



UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
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**WEBSITE CHARACTERISTICS THAT INFLUENCE
CONSUMERS' ONLINE PURCHASE INTENTION WITHIN THE
FAST-FOOD INDUSTRY**

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ABSTRACT

The fundamental goal and purpose of this study is to examine the website characteristics that influence consumers' online purchase intention within the fast food industry. While reviewing prior literature, it was indicated that investigations around website characteristics focused mainly on the banking sector and commercial industries. This study contributes to literature by focusing on the fast food industry.

This study examined the following website characteristics: perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, trust, security, visual and audio elements, interaction and involvement, time-saving orientation, website quality, relative advantage, and service factors. The results indicated that (a) perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, security, time-saving orientation, and relative advantage had a positive relationship with online purchase intention; (b) interaction and involvement, website quality, and service factors had a significant relationship with online purchase intention within the fast food industry.

This study has applied a quantitative approach to investigate the website characteristics that influence consumers' online purchase intention of fast food. The study used a 5-point Likert Scale adapting questions from previous literature. The researcher collected a total of 204 responses, however, only 202 responses were viable. These responses were collected through an online survey due to COVID-19.

This current academic study intended to develop and contribute to literature regarding the website characteristics that influence online purchase intention of fast food as well as extend the applicability of the Technology Acceptance Model and Theory of Flow to the fast food industry. This study also intended to inform and assist marketing managers within the fast-food industry by providing them with research and evidence regarding the website characteristics which motivate consumers' online purchase intention of fast food.

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, Gabrielle Pillay, hereby declare that this research is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Commerce in the discipline of marketing at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

I further declare that: I am aware that plagiarism (the use of someone else's work without their permission and/or without acknowledging the original source) is wrong. I have followed the required conventions in referencing the thoughts and ideas of others. I understand that the University of the Witwatersrand may take disciplinary action against me if there is a belief that this is not my own unaided work or that I have failed to acknowledge the source of the ideas or words in my writing.

SIGNED ON THIS 16 DAY OF July 2022

G.Pillay

SIGNATURE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
DECLARATION.....	iii
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vii
CHAPTER ONE: Introduction.....	8
1.1 Problem Statement.....	9
1.2 Purpose of the Study.....	11
1.3 Research Objectives.....	11
1.3.1 Primary Objectives.....	11
1.3.2 Secondary Objectives.....	12
1.4 Research Questions.....	12
1.5 Preliminary Literature Review.....	13
1.6 Proposed Conceptual Model.....	25
1.7 Research Methodology	26
1.8 Ethical Considerations.....	30
1.9 Significance and Justification of the Study.....	30
1.10 Research Report Structure.....	31
CHAPTER 2: Literature Review	32
2.1 Grounding Theories.....	32
2.1.1 Technology Adoption Theory.....	32
2.1.2 Theory of Flow.....	34
2.2 Construct Development.....	35
2.2.1 Fast Food Industry.....	35
2.2.2 Internet Use in South Africa.....	40
2.2.3 E-Commerce.....	42
2.2.4 Website Characteristics.....	43
2.2.5 Consumer Behaviour.....	44
2.2.6 Purchase Intention.....	46
2.3 Hypotheses Development	47
2.4 Conceptual Model.....	62

CHAPTER 3: Research Methodology.....	63
3.1 Research Philosophy.....	63
3.2 Research Design.....	64
3.3 Research Approach: Qualitative vs. Quantitative.....	64
3.4 Sampling Design.....	65
3.4.1 Target Population.....	65
3.4.2 Sampling Frame.....	65
3.4.3 Sampling Size.....	66
3.4.4 Sampling Method.....	66
3.5 Data Collection Method.....	67
3.5.1 Research Instrument.....	67
3.5.2 Administration of Questionnaire.....	68
3.6 Data Analysis & Interpretation.....	68
3.6.1 Descriptive Statistics.....	69
3.6.2 Factor Analysis.....	70
3.6.3 Reliability Analysis.....	70
3.6.4 Validity Testing.....	70
3.6.5 Model Fit Indices.....	71
3.6.6 Hypotheses Testing	71
3.7 Ethical Considerations.....	71
CHAPTER 4: Data Analysis.....	73
4.1 Descriptive Statistics.....	73
4.1.1 Demographic Descriptive Statistics.....	73
4.1.2 Variable Descriptive Statistics.....	74
4.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis.....	77
4.3 Reliability.....	80
4.4 Testing for Validity.....	81
4.5 CFA Model Fit.....	83
4.6 Path Analysis.....	84
4.7 Hypothesis Testing.....	85
CHAPTER 5: Discussion, Recommendations and Limitations.....	87
5.1 Discussion.....	87
5.2 Recommendations.....	90
5.3 Limitations.....	91

5.4 Conclusion.....	91
REFERENCE LIST.....	92
Appendices.....	130
SEBS Ethics Clearance.....	133
Permission Letters.....	134
Consent Forms.....	136
Questionnaire.....	137
Turn-it-in.....	145

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Proposed Conceptual Model.....	25
Figure 2.1: 10 Most Valuable Fast Food Brands Worldwide.....	37
Figure 2.2: Top 6 Fast Food Brands in South Africa.....	38
Figure 2.3: Number of Online Shoppers in South Africa.....	40
Figure 2.4: Proposed Conceptual Model.....	62
Figure 4.1: Confirmatory Factor Analysis.....	77
Figure 4.2: Inter-construct Correlation Matrix.....	80
Figure 4.3: Path Analysis Model.....	83
Figure 4.4: Hypotheses Testing Results.....	84

