in institutional fields that are guided by a dominant logic, i.e., a system of patterns, assumptions, values, and practices, that inform operations in that respective field (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). We argue that organizations operating in the food sector can traditionally be thought of as adhering to one of two different logics: a logic of commerce, as found among manufacturers or retailers; or a logic of care, as evident among food banks. Consider the example of a person managing a classic supermarket. This person is informed by a logic that prioritizes profitability, efficiency, and the minimization of shrinkage (Gruber *et al.* 2017). On the opposite side, a person managing a food bank is guided by considerations that center on inclusivity, accessibility, and care (Tarasuk & Eakin 2005). These two persons arguably pursue different objectives and thus establish distinct practices in their respective organizations. But what about people who find themselves at the frontier of these different logics? What about managers who must align both spheres? How do they navigate fields that prescribe distinct values and actions? To what extent do they experience tensions in their daily dealings in a particular institutional field? This research aims to address these questions that are so vital to the field of retailing, and to managers of organizations that are situated at the intersection of these two institutional logics of commerce and care. To do so, we use social supermarkets (Holweg & Lienbacher 2011) as a case study, representative for an expanding alternative retail format with more than 1000 stores across Europe (Holweg & Lienbacher 2016). We employ an in-depth, qualitative methodology to tap into the experiences of managers that find themselves at the frontier of two different institutional logics (McCracken, 1988). The personal involvement of the first author with these organizations gave us privileged access to secondary data and direct observations of the daily operations of social supermarkets. The interviews we conducted with managers of four different stores complemented the data collection and allowed us to gain first-hand accounts of their experiences. Informed by theories of institutional logics and hybrid organizations, our work provides an emic perspective of managing a retail space at the frontier of logics of commerce and care. Our findings speak to the difficulties of managers to navigate two different institutional logics, which do not only refer to the complexity of classic organizational tasks, but also to the emotional labor as experienced by social supermarket managers. Ostensibly simple decisions, such as whether to declare a carton of tomatoes as waste or not, represent an unforeseen complexity to people in this situation (Gruber *et al.* 2017). More specifically, our work addressed the following points: How should managers set prices for produce as they try to reconcile principles of profitability and accessibility? How do managers feel when they have to let go of employees who are volunteers or long-term unemployed trying to find their way back into the workforce? How do managers conciliate the need to sell products and the need to protect consumers' dignity? How do they decide how much time to devote to vulnerable, and often disoriented, consumers, while at the same time preserving their own personal space? How do they manage assortment width and how do they decide when and how to approach potential new donors? How do managers balance considerations of profitability and sustainability in these decisions?

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## Dealing with Endogeneity of Marketing Variables in Multicategory Choice Models

A marketing variable is endogenous if it is related to factors that affect purchases and are not observed by researchers. Such relationships arise whenever managers set marketing variables taking unobserved factors (e.g., missing variables or exogenous shocks) into account. If researchers use models that ignore endogeneity, they may obtain biased estimates of the effects of marketing variables. Several papers deal with the potential endogeneity of marketing variables in sales response or brand choice models (e.g., Besanko, 2001; Andrews & Ebbes, 2014; Villas-Boas & Winer, 1999; Petrin & Train, 2010). With respect to multicategory choice models we see a completely different picture. Almost without exception, multicategory choice models found in the relevant literature leave out endogeneity concerns. This research gap can be explained by the fact that the number of marketing variables is much higher compared to sales response or brands choice models. This higher number of marketing variables also makes it more difficult to find appropriate instrumental variables. Instrumental variables should be correlated with a marketing variable and should be uncorrelated with the error term of the respective model. Because of this difficulty we turn to instrument-free methods. We apply the Gaussian copula-based approach developed by Park & Gupta (2012) which under certain assumptions reproduces the correlation between marketing variables and the error term. This approach also has the advantage to be appropriate for nonlinear models. In addition to the method of Park & Gupta (2012) we investigate two others, very recently presented instrument-free methods that also take the correlation between endogenous variables (in our case marketing variables) and exogenous variables into account. We plan the following analyses using IRI data of shopping visits to one specific grocery store. Our basic model has a multivariate logit model form. It includes as predictors three marketing variables (frequencies of features, displays, and price reductions) for each category, household attributes and exponentially smoothed category loyalties. We also estimate three multivariate logit models that take potential endogeneity into account, one model for each of the three instrument-free methods mentioned above. Overall, we compare these four multivariate logit models by putting the emphasis on endogeneity results. Moreover, we investigate to what extent endogeneity of marketing variables is related to category characteristics like purchase frequency or category type.



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## A Multiple Analysis for Brand Resonance Evaluation and Customer Loyalty Strategy: The Loyalty Spiral Perspective

Consumer-based brand equity has received growing attention from companies. Businesses can interact with customers through various channels and media touchpoints to build their brand image and consumer identity and develop effective brand marketing strategies. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a dramatic decrease in purchases through offline channels and a shift toward online shopping. Owing to the marked changes in consumer behaviors and processes, companies need to better understand the changes and differences in customer experiences and touchpoints during their purchase process. Accordingly, companies must effectively allocate resources to various brand marketing activities to build customer loyalty and establish brand resonance. Prior studies on brand equity focused primarily on the linear purchase process (before-during-after purchase). However, the consumer decision-making process is cyclical, not a closed cycle but more of a spiral. Therefore, companies can drive up the spiral and build customer loyalty and brand resonance over time by creating convenient, simple, and satisfactory customer experiences. This study proposed a multiple analysis for brand resonance evaluation and formulated strategies to maintain customer loyalty and enhance brand resonance based on the perspective of loyalty spiral (Siebert *et al.*, 2020). We selected an international well-known brand: the Starbucks Coffee as the empirical study subject and applied structural equation modeling for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to establish a framework for brand resonance assessment of Starbucks Coffee brand chains. Moreover, the fuzzy linguistic preference relations-analytic network process (FLPR-ANP) was used to assess the weight values and performance of factors affecting brand resonance. The findings were then used to devise a Starbucks Coffee brand loyalty program, create the customer journey profile, and identify customer experience touchpoints. The findings suggested that customers consider the “brand feeling” of Starbucks Coffee to be the most important factor in enhancing brand resonance, indicating that Starbucks Coffee consumers value the experience of each service or event. Furthermore, as indicated in the customer journey map, Starbucks Coffee offers online interactive games in the pre-purchase stage, price incentives in the mid-purchase stage, and feedback gifts in the post-purchase stage. All these initiatives have maintained the brand loyalty cycle and helped the company attain sustainable brand resonance.

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## The Effect of Technological Readiness Dimensions on The Adoption of Autonomous Vehicles: Focusing on Behavioral Reasoning Theory

The purpose of this study is to investigate how autonomous vehicles (AVs) technological readiness (i.e., optimism, innovativeness, discomfort, and insecurity) influence consumers' contextual reasons (i.e., "reasons for" and "reasons against"), and ultimately this process will result in intention to use. In addition, this study attempts to determine how social influence affects the relationship between technology readiness and consumers' contextual reasons as a moderator. Data were collected from the US according to the growth and size of the AV industry, and a total of 414 respondents participated through an online survey platform. The results of study show that insecurity, optimism, and discomfort can have a positive or negative impact on reasons for (against) adopting AVs and that reasons for adopting AVs can lead to positive behavioral intentions among consumers. Additionally, social influence was found to have a moderating effect only between insecurity and reasons for adopting AVs. By confirming the relationship between technology readiness, consumers' contextual motivations, intention to use AVs, and social influence, this research adds to the body of knowledge on technology acceptance for AVs. Furthermore, for business practitioners and marketers, the findings provide guidelines for developing marketing strategies that fit an individual customers' level of adoption.

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## Analysis of Consumer Behavior Towards Fashion Metaverse Platforms for Virtual Shopping: A Comparative Study of Generation Y and Z

Fashion companies are offering unique interactive and immersive experience of gamification to their users with metaverse platforms. Metaverse platforms have been recently announced as the future of the internet and can serve as both virtual marketing and shopping platforms (Lee, 2021; Gonzalez, 2022). To emulate brand awareness, fashion companies have entered the metaverse world (Gibson 2021). The prominent examples of metaverse gaming platforms are Roblox, Sandbox and Fortnite (Lee, 2021). The average daily users of Roblox are estimated to be 46.6 million which covers 180 countries. To enjoy the virtual immersive experience within Roblox platform, Gucci consumers can walk into the Gucci Garden with a blank avatar. The users can explore various experience areas, colors, and patterns by manipulating their avatar character with distinctively designed garments by Gucci. The users can modify their avatars with recent collections of virtual fashion products and can also exhibit their fashion lifestyle with other users and peer group (Gibson 2021). Therefore, the study aims to explore the experience economy of fashion metaverse platform which consist of entertainment, education, aesthetic, and escapism on brand advocacy, avatar realism and the intention to purchase fashion products using the fashion metaverse platform (Kim and Sung, 2021; Rhee & Lee, 2021). The participants (Gen Y and Z) will explore the Gucci Town in the Roblox gaming platform. Millennials and gen-Z have been raised up in a digital environment. Both generations are expected to be foremost contributors to the sales growth of the virtual market (Rhee & Lee, 2021). The experience economy theoretical framework will be used to undertake 30 semi-structured interviews. The study will explore the difference in the experience of both generations and their intention to use metaverse platforms for virtual shopping.

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## The Effect of Negative Emotions on Consumer Complaint Intentions Following Appraisal of Clothing Retailers' In-Store Service Failures

In South Africa, in-store retailing is still the dominant channel for purchasing clothing (Marketline, 2018). Despite retailers' attempts to deliver quality in-store service, service failures are inevitable (Tsarenko & Strizhakova, 2013). Consumers' reactions to these service failures can evoke strong negative emotional responses such as anger, disgust, and frustration, which can prompt different complaint intentions (Tronvoll, 2011). This study explored the effect of negative emotions on consumers' intention to complain after encountering a service failure in a clothing store. A survey research design was implemented using an online self-administered questionnaire. Participants were presented with in-store service failures to determine the service failures most likely to cause consumer dissatisfaction. We measured emotions with items adapted from Tronvoll's (2011) negative emotions scale. Participants' complaint behavioral intentions following the negative emotions were measured using a 5-point likelihood Likert-type scale. The results indicated that service failure dimensions related to personal interaction (i.e., unfriendly staff, incompetent staff), physical aspects (i.e., unpleasant atmosphere), reliability aspects (i.e., stock availability issues), and customer service (i.e., long waiting time in queues) would cause the most dissatisfaction. The primary negative emotions consumers would experience after an in-store service failure included irritation, frustration, anger and disgust. Multiple regression was performed to predict a model for determining which negative emotions lead to specific consumer complaint intention. Anger was the main predictor of consumers' complaint intentions (i.e., complain directly to the retailer, complain to a third party/on social media, switch retailers/stop buying at the retailer, and tell family/friends). Understanding customers' emotional reactions could help service managers to develop effective recovery strategies.

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## How Was Your Experience? A Study on Local Designer Brands' Customers' Journey

In the increasingly complicated and digitalized consumer markets, practitioners have started to view an effective customer journey design as a substantial source of customer value. (Kuehnl *et al.*, 2019). Echoing this trend, researchers delineate customer journey prevalence as a contemporary source of customer value in the twenty-first century. However, despite the great practical relevance of the customer journey, extant research has not fully addressed how the stages of each journey (*pre-purchase, purchase, post-purchase*) (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016) impacted the total customer experience. This study aims to contribute to filling this research void between the phenomenon, social media platform, and experiences that have not yet been clearly established. The authors suggest social media stimulus influences customers' purchase journey. Hence, this study aims to explore the impact of Instagram on customers' purchase journey experiences in the context of local designer brands (LDB) in Malaysia. Through quantitative research conducted with LDB customers, the Statistical Programme for Social Sciences (SPSS) is carried out in testing the hypotheses. Theoretical contributions to the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model and managerial implications are proposed to create actionable growth-oriented strategies focus on leveraging myriad touch points interaction between firms and customers.

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## Curation Subscription Box Services: Implications for the Pet Industry

The pet industry market has been rapidly growing in the last few years, being accelerated by the increase in pet ownership during the COVID-19 pandemic. The rise of pet ownership led the pet industry to become expanded and intensively competitive, urging pet companies to differentiate their businesses through personalization strategies. With the market trend and demands, pet brands have adopted a subscription box service, one of the most personalized eCommerce models, to meet customer expectations by providing tailored pet supplies and food. Despite the sharp growth of subscription box services, subscription eCommerce retailers have been facing a high churn rate that threatens to maintain their businesses. The purpose of this study is to examine online pet subscription box service features that increase customer satisfaction using the services. This study attempts to answer the following research questions: 1) what features of online pet subscription box services are more appealing to customers? and 2) which combination of the features is the most preferable and leads the highest customer satisfaction? This study identified pet subscription box service features through content analysis of the subscription box services to develop a conjoint survey questionnaire. Four attributes (i.e., product, personalization, e-service quality, personalized e-service, and price) and 18 features were identified. This study conducted two steps of data collection to examine the important features affecting customer satisfaction. First, to identify the pet subscription box service features before conducting a conjoint survey, this study conducted an online survey with 46 students at a public southwestern university in the U.S.A. Using MaxDiff (Best-Worst scaling) method, this study analyzed the importance of features in product, personalization, and service attributes. Based on the result, a Choice-Based Conjoint (CBC) survey questionnaire was developed to examine the most important features and preferable set of the service features. A total 350 complete responses were collected. CBC analysis was performed to identify the preferred attributes and features that could be optimally used to curate pet subscription box services, eventually generating customer satisfaction. The result indicates that price, product, and personalization are prioritized attributes to achieve customer satisfaction. Respondents show their preferences to the following features: pet's diet habit among personalization features, fresh, human-grade food and treat among product features, flexible cancellation policy among e-service quality, individualized pet contents by experts among personalized e-service, and cheaper price among price features. The result indicates that the most optimized pet subscription box service is expected to include a treat, a flexible cancellation policy, and individualized pet contents by experts considering of pet's diet habit in the \$30 price range. This study contributes to providing implications for the pet industry and retailers on how to curate pet subscription box services based on customers' preferences and priorities. This study further provides insightful discussions for subscription eCommerce retailers in other fields on how to examine valued features based on an understanding of customers and how to refine the subscription box services to increase customer satisfaction.

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## What Makes Consumers Have Neutral or Negative Responses to Celebrity Endorsement on Social Media? A Qualitative Study Based on Chinese Luxury Fashion Market

Sustainability (social, environmental, financial) is strategically important for fashion brands, which promotes brands to be environmentally friendly and competitive among competitors (Akrouf & Guercini, 2022). Influencer marketing is closely connected to brands' sustainable strategies, Johnstone & Lindh (2018) state that social media influencer is valuable for affecting younger customers by stating sustainability. This research aims to study how information about sustainability posted by social media influencers shape consumers' attitudes to influencers and brands based on source credibility model (SCM) and elaboration likelihood model (ELM). Sustainability is commonly mentioned by influencers but little research studies how sustainability contribute to the effectiveness of influencer marketing based on SCM and ELM. SCM is used for testing influencers' effectiveness (Belanche *et al.*, 2021), which indicates that expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness of the source (influencer) affect receivers' acceptance of the message (Ohanian, 1990). Meaning transfer model (MTM) (McCracken, 1989) states that message posted by influencer shapes receivers' views on the influencer. Little research studied whether post about sustainability will shape receivers' views on the influencer and then affect receivers' acceptance of the message based on source credibility model. In other words, whether the post will inform consumers' perceived trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness of the influencer is hardly discussed. Additionally, SCM and MTM is hardly explained from the aspect of ELM, which makes the previous researches one-sided for ignoring different psychological routes. A qualitative experiment research will be applied by interviewing international female millennial students that shop in the UK by comparing fashion brands' positive and negative sustainability information posted by influencers. Thus, how and why sustainability information will shape consumers' perceived credibility of the influencer and the subsequent changes in attitudes will be studied. The research will theoretically contribute to SCM and MTM by exploring how influencers' sustainability posts shapes receivers' attitudes based on consumer psychology theory. This research will also practically contribute to influencer marketing by indicating how to post sustainability to improve consumers' attitude to brand and influencer. The data is planned to be collected and analysed before June in 2023.

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## Adoption or Co-creation? Redefining the Role of Customers in Mobile App Development

As of the fourth quarter of 2019, there were around 2.57 million apps for android users and 1.84 million apps for App Store users available (Statista, 2019). Survival in such a “hyper-competitive” mobile market was challenging to apps developers. Unwanted or unpopular apps could be phased out very shortly after launch, resulting in a waste of development cost and effort. To sustain competitiveness, it is therefore becoming increasingly important for app developers to pursue continuous improvement and launch novel features that meet customer needs (e.g., see Chen *et al.*, 2014; Maalej & Hadeer, 2015; Maalej *et al.*, 2016). As customers are equivalent to users of mobile apps, the terms “customers” and “users” are used interchangeably in this paper. Despite its potential usefulness for performance enhancement, screening through user reviews could be challenging. The aspects covered in the reviews could be highly diverse, ranging from complaints about the price of the apps to the frequency of advertisements. Management of user reviews could be overwhelming and costly to app developers. Little empirical evidence is available to prove it worth the resources to act upon user reviews. It is also not clear whether customer involvement really offer constructive and commercially feasible suggestions for app improvement. This study therefore aims to empirically investigate the impact of user reviews on app performance. Most prior researchers focused on the development of analytical tools for categorization of user reviews (e.g., Maalej & Hadeer, 2015; Maalej *et al.*, 2016), presuming that customers could always provide useful feedback. In this study, over 189,000 user reviews associated with over 50 apps were categorized and analyzed to verify the impact of user reviews on app performance. The findings of this study confirmed that addressing customer led improvement reviews could significantly lead to improvement in app revenues. Such positive effect is even more remarkable if follow-up actions on the user suggestions are taken promptly by the app developers. Conversely, customer led innovation was not found to have a significant impact on app revenues. Responsiveness to these suggestions, however, has a significant yet weak moderating effect on such link between reviews on innovation and app revenues.



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## Spatial Relationships Between Food Waste and Shopping Behavior? A Mixed-Method Approach Exemplified By Data from Germany

The aim of this study is to expand the discourse on food waste with a spatial perspective that has not been considered so far. This perspective no longer only focuses on the disposal of food waste in the homes of private households at the micro level, but also on producers and retail sources of (fresh) products that are particularly susceptible to food waste at the meso level. Attitudes and perceptions of private households towards food waste can be explained and spatially differentiated beyond the areas of origin and structural specifications of their food such as production conditions or packaging sizes. In this way, behaviorally segmented target groups among private households will be identified, and their perceptions and behaviors will be linked to purchasing patterns and localizable attitudes toward food such as locality, region, and home. For this purpose, quantitative and qualitative surveys will be conducted in rural and urban areas in order to identify the type and extent of mutual communication between different groups of actors and to derive learning potentials for the prevention of food waste. Own surveys are presented as a case study for the German federal state of Schleswig-Holstein in order to break down practical experiences on the topic of food disposal to the meso level of a federal state and, in this presentation, to the micro level of individual households. For this purpose, citizen group discussions were conducted in the period October 2020-March 2021 and quantitative and postal household surveys in 12 municipalities of Schleswig-Holstein as well as online surveys via lime survey in March-May 2021. The extensive methodological preparations for this despite and during the Second and Third COVID19-Wave are presented in order to relativize the significance of the results accordingly. The survey asked about a) attitude sets on food purchasing behavior in various business formats, on the handling of food, on the planning preparation of shopping activities or on the social significance of food; b) practical references to the disposal of food in one's own household; c) patterns of relevant business formats and locations for the purchase of everyday food; d) indicators on the housing situation, mobility and on other demographic criteria. These statements are mirrored with own expert and focus group interviews from politics, economy and population 2020-2022 as well as transcribed texts from TV documentaries, in which action groups discuss their discourse strands for the avoidance of food waste. The claims of policy makers and the interest of diverse activist groups in sustainable consumption in mainstream household practice have not yet reached the garbage can. Despite a number of educational efforts, food waste reduction figures have not changed over the 2010s. The traceability of food waste in private households is still the easiest to achieve, because disposal by restaurants or retailers is sometimes classified as a business secret. Therefore, other conceptual approaches are all the more important to bring together open-mindedness, solidified attitude sets and practices on the topic of food in the most susceptible group to food waste, private households, via qualitative and quantitative surveys.

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## Investigating Service Quality Dynamics with User Ratings and Reviews: A Hierarchical Bayes Dynamic Linear Model with Provider and Reviewer Heterogeneity

Increasingly managers rely on online user-generated reviews and ratings of overall service quality, and the quality of specific service attributes, to monitor whether service quality is varying over time (quality dynamics). However, user-generated ratings of a product or service are imperfect and inaccurate (i.e., noisy) indicators of underlying perceived quality. Researchers and managers need to be aware of, and adjust for, several issues that are inherent in such reviews, including the nature of the relationships between the different quality components, the impact of horizontal and vertical differentiation of their services on the stickiness of quality (i.e., carryover of quality perceptions), provider and reviewer heterogeneity, situational factors, and data censoring. We propose a Hierarchical Bayes Dynamic Linear Model to address these issues. The model helps identify the evolution of customers' perceived overall service quality, as well as the quality of individual attributes of a service, which are latent constructs to be estimated from observed customer reviews. We calibrate our model using data on customer ratings and reviews of the top 100 restaurants in the San Francisco Bay area over a period of 10 years, which helps us gain insights into long-term quality dynamics of overall quality, and the long-term dynamics of perceived quality of individual attributes (food, service, and ambiance) of the restaurants. We validate our model results against the ratings from Zagat reviews an expert source of quality in the restaurant industry. Our analyses and results point to several important findings managers of services should consider before responding to any observed changes in ratings and reviews: (1) Overall quality and its components coevolve with a more fluid structure compared to a formative or a reflective model, (2) Quality and its components tend to have high carryover for some restaurants but less for others (3). With respect to provider heterogeneity, vertical differentiation predicts quality carryover more compared to horizontal differentiation (4) There are several segments of reviewers, and segment proportions vary across time, indicating that observed differences in ratings is partly due to differences in reviewer types who provide reviews in different time periods. (5) Economic indicators and economic ratings do impact quality perceptions, (6) Incorporating censoring is an important feature in incorporating quality components of ratings data. We discuss the managerial implications of these findings and illustrate how our results can be applied in practice.