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Questionnaire Sources.....	130
Table 4.1: Demographic Frequency.....	72
Table 4.2: Independent Variables Frequency.....	118
Table 4.3: Dependent Variables Frequency.....	75
Table 4.4: Accuracy Analysis Statistics.....	77
Table 4.5: Model Fit with CFA.....	82

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The World Wide Web was introduced in the nineties (Ross, 2021). Since then the digital world has been growing rapidly (Pettersson, 2015). People have grown to turn to technology more often and in almost every aspect of their daily lives because it is perceived to make things easier (Alexander, 2018). The development of the internet and its unlimited worldwide impact has also been the foundation of entrepreneurship to new technological spheres (Bucko, 2018). An example of entrepreneurship in the new spheres includes e-commerce, which has mainly two approaches which are websites and apps (Bucko, 2018). The growth of the technology industry also brought about the growth of the digital marketing industry (Stokes, 2017).

Reaching consumers through digital media is considered a promising field of development for marketing (Zaika, et al., 2021). Digital marketing is defined as the creation of demand using the power of the Internet, which is advantageous for marketers (Stokes, 2017). Online tactics also have the ability to influence the viewers' online purchase intention (Jones, et al., 2011). This is advantageous for marketers as they are moving towards the implementation of a consumer-oriented approach and trying in every way possible to connect with consumers as much as they can to break down the barriers of location (Malik, 2017).

In the food industry, the digital marketing concept has grown rapidly among consumers (Roy, 2018). Many companies within the food industry are relying increasingly on digital marketing (Zumstein, et al., 2021). Organisations usually make use of these tools through social media, email, and their websites which helps them connect with existing and potential customers more efficiently (Alexander, 2018). Websites are seen as a primary form of digital marketing that companies use to attract and engage consumers (Sherman, 2019).

Websites are also seen as a primary source of digital marketing that encourages consumers to make online purchases (Yasmin, et al., 2015). This growth within the digital world led to the introduction of online shopping which subsequently revolutionized the way consumers shop (Makhitha, et al., 2019). Businesses are adopting websites by having a static website that provides basic information about their business and products or by having a state-of-the-art website that allows online transactions with consumers (Shaltoni, 2017). Hence, encouraging the use of websites as an e-commerce platform.

An E-commerce platform is defined as a mediated interaction tool designed to implement a marketing strategy used by intelligent and motivated players in the buying process (Bee, et al., 2022). E-commerce lacks human contact; thus only through website characteristics, online retailers are able to communicate with consumers' (Nazarie, et al., 2021).

Toufaily (2016) identified two types of website characteristics; functional and relational. The functional characteristics, which are based on technical features, would consist of: perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, security, visual and audio elements, and web design quality (Berraies, 2015). Relational characteristics relate to the social and human aspects of a website namely, trust, interaction and involvement, time-saving orientation, relative advantage and service factors (Basinska, et al., 2013; Keyzer, et al., 2019). This facilitates the explanation of the relationship between website characteristics, as it acts on behalf of the business, and consumers' online purchase intention. However, this study explores the website characteristics that influence consumers' online purchase intention in the fast-food industry.

There are two types of retailers that provide food delivery services, one is the retailers themselves (Ali & Cheng, 2012; Mckinsey & Company , 2016), for example, KFC and McDonalds, and the second type consists of restaurant intermediaries that provide delivery services for a large range of restaurants; i.e. Uber Eats and Mr. Delivery (Yeo, 2016). 60% of US consumers order delivery or takeout once a week (Resendes, 2021).

The fast-food industry is a saturated market thus to remain competitive they have started providing additional online services (Ali & Cheng, 2012; Lee, et al., 2019). Thus, this study explores whether specific website characteristics motivate consumers to buy from an online medium.

Consumers are also more aware of the world around them and everything happening within it (Malik, 2017; Ziembra & Eisanbardt, 2013). Information is communicated at a fast pace due to social media and other online platforms that deliver services and products in real-time (Martin, 2018). Website characteristics have the ability to shift human interaction and the social aspect of relationships from the real world to the virtual world (Toufaily, 2016).

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Electronic commerce transactions play an important role in the current economy which includes the fast-food industry (Long, 2015), hence it is important we understand the characteristics which affect e-commerce transactions. Further research is required to

understand which website characteristics affect consumer behaviour which then affects the purchase intention of specific goods and services online, thus justifying the need for it to be studied and measured.

63% of consumers agree that it is more convenient to get delivery than to dine out with family (Resendes, 2021). This led to an increased usage of online food delivery services (Hotel Tech Report, 2022). This also highlights the importance of understanding which website characteristics influence consumers' online purchase intention, especially, in the fast-food industry. Studies show the influence of digital marketing on consumers in the banking industry, however, not as many studies have been done in relation to the food industry (Girchenko & Kossmann, 2016; Long, 2015; Wanjuki, 2014). The food industry is also one of the leading industries in the economy (Gqomo, 2017; Mackay, et al., 2013). A study in the United States of America (USA) showed that the amount of money spent by fast-food outlets on online marketing is more than the entire healthcare industry in the USA (Roy, 2018).

With regards to digital marketing within the fast-food industry in South Africa, the best organisation to look at would be Nandos, as they are well known for their interactional digital marketing strategy (Gqomo, 2017).

Previously, it was the popular brand name fast-food outlets that were fully utilising the digital marketing concept (Cottam, 2013). Over time many other businesses within the food industry started following their lead and chose to use websites as the mainframe for their digital marketing efforts (Roy, 2018). Although online food purchases are not as popular as other means of ordering food, the numbers are steadily growing (Yeo, 2016). The most common form of ordering is by telephone or by visiting the actual restaurant, however, orders of fast food through websites are becoming increasingly popular (Yeo, 2016). Approximately 60% of online orders are made on smartphones; therefore, it is important to ensure that restaurants' websites and online ordering systems are optimized for small screens (Hotel Tech Report, 2022). This research attempts to bridge both the online medium and fast-food industry for retailers and marketers to gain insights as well as develop effective strategies to target their market.

A study examining online grocery food shopping explained that all tasks of a website can be strategically designed to enhance users' intentions and elaborated on the significance of measuring several features to understand users' perceptions of the website layout and how all these features jointly influence e-buyer perceived flow and control (Lopez, 2018). The study

eventually concluded that consumer satisfaction influenced the e-loyalty of consumers. However, the website characteristics that influence online purchase intention need to be determined and measured.

Within the large fast-food industry, it can be difficult to understand what is required from the brand and its website to effectively get a consumer to purchase the product (Mackay, et al., 2013). Consumer behaviour is difficult to understand as the food industry consists of consumers with different characteristics (Marily, 2015). This study intends to lessen the informational gap between consumers and businesses by investigating the correlation between website characteristics and consumers' online purchase intention within the fast food industry.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to bridge the gap between consumers and businesses in the fast-food industry with regard to what is expected of an organisation in terms of its website and what characteristics positively affect the consumer's choice to purchase.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 Primary Objectives

- To investigate how the perceived ease of use affects the consumers' online purchase intention in the fast-food industry.
- To investigate the relationship between perceived usefulness and the consumers' online purchase intention in the fast-food industry.
- To investigate how trust affects the consumers' online purchase intention in the fast-food industry.
- To determine how security affects the consumers' online purchase intention in the fast-food industry.
- To ascertain how visual and audio elements affect the consumers' online purchase intention in the fast-food industry.
- To determine the relationship between interaction and involvement and the consumers' online purchase intention in the fast-food industry.
- To determine the relationship between time-saving orientation and the consumers' online purchase intention in the fast-food industry

- To investigate how website design quality affects the consumers' online purchase intention in the fast-food industry
- To determine how relative advantage affects consumers' online purchase intention in the fast-food industry
- To investigate the relationship between service factors and consumers' online purchase intention in the fast-food industry

1.3.2 Secondary Objectives

- To conduct a literature review on the website characteristics that influence online purchase intention

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- To what extent does perceived ease of use affect consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry?
- What is the relationship between perceived usefulness and consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry?
- To what extent does trust affect consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry?
- How does security affect consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry?
- To what extent do visual and audio elements affect consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry?
- What is the relationship between interaction and involvement and consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry?
- What is the relationship between time-saving orientation and consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry?
- To what extent does website quality affect consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry?
- How does relative advantage affect consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry?
- To what extent do service factors affect consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry?

1.5 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumers are the most significant entities to the business world because they possess the power of choice with regard to deciding to purchase the product or service or reject the option to purchase (Pettersson, 2015). For this reason, it is imperative to understand the factors behind online purchase intention and the consumer behaviour which leads to the purchase of a product or service. Website characteristics and technology acceptance theories are important factors to understand in order to effectively utilise e-commerce to its absolute potential. The literature review for this study is discussed further in Chapter 2.

1.5.1 Theoretical Groundings

This research study is grounded by the technology acceptance model and the theory of flow.

1.5.1.1 Technology Acceptance Model

The technology acceptance model (TAM) aids research that relates to the adoption of information systems (Feng, et al., 2020). Websites are considered information systems, thus, the technology acceptance model is an applicable grounding theory to this study (Dachyar & Banjarnahor, 2017).

The Technological Acceptance Model claims that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness have a direct influence on behaviour thus indicating a direct influence on consumers' behaviour and their acceptance of technology (Lai, 2017). This study extends the knowledge of the technology acceptance model by examining how perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness influence consumers' online purchase intention. It explores the website characteristics that have the ability to motivate consumers into accepting online shopping.

TAM enables the prediction of users' adoption of an information system which explains how consumers will accept website characteristics and how this leads to online purchase intention (Durodolu, 2016).

1.5.1.2 Theory of Flow

The flow search theory or flow theory, states that an individual achieves a state of flow when they are engrossed in an activity that they may lose awareness of their environment, time, and even self (Joonas, et al., 2018). Flow is usually characterized by the following aspects: clear goals, immediate and unambiguous feedback, balanced skills versus challenges, sense of

control over the task at hand, high but subjectively effortless attention, distorted sense of time perception, merging of awareness and action takes place, a loss of self-awareness and autotelic motivation (Mao, et al., 2020). This is relevant as the website characteristics; trust, security, visual and audio elements, interaction and involvement, time-saving orientation, website quality, relative advantage, and service factors are measured in this study as they aid the feeling of flow.