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## Car Dependency and Creative Car Consumers

Creative consumers consume products and services differently to what they were initially intended for. That is, products are used but are adapted, modified or even transformed by the users (Berthon *et al.*, 2007). This research addresses the concept of creative car consumers in the context of car dependency. This concept emerged and was developed as part of a larger research project aiming at the reconceptualization of car dependency focusing on a consumer behavioral perspective. The consumer behavioral perspective is proposed as an extension of car dependency from a transportation research perspective on the premise that the emotional relationships which consumers build towards the material object of the car together with the more subjective elements would better reflect dependency, thereby providing a better explanation of behavioral outcomes such as low usage of public transport or car sharing. Creative car consumers whilst representing an “extreme” sub-group of car consumers through their usage of the car provide an opportunity for uncovering the behavioral processes that illustrate and support our contention on the affective and emotional aspects of car dependency. For instance, whilst a typical car user might primarily derive utility from the car’s functional benefit, a creative car consumer – or car modifier – will instead be seeking peer recognition, wanting to express their unique personality or taste, or aiming to develop a technically superior car, or even might be forced to be creative because the “market” does not serve their needs. This research on creative car consumers and their impact on the car dependency debate is based on a series of 25 semi-structured interviews. The data was transcribed and analyzed applying a thematic approach using the software NVivo. Emerging themes connected and derived from car consumers’ understandings of car dependency and their specific consumption of the car are discussed in relation to the holistic concept of car dependency. This research and the proposition of the creative car consumer represents an attempt at challenging our perspective of car dependency, even at times challenging the unfavorable notions associated with that construct.

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## When Artificial Intelligence Becomes More Creative Than You: The Effects of Disclosing AI-Authorship for Creative Products

Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies are computer programs, robots or any kind of machines that can autonomously learn, adapt and mimic behaviors typically considered intelligent and associated with humans (e.g., decision-making, forecasting or problem-solving). AI can also design creative products, such as paintings, pictures, music, books, interior designs or movie scripts. Little is known, however, on how people respond to AI-authored creative products, and out of very few available studies in this field, most offer inconsistent findings. We therefore ran a series of experimental studies to uncover what determines consumer responses to AI as an author of creative products. In a large cross-sectional study with 16 different product categories (Study 1) and in an experiment (Study 2) we show that people are generally more likely to choose human-made than AI-made goods. Next, in four experiments we reveal the circumstances under which consumers may buy AI-designed creative products (Studies 3-6). More specifically, Study 3 reveals that AI-designed products are more likely to be purchased when one's expectations are negatively disconfirmed. Study 4 replicates these findings. Two final experiments (Studies 5-6) test the conditions under which the probability of negative disconfirmation grows, thus increasing the chances for AI-designed products to be purchased. Our research provides important insights into consumer responses to AI-authorship and it tests the managerially relevant conditions under which AI disclosure is less likely to backfire and might actually result in product purchase.

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## Understanding Consumer Resistance to Shared Consumption

Shared consumption is gradually unfolding as a potential alternative to the traditional mode of ownership-based consumption. Though shared consumption has its conveniences and benefits, it faces significant challenges regarding adoption and usage (Rotaris *et al.*, 2019). Nevertheless, the literature on shared consumption has paid less attention to innovation resistance. Consumer resistance, avoidance, or discontinuance behavior have not been adequately explored. Most studies (Barnes & Mattsson, 2017; Boateng *et al.*, 2019; Möhlmann, 2015; Shao & Yin, 2019) examining the diffusion of shared consumption reflect a pro-innovation bias and investigate positive outcomes such as intention to use, adoption behavior, and continuance intention. However, it is equally important to investigate and understand consumers' rejection or avoidance behavior to decipher the state of diffusion of innovation (Ram & Sheth, 1989). A holistic cognizance of adoption and resistance behavior is indispensable for innovation to transcend the chasm between an early market and a mainstream market (Huang *et al.*, 2021). Prior research has shown that sluggish adoption of any innovation can be attributed to the resistance behavior of consumers (Kaur *et al.*, 2020). The present study attempts to understand the diffusion of shared consumption through the lens of innovation resistance. A conceptual model explaining consumers' resistance behavior toward shared consumption has been proposed using the theory of innovation resistance as the overarching theoretical guidance. The study hypothesized that factors such as perceived complexity, cost of sharing, contamination concerns, economic value, materialistic norms, and negative social identification contributes to consumer resistance. The model also tests the impact of cognitive rigidity in the aforesaid process. Two hundred and twenty-six usable responses are collected through an online survey platform. The responses were analyzed using partial-least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) to test the conceptual model. The analysis is done in two stages. First, in the measurement model analysis, the reliability and validity of the model have been established. In the second step, the structural relationships have been tested using bootstrapping. All the hypothesized factors, except materialistic norms, are found to have a significant influence on resistance. The findings of the study provide insights into the factors that negatively influence the adoption of sharing. These insights may help service enablers (platforms) to understand the inhibiting factors and develop mitigating strategies to enhance the acceptance of their offerings. The service enablers need to minimize the complexity and inconvenience perceived by the users. Platforms should embrace standard procedures to maintain the quality of shared resources and thereby diminish the costs of sharing and contamination concerns. Since consumers' assessment of long-term economic benefits does not favour adoption, communication should highlight the entailed relief from long-term financial and psychological obligations of ownership. The increased opportunity of trialability and absence of purchase-related regrets should also be emphasized. Further, communications may be crafted to highlight the positive social and environmental effects of sharing to overcome the negative social identification barrier.

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## I am 100% Biodegradable – Consumers’ Perceived Durability of Biodegradable Luxury Fashion Products and Subsequent Impacts on Emotional Attachment

The luxury fashion industry has witnessed a growth in more sustainable approaches to reduce its negative social and environmental impacts (Vanacker *et al.*, 2022). Biodegradable and/or compostable products is one of its most recent innovative developments. Durability is a core part of both sustainable and luxury fashion; it helps increase the lifespan of products, hence reducing/eliminating the need for new resources to replace damaged products (Lou *et al.*, 2022; Vanacker *et al.*, 2022). It is not limited to the physical aspects of a product and includes the emotional aspects as well, which is known as emotional durability (Vanacker *et al.*, 2022). Emotional durability refers to the “design of products that produce an emotional attachment” (Vanacker *et al.*, 2022, p.21). Emotional attachment which is originally concerning a child’s tie to their mother, has also been studied in the context of consumers’ attachment to objects (Tzou & Lu, 2009). It is particularly important in the context of sustainability as it impacts how a product is used, loved, and disposed of by consumers (Vanacker *et al.*, 2022). Most of the research on emotional attachment in fashion focuses on consumers’ emotional attachment to a brand as opposed to the constituents of the product itself. Additionally, no research within the fashion domain, has been done on the impact of perceived durability – particularly regarding biodegradable function, on consumers’ emotional attachment to product, and the possibility of separation anxiety (Forslund & Duschinsky, 2021). This study thus builds on existing durability, emotional attachment, and separation anxiety theories to understand the impact of consumers’ perceived durability of biodegradable luxury fashion products on their emotional attachment. To achieve this, the authors first identify the factors affecting consumers’ perceived durability of biodegradable luxury fashion products; next, they evaluate the impact of the identified factors on consumers’ emotional attachment to these products. The primary focus of this research is on Generation Z consumers as they are one of the key consumer groups in the luxury fashion sector (Shin *et al.*, 2021). A qualitative approach is adopted using 15 semi-constructed interviews administered with UK Generation Z consumers. A thematic analysis approach will be used to gather data to provide novel findings for biodegradable material development companies as well as fashion retailers and the development of their strategies.

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## Analysis of Retailing and Logistics Platforms and Ecosystems in the Age of Digital Transformation

In the course of adapting to the fourth industrial revolution and the new normal environment catalyzed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the retail-logistics sectors are actively adopting digital transformation. In particular, this transition has not been driven by government leadership or national planning but by voluntary participation and innovations by private businesses and related stakeholders. As a result, rapid changes in the retail-logistics sector are underway, centering on last-mile innovation and e-commerce & omnichannel development. This change is expected to continue for a long time because such a transition involves structural changes in the service chain (or service delivery process) at the widespread points of the service encounter. Furthermore, since digital platforms play central roles at the center of digital transformation in this sector, such a transition is likely to spill over and spread into other industries and sectors. We confirmed this potential using the IO(Input-Output) analysis. For example, we identified the core part (to be called the 'core sector' from now on) of the retail-logistics sectors, which leads the digital transformation, and discovered that the forward linkage of the core sector has a more significant effect than its backward linkage. In particular, its forward linkage is the highest out of the other industries. We could also find out that industries affected by the forward linkages of the core sector are gradually increasing. These findings imply that the influence of digitized retail-logistics sectors is expected to expand widely and be dispersed. Based on our analysis, it can be concluded that well-developed and finely-tuned policies to promote the digital transformation of the core sector will be of great significance. Our analysis also suggests that in addition to deploying ABCD (Artificial intelligence, Blockchain, Cloud computing, Data) technologies, social recognition and acceptance of changes in the organizing principles across production and distribution would be essential in advancing the retail-logistics sectors.

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## Can Environmentally Sustainable Food Consumption Coexist with Convenience-Oriented Food Consumption? The Moderating Effect of Young Single-Person Households

The increase in single-person households occurs with a country's economic development, which is already common not only in Korea but also in many developed countries (Jeong, 2019). In 2021, there are approximately 7.17 million single-person households in Korea, accounting for 33.4% of all households (Statistics Korea, 2022). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the advancement of the Internet, the increasing number of young single-person households purchase foods online and eat home meal replacement (HMR) (KB financial group, 2020). At the same time, young single-person households change their existing lifestyle in a way that is consistent with the values they pursue, such as consuming low carbon and eco-friendly foods for being healthy, protecting the environment, and improving animal's well-being. In other words, young single-person households try to save their efforts and time by pursuing convenience-oriented food consumption, but at the same time they also pursue sustainable food consumption reflecting their values. The purpose of this study is three-fold. First, the study intends to identify the effects of consumers' personal factors (PF) and attitudes toward sustainable consumption behavior (ATSCB) on their sustainable consumption behavior (SCB). Second, the study aims to investigate the effects of consumers' personal factors (PF) and HMR experience (HMRE) on their convenience-oriented consumption behavior (CCB). Third, the study is designed to examine the moderating effects of whether or not a consumer is a young single-person household on the aforementioned relationships (PF-SCB, ATSCB-SCB, PF-CCB, HMRE-CCB). Using data from the Consumer Behavior Survey for Foods conducted by the Korea Rural Economic Institute (KREI) in 2021, we analyzed the survey responses of 6355 consumers in South Korea (19-74 years old) to test the hypothesized relationships. The data analyses used for this study included descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis, and multiple regression analysis. In addition, a hierarchical regression analysis was used to analyze the moderating effects of a young single-person household. We found that the overall results supported the proposed research hypotheses. Consumer's personal factors (PF) and attitudes toward sustainable consumption behavior (ATSCB) positively influenced their sustainable consumption behavior (SCB). In addition, consumer's personal factors (PF) and HMR experience (HMRE) led them to conduct more convenience-oriented consumption behavior (CCB). Regarding the moderating effects of young single-person households, results showed that the effects of consumers' personal factors (PF) and attitudes toward sustainable consumption behavior (ATSCB) on sustainable consumption behavior (SCB) were moderated by young single-person households. When consumers are young single-person households, the negative effect of age on sustainable consumption behavior (SCB) became greater. However, the effects of consumers' personal factors (PF) and HMR experience (HMRE) on convenience-oriented consumption behavior (CCB) were not moderated by young single-person households. The findings from this study offers managerial implications that may be useful to food retailers, food manufacturers, and home economics educators.



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## Who are the Best Consumers for Sales Personnel? Consumers' Sustainable Relationship Building with Sales Personnel and Its Impact on Switching Cost

The recent marketing strategy research emphasizes on that how businesses should serve consumers and build a relationship, especially with sales personnel's efforts to connect with them emotionally. However, when applying the social relationship-building process with social equity exchange from the social psychology field's perspective (i.e., Social Exchange Theory), sales personnel are also human beings who should be treated equally as consumers as a member of society, and a relationship should be built between two parties through mutual efforts by sending and receiving information and emotions, not just from one party to/for the other party like most business relationships. Consumers also need to build a real relationship with sales personnel for their own benefit. A relationship built through mutual efforts would bring both parties benefits and would last longer (i.e., high sustainability of a relationship). However, no research has focused on how consumers build a long-term relationship with sales personnel, and how the positive relationship would benefit consumers which provides a motivation of consumers' initiation in building a good relationship with sales personnel. The purpose of this study is to examine how consumers establish a relationship with sales personnel to maximize their benefits/rewards, and what factors increase both parties' switching costs. Especially, it examines whether consumers' switching costs would increase if their intangible/emotional benefits from a positive relationship increase, even when tangible benefits decrease (i.e., less competitive value offered by the company compared to competitors' value). This study also examines if sales personnel would increase their effort in building a relationship and in improving service quality when consumers positively interacted with sales personnel. Lastly, whether the positive relationship is a reward/benefit itself for both parties or a method/process to achieve benefits/rewards will be examined. This study applies and expands Kim *et al.*'s (2021) human-Supply Chain Management (h-SCM) model, instead of electronic-SCM, to explain how sales personnel and consumer become loyal to each other through human interaction and an assessment of non-product related/intangible benefits/equity, rather than through one-way customer relationship management (CRM) focusing on product-related/tangible benefits/equity. The model proposes the directional relationships between the factors, which are mutual benefits/equity, trust, purchase, and loyalty, and all factors affect switching costs. The precondition of this study is that both sales personnel and consumers feel confident about product-related/tangible benefits/equity they offer and receive, and they are about to start interacting on a sales floor for the first time and start their assessment of non-product-related/intangible benefits. Trust is an outcome of both parties' assessment of each other's non-product related/intangible benefits/equity, which is influenced by both parties' personalities. Purchase is the outcome of service quality increased by established trust, and loyalty is the outcome of the positive assessment of post-purchase interaction and the product- and non-product-related benefits/equity. Switching cost increases as mutual benefits/equity, trust, purchase, and loyalty increase. This research is a work in progress, and data will be collected through sales personnel and consumer surveys. Statistical tests and qualitative data analysis will be conducted to confirm or revise the proposed model.

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## On the Acceptance of Immersive Virtual Product Presentations in Offline Showrooms of Retailers

Offline showrooms where customers can view and try out products have gained increasing relevance in the digital economy. This study investigates the to-date understudied field of integrating immersive virtual product presentations in offline showrooms. Immersive virtual product presentation formats block out all visual cues from the user's physical environment, teleporting them into a computer-simulated world. We investigate whether and how showrooms benefit from the integration of product presentations in immersive virtual reality (VR) using state-of-the-art head-mounted devices. The study was conducted as a field experiment at a middle-sized European retailer's headquarters that sells wood and pellet stoves. The findings of our study suggest that (1) offline showrooms featuring VR for product presentations outperform a showroom without VR technology in terms of (a) perceived consumer enjoyment, (b) ease of use, usefulness, attitude towards using, and intention to use a showroom, as well as (c) consumer attitude towards the targeted product; (2) the widely established Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is appropriate for predicting the acceptance of a physical showroom with integrated immersive virtual product presentation formats; (3) both attitudes towards using and intention to use a showroom with immersive VR technology have a significant impact on attitude towards the virtually presented product, which in turn influences consumer willingness to pay. Moreover, product knowledge is identified to moderate the relationship of perceived enjoyment and perceived ease of use on attitude towards using a showroom, suggesting that companies should use different VR strategies in physical showrooms for customers with high vs. those with low product knowledge.

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## Ageing Consumers' Service Path in Housing and Support Services

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The ageing population challenges the health and welfare services in many ways. In Finland, the central goal of the current ageing policy is to encourage older people to live at home for as long as possible and many older people certainly wish for this themselves, too. Due to the changes in the functional capacity typically associated with ageing, reaching this goal requires various housing and support services. The municipalities in Finland are responsible for organizing the housing and support services. However, the services may be provided by either the public or private sectors. These services are statutory basic services for citizens in Finland and the municipal authorities decide which services financed with public funds the customer is entitled to. The consumer can also purchase services at his/her own expense purely out of own pocket or add to the public sectors services that s/he is entitled to. The information of housing and support services available to the consumer is primarily offered on websites maintained by the municipalities. The information available online and the overall picture formed from it have an impact on the perceived availability and accessibility of services and hence the service path chosen. The research is carried out as a case study that examines the websites of the selected municipality's housing and support services provided for the older consumers. The research questions are: 1) What is the service path like for an ageing consumer who is seeking housing and support services based on the information received on the websites maintained by the municipality? 2) What kind of information is provided on the websites i.e. what services are available, where, how and at what cost? The theoretical framework of the research is path dependence. The consumer is forced to make choices based on the (often incomplete) information s/he receives, which affects his/her future service solutions. The research materials consist of two types of materials: 1) Official websites provided about the housing and support services to examine the information that consumers receive, and 2) The relevant legislation and guidelines on the housing and support services to increase in-depth understanding of the structure and forms of the services as well as consumer rights. The collected data is analysed using content analysis. The study is in progress, but based on the analysis, a description of the service path of housing and support services with different options for ageing consumers will be produced. The research increases the understanding of the challenges that consumers can face on the service path when their health and wellbeing deteriorates and the need for assistance increases. Moreover, the results will give information how to develop services.

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Often regarded as the last few seconds of marketing, packaging plays an important role in supporting brand communications and driving sales (Rundh, 2009, Underwood, 2003). Recently, packaging, particularly in the FMCG category, has begun to include short brand stories to capitalize on the persuasive ability of stories (Ma & Li, 2023, Solja, *et al.*, 2018). Arguably, packaging constitutes a physical touchpoint for consumer-brand interactions. Recurring interactions are also likely to ensue when the packaging is stored in consumers' homes for repeated product use (Solja *et al.* 2018). While findings from Solja *et al.*, (2018) further show that short brand stories on packaging elicit favorable cognitive and affective reactions and behavioral intentions from consumers, several caveats remain. First, examining the effects of short brand stories on product packaging has been limited to FMCG categories which are typically characterized by low consumer involvement levels. Second, while packaging containing no story versus a short story has been examined, the effects of different types of stories have not been investigated. Drawing from the tricomponent attitudinal model, this paper aims to examine the effects of different types of short brand stories included on packaging on consumers' narrative transportation, critical thoughts, brand affect, value perceptions, word-of-mouth, and purchase intentions across two studies representing hedonic (Study 1 handmade clothing) and utilitarian (Study 2 hot chocolate) product categories. In Study 1 ( $n = 119$ , between-subject design), a fictional handmade clothing brand was created to improve internal validity and the subsequent effects of different conditions (no story, list condition, rags-to-riches, and a quest story plot) were tested. In Study 2 ( $n = 118$ , between-subject design), the researcher collaborated with an existing FMCG brand to improve external validity and different conditions (no story, list condition, founder story, and brand value story) were developed and tested for their hot chocolate product line. Analyses of variance and covariance reveal that, across both studies, brand stories have no significant effect on consumers' narrative transportation, critical thoughts, brand affect, value perceptions, word-of-mouth, and purchase intentions. These findings imply that while stories certainly have a place in brand communications, that place should not be on product packaging.

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## Understanding the Pandemic-Related Market Segmentation: A Case Study of Taiwanese Consumers

Nowadays, business have faced challenges about how to develop new strategies to deal with consumers' "new normal behavior". Since 2019, the Coronavirus-19 (COVID-19) pandemic has totally changed the world. Despite the continuing impact by the pandemic, the governments started to lift the restrictions progressively due to the less severe syndrome of Omicron and the vaccination coverage. However, consumers have adopted different approaches towards 'living with virus'. For example, many Asian countries such as Taiwan have implemented strict policies to regulate consumers to wear masks in the public for more than two years. After the government lifted the restrictions, some still follow all safety measures such as wearing masks and expecting businesses to provide hygienic measures but some do not. Without a guideline (i.e., safety policy) for business, it is difficult for companies to redesign the services to satisfy various consumers in the post-pandemic age. To address the problems from the businesses, this study integrated the concept of marketing segmentation, regulatory focus theory and other pandemic-related variables (i.e., perceived risk, psychological wellbeing) to identify different market segments, then comparing the differences between segments and homogeneities within segments. In response to the global pandemic context, the following research questions (RQs) are used to guide this study. RQ1: In respond to the global pandemic, what consumers' segmentation are formed based on purchasing behavioral, consumers' regulatory focus and perceived risk? RQ2: How do these consumer segmentations differ toward consumers' psychological wellbeing (life satisfaction, depression, anxiety, and stress)? According to the research objectives, this study developed the questionnaire based on previous literature and collected 1,169 responses in Taiwan, finally, there were 1,140 responses remained for final analysis. By means of the two steps cluster analysis, data analysis revealed three segments—Hesitant, Moderate and Aggressive. The Hesitant are the most cautious to the virus, that is, having a significantly higher physical risk and psychological risk to outdoor activities among the segments. The Hesitant are more prevention focus comparing with other segments. Thus, the Hesitant have the strongest tendency to avoid physical/outdoor activities; on the other hand, the Moderate showed less perceived risk to the virus. They are also having a stronger regulatory focus on promotion. Such that consumers in the group of the Moderate tend to have positive responses to physical/outdoor activities rather than engaging in online environment. The Aggressive have intervenient concern to the virus, and feel more satisfied with their life. Meanwhile, consumers in the group of the Aggressive are the least avoidance to the outdoor activities. This study contributes to the existing literature in twofold. First, this study provided the post-pandemic-related market segmentation, which is still unfulfilled in the current literature. Second, this study provided explorative findings to explain how different types of perceived risk, psychological wellbeing shape various consumer behavior in the global pandemic context, that will benefit current literature to further explore consumers' new normal behavior.

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## Do Consumers Truly Understand Sustainability? Text Mining and Sentiment Analysis

This study aims to understand individuals' awareness of sustainability and explore how individuals perceive sustainability through sentiment analysis. The study employed a qualitative method by conducting semi-structured interviews with 15 participants from different fields. The interviews were transcribed, and the data were analyzed using the NVivo 12 software. The study identified seven themes related to sustainability, including knowledge, level of responsibilities, awareness of consequences, sustainability lifestyles, recycling, conservation, and point of sale. The study area was focused on sustainability-related resources, and the sample consisted of individuals from various areas, including retail, architecture, hospitality and tourism, and academia. The study found that although most participants had heard about sustainability, they only associated it with environmental issues without recognizing the social aspect of sustainability. However, there needs to be more awareness of sustainability that puts a pause on creating a sustainable lifestyle.