1.5.2 Construct Development

In this section, aspects relating to the fast food industry, the South African context on Internet use, E-commerce, website characteristics, consumer behaviour, and purchase intention are reviewed. A review of these aspects enables insights that aid the development of the constructs and the understanding of the constructs developed will be subsequently used in the hypotheses development.

1.5.2.1 Fast-Food Industry

The subsection below discusses the global fast-food market environment and the South African fast-food market.

Global Fast Food Market Environment

The rise of globalisation and urbanisation has produced an augmentation in the global demand for fast food as consumers continue to rely on the convenience of fast food (Insight, 2018). Fast-food restaurants offer standardized meals and prices to customers around the world (Cengel & Yildirim, 2013). These standardized meals often characterise the menu to incorporate the local culture and delights (Etemad-Sajadi & Rizzuto, 2013). The emergence of dual-income households has increased the practice of dining outside rather than cooking at home due to people being busy and having tight schedules, fast food provides convenience and relief from stress (Ali & Cheng, 2012). Examples of fast-food restaurants include McDonald's, KFC, Burger King, etc.

The South African Fast-food Market

Fast food is big business in South Africa (Mackay, et al., 2013). It is one of the most emergent sectors and has the largest turnover in the South African food service industry (Mackay, et al., 2014). Fast-food franchises are on the rise in South Africa (Martinuzzi, 2019). This is partly due to the introduction of easy-to-use services such as Order In, Mr.

Deliver, Uber Eats, and franchises offering delivery services (Martinuzzi, 2019). Despite changing lifestyles and a sluggish economy, South Africans are embracing the consumption of affordable, large-portioned, and immediate fast food, so much so that South Africa experienced a higher growth rate of online food delivery services than the international standard (Memeburn, 2019).

KFC is the biggest fast-food franchise in South Africa, followed by McDonald's (Insight, 2018). The reason they are the biggest players is partially because of their ability to effectively increase online purchase intention (Insight, 2018). For example, free delivery, combo, and meal deals also attract the budget-conscious fast-food craver with Google searches rising for keywords such as “McDonald's Snack Box”, “Big Mac Meal” and “KFC Bucket for 1” (Martinuzzi, 2019)

Websites build active relationships between companies and their website visitors (Chang, 2015). Websites thus have the ability to increase profitability within the fast-food industry by reaching consumers through an online medium (Ling, 2018).

1.5.2.2 Internet Use In South Africa

A large number of South African consumers use the Internet to acquire information with regard to products, services, and special offers (Mulero, 2012). Shopping on the internet involves whole, or part purchase of products, and services through an online medium (Lutkevich, 2022). It has been proven that time spent on the internet by South African users is higher than that of American and European users (Villiers, 2019); this is confirmed by the fact that South Africans spend roughly 8 hours 23 minutes online every day whereas Americans spend an average of 6 hours and 38 minutes a day (Villiers, 2019). South Africa has an online market penetration of 35%, meaning, that thirty-five percent of South Africa's population has bought at least one product online (Ecommerce Market Analysis, 2021). However, South Africa is the 41st largest market for e-commerce as of 2021 and is experiencing a growth of 19% (Ecommerce Market Analysis, 2021). This influences the study as it indicates that digital marketing and online purchase intention have the ability to grow exponentially in South Africa when executed effectively. For this reason, it is important to understand which website characteristics encourage South Africa's Internet users to purchase online.

1.5.2.3 E-Commerce

E-Commerce is defined as purchases and sales of goods and services transacted over the Internet (Cho, 2015). Consumers' shopping behaviours in the online environment differ from those in traditional retail stores (D'Adamo, et al., 2021; Fend & Kang, 2021).

E-Commerce is accomplishing continuous growth in the retail environment within South Africa (Export.gov, 2019). Although the e-commerce sector in South Africa is growing rapidly, South African online services must observe the USA, UK (United Kingdom), and China to improve our online retail offering (Tucker, 2019). With China and the USA being the two countries with the highest amount of revenue from e-commerce sales, it is indicated that South Africa needs to increase its knowledge and marketing strategies to better equip itself to compete within the e-commerce sector (Clement, 2019)

It was proposed that flow assists online behaviours such as browsing, shopping, and repeat purchases (Lim, 2014). Following the theory, it is argued that when consumers are navigating through a website they are in a state of flow resulting in more time spent on the website (Mao, et al., 2020). The theory of flow was found to create positive customer experiences with regard to e-commerce (Bilgihan, et al., 2014). Online marketers are convinced that if a consumer experiences flow, they are more likely to make more purchases as well as visit the website more frequently (Mohammadi & Dickson, 2021). Website characteristics such as perceived ease of use and trust as well as visual aesthetics all play a role in the creation of Flow that a consumer experiences whilst shopping online (Liu, 2013).

1.5.2.4 Website Characteristics

Marily (2015) found that there are six main aspects of website characteristics that are considered important to consumers: usability, visual aspects, technical adequacy, security, communication, and prestige. This research focuses on five functional and five relational characteristics. Functional characteristics include perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and security as well as visual and audio elements and website design quality. The five relational attributes are namely trust, interaction and involvement as well as the time-saving orientation concept, relative advantage, and service factors. The main role of these characteristics is to incorporate the human interaction and social relationships experienced in the real world into the digital world (Toufaily, 2016).

It is noted that previous research studies have empirically tested several website cues, some of which include: visual appeal, website quality, media format, and functional convenience, and how these cues relate to online impulse purchases (Liu, 2013; Maraqa & Rashed, 2018). There is a proposed term called ‘webmospherics’ which includes website aspects such as frames, graphics, text, pop-up windows, media dimensions, and site layout parameters (Lin & Liu, 2019). This study evaluates the influence of visual and audio elements and perceived ease of use, along with other factors, to online purchase intention.

1.5.2.5 Consumer Behaviour

Consumers often make unintended purchases through spontaneous and intuitive behaviour after being exposed to stimuli, which is referred to as an impulse purchase (Liu, 2013). It has been suggested that webmospherics have the ability to replace atmospherics, which is provided by a physical store, thus providing the necessary stimuli required to encourage an online purchase (Fend & Kang, 2021). Previous studies explored consumers’ impulse decision-making mechanisms in online environments, where the examination of how website attributes such as visual appeal and website ease of use affected a consumer’s emotion and personality which triggered one’s online purchase behaviour (Fend & Kang, 2021; Liu, 2013). It is vital for companies to understand what cues encourage online purchase intention and to try and ensure that consumers do not regret their purchase choice.

1.5.2.6 Purchase Intention

Online purchase intention can be defined as a situation where a consumer is willing and intends to make online transactions rather than in-store purchases (Chaffey, 2017; Meskaran, et al., 2013). This study verifies whether website characteristics influence consumers' online purchase intention within the fast food industry.

Purchasing a product through an online platform is a progressively common practice for consumers worldwide (Cho, 2015). Customers from various age groups utilise the Internet as an alternative channel for the acquisition of goods and services (Cho, 2015). Therefore it is essential to understand which website characteristics influence consumers' online purchase intention.

1.5.2.7 Hypotheses Development

Under this subsection, the relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable is reviewed to gain insight into the findings of the existing empirical literature.

Relationship between Perceived Ease of Use and Consumer Online Purchase Intention within the Fast-food Industry

Perceived ease of use is defined as an individual's belief that the use of new technology will be effortless (Cho, 2015). It is said that ease of use refers to the degree of ease with which one can use a system (Malik, 2017). Applying this definition with regards to online shopping, ease of use indicates that using the Internet to shop online will involve minimal effort.

A study in South Africa stated that ease of understanding was an essential factor that influenced online shopping (Hung & Cant, 2017). It further stated that online shopping sites should contain unambiguous language and instructions (Hung & Cant, 2017). However, the fact that there are 11 official languages in South Africa which could lead to language barriers and may influence the consumers' intention to shop online was not studied, hence, supporting the need for this to be investigated further.

With regards to this specific study, reference is made to the ease of navigation and use of the website, ensuring that a customer experiences easy navigation and can easily locate what they require. This suggests that the ease of use of technology on the website and the extent to which the consumer is satisfied with the online purchase experience is the basis for determining consumer preferences (Raad, et al., 2018). Online purchase intention can be described as the consequence of attitude and satisfaction, thus showing the possibility that perceived ease of use affects a consumer's online purchase intention (Cho, 2015).

Thus, it can be hypothesised that there is a positive relationship between perceived ease of use and a consumer's online purchase intention.

H1: There is a positive relationship between perceived ease of use and consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry.

Relationship between Perceived Usefulness and Consumer Online Purchase Intention within the Fast-food Industry

Perceived usefulness is defined as the idea that the use of new technology will lead to the enhancement or improvement of an individual's performance (Olivia & Marchyta, 2022). According to the Technology Acceptance Model, perceived usefulness is when consumers feel that shopping online increases their efficiency and positively affects their entire purchase process (Cheema, 2013)

Shopping online allows consumers the opportunity to save time, evade crowded markets, solve parking problems, and allows consumers to access online stores 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, free from stress and the necessitate to carry heavy items (Cho, 2015). This indicates a relationship between the perceived usefulness of a website and the consumer's online purchase intention. Therefore it is hypothesised that:

H2: There is a positive relationship between perceived usefulness and consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry

Relationship between Trust and Consumer Online Purchase Intention within the Fast-food Industry

Online shopping consists of two participating entities, namely the business and the consumer (Kutz, 2016). A well-designed website can build trust among consumers (Enginess, 2020). As trust increases in the site, confidence towards the product increases too (Hsu, 2013). Trust cannot exist without risk, consumers have a feeling of uncertainty and believe there is risk associated with online shopping (Bergman, 2017). It is said that a consumer's perceived risk influences their acceptance of digital aspects (Malik, 2017).

The brand name is one of the most important factors when it comes to providing a consumer with trust, especially when the main physical features and functional properties of a product are unknown (Sevim, 2014). Brand names assist the concept of trust as it influences and pushes consumers toward the use of e-commerce (Douglas, 2021). When a consumer considers a website trustworthy; it refers to the consumer's faith in the site as well as a reduction in risk and uncertainty (Maraqa, 2018). This extends to the acceptance of digital marketing stimuli. It is, therefore, hypothesised that:

H3: There is a positive relationship between trust and consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry.

Relationship between Security and Consumer Online Purchase Intention within the Fast-food Industry

The fear a consumer feels from the possibility of exploitation of their money or credentials often tends to outweigh the benefits they receive from shopping online, therefore, websites need to ensure that the consumers' personal information is secured (Sevim, 2014). Security was found to be an essential factor with regard to shopping online, as 96.6% of the respondents agreed that the protection of their personal information was an important factor that influenced their online purchase intention (Hung & Cant, 2017). Research needed to be carried out to understand what makes a consumer feel secure to purchase fast food online.