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## Conspicuous or Inconspicuous Purchase for Luxury Products-- An Exploratory Study n Chinese Luxury Consumers Typology in the Digital Age

The growth of social media has become an effective marketing channel, and it has been seen to have a massive impact in affecting consumer behavior. Purchases via social media platforms is the major method for consumers to have the product inspiration. This tendency makes livestream commerce become an unprecedented popularity. 2016 was the first year that the online livestreaming started in China, and it boost rapidly from 2018, as of March 2021, the subscribers of livestream commerce in China has reached 560 million, accounting for 62% of total Internet users (CNNIC, 2021). Luxury brands have seized this opportunity of using livestream platform to sell their luxury products, as they are aware that Chinese spending on luxury goods is set to account for 37% of the overall global luxury market (\$147 billion) by 2025 (McKinsey, 2019), and Chinese consumers are the world's number one luxury spenders with a particular appetite for Western luxury brands. There are numerous studies exploring luxury consumption in China, however, limited efforts have been made to consider conspicuous and inconspicuous together in luxury consumption studies, particularly, under the digital age. Researchers in the past years revealed that people purchase luxury brands in order to attain social recognition and enjoy attention and attraction from other people, but with the growth of the luxury industry, consumers purchase luxury brands were still influenced by “conspicuous” as Veblen indicated over hundred years ago? The lack of updated and accurate grouping regarding whether targeting on conspicuous consumers or inconspicuous consumers also creates difficulties for practitioners to draw effective marketing strategies for diverse customer segments. This study aims to establish luxury consumers typology towards (in)conspicuous consumptions on luxury products which sold under livestream platforms in China. An in-depth, face-to face interview method was adopted as the main technique to generate rich primary data, both thematic and paradigmatic data analysis approaches were involved. Based on the research findings, four types of consumers are generated according to their both individual and societal luxury value perception. They are: (1) luxuriant (2) risk avoiders (3) status seekers (4) vanity admirers. The findings of this research contribute to the literature on live streaming study in luxury sector by examining Chinese consumers' typology towards (in)conspicuous consumptions. It also provides practical implications for luxury brands on how to utilise live steaming services to engage more with different types of luxury consumers, find out the likely reasons for the Chinese consumers' preferences and choices towards (in)conspicuous luxury brands in the context of Chinese luxury market.

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## Exploring Sustainable Tourism Development Through Desert Tourism in China: Based on Desert Heritages Landscape

With the prevalence and diversity of ecotourism resorts, deserts with heritage landscape are becoming more and more desirable tourist destinations. From the standpoint of sustainable tourism development, deserts with historic landscapes present opportunities for the development of ecotourism and leading tourist destinations. However, the increase in visitors is harming some of the world's oldest and most magnificent tourist attractions. When it comes to the question of tourist development and cultural preservation, there is a paradoxical relationship between fragile ecosystems and economic pursuit. These rural desert areas with historical significance share characteristics such as low population density, poor economic development, and a lack of infrastructure. Few researches in the field of desert tourism have sought to study traveler's perceptions on the development of desert heritage landscape destinations. There is a need for a research with the objective of revealing and highlighting the rich history and tourism potential of desert landscape tourist destinations. This study's aim is to investigate sustainable tourist development of desert tourism destination based on Taklamakan desert heritages landscape. The objective of this study is to develop an adaptable model for a sustainable desert tourist destination by evaluating the desert heritage environment and the perceptions of travelers from China. According to LULC (Land use & Land cover) result that will identify the landscape change, the study will use questionnaire and deep interview to explore travelers' perception on desert heritage landscape tourism destination and what the tourist's perception about the change happened to the landscape. Accordingly, evaluate the present regime of a desert destination landscape development and the relations of travelers' perception associate with desert tourism destinations' landscape changes.



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## Can Value Congruity Influence Trust and Acceptance of Controversial COVID-19 Related Decisions? Cross-National Evidence from the Case of the International Olympic Committee

While the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has impacted supply chains across industries, the economic outcomes of the crisis have been particularly acute in regards to international travels, as countries have often updated their travel policies rapidly and without warning, imposing curfews, and discouraging or even prohibiting foreign travels (The World Tourism Organization, 2020). In such an uncertain environment, firms had to make difficult and sometimes controversial decisions. In particular, the organization of international sporting events has been the topic of intense scrutiny from sports fans and media alike (e.g. Ludvigsen, 2022). Yet, it is unclear whether these companies were able to leverage their values and commitments to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to limit controversies and (re)gain the approval of consumers, as suggested by pre-COVID-19 literature on CSR and value congruity (Elbedweihy *et al.*, 2016; Fatma *et al.* 2016ab, 2018; Iglesias *et al.*, 2020). In view of this background, the present research proposes to examine whether value congruity influences consumers' trust and acceptance of controversial COVID-19-related decisions. In particular, the presentation (a) compares the respective influences of three measures of value congruity, including two CSR-based measures (brand-based value congruity – based on the specific values promoted by the IOC and SDG-congruity) and a traditional consumer-based measure (Lindeman, 2005), (b) assesses the mediating effect of brand trust in the relationship between value congruence and acceptance of controversial COVID-19-related decisions, (c) evaluates the moderating effects of product involvement, risk perceptions of COVID-19, and cross-national differences. Data was collected from American, French, Turkish, Chinese and Taiwanese respondents ( $n=1241$ ) after the 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympic Games. Scales were adapted from previous research at the exception of acceptance of controversial COVID-19-related decision which was tailored for this research. Data was analyzed with SmartPLS4. The research presents four main results. Firstly, the results reveal that all three measures of value congruity predict brand trust and decision acceptance. The effects are weak to moderate, which is in line with the literature (Lee *et al.*, 2022). Yet, model comparison indicates that SDG-congruity has the strongest influence on decision acceptance. Secondly, brand trust partially mediates (brand-based value congruity) or fully mediates (value congruity or SDG-congruity) the influence of value congruity. Thirdly, moderation does not affect all measures of value congruity similarly. When significant, product involvement and risk perceptions dampen the relationship between value congruity and brand trust, which suggests elaboration (Petty & Cacioppo, 2012). However, when significant, both moderators also amplify the relationship between value congruity and decision acceptance. Fourthly, cross-cultural moderation is demonstrated, yet it does seem to be influenced by the individualism-collectivism dimension, as previously suggested by the literature (Litvin & Car, 2004; Moon *et al.*, 2015). Implications for scholars and practitioners are presented.

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## Development of Brand-Association and Agent- Association Routes to Brand Loyalty in Hairdressing Services: Fashion Consciousness as a Moderator

Based on the theory of customer-based brand equity (CBBE), the brand association process indicates that customers perceive benefits when using a brand's services, and these benefits become unique values of the brand associated with the equity of the brand. Brand loyalty is a determinant of brand equity since it reflects customers' long-term support for the brand. Therefore, the CBBE theory focuses more on brand level. However, a personal service like hairdressing relies heavily on service agents, but little research discussed this individual-level effect on brand loyalty. In hairdressing services, customers perceive benefits from a hairdresser's attributes, and the brand receives profits from brand loyalty in return. This process can be explained by the social exchange theory because customers and the brand obtain what they need during the exchange in the service. Hence, this research developed a two-route model with agent and brand associations, and agent loyalty resulting from agent-associations had a significant effect on brand loyalty. Two studies were conducted by surveying experienced customers' perceptions toward the hairdressing service in Taiwan. Study 1 ( $N=211$ ) examined the proposed model using the partial least square (PLS) method. Study 2 ( $N=183$ ) further conducted the ANOVA method to examine the moderating effect of fashion-consciousness on the relationship between agent and brand loyalty. The results extend the retailing and service literature by discussing the relationship between service agents and the brand and customers' fashion consciousness in hairdressing services. Low fashion-conscious customers are susceptible to the negative effect of low agent loyalty. The findings suggest that hairdressing salons should enhance agent-associations prior to brand-associations, particularly for customers with low fashion-consciousness.

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## Will Typical Store Atmospheric Cues Trigger More Online Engagement and Sales Performance? A Preliminary Investigation of Streamers and Users' Insights in Live Streaming Marketing

Digitalization has speeded up retailing transformation by expanding commerce channels, and live streaming marketing, as novel approaches that have attracted marvelous viewings and transactions nowadays. But will conventional store atmospheric cues drive the same or different user experience when streaming a live session? This research is the first attempt to reveal emerging atmospheric cues embedded in live streaming and examine successful streaming factors by interviewing nano streamers and users. The current paper analyses ten semi-structured interviews and provides descriptive content analysis to showcase insightful observations in terms of the latest live streaming implications, we further denote some original codes from NVivo output.

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## Do Consumers Value Green Packaging and Can Firms Make Them Value It More? The Effect of Home-Compostable Packaging on Willingness-To-Pay (WTP) in the Food Industry and the Contingent Role of Framing

Plastic packaging is ubiquitous in the food industry. It is durable, light, reliable protection against damage and contamination, easy to color and mold into any shape, and relatively inexpensive (Andrady & Neal, 2009; Hopewell *et al.*, 2009; Thompson *et al.*, 2009; Beckman, 2018). While heralded as the material of the 21<sup>st</sup> century for decades, its environmental and health-related disadvantages have become increasingly apparent over the last couple of years. Of the 8.3 billion tons of plastic produced to date, more than six billion tons have resulted in waste. Only a fraction of this waste has been recycled (9%) or burned (12%), while the majority (79%) ended up in landfills or the environment – with disastrous consequences for global ecosystems (Geyer *et al.*, 2017). Home-compostable food packaging biodegrades within a short period of time, like an orange peel. Home-compostable food packaging could reduce the environmental damage caused by the food industry, which has become one of the largest plastic waste producers (McDonough & Braungart, 2010; Kensler, 2016; Rundh, 2016; TIPA, 2019). Yet, companies in this industry hesitate to switch to home-compostable packaging because this transition implies high initial investments and higher ongoing production expenses than conventional plastic packaging (Boztas, 2016). Companies could be motivated to transition to sustainable packaging if such packaging increased consumers' willingness-to-pay (WTP) for a product and reduced its perceived expensiveness. Unfortunately, whether home-compostable food packaging yields these effects, remains largely unclear. Our study attempts to overcome this knowledge gap by conducting a survey among consumers in Austria. Our final sample consists of 446 respondents and is approximately representative of the Austrian population in terms of gender, age, income, and educational background. Preliminary analyses reveal three intriguing insights: First, sustainable food packaging can significantly increase consumers' WTP. Second, it can reduce the perceived expensiveness of a product. Third, utilizing positively framed messages to communicate the use of home-compostable food packaging effectively reduces perceived expensiveness and increases the WTP when addressing younger consumers. On the contrary, utilizing negative framing appears to be more effective when addressing older consumers. These insights have important implications for marketing theory and practice and environmental psychology.

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## Customer Experience in Luxury Retail: What Matters

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, fashion brands were forced to be innovative in their approach to reaching consumers by providing a unique blend of experience and convenience. This resulted in increased utilization of omnichannel retailing strategies, seamlessly integrating multiple selling channels to reach consumers. Although luxury fashion companies were slow to enter the digital space, the pandemic compelled them to devise novel methods of engaging consumers. The present study investigates how implementing multiple retail channels impacts the consumer shopping experience for luxury fashion brands. Moreover, it examines the utilization of branding elements in luxury fashion brands and their potential contribution to the consumer shopping experience. The study also questions how luxury fashion brands utilize omnichannel in retail and its effectiveness as a tool. To this end, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight consumers of luxury fashion brands. Qualitative research methods were utilized to analyze the key findings, which include the luxury fashion brand purchase process, the in-store shopping experience, perceptions of channel marketing, branding elements, and emotions associated with luxury fashion purchases. Our study revealed that luxury consumers are open to using e-commerce but do not intend to replace the in-store shopping experience. Even when making online purchases, luxury consumers seek a human touch to the experience. Therefore, luxury brands must find a balance between providing an engaging online presence and a high-quality offline experience. Brands must also deliver a seamless brand experience across all devices and physical touchpoints. We found that accessibility is a crucial aspect of convenience, and luxury brands should prioritize displaying product information on digital platforms with high-quality editorial and product photos. Our findings suggest that personalized online experiences, virtual fitting rooms, virtual assistants, and tailored in-store experiences are essential for omnichannel success. Moreover, our study indicates that luxury fashion purchases are associated with a variety of emotions. Therefore, brands must cater to and give attention to consumers to evoke positive feelings. This study highlights the significance of intangible elements of brand identity that enhance the customer experience for luxury consumers. There are many things that constitute brand identities that are intangible, such as heritage, exclusivity, authenticity, quality, and prestige. These elements help to create a sense of luxury and value beyond the physical product itself. They can contribute to the overall experience of purchasing and owning a luxury item. Additionally, factors such as personalized customer service, attention to detail, and a seamless brand experience across different touchpoints can also be important intangible elements that enhance the luxury consumer experience. Further research is needed to investigate how luxury brands are embracing digital transformation as digitalization continues to grow in the luxury fashion industry.

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## U.S. Consumers' Mobile Payment Behavior: The Impact Of UTAUT, Risk, Rust and Attitude on Intention to Use and Recommend

The ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic sped up digital change in retail as multiple behavioral changes occurred due to consumers adapting to a new way of life, for many in the US, this increased mobile payment usage. Historically, US mobile payments growth rate was slower than anticipated due to the widespread use, comfort, and knowledge of traditional payments. However, the safety concerns created by the pandemic urged consumers to reconsider their payment methods. As pandemic concerns and restrictions ease in the US, retailers must understand changing mobile payment behavior. Therefore, this study investigated US consumers' intention to use and recommendation behavior for mobile payments through generational cohort theory. Using the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) (Venkatesh *et al.*, 2003) as a guide, the constructs of performance expectancy (PEX), effort expectancy (EEX), and social influence (SINF) were examined to determine the antecedents of mobile behavioral intentions. Based on prior insignificant findings, the construct of facilitating conditions was removed. However, the conceptual model was extended via risk, trust, and attitude toward mobile payment to better understand the complex dynamic of US mobile payments. Additionally, numerous mobile payment research fixates on adoption and usage intention, thus, the construct of intention to recommend is included to determine if consumers are also likely to recommend the payment structure to others. Furthermore, until recently baby boomers were the largest US generational cohort and now the millennial generation is larger. These two generational groups have very different values, ideas, and technological aptitudes. Therefore, generational cohort theory (Ignatius & Hechanova, 2014) was utilized to examine the cohorts' difference. Participants were recruited by Qualtrics to complete an online survey in June 2021. A total of 758 responses were collected by US adults with 382 Baby Boomers and 376 Millennials. Participants answered questions related to the constructs of PEX and EEX, SINF, risk, trust, attitude, and intention to use and recommend, and demographic questions. All items were measured on a Likert scale and adapted from previous studies. After the measurement model was found to have reliability and validity, the SEM results were found to have a good model fit of  $\chi^2=2930.32$ ,  $df=1170$ ,  $\chi^2/df =2.50$ , RMSEA=.037, TFI=.94, CFI=.95. Attitude mediated the impact of PEX, EEX, SINF, and Risk and Intention to use. Intention to use positively mediated the impact of PEX, EEX, and Attitude with intention to recommend. Trust had a negative impact on risk, as did Risk had a negative impact on PEX and attitude. For millennials, RISK did not have a significant impact on PEX, as well as EEX not having a significant impact on intention to use. The results imply that U.S. consumers with a positive attitude towards mobile pay will use mobile pay as well as recommend this option. Further, consumers' trust in mobile pay reduces the feeling that mobile pay is risky, resulting in consumers believing mobile pay is useful. However, for Millennials, risk had no impact on usefulness. The practices of marketers are working for baby boomers, but there is a shift in behavior for millennials, so retailers need to be considering the generational cohort because millennials are now the largest consumer cohort in the US.

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There has been a sharp increase in the online consumer content as there is an effortless access to the information regarding products and services. Previous studies have recognized the relevance of word-of-mouth (WOM) in marketing. Due to rapid increase in social media usage, the mode of WOM has also shifted to online. The modern online WOM is termed as electronic word of mouth (eWOM). eWOM is described to be any favorable or critical comment made by the consumers about a firm, product or service that is available over the Internet for other consumer. One of the striking concepts that is gaining importance in eWOM literature is eWOM acceptance. Credibility is a prominent concept in the eWOM literature. Source credibility is defined as consumers' willingness to believe and accept the information provided by others about a product or service. A broad framework for structuring and comprehending the potency of persuasive communications is provided by the Elaboration likelihood model (ELM). According to ELM, changing one's attitude may be accomplished in primarily two ways, namely through central route and through peripheral route. People preserve cognitive effort when motivation or their capacity to analyze the message is relatively low by relying on obvious conclusions, such as source characteristics, rather than carefully scrutinizing the information that is pertinent to the issue. This is the peripheral route. This points to the fact that source credibility act as peripheral route to measure the consumer behavior. The previous studies have also established that source credibility enhances the acceptance of the online reviews. The other factor that leads to eWOM acceptance according to technology acceptance model is the perceived usefulness of the message. The perceived usefulness of eWOM can be defined as the level of helpful and useful the content of the message is in consumers' perception. The technology acceptance model states that Perceived Usefulness is the level to which a person believes using a particular technology will help them improve their performance. This study identifies the impact of source characteristics namely expertise, attractiveness and trustworthiness on acceptance of the information and the mediating role of credibility of the information source and perceived usefulness of the information. This study also aims to find the effect on acceptance of eWOM when consumer involvement is present. Hypotheses are acquired from previous literatures and the analysis is done through Structured equation modeling in AMOS 23. Data is collected through questionnaire floated on online social media platforms through random sampling. The survey is designed specific to online reviews written on amazon.com while making purchases as they provide detailed consumer reviews which are validated in previous literatures. The study aims to find a significant relationship between source attractiveness, source expertise and source trustworthiness on source credibility and perceived usefulness. The study also assumes a positive relationship between source credibility and perceived usefulness on eWOM acceptance in the absence of consumer involvement. In the presence of consumer involvement, the significance between the source credibility and eWOM acceptance and perceived usefulness and eWOM acceptance decreases. It also aims to find out whether source credibility and perceived usefulness acts as mediators between source attractiveness, source expertise and source trustworthiness and eWOM acceptance. It is assumed that they would behave as full mediators.

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## Shopping Orientation as a Driver of Grocery Store Choice: The Role of Proximity in a Competitive Retail Environment

The Italian retail market is facing several challenges, including a saturated market, a decline in population growth, an increasingly discerning and less brand loyal consumers. Furthermore, challenges include the intensification of market competition, the emergence of alternative distribution channels and the blurring of boundaries between suppliers and retailers. Focusing on physical stores, these changes has led to a progressive abandonment of large surfaces in favor of smaller sizes, with a more capillary presence throughout the territory and with a focus on omnichannel opportunities to meet customers' needs. The new kind of stores are usually innovative small sales outlets, which make extensive use of technology. In response to a mature market environment with limited population growth prospects, grocery retailers are exploring new strategies to expand their target market and attract new customers. They are actively stimulating consumer switching between different store formats, leading to the emergence of innovative "hybrid" formats that combine characteristics from different store formats (Cardinali & Bellini, 2014). Moreover, the issue of sustainability must be taken into account in the context of retail competition. In the last years a few studies have started considering sustainable consumer values as a proper shopping motivation which drives consumers to choose a store instead of another. In short, the grocery retail sector is undergoing a significant evolutionary phase in which the paradigms of competition, customer management, and location choices are rapidly changing. The current study seeks to shed light on consumers' shopping orientations and store choice in the grocery retail sector in Italy with the aim to demonstrate that the choice of a particular store is influenced by the consumer's shopping orientation and the degree to which the store's attributes align with those orientations. The theoretical frameworks underlying this study research is based on the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). In order to answer these questions, survey data were collected through in-person interviews and an online questionnaire. The Lombardy region has been chosen as study field and respondents come from a panel composed by Bennet fidelity-card holders in the Lombardy region. Data collection was outsourced to Bennet retail company which allowed us to collect 709 usable questionnaires and 61 weekly shopping diaries. Results of an empirical research show that among the dimensions of shopping orientations, utilitarian factors, especially proximity to the store, are the most important driver of store choice. However, the empirical analysis conducted using the multivariate probit model did not yield statistically significant results, possibly due to a sample selection bias. It is worth noting that by diversifying the sample, the findings of the analysis may potentially exhibit variations.



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## Smart Shopping in Smart Cities: A Data-Driven Consumer Segmentation in Proximity Grocery Retail

The grocery retail sector is experiencing an important evolutionary phase in which the paradigms of intensification of market competition, emergence of alternative distribution channels, customer management and location choices are rapidly changing following new rationales. In recent years, the concept of the Smart City has gained attention as a way to promote sustainable and inclusive urban development. This approach aims to create neighbourhoods where people can access their daily needs, such as retail stores, within a 15-minute walk or bike ride (European Commission, 2023). In response, according to EuroMonitor (2022), the opening and relocation of retail stores to city centers are driven by the increasing demand for convenience and proximity to consumers retail stores are aligning their strategies with the evolving urban landscape. However, with a declining population, this leads to intense competition among similar retail stores which have to compete for the same marketplaces and consumers. Furthermore, retailers are becoming “phygital”, meaning that the physical and digital aspects of retail intertwine to build a seamless customer experience. People now expect stores to be not only conveniently located but also potentially sustainable and with features such as a good quality of the products and affordable prices. Therefore, it becomes essential for individual retail stores to recognize and interpret the specific needs of their target customers. Technology, when viewed as the capacity to interpret data, has the potential to offer valuable insights regarding consumer behavior and preferences. As a consequence, using advanced analytics and data-driven approaches retailers can uncover meaningful patterns and trends, enabling them to tailor their assortment to specific customer needs of the local consumers. In this context of changes in the dynamics of competition among retailers, our study aims to explore the application of business analytics and the use of technology in grocery retailing to segment consumer preferences and habits based on their belonging to different catchment areas. The final objective is to differentiate the assortment offered by proximity stores based on the different lifestyles/habits of consumers located in different neighborhoods. In order to answer to the above-mentioned objectives, secondary data sourced from TradeDimensions 2.0, an in-cloud platform open to the integration of data sources from NielsenIQ and Jakala, are used. In addition, a micro-territorial analysis, that goes beyond geographic and structural variables to consider sociodemographic and behavioral characteristics of the population, is performed. By examining factors such as population composition, income levels, lifestyle choices and digitalization, distinct consumer segments for different catchment areas could be defined. Providing consumers with a customized assortment, based on the demographic profile of the reference neighborhood (which varies in terms of lifestyles/habits), has been successfully implemented in some Italian cities. “Studying the local neighborhood, there is the opportunity to create a technology-driven community (e.g., utilizing social networking platforms). By leveraging these platforms, it is possible to develop consumers’ profiles based on personal interests, lifestyles and preferences. This enables to create relevant content and analyze the interactions with such content. Through this process, we can establish a comprehensive database that extends beyond mere purchasing data, encompassing a deeper understanding of the local needs and territorial dynamics” (G. Ibba, CEO of Crai).

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## Servant Leadership and Stress in Call Centers: The Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy, Emotional Labor and Mindfulness

Research has indicated that stress and its deleterious outcomes are particularly pronounced for call center service representatives, given their high task load, low independence, time constraints, aggressive goals, and excessive customer demands (Charoensukmongkol & Puyod, 2020; Deery *et al.*, 2002). However, little is known about the resources that can enable employees to cope with this stress. Based on the job demands-resources model (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001), this study explored the role of servant leadership in providing resources that enhance employees' coping with stress. Self-efficacy, which is promoted by servant leaders' empowering behaviors (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2010), as well as mindfulness, which is positively related to supportive leadership (Narayanan & Moynihan, 2006,) and emotional labor, which is affected by the leader's encouragement of employees to express their true selves (Lu *et al.*, 2019), were examined as potential mediators in the relationship between servant leadership and service employees' stress. Questionnaires were administered at two points (two weeks apart) to 303 call center employees, measuring servant leadership (Time 1), self-efficacy, emotional labor, mindfulness, and stress (Time 2). The findings indicated that servant leadership was negatively related to employee stress through the mediating effects of mindfulness and self-efficacy. Emotional labor failed to mediate the hypothesized relationship. Thus, unique characteristics of servant leaders, who primarily aim to benefit their followers, may provide employees with a sense of work-related self-efficacy and situational mindfulness, which are likely to enhance employees' ability to handle the stress derived from the challenging conditions and their role demands.

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## The Impact of Service Quality on Customer Loyalty in the Context of the Eastern European Festival Industry

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The festival industry brings important social and economic benefits to local communities. During the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, the industry was harshly affected. However, as restrictive measures associated to the pandemic have faded out, the industry has gained momentum once again. Nevertheless, increasing competition among festivals put pressure on organizers to find ways to enhance attendees' loyalty and attachment towards such events. The present study investigates the impact of festival quality on festival loyalty, via festival satisfaction and attachment as mediators. The study capitalizes on a comprehensive scale for measuring festival perceived quality, considering six essential dimensions of attendees' experience: core festival activities, organization, information and communication, food and beverage, sanitation, and staff. Based on a survey conducted among the attendees of two major electronic music festivals in Eastern Europe (Untold – 558 participants, and Electric Castle – 364 participants), and applying the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) technique, the research emphasizes the specific impact of each festival quality dimension on attendees' satisfaction, attachment, and – indirectly – on participants' loyalty toward the festival. From a theoretical perspective, the study enriches the knowledge regarding the complex relationship between quality, satisfaction, attachment, and loyalty, in the particular context of the festival industry. As for practical implications, the results provide valuable insights for festival organizers, outlining those quality aspects on which they need to focus on in order to increase the loyalty of their participants.

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## Change in Consumer Behavior Pre and Post Covid: Cross Culture Study Across U.S. and Colombia

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Wuhan, China became in 2019 the epicenter of a new diseases known as COVID-19, infecting more than 200 million people around the globe (CSSE, 2020). International trade suffered as worldwide supply chain networks and factories operations almost went on a halt. Moreover, changes on people's behavior were perceived globally while prologue lockdowns were taking place; consumer panic was the most notorious, triggering hoarding practices over different type of products (toilet paper, sanitizers, alcohol and food). Significantly, the Non-Food retail sector suffered the most, due to a dwindled-on pedestrian traffic, severe limitations to operate, consumer attention towards essential products and highly dependency on physical interactions with their final consumers. Therefore, the aim of this study is to understand how shopping behavior at Non-Food retailers has change after COVID 19 pandemic and if consumers perceive any difference between their shopping experience in large and small retailers by comparing the U.S. and the Colombian consumer. Findings suggest that consumer behavior has changed in both country pushing consumers to the digital frontier, women arise as the group who leads the shift on consumer behavior; similarities between the U.S. and the Colombian consumer are as well perceived. Consequently, COVID-19 pandemic has changed forever how consumers interact with any type of retail format.

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## Retailers' Role in the Circular Economy

More retailers are paying heed to circular business models in order to not only address various stakeholders' demands on sustainability aspects but also (1) develop a more competitive brand; (2) attract more capital by meeting investors' ESG (environmental, social and corporate governance) requirements; and (3) cut fixed and variable costs by mitigating energy consumption, reducing waste, lowering transportation and inventory costs, reducing employee turnover. However, implementation challenges persist since (1) the whole ecosystem needs to be aligned for circular economy; (2) retailers have a key role in the ecosystem as they have direct connection to the suppliers, customers, technology providers, among other important actors; (3) deficiencies of marketing in a circular economy which leads to challenges in motivating behavior change, sustainability culture, retailer-supplier relationships to promote sustainability. This paper discusses each challenge and propose a framework for overcoming them in order to increase the scalable impact in the circular economy.

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## Exploring the Subjective Experiences and Conditions Influence Customer Adoption Behaviour Using Scan and Go Technology

This study unites both social practice theory and motivation theory to create a new combined three-factor technology adoption process model, with the intention of advancing recognition of positive and negative experiences of scan and go apps users in a merchandising context. Multiple qualitative online methods were used, such as reviews of ten famous scan and go apps, YouTube reviews, tweets, and a focus group to collect material on the retail customer adoption process of scan and go apps. Findings revealed an understanding of three independent factors in the context of retail customer scan and go apps adoption process: hygiene factor, motivators and adopters. Hygiene factor understanding was provided through observing the need to avoid financial and personal information risks, offset by reliable security systems that can reduce the level of concern related to distrust. Motivators included interactivity, compatibility, availability and accessibility as these can enhance user level of satisfaction of scan and go app systems. Every shopper has goals, such as time saving and increasing monetary savings, which can increase the intention to adopt scan and go app systems. The major theoretical contribution is to combine social practice theory and two-factor motivational theory into a unified theory, as this helps to understand retail customer adoption process of scan and go apps. This study offers a unique research framework, based on subjective realities of positive and negative experiences of retail customers that can help to understand the adoption process for scan and go apps, and has extended motivational theory by adding a third factor 'adopters', which helps to further develop understanding of retail customer experiences related to shopping goals.

Tim Nierobisch

## Unpackaged Groceries – Burden or Chance for Grocery Retail Chains?

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Ecologically friendly consumption is of increasingly importance to many consumers. Reasons are manifold to buy ecologically attractive groceries: saving the environment, better health consequences, organic or vegan lifestyles, even the dislike of conventional brands resemble some motives why consumers are increasingly prone to ecologic consumption. A new trend, at least in Germany, is the opening of unpackaged food stores to address ecologically friendly consumption. In these type of stores, customers bring their own boxes or bags to package the goods for filling the shopping cart. As unpackaged food gains popularity, traditional retail chains that are larger in scale, more efficient in assortment size and price competition, start to integrate unpackaged products into their assortment as well. However, it is questionable if consumers of conventional packaged food at traditional retail chains will accept unpackaged food, as the retail format-stereotypes, as well as the assortment often differs from the image and target group ideals of unpackaged food solutions. Therefore, this study examines whether unpacked foods are suitable for established grocery retail chains by addressing the following research questions: How different are the motives of purchasing unpackaged food by retail formats? What makes consumers of conventional packaged food switch to unpackaged food in established grocery retailer chains? Which assortment categories could benefit from unpackaged choice options in established grocery retail chains? How does unpackaged food add to or dilute the image of grocery retail chains? In order to find answers to these research questions, three studies are currently conducted. Study one contains data from shoppers about conventionally packaged food. Study two contains data about shoppers in unpackaged food stores. Study three contains data from shoppers of a grocery retail chain that has recently introduced unpackaged food stations in its assortment. Hence, the aim of the study is to identify, whether unpackaged food is suitable for grocery retail chains or if environmentally consumption needs to be created in a different manner.

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## Established Sales Channel New to a Brand – How Do Consumers Respond to a Brand in a New Sales Channel?

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In saturated markets, particularly the FMCG branch, brands and retailer often compete by price and promotional activities. Due to unique selling propositions increasingly assimilate, the brand recall or equity might be the only remaining differentiator. In addition, retailers start to increasingly introduce private label lines, competing on price quality tiers with national brands, making it even harder to achieve growth for either side. With the rise of online business activity, at least since COVID-19 lead to shop lock downs, entering the online sales channel was a way to differentiate, leading to brand growth. However, the multi-channel engagement might only be a limited advantage, as any brand could engage in platform selling or online shops nowadays. Therefore, new ways of reaching customers and enabling an even more convenient shopping experience might be the answer. Lately, one-stop-shopping has regained new attraction. Thus, brands of different branches try to get listed in various retail chains, even though their assortment is usually not expected by consumers entering that sales channel. For example, a pet supply brand thrives to get listed at food retail chains. While pet owners shop groceries and pet food, shopping a new leash or a play ball could be of interest. Another example could be a bike supply brand selling lights, tools, or even helmets at a gas station or convenience store. This study examines consumers' acceptance of brands selling their products in non-typical retailers or branches. Therefore, the research questions are as follows: How strong influences convenience the consumption of brands in non-typical sales channels? What expectations devote consumers to the assortment in a non-typical sales channel? How does the new sales channel affect brand perception? In order to address these research questions, two studies were conducted. Study one uses a pet-supplies brand entering grocery chains to sell their products. Study two investigates a bike brand starting to sell their products through convenience stores and gas stations. By analyzing the result of the data gathered with questionnaires, the aim of the study is to investigate whether expansion into new non-typical sales channels can be beneficial to brands. As the data is currently gathered, results will be presented first time at the conference.



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## The Service Quality Experience of International Students: The Case of a Selected Higher Education Institution in South Africa

The university that serves as the foundation for this paper has seen a major increase in the enrollment of international students. The expectations and perceptions of service quality of international students are examined against this backdrop. The SERVQUAL instrument was used to conduct a census among this set of students, which included 215 respondents. The results demonstrate that expectations and perceptions for the five components of service excellence are internally consistent. The twenty elements that were measured turned out to have a variety of gaps, with the empathy dimension showing the biggest gap score. There are suggestions on how the institution might raise the standard of service provided to its international students.

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## Co-funded Innovation Projects: The Impact of Cross-Border Collaboration

If ever, innovation is now at the cornerstone of the progress of firms and the society. It is not only of vital importance to develop new and improved products and services, but also to meet requirements due to the climate change, to contribute to sustainability, and to meet ever increasing demands in health services, just to name a few. To induce even more effective innovation activities, policy makers, such as public grant institutions have emphasized cross-border collaboration between those who receive grants for R&D projects. This research deals with the question of the impact of these new demands for cross-border collaboration in comparison with grants provided to local firms without requirements for collaboration. The objective is to gain an insight into so-called Eurostars grants offered by a selection of European countries, requiring a minimum of participants from two of the member countries in their innovation projects. A special focus is on the impact of these grants on networking, the innovation eco system, creation of knowledge that contributes to continuous innovation by the participants and the implementation of the innovation being developed. A qualitative approach was applied, where twelve participants involved in innovation projects which received grants from the Icelandic Technology Development Fund were interviewed, six which received grants within the Eurostars program, and six who received what we refer to as local grants. The objective was to gain an insight into how the interviewees perceived the impact of the grants on a variety of issues related to collaboration and the progress of the funded project. Then, the results were compared with the interviewees who received local grants from the same funding body. Each interview took 40-60 minutes, were recorded, and transcribed within the next two days. The results indicate that the projects based on cross-border collaboration surely gain from the wider knowledge base they have access to. They developed networking on a wider scale than the projects based on local grants, and they developed their capability that may contribute to continuous innovation and finally, knowledge on their innovation was distributed among many key players in their respective market. This research contributes to an understanding of cross-border collaboration in innovation projects, which is increasingly important in today's demands for fast response to ever increasing requirements on a global scale. The limitation of this research is that it is only based on interviews with 12 individuals, all from the same country and culture, but it hopefully still provides a useful insight into the topic under investigation. Furthermore because the research is qualitative it is not possible to generalize from the results.

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## Exploring the Relationships between Social Media Influencers and Service Failure Recovery Process: Views from Social Influence and Commitment-Trust Theories

Here comes the abstract that should attract delegates to come listening to your presentation. Don't use indents but continuous text. Inform delegates about motivation, aims and objectives of the study, research questions/hypothesis, data collection, analyses and some main findings. If work in progress, indicate planned analyses. For references to multiple authors use (Author *et al.*, 2020). Save as word document with the last name of the authors and submit. Prior research has advanced several explanations for social media influencers' (SMIs') success in the burgeoning computer-mediated marketing environments but leaves one key topic unexplored: the moderating role of SMIs in service failure and recovery strategies. Drawing on a social constructivist perspective, and employing social influence theory (SIT) and commitment-trust theory (CTT), 58 semi-structured interviews were conducted with millennials from three European countries (Italy, France and the United Kingdom). Four themes emerged conceptualizing millennials perspectives of SMIs' role in the service failure recovery process.

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## The Role of Perceived Biosecurity in Explaining the Return of Customers to Stores During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

The health emergency resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic has changed certain behaviors of individuals, such as the purchasing behavior of customers due to the fear they have of going to the physical store and catching the disease (Hasan, 2020; Roggeveen & Sethuraman, 2020; Martin-Neuninger & Ruby, 2020; Picot-Coupey *et al.*, 2021). However, recent literature still does not present convincing evidence regarding the form, intensity and impact that fear of contagion has on said purchasing behavior and whether the perception of security of customers during their time in a store to make their purchases will influence in his intention to return to said store in the future (Roggeveen & Sethuraman, 2020; Martin-Neuninger & Ruby, 2020). The objective of this study is to explain the repatronage intention of stores in a health emergency context, taking into account the role of perceived biosecurity and how it affects the general experience of customers in stores. Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior, a model is proposed that seeks to predict the repatronage intention of customers of retail stores in a context of health emergency. This theory postulates that a certain behavior is preceded by the individual's intention to adopt specific behaviors. Also, that said intention depends on attitudes towards behavior, social norms and perceived control (Ajzen, 1991). The model was validated in a sample of 733 supermarket customers in Metropolitan Lima, Peru. The data was analyzed using structural equations. The results of the structural model indicated that the proposed model explains 64.4% of the variance of the stores' repatronage intention, where 52.6% is an additional contribution of the independent variables and that customers' perception of biosecurity during their visit influences their overall evaluation of the store experience and their intention to repatronage. As expected, overall store experience is positively and highly correlated with store repatronage intent. On the other hand, social influences have a low negative correlation with the intention to repatronage the store. Finally, perceived biosecurity presents a positive and high correlation with the general experience in the store. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the literature by broadening knowledge about the repatronage intention of stores, with a particular focus on the potential effects of the perception of store biosecurity on the consumer's intention to buy again in the same store in the future. In addition, it is proposed to contribute to the Theory of Planned Behavior by showing that, in this context, the general experience of customers in stores has adequately acted as a replacement for attitude. In addition, it is also possible to state, according to the findings, that the perception of biosecurity of customers is now an important factor that influences the general experience in stores, given the context of health emergency. Several theoretical and managerial implications are proposed, as well as interesting avenues for future research.

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## An Approach to the Study of Service and the Self: A Framework with Applications

Overall, much has been written about possessions and the self (Belk, 1988; Sirgy, 1982), and relative less research has been directed to understanding the role of service in the construction of the self. The purpose of this paper is to explore and conceptualize the relationship between the self and services and to discuss in what way it makes sense to talk about service as part of the consumer's self-construct. The aim of this paper is to suggest some potential linkages and limitations between the two concepts and to start a dialogue on the possibility of understanding the importance of service for the self-concept. This paper offers a counterpart to the existing approach to understanding the Self in consumer behavior that are provider-view bias rather than taking the point of departure in a consumer perspective.

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## You Want my Loyalty? Treat me Fairly! A Study of Islamic Banking Customers in South Africa

Despite being a substantial segment of banking customers in South Africa, Islamic banking customers are under-researched and keeping these customers loyal in this highly competitive industry is not well understood. The study aims at uncovering the key drivers of customer loyalty, drawing on the justice theory (Giovanis *et al.*, 2015) and relationship marketing constructs. More specifically the study examines how service fairness as a second-order reflective construct with its three underlying dimensions namely interactional, procedural and distributive fairness used as indicators, (Clark *et al.*, 2009) influences customer satisfaction, perceived value and in turn customer loyalty. Mediation analysis was furthermore undertaken, and two moderators (duration of support and perceived monthly spending) were included between service fairness and perceived value and customer satisfaction. An interviewer-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from 350 Islamic banking customers in South Africa and Mplus was used to test the conceptual model of the study. It was found that service fairness has a significant and positive relationship with customer satisfaction and perceived value. The relationships between satisfaction and loyalty and perceived value and customer loyalty are also significant. The key drivers of customer loyalty are service fairness and perceived value. Customer satisfaction partially mediates the relationships between perceived fairness and customer loyalty and perceived value partially mediates the relationships between perceived fairness and customer loyalty. As for the moderators, the interaction effects were not significant. The study guides banks serving Islamic banking customers on how to cultivate and maintain customer loyalty from a fairness and relationship perspective, especially considering the critical role of service fairness and managing and sustaining a long-term relational focus towards these customers in South Africa.

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## The Sound of Healthy Food Choices

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Imagine you enter a supermarket where you plan to buy your groceries. As you go about your shopping, nature sounds are playing in the background. Supermarket retailers such as K-supermarket Hertz have begun playing nature-sounds to elevate the shopping experience and increase healthier food sales (Genelec, 2022). Although retailers use sound as a strategic tool, it can also be used to connect humans in with their need to affiliate with nature to drive more positive feelings and to reduce stress (Esan-Ojuri & You, 2021), yet it remains unclear empirically how nature sounds influence consumers when they are shopping, and what drives this effect. This research asks for the first time how sales and purchasing of healthier foods is affected by a nature-related sound in a food shopping setting. In retail, shoppers are exposed to many different environmental factors that can influence their food choices; among these are retail atmospherics (Hock and Bagchi, 2018). While the effects of several ambient factors have been investigated such as ambient scent (Biswas & Szocs, 2019), ambient lighting (Biswas *et al.*, 2017), and ambient music and background noise (Biswas *et al.*, 2019), research on how ambient non-musical sound (i.e., nature sounds) affect healthy food and beverage choice is lacking, especially in non-eating and real-world shopping environments. Besides from Peng-Li *et al.* (2021), lab studies that find that when nature sounds with and without music overlaid are playing, people increase choice for healthier ready-to-eat options and healthier foods from a menu card, respectively. In a real-world environment and when food is not plated ready for consumption, does the effect still hold? This research sets out to answer this question. Drawing from biophilic design (Esan-Ojuri & You, 2021) we present the following hypotheses: **H1:** nature-related (vs. control) sound will increase spending and selection of healthier foods **H2:** nature-related (vs. control) sound will promote relaxation which will increase spending and selection of healthier choices. We test these hypotheses across one field study in a supermarket and two laboratory experiments. All three studies were a single factor between subjects design with three conditions of the independent variable (nature-related, control). Participants were randomly assigned to each of the conditions. Study two was conducted in a behavioral lab and study 3 via online recruitment from Prolific. Our main finding shows that nature-related sound (i.e., birds chirping, water running, wind blowing in the trees) increases feelings of relaxation and thus leads to healthier food and beverage choice and sales. We replicate current insights into nature sounds and the impact on healthy food choices (Peng-Li *et al.*, 2021; 2022) and extend findings to in-store sales, where immediate consumption is delayed, to a new product category (i.e., beverages), to a greater number of nature sounds beyond ocean sounds to include forest related sounds, and show empirical support for relaxation as an underlying mechanism. In terms of practical implications, many policy makers, consumers, and public health advocates are concerned about the health and well-being of consumers, and broader society (Nielsen IQ, 2021; Wang *et al.*, 2020) and the role supermarkets play in the foods that are consumed (Story *et al.*, 2008). While it is not the direct responsibility of supermarket retailers to encourage their customers to purchase and eat healthier foods, their position as choice architects enables them to play a huge role in what is ultimately selected and consumed. We propose that nature-related sounds have important implications for value-based stores whose mission it is to nudge their customers to eat more nutritious foods.

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## The Relationship Between Corporate Social Responsibility and Stakeholder Prioritisation in Terms of SMEs' Financial Performance in a Crisis Period

This quantitative study that was conducted amid the COVID-19 pandemic, aimed to determine the impact of corporate social responsibility-related (CSR) activities on SMEs' financial performance during the crisis period. The learnings from stakeholder theory provided the basis for what to look for, to assure that the maximum possible rewards are extracted from these CSR activities considering that SMEs' resources are generally limited during crisis periods. The study attended to different stakeholders to determine which would provide financial benefits, as well as the owner-managers' focus on certain stakeholders during crisis periods. Claims that long-term relationships with stakeholders, and satisfying the most salient stakeholders would produce the biggest rewards, were also tested. The study involved 161 owner-managers, testing the claims in stakeholder theory, to find the sought-after link to financial performance. Electronic surveys were used to collect data, targeting owner-managers of SMEs in a major metropolitan area in South Africa. A combination of descriptive statistics and linear regressions was used to analyse the data. Descriptive statistics indicated that SMEs were indeed involved in CSR activities during the COVID-19 crisis period, despite financial challenges, but attention to different stakeholders varied depending on the longevity of the relationship. Linear regression could not produce evidence of a relationship between SMEs' CSR activities and their financial performance (hence that CSR activities were financially rewarding), neither could a moderating effect of the salience of stakeholders on the relationship between CSR and financial performance be confirmed. Therefore, even though CSR activities were undertaken, the associated benefits seem of an informal nature, and more geared towards satisfying the owner-manager.



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## The Elephant That Stood on the Ant: Localized Market Orientation and Autonomy-Control Issues in MNCs

During the past two and a half decades, several hundred articles have been published on market orientation and its effect on business performance. It represents one of the most widely cited concepts in marketing scholarship. With roots stemming from the initial marketing concept of the 1950s (Felton, 1959; Keith, 1960; Levitt, 1960), market orientation has helped shape organizations' cultures towards the provision of superior customer value (Narver & Slater 1990). At its core, it is a philosophy which encourages interaction across organizational functions, driven by an overarching commitment from all to generate extensive market intelligence on both "current and future customer needs" (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990: 6). To date, however, few studies of *international* market orientation capabilities have been reported in parent-subsidiary relations. Indeed, we know much less about how the relationship between a multinational corporation (MNC) can facilitate or else *inhibit* the capability of a foreign subsidiary to develop a (consistent) market orientation and the successful delivery of value to end consumers. This is an important omission as it is estimated that some 215,000 subsidiaries with foreign headquarters currently are operating globally (Investment Monitor, 2022). To compound this, it has been argued that dysfunctional relations between parents and subsidiaries can impede effective marketing implementation in subsidiary markets, making it a crucial issue for MNCs (Homburg & Prigge, 2014), particularly in terms of delivery customer value. To develop our theoretical framework, we draw on Reactance Theory (Brehm 1966; Brehm & Brehm 1981). This sociopsychological theory assumes that people experience an inner state of psychological reactance if their freedom to engage in a specific behavior is restricted by a controlling party. Reactance theory would therefore seem well-suited for application to MNC research and particularly to understanding parent-subsidiary relationships where subsidiaries seek autonomy and conflict avoidance with their foreign HQ. Based on an ethnographic enquiry comprising over 20 cross-functional, marketing-led management meetings, combined with over 50 interviews, and work-shadowing, amounting to over 2000 pages of transcribed data, we follow at first hand the UK subsidiary of a major U.S. parent as it attempts to maintain control of its own marketing initiatives over an 18-month period and the implications of this for market orientation.