This hypothesises that security positively influences the online purchase intention of fast food. The study will, therefore, test the following hypothesis:

H4: There is a positive relationship between security and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry

Relationship between Visual and Audio Elements and Consumer Online Purchase Intention within the Fast-food Industry:

Since we feel trust towards another human by seeing his/her face, this considers that we can get the same kind of feeling towards a company by viewing their website's graphical interface (Bergman, 2017). Thus, suggesting that the graphical and visual features of a website are crucial for an online shop's trust. This also suggests that there is possibly a relationship between trust and visual elements of a website that influences online purchase intention.

This characteristic from the study mostly focuses on how the visual and audio aspects of the website design influence the emotions a consumer experiences which ultimately leads to online purchase intention. The design elements required to reach a purchase decision were typography, graphics, audio, colours, frames, and navigation, which inherently are visual and audio elements (El Dehaibi, 2021). Visual and audio elements have the ability to elicit positive emotions toward the consumers' purchase decisions (Pramudya & Seo, 2019). However, the idea of Emotion-Oriented eCommerce is fairly new, thus this is investigated further in relation to the online purchase intention within the fast-food industry.

It has been stated that the more visually appealing a website is, the more pleasure a consumer experiences while interacting with the website (Liu, 2013). From this increased pleasure experienced the likelihood of the consumer purchasing a good or service from that specific website increases too. Therefore it is hypothesised that:

H5: There is a positive relationship between the visual and audio elements of a website and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry

Relationship between Interaction and Involvement and Consumer Online Purchase Intention within the Fast-food Industry

Interaction and involvement on websites refer to electronic word of mouth (Khan & Hashmi, 2016). Electronic word of mouth is defined as a positive or negative statement made by potential, actual or former customers towards a product or company, which is made available to a large number of people or institutions through the internet (Ling, 2018). Consumers are given the opportunity to read other consumers' experiences with the website along with the products offered (Pettersson, 2015). The use of reviews online can also determine how often user reviews influence consumer decision-making, this can be seen from the number of helpfulness polls (Raad, et al., 2018). Electronic word of mouth is also considered an informal communication channel between the customer and seller via the internet (Ling, 2018).

This is important as it influences how consumers perceive the products and services of that company. It is a type of word of mouth, which means that it can also affect how other people view the product (Malik, 2017). Word of mouth is especially important when trying to recruit new customers (Bhuvaneswari, et al., 2022). If a business experiences negative word of mouth it can affect other consumers' behaviour towards the product or service (Huete-Alcocer, 2017). It is therefore hypothesised that:

H6: There is a significant relationship between the interaction and involvement of consumers with the website and the consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry

Relationship between Time-saving orientation and Consumer Online Purchase Intention within the Fast-food Industry

Time-saving orientation has a strong relationship with post-usage usefulness because the more time the user can save the more valuable and useful the service is perceived (Prabowo

& Nugroho, 2018). All these factors tend to increase consumers' preference to purchase online rather than having to go to physical stores. People who are income rich but time-poor find online shopping attractive because it helps them save time (Punj, 2012). This explains that in a world where everyone seems to be income-rich but time-poor, online shopping is growing, and considering food is a daily necessity, this establishes the following hypothesis:

H7: There is a positive relationship between time-saving orientation and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry

Relationship between Website Quality and Consumer Online Purchase Intention within the Fast-food Industry

Due to the increasing number of internet users, the role of websites is becoming increasingly important for marketing within various business fields (Semuel, 2019). Website quality structures the majority of opinions from the consumers towards the website, this is because website quality increases the effectiveness of the messages delivered to the audience and consumers (Ling, 2018). There are two main approaches to evaluating website quality, which is the consumer usability perspective and the business perspective (Semuel, 2019).

The role of influencing users online is the ability of the web design itself (Raad, et al., 2018). This means that the context of a website can attract buyers to the website, as it affects how efficiently a website promotes its products and services. The quality of the website can also be known as the presentation aspect, as the design represents the emotional appeal consumers experience in relation to the website as well as towards the products that are offered (Marianne, 2021).

H8: There is a significant relationship between website design quality and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry

Relationship between Relative Advantage and Consumer Online Purchase Intention within the Fast-food Industry

Relative advantage is explained to be the characterisation of how much technology advancement is seen as better or better than ever (Mapande & Appiah, 2018). Relative advantage positively influenced the adoption of e-commerce (Mapande & Appiah, 2018). This then supports the idea that if consumers see technology advancement in a positive light they are more likely to embrace and encourage the use of said technological advancement.

The adoption of e-commerce sites must occur for the desired result of online purchase intention by consumers to be reached (Lai, 2017). It is therefore hypothesised that;

H9: There is a positive relationship between relative advantage and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry

Relationship between Service Factors and Consumer Online Purchase Intention within the Fast-food Industry

Adequate service is the ability to solve customers' problems and concerns before they occur, however, in the context of e-commerce the service factors include customer service and delivery service (Mkhize, 2019). Service factors, namely the delivery service aspect, are considered an important factor in relation to their influence on consumer online buying satisfaction (Rudansky-Kloppers, 2014). Therefore, taking into consideration that service factors influence online buying behaviour it can then be hypothesised that:

H10: There is a significant relationship between Service Factors and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry

As mentioned above, prior literature was used as a basis for developing and substantiating the proposed hypotheses. Additional research is required to gain knowledge of whether these characteristics influence consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry. This study resolves this knowledge gap.