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## Shopping for Self versus Shopping for Others: Modeling Baby Boomers' In-Store Fashion Shopping Experience

The National Health and Aging Trends Study (NHATS) shows that 25% of older adults (65+) require assistance in daily household activities such as shopping and housekeeping, and the need for such help increases as they get older (NHATS, 2015). It is well-recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted the elderly (born between 1918 and 1945). According to a study (Arriagada, 2020) of older caregivers, nearly a quarter of seniors aged 65 and older provide care or help to others including their loved ones and friends. In the context of fashion shopping, aging consumers such as baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) do not always shop for themselves but also their spouses, parents, and children. For many baby boomers, shopping is an integral part of their daily activities to satisfy personal needs and/or fulfill specific responsibilities as informal caregivers. Fashion shopping in the brick-and-mortar store was the focus of this study because clothing provides physiological needs and symbolic significance to the users. Moreover, recent surveys (PwC Canada, 2019; Raydiant, 2021) revealed that many shoppers still prefer or enjoy the in-store shopping experiences, particularly for clothing purchases because touching and interacting with the garments are important. The overarching objective of this study is to develop a model for empirical testing to broaden our understanding of Canadian baby boomers' shopping "Experience Value" (Varshneya & Das, 2017) and "Well-Being" (Ekici et al., 2018) in two scenarios (shopping for themselves vs. shopping for others). Several essential components were adapted from prior studies, including "Fashion Orientation" (Gutman & Mills, 1982) and "Shopping Involvement" (Mittal, 1995) as exogenous variables, and the "Role of Shopping Motivation" (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003), "Risk Aversion" (Raju, 1980), and "Price Sensitivity" (Goldsmith & Newell, 1997) as moderators (see Figure 1). To the best of our knowledge, the practice of baby boomers acting as caregivers to shop for others (caregiving purchases not gifting) has never been undertaken. The significance of the study is twofold: 1) to provide a framework to advance knowledge and build theory in the fields of retailing, consumer behaviour, and fashion; and 2) to inform policymakers and practitioners seeking to promote effective retail solutions and environment to enhance aging shoppers' experiences. In total, 600 survey responses were collected from Canadian baby boomers (58-76 years old) through Qualtrics online panels. Other than age, shopping apparel for themselves and others within the last 5 years (covering both pre-pandemic and pandemic periods) is another selection criterion. SmartPLS 3 software for Structural Equation Modeling will be used for analysis, and the findings will be presented at the conference.

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## Gamification: A New Promising Tool in the Battle Against High Return Rates in E-Tailing? – An Empirical Analysis

With the increasing success of e-commerce, the number of returns is rising steadily. Consumer returns are not only an economical but also an ecological problem. Therefore, it is important to influence consumer behavior and prevent returns before they actually occur. One potential approach to influence behavior is gamification, which Lounis *et al.* (2013) define as: “[...] the process of game-thinking and game-mechanics to engage consumer in the non-gaming context of shopping in order to drive engagement and enhance the process of behavioral shift.” This study focuses on investigating the effect of gamification on consumer’s return behavior drawing on the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and the Technology Acceptance Model (Venkatesh/Davis, 1996). We invited 456 to participate in an online experiment. At first, participants were surveyed regarding their general ‘return attitude’ (RA), ‘perceived behavioral control’ (PBC), ‘perceived social norms’ (PSN), ‘return intention’ (RI), ‘perceived usefulness’ (PU), and ‘perceived enjoyment’ (PE). In the following, all participants were introduced to a new fictitious online shopping experience called “VIP Club” and were randomly assigned to one of three different groups: (1) no gamification, (2) gamification with individual incentive, (3) gamification with societal incentive. Participants in groups 2 and 3 were exposed to a gamification treatment in which, on the one hand, a virtual batch and, on the other, an incentive were awarded if the mean return rate (RR) reached a certain value during the observation period (Return Rookie, RR:  $x > 40\%$ ; Return Pioneer, RR:  $20\% < x < 40\%$ ; Return Hero, RR  $x < 20\%$ ). The individual incentive consisted of a discount coupon for future purchases, and the societal incentive consisted of a donation to environmental projects in the same amount as the coupon. After the treatment, participants were asked again about the previously surveyed constructs, but under the special conditions of the VIP Club. In addition, an ‘environmental awareness’ (EA) scale was queried. The manipulation check showed that PU and PE were significantly higher in both gamification groups compared to the control group ( $p < .05$ ), thus the treatment worked. Moreover, we found that, unlike in the control group, both treatments significantly changed the participants’ RA (less favorable), PBC (less control), and PSN (less accepted). Moreover, both gamification treatments reduced the RI. It also showed that the higher PU and PE of the gamification treatment, the higher the reduction in RI. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that in the control group EA moderated the relationship between the RA and the RI in a way that it was only significant with high EA. The effect was insignificant in the gamification environment. Based on these findings, the study derives recommendations for the use of gamification applications in preventive returns management.

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## Measurement and Implications of Experiential Retail

Retail has been proclaimed to be dead many times. The business press and academics have written many obituaries for traditional retail, (i.e., “Warren Buffett just confirmed the death of retail as we know it” {Business Insider 2017}). It has been suggested by many that traditional retail is being ‘killed’ by digital (Kara 2017, Adweek “Bad news, Brick –and-Mortar Stores: The Internet Finally has you Beat”). Some describing it as a retail apocalypse (i.e. Bloomberg, 2017; Business Insider 2018). Not only merchandise stores, but whole industries have been transformed due to the internet – particularly books/music/movies (McCracken 2011) and theaters (Moore, Forbes, 2017). Nearly all products can be bought online, as well as many services. While many proclaim the death of traditional retail, others are stating that “Why Technology Won’t Kill Brick and Mortar Retailers” (Forbes 2018) and “Online Shopping Hasn’t Killed Brick-and Mortar Retailers” (ABC News 2018). One thing common among the proponents of B&M retailers is that the shopping experience itself is a competitive advantage. The want and need from consumers for physical retail and the experience it can provide has been further put forward during the Covid-19 pandemic, where we saw lockdowns and a decline in not only physical retail due to this but also in certain areas of online retail. Interestingly, there is little agreement on what constitutes the actual experience and what constitutes antecedents and outcomes. Very broadly, experience typically encompasses sensory, affective, and cognitive components. Often, specific emotional reactions, social interaction and self-identification (relate) are included. Sometimes the experience also includes behavioral and/or environmental elements. There is not yet a widespread acceptance of the components of the ‘experience’. More recently Brun *et al.* (2017) examined six dimensions of a shopping experience and empirically showed that most (expect positive affect and sensory) have an effect on loyalty in physical and online service retailing. The measures are adapted from a series of previous research projects from 1974 to 2013, which seem on the face of the items perhaps somewhat unrelated to the experience. Going back to Holbrook & Hirschman’s 1982 proposition, Tasci a& Ko (2016) recently developed the “FUN-SCALE”. The purpose of this research is to develop a scale that measures customer experience across formats and shopping/consumption experiences; and conduct and initial examination of the nomological validity of the scale dimensions. After defining potential dimensions of shopping/consumption experience, a list of items was developed from both previous studies as well as from the authors. Sixty-six consumers were surveyed. The survey examined six potential dimensions of experiential consumptions/shopping – Affective, Cognitive, Behavioral, Sensory, Social and Self Identification. Authors reduced each dimension to four items each. Cronbach reliability measures for the dimensions ranged from .634 to .922 after item reduction using EFA, all considered acceptable for further examination. Individually, the reliability of the experiential dimensions ranged from .780 (Affect) to .907 (Self-Identification). Results suggest it appears that a general scale of experiential consumption/shopping is indeed possible. However, discussion of the dimensionality of the scale needs to be conducted before further construction.

\*\*\*An earlier version of this paper has previously been presented\*\*\*

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## Fashion Subscription Boxes: An Empirical Investigation from the Consumers' Point of View

Renting fashion via subscription boxes is a growing trend in sustainability and gaining more and more popularity in the fashion industry (Simon-Kucher 2019). Currently, the fashion rental market has two main revenue models to engage customers: rentals on a one-time basis or within a subscription. Regarding the latter, a fashion box is sent monthly. Current pioneers of this new business model are the German fashion rental companies unown, myonbelle, modami, or in the U.S. Runway and Nordstrom. Already in 2014, Rent the Runway rented out clothing worth more than \$800 million (Ellen MacArthur Foundation 2017). In 2021 the total revenue of worldwide clothing rentals was \$4.7 billion, with the U.S. and Europe accounting for over three-quarters of the market (Statista 2022). While in Europe the market for shared fashion in the UK is the fastest growing, the one in Germany is expected to be the largest. Similar to Bischof et al. (2020) we concentrate on the two archetypes of subscription boxes, predefined subscriptions chosen by the consumer and curated surprise subscriptions chosen by the provider with both differing in the degree of surprise. We hypothesize that (1) young and high-income earning females show a higher intention to subscribe to curated fashion boxes; (2) when choosing a subscription for fashion boxes, the price is more important to consumers than the number of sustainable and fairly produced fashion pieces. Relying on a choice-based conjoint analysis with a conditional design, a between-subject design was used to compare the two archetypes. This was done relying on a data set of 364 respondents. The results show that the price has the highest relative importance for curated surprise subscriptions. For both subscription models, consumers preferred to rent four fashion pieces instead of only two opting for more combination possibilities. In particular young and high-income earning females show a high intention to use subscription boxes. However, their experience is still low. Past sustainable behavior significantly contributed to predicting consumers' intentions to rent clothing.

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## Hurry up! Gen Z's Motivations to Shop on Digital Pop-up Shops: an Expectancy Theory Approach.

A pop-up shop, by definition, is a temporary shop (Russo Spina *et al.*, 2012), a trial retail store or an experiential space. A Digital pop-up shop is an entirely virtual temporary retail space. Despite their growth and popularity, digital pop-up shops as a form of experiential retail have not been studied extensively in an academic context. This study looks to apply an expectancy theory lens to develop and test a model to explore how consumers' attitudes towards digital pop-up shops are influenced by the identified facilitating/inhibiting factors. Expectancy theory is a cognitive theory of motivation based on subjectively rational human behaviors (Vroom, 1964). The theory postulates that people evaluate the available choices and choose the alternative with the most desirable outcome (i.e. maximum pleasure and minimum pain) from a personal perspective (Abrate *et al.*, 2021; Zboja *et al.*, 2020). The proposed model in the current study is built on the Expectancy Theory, which includes three core components, (1) expectancy, measured as (h1) novelty/uniqueness in the proposed model; (2) Instrumentality measured as (h2) impulsiveness, (h3) consumer innovativeness and (h4) market mavenism in the proposed model; and (3) valence is measured as (h5) ambience, (h6) design, (h7) time pressure, (h8) social pressure, (h9) privacy/security, and (h10) general shopping experience (i.e. price, customer service, reliability, and fulfillment) in the proposed model. Together these dimensions create a motivational force. This study will specifically examine the drivers of attitudes towards digital pop-up shops amongst Generation Z consumers. Gen Z accounts for 33% of the global population (2.5 billion people), slightly ahead of the millennials at 31.5% (Miller & Lu, 2018). According to Prensky (2009), Gen Z's are digital natives because they never experienced life before the Internet. Fromm (2018) further notes that "Gen Z is already on track to become the largest generation of consumers by the year 2020, and they account for \$29 to \$143 billion in direct spending" (para. 2). Given their consumption and digital nativity, we expect that these hypotheses reflect their motivational force to shop in digital pop-up shops. The study will seek to collect 400 respondents through a university student research pool, and data will be analyzed using Structural Equation Modelling with SmartPLS 3.

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## Intergenerational Differences in Consumers' Intention to Use Shopping Apps in Romanian Retailing

Use of shopping apps in retailing increased dramatically during the Covid-19 pandemic to the point in which marketers consider them essential platforms for customers engagement. With the end of the pandemic in sight coupled with the proliferation of shopping apps, continued use and engagement trends among consumers of different ages can rapidly become a concern. The main objective of this study is to examine intergenerational differences among retail customers in their intention to use and engage with available shopping apps. The nomological network considered is based on the Theory of Planned Behavior, with age group playing the part of a moderator variable. Data were collected from a quota sample (based on age) of 400 retail customers from Romania, that intent to use shopping apps, having previously done so in the last year. Data analysis will be based on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), using SmartPLS software. The main discussion will focus on different usage intention of shopping apps among retail customers based on their age. Also, managerial recommendations will be proposed based on the main findings of this study, taking advantage of the predictive capabilities of PLS-SEM.

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## East Versus West Student Expectations: How Culture Affects Resilience, Engagement and the Perceptions of Performance

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have experienced a seismic change since COVID. Short notice switching to online teaching posed challenges even to the best performing teaching faculty. Indeed, contemporary literature talks of some academics being forced into retirement due to the fear of online delivery while some students have claimed that their educational experiences were significantly harmed by the lack of face-to-face engagement. Nonetheless, academicians and students were largely forced to adapt to hybrid delivery (at best) and designed new materials to support students' learning journey. Indeed, many such tools, techniques and support measures still linger in the post-COVID era. Whether such effects are hangovers or improvements is highly debatable. Questions remain regarding whether such changes were too much or too little?! Some have argued that universities 'hand-held' too much in an effort to reassure but really disabled proactivity and resilience? Thus, a key question centers on whether universities should do anything different and how should we adjust our discourse and tools to our audiences? This study looks at the impact of culture on students' reactions to a VUCA environment, assessing the degree that culture influences resilience, proactivity, rule-following, and the expectation of 'having it easy' when in trouble. We adopted an exploratory research designed to enable us to explore and define the core issues of interest. Thereafter we deemed in-depth interviews to be the most appropriate methodology. In-depth interviews have a number of advantages and allow participants to describe their experiences and interpretations using their own terminology and jargon that best reflects their understanding of the world. Accordingly, we conducted interviews in the UK, Peru, Singapore and Romania. These locations were designed to provide a cross-section of educational contexts and thus facilitate meaningful comparisons. Data collection was gauged to improve the trustworthiness of the data retained and steps were taken throughout the design, collection and analysis phases to enhance the reliability validity of the insights gained. Data analysis centered on transcript review into core themes and categories in the conventional way. The findings of the research lead to some interesting insights in a range of different fields. In summary terms we develop valuable insights into students' impressions of support, resilience, engagement, and perceptions of lecturer and peer performance. Cross cultural implications derive from a range of differentiated findings in the context we studied. Our paper ends with a series of implications for both theory and arguably more importantly for practice. Furthermore, we highlight some areas where future research could lead to potentially fruitful insights in a range of contexts.



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## Perceived Opinion Leadership: Analysis on what it Takes for Social Media Influencers to be Considered an Opinion Leader and How it Affects their Followers' Behavior

Social media influencers are individuals who are knowledgeable in certain fields and become online celebrities as content creators (Lou & Yuan, 2019). They are usually well-known among a niche group of people and showcase their personal lives and lifestyles through textual and visual narratives, promoting brands to their followers for a fee (Abidin, 2016; Freberg *et al.*, 2011). Influencer on social networking sites have been shown to be a source of advice for other consumers, and so have become opinion leaders (Casaló *et al.*, 2020). Perceived opinion leadership of an influencer is the key construct connecting various influencer and post attributes to followers' behavioral intentions. Following persuasion research, our study extends previous research on opinion leadership on social media website—especially Instagram—in two ways. On the one hand, we consider the content of the account, the perception of the influencer as a person in terms of expertise, trustworthiness and credibility, and the emotional attachment to the influencer as antecedents for perceived opinion leadership in different industries. Second, we analyze how the perception as an opinion leader affects their followers' behavior, especially regarding interaction, purchase, and recommendation intentions. As the research is still ongoing, we cannot report any results at this stage of the study. However, the goal is to further and more comprehensively explain the construct perceived opinion leadership in a digital environment and to analyze the impact on follower behavior in different industries.

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## To Donate, or Not to Donate? Analysis of the Underlying Motivation to Donate Blood in One-Time-Donors

The demand for blood donations is constant and, in many countries, can only be met by voluntary, unpaid blood donors. Health care systems in developed countries are experiencing an alarming trend of declining blood donations, which was worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic (Baron *et al.* 2020). Although, in general, there is a positive attitude toward blood donation (Felimbran *et. al.*, 2019; Gazibara *et. al.*, 2015; Huis In 't Veld *et. al.*, 2019), figures worldwide show, only a small minority of the population eligible for donation donates blood—in the United States 3.0 % (The American National Red Cross, 2021) in Austria 3.4 % (Austrian Red Cross, 2021). Thus, the pool of people willing to donate blood is already small, and if people then donate only once or are no longer eligible or willing to donate regularly, there may be shortages in the blood supply. Although first-time donors play an essential role in replacing donors who leave the system, either voluntarily or forced (Lattimore *et. al.*, 2015), they often donate only once and not regularly (Germain *et. al.* 2007; Volken *et. al.*, 2015; Yu *et. al.*, 2007). Based on self-determination theory and using stages of change adapted from the trans-theoretical model, in this longitudinal study, we analyze one-time donors' reasons for discontinuation and differences in motivation of people who consciously decided not to donate blood again and people who are planning to donate again. Self-determination theory provides a comprehensive framework for studying human motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Behavior is considered to be on a continuum of self-determination with different types of motivation ranging from complete amotivation (characterized by inaction or a complete lack of intention to act because the activity is not considered or valued) to autonomous, intrinsically motivated behavior (characterized by acting out of interest, pleasure, and inherent satisfaction from the activity). Each regulation is related to positive and negative motivational consequences (M'Sallem, 2022). Furthermore, people can have varying degrees of readiness to donate blood and are therefore divided into different stages of change. Depending on a person's readiness to change a behavior, they typically move forward through the stages, fall back, and then continue to move through the stages (Glanz, 2008). Some studies have demonstrated that blood donors can be classified into different stages of change and that their psychological and behavioral tendencies vary depending on the stage (Amoyal *et al.*, 2013; Burditt *et al.*, 2009; Ferguson, 1996; Ferguson & Bibby, 2002; Ferguson & Chandler, 2005). The study's target population are individuals who had donated blood in the last two three years before the COVID-pandemic (but had discontinued). These were chosen because it can be assumed that they already have a positive attitude towards blood donation and further encouragement e.g., in the form of communication measures can lead to them being motivated to donate blood again—given that they are eligible to donate blood. Apart from motivation and intention to donate, this longitudinal study, which is currently still ongoing, also assess the actual blood donation behavior.

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## The Effect of Power Attributed to Majority Group Customers on Empathy and Emotional Labor Strategies of Minority Service Providers

The study focuses on the power relationship between service providers from different minority groups and customers from the majority group. Specifically, we explored the effect of this relationship on the service providers' empathy and emotional labor strategies (surface acting [SA] and deep acting [DA]). We assumed that attribution of power to majority group customers would relate positively to the service provider's emotional efforts (i.e., empathy and deep acting) toward them. Furthermore, we hypothesized that service providers from different minority groups would react differently according to their social position in society: When attributing high power to majority group customers, service providers from a minority group holding a relatively lower social position will display higher emotional efforts toward majority group customers than service providers from a minority group holding a relatively higher social position. An online survey was administered to Israeli service providers ( $N = 511$ ) from two different Israeli minority groups—210 Arabs and 301 originating from the Former Soviet Union (FSU; popularly identified as Russian immigrants). The findings revealed that power attributed to majority group customers by both service provider groups was positively related to empathy ( $r = .37; p < .001$ ) and emotional labor (SA:  $r = .17; p < .001$ ; DA:  $r = .32; p < .001$ ) toward customers. Critically, these associations were stronger for service providers from a minority group holding a lower social position than those from a minority group holding a higher social position. The positive relationship between power attributed to majority group customers and the service provider's empathy was significantly stronger for Arab service providers than for the Russian immigrant service providers. The findings expand our understanding of how multicultural relationships impact power attribution, which, in turn, determines service employees' invested emotional efforts (empathy) toward customers in day-to-day service encounters. Practical implications are elaborated.

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## The Importance of a Safe Service Environment to Anxious Customers

The customer's level of trait anxiety, characterized by high vulnerability and a higher level of fear of threatening external factors, is highly relevant for their quality of coping with stress and perceived potential threats in the service environment. The degree of a service environment's safety can be crucial for these customers. However, the literature on aspects of the service environment has largely neglected the safety component. This study investigates the moderating effect of customers' trait anxiety on the link between a safe service environment (i.e., the degree of the perceived safety of a restaurant's design and layout) and customers' behaviors (defensive behaviors and word of mouth [WOM]) mediated by interpersonal trust. An online survey was distributed to a representative sample of 401 participants: 50% female, aged 18 to 70 years. Respondents were divided based on their degree of trait anxiety (high anxiety [HA;  $n = 199$ ]; low anxiety [LA;  $N = 202$ ]). All constructs were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale. *Anxiety* was measured by 20 items of the STAI (Spielberger *et al.*, 1983); *trust* was assessed by five items adapted from Adeji *et al.* (2009). *WOM* was evaluated by four items taken from Zeithaml *et al.* (1996). *Defensive behaviors* were measured by 10 items adapted from Gilboa *et al.* (2022). The *safe environment* measure was developed specifically for the current study. Based on previous studies that identified customers' defensive behaviors in service settings (Seger-Guttman *et al.*, 2021; Gilboa *et al.*, 2022), a 9-item measure was developed, portraying several features of a hospitality service environment, such as sitting arrangements, exit location, and spaciousness. The new measurement was tested on a sample of 50. The convergent validity and reliability of the new scale were satisfactory (AVE = .64; CR = .86). The CR values exceeded the 0.70 threshold (Hair *et al.*, 2011) for all scales, and all AVEs were above the 0.50 threshold, confirming convergent validity. Discriminant validity was achieved as the squared roots of the AVEs exceeded the constructs' inter-correlations. To test the moderation of trait anxiety on the link between a safe service environment, trust, and customer behaviors, multi-group structural equation modeling (SEM; Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) was calculated. The findings emphasized the positive effect of a safe service environment, especially for HA customers. For these customers, a safe environment elicited interpersonal trust in the service provider (HA- $\beta = .30$ ;  $p \leq .001$ ; LA-ns) and, in turn, reduced defensive behaviors (HA- $\beta = .30$ ;  $p \leq .001$ ; LA-ns), engendering positive WOM (HA- $\beta = .60$ ;  $p \leq .001$ ; LA- $\beta = .37$ ;  $p \leq .001$ ). The model yielded relatively good fit:  $\chi^2 = 1043.3$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.7$ , CF I = .95, TLI = .94, RMSEA = .041. The findings highlight the importance of designing a safe service environment, a feature especially crucial for highly anxious people. Practical implications are discussed regarding ways to facilitate safe service environment.

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## To Infinity and Beyond: Immersive Shopping from Augmented Reality to Metaverse Retailing

Metaverse technology is emerging as a huge opportunity for retailing, since it offers a new sensorial space where users can both visualize products and interact with other users in a highly immersive experience (Dwivedi et al., 2022). Accordingly, numbers of retailers exploring metaverse opportunities is increasing. For instance, a meaningful example is the *metaverse* store created in metaverse environment by Bloomingdale, a popular luxury retail chain in US, for their 150th Anniversary, which was available to users by the starting of the New York Fashion week in 2022. Specifically, the retailer created a new form of virtual store (consisting of a digital representation of the physical store in a 360-degree views where interactions with other users and employees are possible, in opposite with traditional virtual store- 2D and 3D- where these interactions were not possible). Another example was made by Zara, a fast-fashion brand, which launched the Y2K Creature collection, a digital collection available on a specific a metaverse mobile application (Zepeto). Thus, metaverse is a fast-growing area of research in academia raising up new lines of inquiry to understand to what extent can metaverse a new form of immersive shopping beyond the augmented reality. Indeed, actual literature does not provide yet a comprehensive definition of this new shopping environment (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2022). However, many scholars define metaverse in general as the whole of virtual worlds able to extend the physical universe by adding new dimensions and domains for economic, social and leisure activities (Bourlakis *et al.*, 2009). Accordingly, the aim of this paper is providing a comprehensive definition of metaverse retailing as a new form of immersive shopping that goes beyond the application of augmented reality retail settings. To do so, the research explores the characteristics of vividness, information richness, and interactivity to offer a new and comprehensive framework encompassing the social presence (Fulk *et al.*, 1990) and cognitive absorption (Agarwal & Karahanna, 2000). In summary, our research, theoretical in nature, will provide theoretical contributions about the literature on consumer behavior and immersive (shopping) experiences, along with practical recommendations to create new and effective immersive shopping environments.

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## A Case Study of the Fashion Brand Mobile App Review Using LDA Topic Modeling

Reviews have been of great value in marketing as one of the factors that have the greatest influence on consumers' attitudes, intentions, and behaviors. With the development of technology, consumer reviews have evolved from verbal reviews in the offline world to image or text reviews online. Unlike offline reviews, online reviews have stronger accessibility, continuity, and dissemination. Once a review is published, it remains permanently online and continues to reach unspecified people unless it is intentionally deleted. That means any consumer can search and view reviews made by previous consumers. Due to the characteristics of online reviews, the persistence and propagation of EWOM (e-word of mouth) are higher than traditional word-of-mouth. For these reasons, online consumer reviews have been explored as an important source not only in academia but also in industry. In this study, we focused on analyzing fashion brand mobile app reviews. As smart devices have become a normal part of everyday life, activities that have been performed through existing web-based devices have been transferred to mobile devices. In contrast to the web, Google Play and the App Store allow users to rate and leave reviews about their app experiences. Mobile app review plays an important role not only in identifying issues that customers face but also, in the case of a positive review, in helping boost the visibility of an app. Nevertheless, unlike other industries, there is no study that explores fashion mobile app reviews. Most studies assessing fashion-related customer evaluations focus on fashion product reviews. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to promote the usability of fashion mobile apps by analyzing consumers' reviews of mobile applications that serve as platforms for the purchase of fashion items. A pilot study was conducted to select two fashion brand mobile applications. A series of open-ended questions were distributed to university students who were taking courses in the fashion merchandising program. The responses from the 49-convenience sample were used to select two fashion brand mobile applications. A total of 93 fashion brands were extracted from the response. However, brands that were unrelated to fashion, such as Amazon and Apple, were left off the list. Lululemon was the most frequently mentioned as the best brand they experienced in mobile shopping. On the other hand, Zara was most frequently mentioned as the worst brand they experienced in mobile shopping. Therefore, this study explored and compared Lululemon's and Zara's mobile app reviews. This study used a corpus consisting of fashion brand mobile app reviews collected from the Apple App Store. First, an "app store scraper" was employed to crawl the review data from the app store. As of June 2022, there are 188,000 ratings for the Lululemon mobile app and 55,000 ratings for the Zara mobile app. However, only 1,398 ratings for Lululemon and 6,359 ratings for Zara include text reviews. According to the purpose of this study, the ratings containing textual reviews were collected. The collected data was analyzed using LDA topic modeling. We found four topics from Lululemon mobile app reviews and Zara mobile app reviews, respectively. The series of words that compose each topic are discussed in this paper. This study is expected to lay the groundwork for providing insights into the app usage experiences of fashion brand consumers in academic literature. It can also provide meaningful insights to fashion businesses or related mobile app developers.

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## One Customer at a Time: Technology-Based Stakeholder Contingency Management for Responsible Shopping

When making food-related decisions, many consumers are concerned about how the food will affect their health (Yu-Hua, 2008) and environmental sustainability (White *et al.*, 2019). Global sales trends follow this tendency by showing that products positioned in the sweet spot of “healthy for me and healthy for the world” are growing in demand (Nielsen, 2018), which to some degree takes the customer's attention away from the pricing. In the conceptualization of customer engagement (CE), defined as a customer's cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and social resource investment in brand interactions, this can entail retailer(company)-customer (or other stakeholders) contingencies and we are interested in testing if this can even entail stated collaboration. This is an innovative approach, worthy of development and testing, as strategies and tactics toward health and sustainability tend to be insufficiently integrated into overall stakeholder engagement or stakeholder journeys, seen as any stakeholder's (e.g., customer's, manager's, employee's, etc.) journey with the firm (Hollebeek *et al.*, 2022; Lievens & Blažević, 2021). The purpose of the current paper is to extend literature and practice by analyzing the relevance of technology-based contingency management (CM: see Dallery *et al.*, 2015), using for instance mobile devices and wearable sensors, aiming for behavior change. This involves real-time monitoring in situ, and retailer-customer contingencies (see Foxall, 2021). The retailer acts in accordance with proactive consumer orientation working towards its financial objectives through well-defined customer analysis and metrics (e.g., customer satisfaction, retention, and loyalty) and interventions (e.g., increasing convenience, feedback, crowdsourcing, customer-oriented packaging) that can offer particular value to customers, firms and other stakeholders. The paper discusses single-subject research, and case studies consisting of a contingency contract, goal setting, social media contingencies, and performance feedback that can be implemented with individual customers wanting to change particular aspects of their food choices and consumption.

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## Gamified Promotions in Shopping Apps: The Role of Regret and its Impact on Purchase Intention

The topic of gamification has received more attention in recent years (Huang *et al.*, 2019), particularly in the marketing context (Bauer *et al.*, 2020; Berger *et al.*, 2018). Prior research has shown that gamification has a positive influence on consumer behavior such as consumers' purchase intention (e.g., Balakrishnan and Griffiths, 2018; Kim *et al.*, 2020). As traditional promotions and advertisements often not catch consumers' attention (Stipp, 2018), gamified promotions might be a solution to attract customers. When consumers earn a discount through gamified elements, this could increase their intention to redeem the discount (compared to a traditional promotion) and consequently make a purchase. Previous gamification literature focuses on flow theory (e.g., Berger *et al.*, 2018; Waiguny *et al.*, 2012) and self-determination theory (e.g., Bauer *et al.*, 2020; Feng *et al.*, 2018; Hollebeck *et al.*, 2021). For our context of gamified promotions, we use regret theory to explain the effects on customer behavior. According to regret theory, consumers should feel stronger anticipated regret when they do not redeem the discount of a gamified promotion compared to a traditional banner ad promotion. This could be due to the fact that consumers invested more effort get the discount than if they had received it as a traditional pop-up ad. As gamification enhances positive emotions (Harwood & Garry, 2015; Koroleva & Novak, 2020), we further assume that the gamified promotion triggers such emotions in the consumer, which in turn lead to increased purchase intentions (Nasermoadeli *et al.*, 2013). The study uses a scenario-based online experiment with a between-subjects design (gamified promotion vs. non-gamified promotion). Data from 96 respondents were collected and analyzed with M/ANOVA and PROCESS (see Hayes, 2018) in SPSS. Findings suggest that a gamified promotion has a greater effect on consumers' purchase intention than a non-gamified promotion. The same is true for the effect on anticipated regret. The positive influence of gamified promotion on purchase intention is mediated by firstly the perceived effort to obtain the discount and anticipated regret and secondly via the enjoyment with the app directly and via anticipated regret (serial mediation effects). This research is novel, as it explains the impact of a gamified promotion on purchase intention based on regret theory. Prior research on promotions has rarely concentrate on gamification (e.g., Bauer *et al.*, 2020). Based on the results, retailers should use gamified promotions instead of traditional banner ad promotions and the game should not be to simple so that consumers perceive an effort. As a next step, we plan to add two more studies. The first study should validate the results of this study. Further it should show that the results are independent of the level of the discount. The second study should focus on the reinforcement of regret. It should provide management implications whether a specified or an unspecified discount leads to higher anticipated regret and consequently purchase intention.



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## Consumer Use of Product Passports for Secondary Luxury Consumption

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The overall resale market is expected to reach sales of \$57 billion (USD) by 2025. As the resale sector is growing, there is a heightened importance on authenticity and history tracking especially for luxury products sold on the secondary market. To support this need, product passports have been suggested to ease the operational processes of the secondary luxury market. Product passports, or digital passports, are QR codes or hardware tags (i.e., NFC, RFID, or Bluetooth) that are attached to the garments and provide detailed information about the individual product. The product passport provides valuable information which can include its brand and manufacturing practices, material composition, product care, history (i.e., previous owners and repairs), and marketing and pricing guidance that may be of interest to consumers and secondary luxury retailers. Product passports can support authentication and valuation which will streamline processes that are typically manual and sometimes, inaccurate. Furthermore, this technology can support greater value and trust from consumers, but the question is whether the consumer will be willing to adopt such technology. To date, there is no research on product passports which is said to have the potential to reshape the processes in the secondary luxury market and heighten consumer acceptance of consumption within the secondary luxury market. Therefore, the purpose of this study will be to investigate consumer values influencing the use of product passports for consumption of secondary luxury products. The theory of consumption values will be used to guide this study. Multiple consumer values including functional (i.e., ease of use), social, emotion (i.e., trust, exclusivity), conditional (i.e., risk assessment), and epistemic will be investigated to determine consumer use and acceptance of product passports used within the secondary luxury market. The researchers will conduct a quantitative study and create a consumer survey consisting of demographic questions and reliable scales to test the variables and hypotheses. Structural equation modeling (SEM) will be used to perform a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and will be used to test the overall model and hypotheses. The results of this study will provide needed information on consumer acceptance of product passports and how this technology can shape the secondary luxury market. It will also determine the consumer values associated with the use of product passports and consumption within the secondary luxury market. The findings are thought to support the digital authentication provided by product passports and will provide added trust, exclusivity, and reduce consumer risks when purchasing second-hand luxury products. The findings will also provide information about the ongoing value of such luxury products. The increased competition in this market will force these retailers to innovate. The use of product passports will ultimately provide greater success for secondary luxury retailers such as The RealReal and Vestiaire Collective. Furthermore, product passports can encourage a more circular model as they support repurchase of luxury products to enable more sustainable and responsible practices.

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## The New Luxury Concept Store: Investigating Psychographic Characteristics Affecting Patronage Intention

Luxury department stores like Bloomingdales and Nordstrom have been rolling out new concept stores (e.g., Bloomies, Nordstrom Local) focused on presenting small assortments of curated merchandise in an ever-evolving manner as they focus on creating an immersive customer experience. Building on recent developments in small retail formats, the purpose of this study was to investigate the psychographic factors of luxury consumers and their attitudes and patronage intention towards small retail formats in luxury fashion. The research expands on literature in rapidly evolving area of retail formats and consumer perception by exploring psychographic factors included shopping enjoyment, market mavenism, and innovativeness impact on the beliefs regarding retail formats' hedonic and utilitarian value. The theory of reasoned action was the guiding framework for this study. Specifically, six hypotheses were addressed: (H1) Shopping enjoyment is positively related to the (a) hedonic beliefs, (b) utilitarian beliefs, and (c) attitudes regarding small luxury retail formats. (H2) Market mavenism is positively related to the (a) hedonic beliefs, (b) utilitarian beliefs, and (c) attitudes regarding small luxury retail formats. (H3) Consumer innovativeness is positively related to the (a) hedonic beliefs, (b) utilitarian beliefs, and (c) attitudes regarding small luxury retail formats. (H4) Hedonic beliefs and (H5) Utilitarian beliefs are positively related to attitudes regarding small luxury retail formats. (H6) Attitudes are positively related to patronage intention regarding small luxury retail formats. The researchers used a quantitative approach and distributed an online survey to luxury consumers in the US. Reported alpha coefficients ranged from .91 to .96, supporting reliability of the measures. A measurement model was tested through structural equation modeling (SEM) using a maximum-likelihood estimation procedure with a covariance matrix as input to test the measures. The measurement model indicated good fit ( $\chi^2 = 2,436.564$ ;  $df = 1,059$ ;  $p = 0.0$ ; CFI = 0.9; RMSEA = 0.073; SRMR = 0.035). Each of the latent variables satisfied the suggested criteria for composite reliability ( $CR \geq 0.70$ ) and average variance extracted ( $AVE \geq 0.50$ ). The hypothesized relationships were tested through SEM. The structural model revealed adequate fit ( $\chi^2 = 124.061$ ;  $df = 6$ ;  $p = 0.0$ ; CFI = 0.92; RMSEA = 0.083; SRMR = 0.075). Based on parameter estimate t-values cutoffs of 2.00, H1a, H1c, H2a, H2c, H3a, H3c, H4, H5, and H6 were accepted. Individual psychographics including shopping enjoyment, market mavenism, and marketplace leadership demonstrated a direct effect on hedonic beliefs towards luxury retail formats. This result demonstrated that psychographic factors lead to pleasure seeking in luxury retail. Further, beliefs regarding small retail formats pleasurable presentation contributed to consumers attitudes towards the stores and patronage intentions. The researchers expected psychographic factors to influence utilitarian beliefs regarding small retail formats given the efficiency and ease of access the formats present, yet no psychographic factors significantly impacted utilitarian beliefs towards luxury retail formats. These results demonstrate the emphasis on hedonic value consumers place on small store formats in luxury fashion.

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## Optimising m-Commerce to Elevate Millennials' Sensory Experiences and to Boost Their Purchase Intentions When Conducting Clothing Purchases Online

Within the highly competitive clothing retail industry, and even more so in developing economies with well-developed infrastructure such as South Africa, online sales revenue has not yet reached expected levels. A possible reason, apart from consumers' risk perception, is that consumers' expectations of online shopping are framed within what they are accustomed to in physical stores, therefore, sensory rich, exciting experiences. To date, online shopping platforms have neglected this issue, to their own detriment. Sensory-enabling technologies, such as mobile phone applications are now capable of elevating online shoppers' experiences, keeping them immersed, with increased potential to boost shopping transactions. These possibilities are unfortunately still under-explored in m-commerce. This quantitative study was conducted in a developing economy with well-developed infrastructure, where the popularity of smart phones has grown significantly among millennials in recent years. This study developed a custom-designed mobile phone application for a fictitious clothing retailer as part of a two-phase electronic survey. Through social media, 842 millennials were recruited in Gauteng, the economic hub of South Africa. After downloading the mobile phone app, respondents were introduced to a vignette design that presented a real-time shopping experience, which allowed them to manipulate visual and auditory cues to their liking, while completing a shopping task that presented four clothing categories to choose from. The aim was to increase shoppers' involvement, providing more detailed product information, opportunity for customization of the shopping encounter, as well as a more exciting telepresence that were expected to boost their purchase intentions. Statistical analyses included descriptive statistics, confirmatory factor analysis, co-variance-based structural equation modelling, moderation analyses and multivariate analyses of variance. The findings confirmed the significant positive influence of sensory cues on online shoppers' sensory experience, as well as the significant positive moderating roles of telepresence and customization in facilitating millennials' online shopping purchase intentions. Failure to confirm a positive moderating influence of product information, could be attributed to lack of ability to provide intrinsic product information, such as fit and comfort on an online platform. This, however, highlights how important it is to optimize the sophistication of visual and auditory cues to negate shortcomings that cannot yet be resolved with existing technology. Significant gender differences concerning millennials' sensory experiences, purchase intentions as well as their use of product information provide valuable empirical evidence concerning how retailers could purposely refine their strategies. Structured within the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) framework, this study contributes to an understanding of how millennials' online clothing purchase endeavors could be enhanced in a developing economy.

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## The Impact of Smart Technology on Customer Experience With Hotel Services in Romania

The research is aimed at understanding how the smart technology deployed by the hospitality industry is used to deliver and enhance the customer experience. It also aims at showcasing how the consumers in an emerging economy with a low to medium level of digital competency understand smart technology benefits and are prepared to use it for a specific form of service. The data will be collected from a sample of at least 350 Romanian consumers using an online survey. Descriptive statistics and partial least squares, which is a component-based structural equation modelling technique with SmartPLS software, will be used to test the hypotheses and meet the study's objectives. The findings should show that hotel guest technologies have a significant impact on customer experience. Smart technology tools facilitate the co-creation and delivery of customer experience in hotel services, no matter their rating. However, human contact also provides a competitive advantage as customers often express frustration and dissatisfaction with certain technological features that don't work as they should or are expected to. Therefore, hotels must tailor their services to provide the right mix of smart technologies and human interaction, depending on the customers they serve. Also, satisfaction with smart technologies should have a stronger impact on the overall customer experience in mid-scale and economy hotels than in upscale and luxury hotels. Practitioners and researchers in the hospitality industry should find the results of this study useful in the context of the continuously evolving technology and the customer-centric business approach where hotels are called to meet exponentially rising guests' expectations. Also, hotels need to identify which areas of the customer experience are more affected by technology and be ahead of their customers in the technology adoption curve. The lack of similarly focused research on an emerging market such as the hotel industry in Romania should provide a starting point for several areas of future research. By analyzing only the guest experience with Romanian hotel services, we provide only a small picture of the phenomenon. Expanding the research area and the number and type of respondents should open up future research on how smart technologies affect the customer experience within the hospitality industry as a whole.

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## Prospect Potential and Brand-Consumer Personality Congruence

The extent to which any specific consumer is a prospect for a market offering can be measured by their perception of fit between the market offering and their perceived wants and needs, specific to the usage situation. Fennell (1978) proposed that a market consists not of consumers but of occasions, which are created by the interaction between consumer characteristics and the market environment. This perspective provides a better understanding of the wants consumers bring to the market and significantly enhances firms' ability to understand and predict consumers' potential as prospects for specific offerings. This study focuses on this set of behavioral drivers in the context of vehicles. It specifically explores consumer personalities, the reflection of these when driving vehicles, and the differences in perceived brand and driver personalities. Approximately 200 owners of cars and pickups were surveyed, measuring dimensions of their personalities, attitudes toward driving, brands they drive, and brands they aspire to own. About 60 personality items were adapted from various scales measuring assertiveness and aggressiveness. Through a series of pretests and analyses, these were reduced to 14 items, representing three distinct dimensions of driver personalities - Stoic (three items), Aggressive (six items), and Considerate (four items). Results showed significantly different personalities and driving behaviors across the personality types. Stoic was negatively correlated with Aggressive (-.376) and was positively correlated with Considerate (.512). There was no significant relationship between Aggressive and Considerate. Brands driven and aspirational brands were found to be significantly impacted by consumer personalities. More aggressive drivers feel strongly that their vehicle portrays their personality and that it is essential that they be admired because of what they drive. Stoic drivers are much less concerned about the link between brand image and their personality. This creates both opportunities and challenges for brands.

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## Flipping the Table: A Prospect Model of Segmentation

Traditional market segmentation begins with a heterogeneous group of prospects and attempts to classify members based on shared characteristics, such as demographics, psychographics, or other attributes. The concept behind this process is that people with similar characteristics often also share wants and needs (Smith, 1956). Fennell (1978) offered a new perspective, not only on segmentation but on the basic definition of what constitutes a market. She proposed that a market consists not of individual actors but occasions. Her concept of a market occasion consists of an actor (prospect) who finds themselves in a situation that results in a set of wants or needs. From this perspective, the problem with conventional segmentation schema is that segments are developed based simply on probabilities of purchasing a product category or even a specific brand offering. By aggregating actors with similar characteristics, groups with similar probabilities of experiencing a set of wants and needs are created. But within these groups, we have little or no insights into the motivations that drive selection and purchase. Even behavioral segmentation typically focuses on actions rather than motivations. Using Fennell's (1978) model, understanding the market begins with motivations within specific occasions. These inherently inform the firm regarding appropriate market offerings, promotions, and other strategic elements. Segmenting based on occasion or motivation takes a bottom-up, aggregative approach to building segments, as opposed to the traditional top-down disaggregation model. Several empirical questions arise from these differences. How different are the resulting market segments when comparing top-down and bottom-up segmentation? Do the differences between these methods vary across product categories or even brands? In what ways, if any, is the resulting bottom-up segmentation plan superior to attribute-based segmentation? This project seeks to answer these questions through a series of studies that collect empirical data and then compare the resulting segmentation plans from different schemas. The first study is motivated by one problem with traditional segmentation, that desire and intention to purchase a particular product or brand very often don't result in the predicted purchase (Morrison, 1979). We surveyed approximately 600 automobile owners, asking about their vehicles, the vehicles they aspire to, and their motivations for purchase. We identify a variety of motivations for purchasing, as well as motivations not to purchase the desired brand. We classify these behavioral motivations and propose improvements to segmentation of automobile buyers resulting from the occasion-based segmentation study.

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## Using Digital Communication Tools to Strengthen the Service Profit Chain

This study analyzes the effects of introducing a digital communication tool for sharing mystery shopping results among employees in a restaurant company and how they took advantage of it. To continuously provide high-quality service, each staff member is required to work autonomously to improve customer satisfaction. Until now, many service companies in Japan, especially restaurant companies, have used mystery shopping to check service quality. Mystery shopping results can also motivate employees by providing feedback on what was perceived as high-quality service provided by the staff. However, there are still some service companies with many part-time workers, where the staff's experience and skills vary. They are also too busy to share information on areas to work on. These reasons make it difficult to improve services successfully. Communication and sharing the feedback from mystery shopping well among employees is necessary. This paper examines how restaurant companies can improve their services by effectively implementing a digital communication tool to share mystery shopping results among employees. The study examines the effectiveness of digital communication tools in several Japanese food service companies using store-level panel data. This data includes stores that introduced the tools and stores without the tools. Data on mystery shopping check achievement rates and revisit intention during the study period from 2018 to 2020 were used to determine the effectiveness of the implementation. The analysis showed that mystery shoppers' revisit intention increased at stores where part-time employees have used the communication tool. In addition, as a case study, we plan to analyze the use of communication tools at stores with high evaluations from mystery shoppers and summarize how they are being put into practice based on data and interviews. For example, one of the hypotheses we are currently considering is that one of the factors that will increase the effectiveness of using the tools by teams is that the organization's leaders should take the initiative in using them. Feeling customer satisfaction and having good communication in teams are important for an employee to increase their engagement. Regarding the service profit chain proposed by Heskett *et al.* (1994), it can be suggested that high employee engagement leads to even higher customer satisfaction. In this study, we have currently analyzed the relationship between mystery shoppers' satisfaction and the digital tool. The relationship between employee engagement and the digital tool will be studied. We believe that digital communication tools may play an important role in effectively implementing the service profit chain.