1.5.2.8 Summary Of Hypotheses

H1: There is a positive relationship between perceived ease of use and consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry.

H2: There is a positive relationship between perceived usefulness and consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry.

H3: There is a positive relationship between trust and consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry.

H4: There is a positive relationship between security and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry

H5: There is a positive relationship between the visual and audio elements of a website and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry

H6: There is a significant relationship between the interaction and involvement of consumers with the website and the consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry

H7: There is a positive relationship between time-saving orientation and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry

H8: There is a significant relationship between website quality and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry

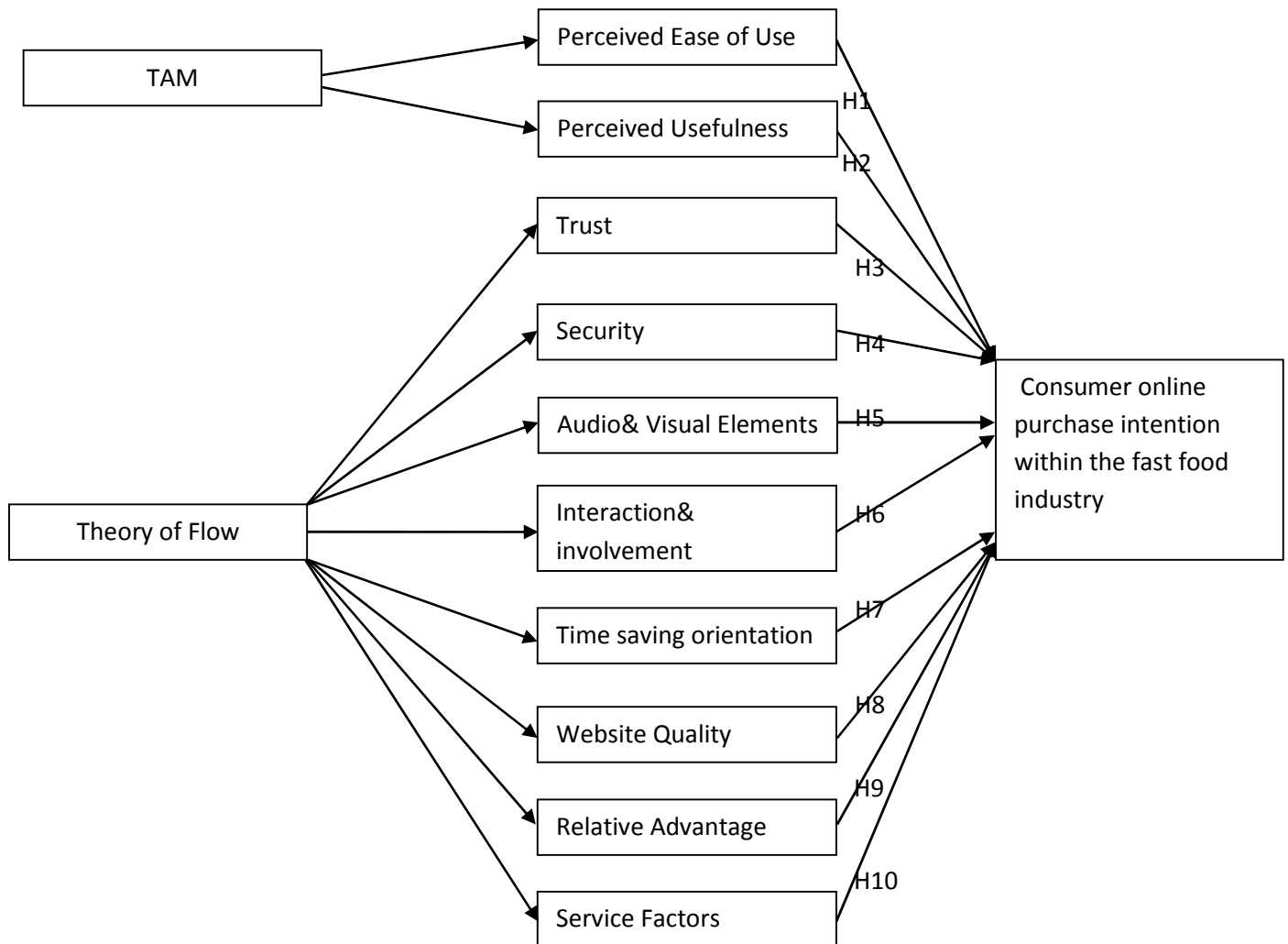
H9: There is a positive relationship between relative advantage and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry

H10: There is a significant relationship between Service Factors and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry

1.6 PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Figure 1.1 diagrammatically illustrates the hypothesized website characteristics that influence consumers' online purchase intention within the fast-food industry.

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Model



Compiled by: Researcher (2020)

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research philosophy, research design, research approach, sampling design, data collection method, and data analysis procedures are discussed in this section. The research methodology for this study is discussed in further detail in Chapter 3.

1.7.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is a belief about the specific technique in which data ought to be gathered, analysed, and utilised (Ramakrishnan, 2013). Several paradigms have been proposed by researchers, however, it has been recommended that they can be grouped into four main categories, Positivism, Interpretivism, Critical, and Pragmatism (Kivunja, 2017). These philosophies are reviewed in Chapter 3 of this quantitative study.