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## A Model for Sustainable Development: Advancing Digital Food Retailing

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Food retail has seen an evolution towards self-service technologies (SSTs) in food shopping businesses (Thomas-Francois & Somogyi, 2022) with a history of other evolutions over many decades. Food retail emerged from a trading post system to general stores, specialty stores, chain stores, and adjoining specialty stores, which led to the supermarket concept's emergence (Peak, 1977). The main motivation for the supermarket concept was its viability due to the consumer convenience of one-stop shopping and direct access to foods (Mogelonsky, 1995; Peak, 1977). This was enabled by frozen and processed food technologies that enhanced shelf-life, and electronic communication that enhanced distribution channels between retailers and distributors (Gold, 1981; Mogelonsky, 1995; Peak, 1977). Nonetheless, the modernization, introduction, and availability of new technologies in food systems do not equate to increased access to food by all groups in society unless there is a concerted effort on the part of key social actors in society (Handy, 2016; Rummo *et al.*, 2020). This qualitative study utilized a grounded theory approach to assess key stakeholders' views and perspectives on the digitalization of food retailing in the Canadian food system. It is purposed to derive a model from the emerging ideas for sustainable development while advancing digital food retail in a manner that reduces current pitfalls in technological advancement in business to benefit all stakeholders in the eco-system. The study has found that the Digitalization of Food Retail was not seen solely as a capitalist activity, rather respondents acknowledge the social and moral ethos of food access. Even retailers acknowledge the importance of food access to all groups. Emerging from the data is the reality that partnership and collaboration by the key players will be necessary for sustainable digitalized food systems.



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## Eastern European Social Sensitive Organizations' performance and ESG: A Fuzzy Set Qualitative Comparative Analysis on Emerging Economies

This study aims to investigate the relation between performance and Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) disclosure affecting their performance level in the case of European emerging economies. Under a legitimacy perspective, the research explores how the disclosure of ESG information can contribute to higher performance level by Eastern European financial institutions. The research adopts a sample of Eastern European financial sector organization issuing an Annual Report for the year 2018-2021. Specifically, the research adopts the fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) in order to explore possible pathways that outline how performance is impacted by the disclosure of ESG information. In this perspective, the present paper contributes to the international literature by providing a fresh perspective on the combination of conditions, in this case, ESG disclosure, leads to higher levels of performance. Accordingly, this study represents a novelty in terms of methodology and analyzed sample, as the vast majority of existing studies are focused on developed European countries.

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## Sustainable Clothing Consumption: Towards a Conceptual Framework

Sustainable fashion is a concept that has recently attracted the attention of scholars and manufacturers globally. Greater sustainability in clothing consumption can be viewed as the strength of the relationship between an individual's consumption attitude and sustainable clothing engagement. Extant literature primarily considers sustainable fashion from a practical point of view. Sustainable fashion practices adopt a lifecycle thinking, taking and returning resources (cradle-to-cradle principle), recycling the materials, considering societal implications and saving resources (Aakko & Koskennurmi-Sivonen, 2013). Although academic research on sustainability has received considerable attention, it has primarily focused on sustainable consumption values and motivations (e.g. Phipps et al., 2013). Implicit in this research is the emergence of the prosumer phenomenon within the framework of fashion marketing. Therefore, this study presents that contemporary society is moving towards integrating consumers and producers - a rise in prosumers in 'value co-creation'. Even though several researchers (e.g. Osbaldiston & Schott, 2012) have presented operational definitions for sustainable consumption (use and response), the theoretical definition requires stronger integration. The apparel business needs new innovative models of practice to reduce its environmental footprint, which is severe in every phase of the product's life cycle, from the production processes, care and maintenance, and disposal. Therefore, this article provides a multilevel conceptualisation of sustainability with theoretical backgrounds in cognitive psychology, human factors, and behavioral psychology. Sustainable consumption and the emergent nature of sustainable systems is defined from a multilevel, theoretical standpoint. An input-throughput-output model is advanced to illustrate a series of phases unfolding over time that constitutes the core processes and emergent situations underlying sustainable clothing consumption. To illuminate the nature of sustainable consumption, the framework highlights the consequences of sustainable consumption adoption in the context of clothing (e.g., reuse, recycle, redesign, repair, remodel, recreate, downscaling, renting, leasing), accentuating the long-term importance of successful management of collaborative engagement. Broadening the view of joint engagement to incorporate personal values, consumption attitudes, underlying processes and the various contingencies provides management with a robust direction underlining appropriate alternatives.

Rejoice Jealous Tobias- Mamina ‘Offer Valid For 2days’ – Impact of Purchase Pressure Cues on Online Deal Choice

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Several retail companies deploy purchase pressure cues, such as limited-time scarcity or limited-quantity scarcity cues on their e-commerce websites to stimulate consumers' purchase decisions. The use of purchase pressure signals is a prominent and commonly used persuasion strategy (Cremer & Loebbecke, 2021; Jang *et al.*, 2015). In general, pressure cues refer to graphical depictions on retail websites that attempt to subliminally put customers under pressure to make a transaction and, as a result, increase sales within the business (Amirpur & Benlian, 2015). The potential of pressure situations to influence consumers' decision-making process has also been recognized in the retail and commerce sector for decades to deliberately nudge consumers to a positive purchase decision (Wu *et al.*, 2021; Dawson & Kim, 2010). Despite growing practical relevance, there is a dearth in research on how pressure cues influence consumers' purchase choice in online settings. Drawing on the Stimulus-Organism-Response model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) consumer decision-making literature, this paper aims to investigate the effects of three purchase pressure cues in the form of limited product availability cues, limited time cues and perceived product popularity cues and effects of perceived value on deal choice. A structural equation model (PLS-SEM) was used to test the proposed conceptual model of four hypotheses based on the validated survey data collected from 301 consumers. To assist participants, photo-elicitation approach was included in the questionnaire to help participants make sense of the pressure cues and stimulate emotions and memory. Photo elicitation is creating an image based on the subject of research in order to elicit the respondents' views, recollections, emotions, and social constructs. Empirical results show that limited product availability cues, limited time cues, perceived product popularity, and perceived value have positive effects on deal choice behavior. The findings provide insights on the distinct efficacy and underlying processes of online purchase pressure cues. It provides insights on how online retailers can stimulate consumers' purchase decisions. Thus, the findings of this study give critical information on how to effectively utilize such cues on e-commerce platforms. The study provides sound argument for cumulative research that seeks to refine novel models of online consumer behavior even further.

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## Can Meta Offer a Sustainable Alternative Solution for Slow Fashion?

The fashion industry is well known for its negative environmental impact, and its adverse consequences for workers (Stahel, 2016). In response, the rise of slow fashion, opposing the values of fast fashion, as a sustainable consumption movement that considers the processes and resources required to make clothing has become a global phenomenon (Chi *et al.*, 2021). Slow fashion has seen increasing support especially for Generation Z that often prefers sustainable, functional, and pleasing fashion experiences (Youn & Cho, 2021). As awareness and popularity increases retail practices are rapidly adapting leading many brands to offer immersive experiences through 3-D technologies such as augmented/virtual reality (AR/VR) and recently within the metaverse channel (Boardman *et al.*, 2020). Although innovative retailers embrace technological developments and sustainability, there seems to be a disconnect between slow fashion value and the metaverse universe. Therefore, we ask whether slow fashion sustainability value can thrive within immersive customer experiences. More specifically, while slow fashion is often associated with traditional apparel industry (e.g., classical tailoring, seasonal fashion, and mending), can experiential and immersive technological developments provide alternative solutions and greater reach for the slow fashion movement? To explore this question, we rely on the interview of 16 active consumers on Meta that have revealed their interest for slow fashion. Our findings suggest that slow fashion which is closely linked to quality and sustainability is too often seen as boring associated with de-growth and fewer garments in turn metaverse through easy access to 3D universes, is seen as offering exciting opportunities to reach in their own term a different segment of Gen Z. The data show that consumers are able assume virtual identities, play games or explore thorough adventure in relation to slow fashion brands. In fact, consumers find these experiences not only “fun” but educational allowing them to go beyond the limits of the re-emergence of the old days. Although these are expected outcomes, what is more interesting is the concept of customisability that appears to be a common factor in all of these. Based on these we argue that Metaverse offers new opportunities in developing a more sustainable retail environment while promoting a more “fun” slow fashion.

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## Green Energy: An Investigation of Service Firms Supporting Photovoltaic Parks

Solar energy is a primary Renewable Energy Source (RES), with a share of 59% of the total energy from RES in 2019 (International Energy Agency, 2020). As a result, significant investments in photovoltaic (PV) system installations have been made worldwide. The PV sector is considered an area with extremely promising potential. This can be attributed to the continuous improvement of PV features performance, the economies of scale, and the national and international incentives to achieve energy and environmental goals. All of these factors have significantly reduced the cost of PV systems expenses and increased the investment interest worldwide simultaneously. As a result, the annual global growth rate amounted to 35% from 2010-2019 (Philipps & Warmuth, 2020), and the total installed PV capacity reached 627 GW at the end of 2019, compared to 100GW in 2012 (International Energy Agency, 2020). Additionally, the performance of new PV system installations exceeded 100GW worldwide for the 3rd year in a row (International Energy Agency, 2020). Given its importance in RES, this paper aims to identify the services developed and offered and the issues PV service providers face in this energy sector. Specifically, this study aimed to examine the PV maintenance and cleaning services offered and identify the best practices for improving PV panel efficiency. To accomplish these objectives, we used a qualitative research approach. We collected data through in-depth interviews with 99 PV service providers in Greece. The study's results identified six types of services developed in the PV sector: contract/maintenance services, contract/consultancy services, contract/maintenance/PV equipment suppliers, PV equipment suppliers, contract/PV equipment suppliers, and consultancy services. Then, we asked service providers their views concerning the PV sector, its present, and future. About the current situation, although there was an increase in the market before 2018, there has been a decline over the last few years due to its concentration on a few large companies that determine the selling prices (oligopoly) and often delay payments. Regarding future opportunities in the sector, respondents consider energy storage, large projects (PV parks), maintenance, installation, and net metering. In the next five years, the respondents believe that energy production via PV will increase and the sector will significantly develop, meeting the European standards for green energy production. The most frequently identified obstacles in the development of the sector are bureaucracy and delays in the licenses, frequent changes in the laws, lack of bank financing, the marginalization of small producers, problems with the distribution channels, and lack of qualified staff. Regarding their services, the majority of the service providers (85.9%) offer PV operation and performance checks once (22.6%) or twice a year (37.1%), and only 6.5% conduct checks daily. PV service providers either offer only maintenance (54%) or cleaning services (4.8%), or both (30.2%). About the PV maintenance methods, the respondents indicated Visual inspection (cable inspection, broken panel, rust, camera), Electrical inspection (operation, thermal camera, and efficient operation of the inverter), and Cleaning (washing - spraying or mowing). The respondents answered that they carry out all the necessary maintenance (46.9%), while 32.8% carry out optical-electrical-sprinkling-grass cutting. In sum, the green energy sector is developing while new supporting services are surfaced to increase the efficiency and operation of the RES. However, there is a lack of research from the service literature on this sector, qualifying further investigations.

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## Optimize Emergency Supply Chain System to Satisfy Quarantined Dwellers' Demand—Evidence from Lockdown in China

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic caused excessive damage in the worldwide area. Every country managed its way to control its spread—the Chinese government lockdown some severely affected areas to prevent an unexpected outbreak. Government shall fairly and accurately assign daily necessities for quarantined units, but evidence shows the allocation of resources is inefficient: Tons of online orders compressed in e-commerce platform; Limited distribution labor force failed to sort out commodities; Over-restricted transportation policy stuck logistic flow; Residents suffered a shortage of fresh food supply. To cope with such uncertainty, a flexible integrated supply chain is needed to allocate resources more efficiently. Our research recommends an optimized emergency supply chain for governmental decision-makers to satisfy quarantined dwellers' needs. Fresh agricultural products are perishable, vulnerable and susceptible to Coronavirus, so the logistical environment should be strictly controlled. Our research will focus on delivering fresh agricultural products, which require timely, consistent delivery, without contamination by viruses. Firstly, we will estimate the total quarantined residents' demand based on historical data through Grey Model (1,1). After ensuring the total supply is sufficient, we recommend replacing the traditional supply chain with an optimized emergency supply chain (ESC) to ensure quarantined ultimate consumers can enjoy fresh agricultural products. Aimed at improving the efficiency of location-routing distribution for fresh agricultural products, the Abi-objective optimization model is constructed, which could minimize the total cost of logistics operation and the value loss of fresh products. Then, according to the problem characteristics, an efficient two-phase hybrid heuristic algorithm is devised based on the improved K-means clustering and the extended Non-dominated Sorting Genetic Algorithm-II (ENSGA-II). The former solves the location problem of the distribution site by performing iterative optimization within the clustering scheme and among different clustering schemes; The latter solves the routing problem through the search for the Pareto optimal frontier based on the NSGA-II main loop framework and embeds flexible storage structure and corresponding tabu search criteria. In the process of goods transportation, the information management platform could promptly share the message among participants to cease information asymmetry. The platform is expected to cover transportation, stockpiling, dispensing, and smart community system management. This article will first focus on contactless distribution during the lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic in China and expand it possesses characteristics of spending and cost saving. In the third part, a discussion of applying such a system may be a solution for ESG requirements, followed by suggestions.

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## Personalization of Point-of-Purchase Communications: Quo Vadis?

In an era of information overload, relevance is key. Even more so in the physical store, where consumers are in a ‘shopping state of mind’ (Shankar *et al.*, 2010), and where still a significant proportion of all purchase decisions is being made. Relevance can be achieved by filtering information and targeting shoppers with context-aware messages (Riegger *et al.*, 2022). A commonly studied example is that of location-based messaging (i.e. aligning the message with the consumers’ geographic position; Meents *et al.*, 2020). An alternative approach is to adapt the message to the characteristics and behavior of the in-store receiver in question, implying personalization of communication. Various technological devices can be used by retailers to transfer personalized messages to shoppers in their stores. The focus of this study is on digital signage (DS) in stores, as these are commonly used by retailers for their digital in-store communication. While the personalization of DS messages may benefit customers (e.g. message relevance), it also comes with high perceived risk to individual privacy (Hess *et al.* 2020). To employ these type of personalized messages effectively, it is important to understand how customers feel and respond. The present study has four objectives, examining (1) whether the perceived benefits of varying levels of personalized DS communication at the point-of-sale outweigh the perceived risks, (2) why or why not, and (3) who is more and less open to it, and (4) for which specific situations is it more accepted. We address these objectives both from a practitioner and consumer perspective, using a mixed-methods approach. First we have conducted 16 exploratory expert interviews with various specialists in the domain of artificial intelligence, shopper marketing, data management and consumer privacy. Transcripts have been content-analyzed using NVIVO 12 software. Insights emerged in terms of how to implement personalized targeting via DS in retail stores, minding legal as well as ethical challenges in preserving consumer privacy. For example, the level of personalization via in-store digital screens differs greatly; DS content can be adapted based on customers’ demographics, emotions, preferences and shopping behavior, and all possible combinations of such personal information. It is expected that customers will respond differently, depending on the level of personalization. In Spring 2023, these results will be complemented based on a consumer survey. That way, consumers and a multitude of specialists in the smart services context of personalized communication at the point-of-sale have been investigated, allowing for setting the boundaries in terms of desirability and feasibility (technology- and privacy preservation-wise).

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## The Future of Packaging-Free Shopping: A Multi-Stakeholder Perspective

We live in turbulent times. Pandemics, geopolitical crises, and climate change that seems unstoppable with devastating effects. This makes people think, among others about the sustainability of our consumption. One of the striking ecofriendly trends is that of packaging-free shopping. Supermarkets like Pieter Pot base their entire business model on this concept, while other big retailers like Carrefour start more prudently with a package-free corner of commodity foods. Over the past 10 years, the European sector for packaging-free stores has grown significantly, with increasing numbers of shops, jobs and sales turnover. By 2030, the EU total turnover from bulk good sales is expected to reach €1.2 billion (Zero Waste Europe, 2020). Breaking-even (let alone profiting) however still seems not self-evident for many players in this industry. Research is needed to further advance the concept of ‘packaging-free shopping’ in a sustainable manner. This study is based on semi-structured interviews with three key stakeholders: managers ( $n = 5$ ), employees ( $n = 5$ ), and customers ( $n = 31$ ) of package-free retail stores. The data are collected in Spring 2022. Interviews were transcribed and content-analyzed. Several findings emerged, whereby some are stakeholder-specific, and others are common across stakeholder groups. We triangulate the insights obtained from the three parties, to identify gaps that may need to be closed. Particular attention was devoted to the tension between ecological concerns and pandemic (contamination) concerns, that is inherently relevant in the category of packaging-free products. What prevails: caring for nature or preventing getting COVID-infected? In any case, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs seems to have been shaken up, when considering the pandemic aftermath findings of this study. Insights are distilled to inspire further research in discrete choice set experiments finding out to what extent the benefits of package-free shopping justify the drawbacks of higher prices, limited product ranges, and more time-investment.



Peter van der Waerden    Commuters' Preferences Regarding the Composition of a  
Shared Bicycle System in the Context of Train Egress  
Mode Trip

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For many train travelers, the railway station is not the final destination of their trip. Often an additional transport mode such as walking, cycling, or public transport is needed to reach the final destination. At many Dutch train stations rental bicycles (OV-Fiets) are available. However, renting these bicycles have some disadvantages such as restricted return policy, one type of bicycle, and high (daily) costs. The rise of so-called 'dockless' bicycle sharing systems might give travelers more flexibility and lower costs. A question that is often raised in this context is: 'what do bicycle sharing systems have to provide to be competitive with traditional bicycle rental systems like OV-Fiets'? The aim of this paper is to provide more insight into commuters' preferences regarding the composition of a bicycle sharing system in the context of train egress mode trip. To investigate the preferences, a stated choice experiment is designed. The following seven attributes are investigated in more detail: Type of bicycle, Reservation option, Rental fare, Access time Egress time, Reliability at starting point, and reliability at endpoint. In an online survey, respondents are invited to indicate what bicycle sharing system they prefer traveling by train to their work location. Every respondents evaluated 8 different combinations of two bicycle sharing system and the base system 'OV-Fiets'. The survey was distributed among panel members of 'Panel Inzicht', which is an online fieldwork organization in the Netherlands. In total, 385 respondents fully completed the survey; 260 private car commuters and 125 train commuters. In total the respondents evaluated 3,080 combinations. A detailed exploration of the travelers' evaluation is carried out using a latent class logit model. It appears that two classes of respondents can be generated. The members of the first class (Class 1) show a basic preference for one of the offered bicycle sharing systems. In contrast, members of the second class (Class 2) prefer the traditional bicycle rental system. Most important attribute to stimulate the use of a newly offered bicycle sharing system are related to reliability and time. A first exploration regarding class membership learns that respondents with a medium education level and respondents living in a bigger city have a higher chance to be member of Class 1.

Peter van der Waerden    **Bus Travelers' Experiences with Available Amenities and  
Bus Services at Bus Stops in Dutch Urban and Rural  
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Travelers' experiences are an important source of information in the context of monitoring and optimizing the services provided by public transport companies. Experiences also give detailed insights to municipalities about omissions in the design of public transport stops and surroundings in relation to all kind of user groups. Because of differences in service levels, a major distinction in this context can be made between travelers in mainly urban and rural areas. The aim of this paper is to provide several details regarding bus travelers' experiences with different bus stop related aspects. To investigate bus travelers' experiences an online survey was composed consisting of four parts. First, some details of the respondents' current travel behavior were collected. The second part focused on experiences of current bus travelers with various amenities and bus services that are present at the bus stop they regularly use. Experiences with the following bus stop amenities were investigated in more detail: Information, Shelter, Seating, and Advertisement. Bus services were detailed into the attributes Frequency and Directness. The evaluation of all attributes was done on a 5 points scale, ranging from Very poor experience to Very well experience. The second part of the survey consisted of a stated choice experiment regarding maximum walking distances (Van der Waerden et al, 2023). The final part includes questions regarding the respondents' personal characteristics. The survey was distributed among the members of the mobility panel Zuid-Limburg Bereikbaar. In total, 882 members fully completed the survey. Based on their experiences with travelling by bus, the data of 423 respondents could be used for the analyses regarding bus stop amenities and bus services. Looking at gender, age, and education, the sample consists of a variety of respondents who are living in an urban (55 percent) or a rural (45 percent) environment. A first exploration of the respondents' responses is carried out using independent t-tests. It appears that significant differences exists for all investigated aspects except for the availability of seating and presence of advertisement. For all other aspects, it appears that bus travelers living in urban environments have significant better experiences with the aspect than travelers living in rural environments. A more detailed exploration of the responses in relation with various background characteristics analyses will be done by using reliability and regression analysis.

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## Factors Influencing Generation Z Purchase Intention in Omnichannel Retailing

The retailing industry is highly competitive as advances in information technology (IT) have changed the landscape of the retailing industry. The retailing paradigm has transformed substantially from offline stores to the contemporary omnichannel platform. Omnichannel is a customer-centric approach to sales that aims to provide customers with a seamless shopping experience, from conventional brick-and-mortar, by telephone to online platforms, for example, social media and websites. The notion behind omnichannel has been driven by rapid advancement in the digital platform, which enables retailers to integrate all channels available to engage with customers. Despite the growing literature on omnichannel, academic research on these occurrences is in its infancy. To fill the gap, this study aims to provide a research framework for empirical insights that explain the value of omnichannel in influencing Generation Z purchase intention in the fashion retail brand in Malaysia. The sample data will be coded, and the hypothesis will statistically analyse using Statistical Programme for Social Sciences (SPSS). Hence, following the omnichannel development, theoretical contributions to the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT2) are proposed. Besides its relevance to retailing, this study examines how it can contribute to strengthening retailers' customers' experience and helps retailers gain a competitive advantage.

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## Exploring Consumers' Perception of Luxury Fashion Brands in Sugar Dating Websites' Social Media

Sugar dating refers to relationships in which wealthy older individuals (i.e., sugar daddies/mommies) offer cash or gifts to younger dates (i.e., sugar babies) in return for companionship, sometimes involving sex. Viewed as a new form of prostitution (Miller, 2012) or a mix of dating and prostitution (Motyl, 2012), sugar dating is generally viewed as a less socially desired phenomenon. With most sugar babies being young, indebted adults, many sugar dating arrangement companies use social media to promote the luxurious lifestyle, gifts, and allowance sugar babies can get from using sugar dating services. Luxury products, such as handbags and jewelry, are depicted on their social media posts as non-monetary benefits that young individuals can get from the sugar daddies/mommies. Luxury fashion brands' image is important because consumers of luxury goods are more likely to be influenced by a brand's image than the price or functional value of products (Riley *et al.*, 2004; Heine, 2012). Research suggests luxury brand images could be damaged by unintended or unwanted brand endorsements by an unwanted group (AR, 2012). Yet, more scholarly attention is needed on unwanted brand endorsements by other businesses. Given that "sugar dating" can be considered a taboo by mainstream consumers, and that taboos in advertising can result in negative outcomes such as boycotts (Sheehan, 2013), we investigate the effect of unwanted brand endorsements on luxury brands' perceptions. Guided by the brand image transfer theory, this study examines the relationship between consumers' exposure to sugar dating websites' social media posts in which luxury fashion brands are embedded and consumers' brand attitudes and purchases and WOM intentions. The findings will broaden the understanding of how unintended disclosure of fashion brands affects consumers' attitudinal and behavioral reactions and the negative consequences of taboos in advertising. Using a one factor two-condition (sugar dating context vs. control) online experiment, this study explores how consumers perceive the image of luxury fashion brands as congruent with the context of the sugar dating business - a potentially negative event that wants to use the luxury brands' image to increase their awareness. Consumers' behavioral intentions, i.e., purchase and WOM intentions are measured. We also explore the mediation effect of the congruency between luxury fashion brands' image and sugar dating on consumers' brand attitudes, WOM intentions, and purchase intentions. The sample will consist of 300 U.S. adults from 18-30 years old obtained using Amazon's MTurk, a reliable online tool for recruiting survey takers. Using mediation analyses and independent t-tests, the study addresses the following research question and hypotheses: **RQ:** What is the perceived congruency between the luxury fashion brand's image and the context of sugar dating? **H1:** The presentation of the luxury fashion brand in the context of sugar dating leads to **a)** less positive brand attitudes, **b)** lower brand WOM intention, and **c)** lower purchase intention. **H2:** The perceived congruency between the luxury fashion brand's image and the context of sugar dating negatively mediates the influence of the presentation of the luxury fashion brand in the context of sugar dating on **a)** brand attitudes, **b)** purchase intention, and **c)** WOM intention.

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## Delivering Brand Value to Consumers in Agri E-commerce: Measures that Matter to Farmer Sellers

E-commerce enables farmers to directly sell agriproducts to consumers, disrupting the traditional agriculture value chain. Meanwhile, it is also increasingly hard for farmers to distinguish themselves in this market. Branding the products has been considered crucial for agribusiness. Different from manufactured products, however, agriproducts brand making has its special challenges, like difficulty in standardization and a high degree of homogeneity. This study attempted to explore the brand value applicable to agriproducts and examine its determinants from the perspective of consumers on the e-commerce platform. To do so, this study constructed brand value dimensions for agriproducts by elaborating on intangible value and tangible value. It hypothesized that what consumers experienced in pre-transaction could influence perceived intangible value, while that in post-transaction could impact perceived tangible one; they would both stimulate a consumer's re-purchase intention. With 310 questionnaires from online buyers, this work found some interesting results: (1) compared with intangible value, perceived tangible value surprisingly had a more significant influence on re-purchase intention, indicating that product quality dominates in agri e-commerce. (2) comments authenticity and the seller's credibility in pre-transaction positively influenced intangible value. That means consumers bought agriproducts mainly based on secondary cues. (3) logistic service quality in post-transaction mattered to the relationship between intangible value and tangible value.

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## The Impact of Social Media Influencer Campaigns on the eWOM and Purchase Intention of Youth Subcultures in Social Sustainability

There has been a growing intensification of social conflicts within society related to gender, race, sexual identity, and ethnicity. Thus, we are witnessing an increased emphasis on social sustainable retailing strategies, as a means of fostering harmonious relationships between business and the wider community. Equally we have witnessed retailers who have not been as proactive in promoting inclusive business practices. At the same time, the widespread use of social media in postmodern society has provided the rapid spread of youth subcultures worldwide, with social media platforms acting as the conduit for consumers to express public opinion on brands and their level of engagement with societal issues. This study examines Generation Z youth subcultures' purchase behaviour in the context of a broad range of social sustainability media campaigns for large multi-national retailers. Adopting a post-positivism approach, the study aims to 1) test the veracity of behavioural impacts as outcomes of diverse and inclusive social media influencer campaigns, and 2) to explore the role of activism and the extent to which youth subcultures' positive eWOM, and purchase intentions are affected. This study presents a systematic and extended theoretical framework to test hypotheses underpinned by the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), to test hypotheses and furthermore, provides propositions to explore the relationships between activism, positive eWOM, and the impacts on purchase intention. Youth subcultures refer to youth cultural groups that oppose popular culture (Weiner, 2018) and are marginal, subversive, and critical (Li & Peng, 2020). To adopt a specific and underexplored segment of the market, this study selects the LGBTQ group; research to date has shown this group share similar behaviours and are significantly affected by social sustainability and social media influencer campaigns (McCormick & Ram, 2022; Li, 2022). Despite being one of the three pillars of sustainability, together with economic sustainability and environmental sustainability, social sustainability has not received as much attention and research as the other two (Ajmal *et al.*, 2018; Bai *et al.*, 2019). In addition, the impact of social media influencer campaigns on youth subcultures is also a topic that has not been systematically studied but deserves discussion.

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## What does NFT offer? The Effect of Cobrand and Digital Product Extension

Brands started to experiment with various approaches to utilize NFT. Some launched pure NFT products, some launched replicas of the physical products, some provided a bundle containing both digital and physical products, and others collaborated with existing NFT brand to promote co-branded products. There were literature studying the related topics including spill-over effect between physical and digital products, product line extension, and co-branding, but not in the context of NFT. The distinctive characteristics of NFT, such as ownership rights, community development, asset value, etc., may have various effects on the original brands. We aim to measure the effects of these NFT-enabled marketing actions on brands in our study. We wish to specifically look at the relationship between the financial performances of the brands and the NFT transaction volume that have occurred since the brands related NFT launches using augmented vector autoregression (VAR). We use the brands related NFT transaction data that has been collected from multiple NFT trading platforms and financial performance indicators of the companies before and after the NFT launch for various NFT strategies. DID is also used to compare the financial results of brands that adopted NFT strategies and those who did not within the comparable time span. The results of the paper will provide managerial suggestions to brands who would like to incorporate NFT as part of their marketing strategies in the future.

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## How Local Grocery Retailers Can Use Social Media to Improve Online Engagement with Local Audiences

With an adoption rate of 59 percent worldwide and an average usage time of two and a half hours a day, social media has become an integral part of today's society. To inform and convince consumers to become (loyal) customers, also local businesses increasingly have an 'online presence'. Particularly, because social media allow local businesses to quickly interact with their audiences and to help them making purchasing decisions. In the grocery retailing context, local retailers utilize these platforms to inspire customers with recipe ideas, promote special deals and new product lines, but they also interact with calendar events like Christmas and Easter. The question arises what type of content is more successful to achieve this engagement with (potential) customers, and to what extent the level of engagement is depending on locational characteristics of the local stores. In this research, we explore how local grocery retailers' current social media activity leads to online engagement. In particular, as depicted in Figure 1, we study how social media activity (i.e., post frequency, post theme, vividness of posts, and whether employees are featured in posts) affects social media engagement (i.e., likes, comments, and shares) and how locational store characteristics affect the level of engagement. For this study, survey data is collected from 132 Dutch franchisees across 5 different chains. In the survey, franchisees are questioned about their social media behavior and their attitude towards the added value of social media for their business. In addition, the characteristics of the store's 20 most recent Facebook posts, the number of followers, and the number of likes per post were collected, resulting in a dataset of 2,640 registered posts containing a variety of post-characteristics. Among other things, we registered the frequency of posting, the theme of posts (e.g., assortment related, price promotions, recipes, vacancies), whether the posts includes pictures, videos, or only text, and whether staff was included in the picture or video. To model social media engagement, which is defined by count data, we planned to analyze the data by Poisson regression analyses. The insights of this study can be used by local businesses to better understand how to increase (online) interaction with their local audiences, and thus, to improve the success of their social media strategy.



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## Subscription-Based Services: Addictive Rewards or Frightening Lock-In?

Even two decades after Vargo & Lush's (2004) seminal piece, marketing's dominant logic is still that of services and value-in-use. Products are only a means to an end, and this is also one of the core premises underlying the recent business model of subscription-based services. The past five years, scholarly attention also started exploring this new type of consumer services. Besides several typologies of subscription-based services (Rudolph *et al.*, 2017; Chen *et al.*, 2018), research is being conducted on the perceived benefits for both consumers and business, as well as on potential drawbacks. The existing research until present mostly focuses on consumers from the US (Bischof *et al.*, 2017); Bischof *et al.*, 2020; Chen *et al.*, 2018; Lee *et al.*, 2019; Ramkumar & Woo, 2017; Rothenberg & Matthews, 2020) and Asia (Jo, 2020; Sivathanu, 2018). The present study bundles 2 empirical studies conducted in the EU to further advance the current state-of-the-art in the literature on subscription-based services. We focus particularly on the dark sides of the phenomenon, from a consumer perspective. Study 1 is a consumer survey among Belgian consumers, conducted in Spring 2022 ( $n = 156$ ), regarding surprise beauty-boxes. The findings of these Belgian (generally highly uncertainty avoidant people; cf. Hofstede, 2022), are contrasted with earlier findings in a similar context in less risk averse cultures. Fear of being locked-in seems to matter more in high uncertainty avoidant cultures. Managerial advice is distilled for differentiated marketing by subscription-based service suppliers. Study 2 is a consumer survey that will be administered in Spring 2023. We compare perceived risks and benefits between different types of subscription boxes (e.g., pre-defined, surprise, and curated subscriptions). Particular attention will go to the trade-off between the thrill of the surprise and the fear of getting locked-in. We will present the findings of both studies and integrate insights to inspire further information.

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## Is Smarter Really Better? Insights into Customer Engagement with Service Robots at the Frontline

The era of Web 3.0 has seen the proliferation of disruptive technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, which further empower consumers through the use of highly intelligent and adaptive products and services. The benefits of Web 3.0 include faster computing speed, richer media content, and enhanced semantic capabilities, which allow machines to function at the level of a human being to deliver highly personalized services to meet the increasing expectations of consumers. This has led organizations to shift their focus to technology-enabled frontline services in an attempt to improve their customers' engagement and experience. One good example is the use of service robots, often referred to as system-based autonomous and adaptable interfaces that interact, communicate, and provide smart services to an organization's customers (Wirtz et al., 2018). Empowered by advanced AI and sensory technologies that can be connected to different internet-related devices, smart systems, and sensors, service robots are equipped to perform highly useful tasks for humans in an autonomous manner (International Federation of Robotics, 2022). Despite the relevance of service robots, research in this area remains highly fragmented (Henkens *et al.*, 2021). This study aims to examine the effects of perceived smartness on customer engagement with service robots at the frontline. Data was collected via an intercept survey of 255 visitors of a museum which utilizes service robots as tour guides. The data was analyzed using PLS-SEM. The findings highlight the importance of awareness (i.e., the ability of the robot to sense information related to its surrounding) and dynamism (i.e., the ability of the robot to learn and adapt based on its relational and cyclical nature) in predicting all three dimensions of customer engagement, namely cognitive, affective, and behavioral. Actuation (i.e., the ability of the robot to decide and act independently) affected only affective and behavioral engagement, while connectivity (i.e., the ability of the robot to connect through Internet of Things with different actors) displayed a nonsignificant effect on customer engagement. This study adds to the literature on disruptive technologies in services marketing and management. Capitalizing on the growing importance of Web 3.0 technologies, the study provides practical suggestions on how different facets of service robots smartness can be customized and deployed via autonomous platforms, AI, smart assistant, and cloud-based services to enhance customer engagement in frontline services.

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## An Evolvement of 5G Enabled Innovative Business Models in the Mobility Eco System

Rapid advancement of communication and connectivity technologies is transforming customers experience in various forms. This is not only disrupting the telecom industry and affecting its customers experience but reshaping several other industries at the same time. Although adoption is at different paces, commercial 5G networks are now operational in many regions of the world, making it a truly global technology. This raises questions about how innovations find their way into various ecosystems and in what circumstances the spread of the most recent innovations generates spillover effects and enable complementors to generate unforeseen qualitative changes in the economy. One prominent early adopter is mobility eco system and transportation industry. Intelligent transportation systems (ITS), Vehicle to everything(V2X), autonomous driving and sustainable smart mobility are some of the many examples, emerging every day. Whilst many studies had focused on the impact of communications systems from different perspectives, less attention has been paid to the role of communication technology advancement, on business model innovation within the mobility eco system, embedding the open eco-system concept. Open ecosystem and open telco are not new concepts and had been a subject under discussion, research and utilization since emergence of early generations of data communication. A classical telco business model is based on providing a stable and tailored network connectivity at a competitive price using a constantly developing infrastructure. In this space telcos compete to provide better connection and service to the customer at a lower price. But the market saturation and the maturity of their offered services, have resulted in steady low growth forecasts for the actors in this play field. With expansion of connected wearables and moving objects, high data throughput and low latency in 5G era, there is a potential to establish symbiotic partnerships with unlimited opportunities, at least in theory. Although, some telcos are already pursuing new business models, most of them seem to have been unable to benefit from full growth in several digital services within various ecosystems. Mobility is one of them. The purpose of this study is to problematize how communication technology, 5G in particular, can contribute to enhancement of business model innovation in smart mobility by contributing to the conceptualization of open eco system. We start off by identifying and analyzing partnership opportunities in this space using industry cases from countries in the Baltic Sea Region. The approach is partly deductive and thus connecting to previous academic discussions and literature, and partly inductive, allowing experiences, industry expert views and cases contribute to the process of conceptualization.

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## Consumer Responses to “Multicultural Marketing”

The ethnic composition of the United States continues to change. Per U.S. Census Estimates, more than 50% of Americans will belong to an underrepresented group by 2044 (US Census Bureau, 2022). With a more racially and ethnically diverse nation, many market segments have turned from Caucasian-dominant to ethnic minority-dominant. Responding to these changes, multicultural marketing is becoming mainstream (Chu, 2022). Based on the principle of homophily (Korzenny & Korzenny, 2012), minority consumers are more likely to respond positively to ads featuring endorsers with similar characteristics. Similarly, distinctiveness theory suggests that an individual's traits are central to their identities (e.g., Hispanic ethnicity, homosexuality), and that racial and ethnic consumers are more likely to favor traits important to them more intensely (Han & Tsai, 2015). For example, research shows young consumers are more likely to purchase alcohol after seeing ads featuring younger models (Alhabash *et al.*, 2021), and that Hispanic consumers who identify with a Hispanic endorser are more likely to buy the promoted product (Mundel & Yang, 2022). This study extends the literature in multicultural marketing to an understudied market: horticulture. This market is important given its size (global horticulture market projection is \$40.24 billion by 2026; Global Market Estimates, 2022). Minority consumers are purchasing more plants because they are three times more likely to live in nature-deprived areas (National Geographic, 2020); thus, they purchase potted plants for comfort and combatting food insecurity, among other purposes (Medium, 2020). Using Qualtrics, the study will use a 2 (Endorser Age: Congruent vs. Incongruent) x 2 (Endorser Ethnicity: Congruent vs. Incongruent) between subjects' design to test the effect of personalized advertising on minority consumers' responses to plant ads. The survey will begin with demographic information and screening, then participants (Hispanic, African American, White, Asian) will report on past plant purchase behavior, see an ad with an endorser who is either congruent or incongruent with their demographic characteristics, and respond to several measures related to plant attitude, purchase intent, and endorser evaluation. The sample will consist of at least 400 U.S. consumers and will be obtained using Prolific, a reliable online tool for recruiting survey takers similar to Amazon's MTurk. Using mediation and moderation analyses, as well as MANCOVAs, the study reports on the following hypotheses:

**H1:** Respondents will show more favorable responses to **(H1a)** the ad, **(H1b)** the endorser, and **(H1c)** purchase intention when exposed to ads featuring age-congruent endorsers.

**H2:** Respondents will show more favorable responses to **(H2a)** the ad, **(H2b)** the endorser, and **(H2c)** purchase intention when exposed to ads featuring ethnicity-congruent endorsers.

**H3:** Respondents that identify more strongly with the endorser in the ad will exhibit stronger purchase intention

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## Classifying Mobile Food Shopping Service Attributes Using Kano Model Analysis

This study aims to examine mobile food shopping service quality attributes and its effects on customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Using Kano model approach, this study analyzed the relative influence of each mobile food shopping service quality attribute on customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction levels. Sixteen mobile food shopping service attributes were extracted through the content analysis of mobile food shopping services to examine how customers evaluate and classifies the attributes. A total of 346 responses were collected using online survey. Based on the survey data, 16 attributes were grouped into 6 quality types: Must-be, One-dimensional, Attractive, Indifferent, Reverse, and Questionable. Satisfaction and dissatisfaction values were assigned to each attribute for its impact on customer satisfaction. The results of continuous analysis of each attribute indicate that the service attributes belong to one-dimensional, attractive, or indifferent. One attribute regarding easy to view menu options, 3 attributes regarding customer information and payment safety, 2 attributes for system processing efficiency, 3 attributes regarding product quality information, and 2 attributes regarding customer service/delivery information are classified as a one-dimensional attribute. This result suggests that customers are satisfied when those attributes are fulfilled, but they are dissatisfied when those attributes are not fulfilled in using mobile food shopping services. Convenient to view products, service notification effectiveness/convenience, and discount information are classified as an attractive attribute, indicating the absence of these attributes may not cause dissatisfaction, but increasing satisfaction when they are present. One attribute regarding country-of-origin information of a product is classified as an indifferent attribute which doesn't affect customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction. This study increases our knowledge and understanding on customer preferences and needs in using mobile food shopping services.

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## Post-Pandemic Retail Therapy? Consumers' Coping Strategies in Response to Stressors

A stressor is defined as an external stimulus that causes stress which further can be explained as an event or situation perceived as a danger and interpreted as threatening. Research from psychology confirms that work and related issues are major stressors, the most serious being the interrelated factors of dismissal from work and loss of income. Previous studies illustrate that some stressors that develop during epidemics may have long-lasting impacts. These enduring effects can be linked to negative feelings associated with job and financial insecurity, which can cause long-term stress symptoms such as negative, depressive emotions and anxiety. While job insecurity is a subjective experience that describes the perceived threat of the possibility of losing a job and the concern a person experiences regarding her or his employment position in the future, the financial burden is the economic threat of financial difficulty and worries of not being able to pay the usual expenses. The Covid-19 pandemic and its effects are a worldwide health and economic crisis that is characterized by danger, problems, challenges, and considerable unpredictability. There are many implications causing, for example, uncertainty, economic recession and unemployment. Coping concerns the cognitive and behavioral techniques people employ to handle demanding or stressful circumstances. Developing coping processes helps people preserve their physical and mental health. The more serious the threat is perceived, the more effective the coping must be. In circumstances where coping is ineffective in dealing with stressors, such as when individuals are unable to reduce or remove the perceived threat of losing their jobs, individuals will experience distress. The purpose of this study is to explore post-pandemic consumer behavior, especially how consumers respond to distress, through the lenses of the Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping and also Protection Motivation Theory. We will identify and evaluate coping strategies (e.g., problem-focused and emotion-focused) such as retail therapy, drawing upon previous research linking shopping to well-being: 'retail therapy'. We will also examine the outcomes (e.g., subjective well-being and/or compulsive shopping) of the coping strategies. A questionnaire survey of retail shoppers will be conducted in the US and China. The results will throw new light on the relative importance of coping strategies in relation to stress responses in the post-pandemic era. Findings have important implications for retailers' communications strategies and consumers' well-being..

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## Free-to-Play or Play-to-Earn? Understanding the Mass Adoption of GameFi

The global gaming market keeps expanding, especially during the Covid pandemic and post-Covid era, which reached over 3.24 billion game players worldwide and brought around \$90 US billion in 2021 across the two top major mobile application platforms, Apple Store and Google Play, with increasing 12.6% compared to 2020. One of the commonly adopted business models in the gaming industry is the so-called “Free-to-Play”. Today, over 90% of game apps are freemium. In the freemium business model, a large group of players is attracted to the virtual world due to free downloads and free to start playing. But they have to purchase virtual goods (e.g., game coins, cosmetics, equipment, unlocking levels, etc.) using real money if would like to gain a better gaming experience. Unfortunately, to most of the players, these in-app purchases and time spent become of no value outside of the game ecosystem. Only professional ones are able to monetize in this system through streaming gameplay or winning eSports tournaments, little chance has been left to the mass players if they want to have a bigger role in their gameplay. GameFi introduced a new business model named “Play-to-Earn” firstly in 2017 and reshaping the gaming industry since 2021. GameFi is also named blockchain games, it is to financialize the gaming industry by adopting decentralized technology and token economics which include but are not limited to non-fungible tokens (NFTs). Unlike “Free-to-Play”, the players in “Play-to-Earn” games are not just playing games, they also have ownership and control over their in-app purchased virtual goods, which are named digital assets in GameFi. These digital assets usually come in the form of in-game cryptocurrencies or NFTs. But no matter for which form, they are measurable or tradable values outside of the game ecosystem. The new model provides a fair chance for both professionals and mass players to realize monetization through playing games. According to the DappRadar Games Report in the first two quarters of 2022, blockchain game activity has dramatically grown from 2021 in Q1 and contributed over 52% of the active users among all the blockchain activities, with nearly 1.1 million active users in Q2. Although GameFi has a considerable potential to benefit every involved player, its game mechanics design also brings roadblocks to mass players joining in this new channel. To help the GameFi industry better understand its current and potential customers, this work is aiming to study the adoption and possible requirements of game players on blockchain games. The textual analysis method was leveraged to study the user-generated content (e.g., Twitter, game forums, blockchain game websites, etc.) by game developers and game players. Based on the analysis, we will design a survey study to collect the game players’ feedback on blockchain games. The study will be focusing on the mass players from two country and region: ASEAN and China. ASEAN, especially the Philippines, owns the top number of players of the most famous blockchain game Axie Infinity. China is selected because it has over 660 million mass game players as of 2022, which is already one of the largest gaming populations in the world. Through studying the opinions of the players from different geographies and with different cultural backgrounds, the final goal of this study is to shed some light on the possible strategies for improving blockchain game design in the near future.