1.7.2 Research Design

Research designs are represented in the form of exploratory, descriptive, explanatory, or predictive research methods (Wyk, 2019). However, for this particular study only explanatory and descriptive research forms are referenced.

Explanatory research is the use of secondary sources to provide evidence that helps us comprehend the problem faced more efficiently (Gradesfixer, 2019). This is referred to as an analytical study as it seeks to identify links between the variables and the research problem (Wyk, 2019). Some of the advantages of explanatory research are that it increases the knowledge of a problem which also means better conclusions (Yousaf, 2017). This research design was considered for the construct and hypotheses development.

The other research approach taken is the descriptive research approach which is an attempt to investigate whilst providing explanations and also discovering new information apropos of a topic; it is the use of primary sources (Gradesfixer, 2019). The main objective of descriptive research is to contribute a precise and valid representation of the variables and their influence on the research problem (Wyk, 2019). This research design was chosen as primary data was required to assist in understanding how the website characteristics affect the consumers' online purchase intention.

1.7.3 Research Approach: Qualitative Vs. Quantitative

Qualitative research is empirical research in which the data collected is not in numerical form (Mcleod, 2019). Qualitative research usually produces more particular or specialised and less generalisable results, which focus more on the depth and breadth of the problem (Subedi, 2016). However, this type of research design and data collection is not required for this particular study, hence a quantitative method approach was taken.

Quantitative research assembles data in the form of a numerical statistical nature which can be categorised or measured (Mcleod, 2019). The results of quantitative research normally consist of findings that can be generalised and applied to other populations as it focuses on testing a specific hypothesis which then leads to statistical reports with correlations, comparisons, and statistical findings (Rehman, 2021). Quantitative research methods aid the researcher with testing the hypothesis and theories with the data (MCPHS Libraries, 2021), which is appropriate for this study.

This research study tests the proposed conceptual model and measures the effects that certain website characteristics have on consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry. Thus, a quantitative study is a more fitting research approach.

1.7.4 Sample Design

This section discussed the target population, sampling frame, sampling size, and sampling method used.

1.7.4.1 Target Population

This study took place in South Africa, in the Gauteng province. The population for this study is consumers who are students at a Johannesburg-based University. Younger consumers are more comfortable using technology (Jiang, 2018), making them the ideal target population for this study.

1.7.4.2 Sampling Frame

Generation Z and Generation Y tend to be the most appropriate sampling frame for this study considering the data was collected from a Johannesburg-based University. This is the part of the population that was targeted, the younger generation particularly as they tend to use social

media and online platforms more often thus they are more exposed to digital marketing (Jiang, 2018).

1.7.4.3 Sample Size

For this particular study, a sample size of 300 respondents was targeted. However, only 202 surveys were collected. A sample calculator had proven that with approximately 35 000 students within a Johannesburg university, a 7% rate of error, and a 95% confidence level, 200 respondents was an adequate sample size. The minimum sample size in the first rule of thumb also suggests that when the number of respondents is ≥ 200 this offers adequate statistical power (Kyriazos, 2018). Findings also suggest that for Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to be safely evaluated a sample should have a minimum of 200 participants (Kyriazos, 2018).

1.7.4.4 Sample Method

The sampling method determined which respondents were included and which ones were excluded from the research. The researcher used a non-probability sampling method. In particular, the convenience sampling technique was applied. The respondents were from a Johannesburg-based University, due to the ease of access and availability. Convenience sampling tends to be the most uncomplicated and economical sampling technique commonly used (Bhat, 2019).

Non-probability sampling states that every element in the populace does not get an equitable likelihood to participate in the study and no form of random selection is made; instead, the assortment of the sample is made on the subjective judgment of the individual conducting the research (Alvi, 2016). Some advantages of non-probability sampling are that these methods require minimal exertion as well as use less time and are economically efficient (Lehdonvirta, et al., 2021). However, some of the disadvantages include that this technique is prone to systematic inaccuracies and sampling biases (Acharya, et al., 2013).

Convenient sampling is the technique used for this study, with this type of non-probability sampling the researcher approaches participants who are considered easily accessible or convenient to be a part of the study. This method is practical and efficient especially when the target population has a broad spectrum (Etikan, et al., 2016). It was concluded that the non-probability convenient sampling technique was the most appropriate sampling method for this specific study.

1.7.5 Data Collection Methods

The data collection method used for this study was questionnaires distributed electronically i.e. online questionnaires.

1.7.5.1 Questionnaire Design

The chosen questions were derived from previous studies as referenced in table 3.1, as these studies also examined a few of the relationships between website characteristics and purchase intention (Chai & Yat, 2019; Cho, 2015; Dachyar & Banjarnahor, 2017; Muhamad, et al., 2020; Yeo, et al., 2017). The ten independent variables measured within this study are perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, trust, security, visual & audio elements, involvement and interaction, time-saving orientation, website design quality, relative advantage, and service factors. The responses of individuals were measured using the Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. In the questionnaire, demographic questions gathered information on age, gender, and internet access.

1.7.5.2 Administration of the Questionnaire

Online surveys, in the form of Google questionnaires, were used to collect the data. Due to Covid-19, this was considered standard academic practice for data collection (Singh & Sagar, 2021; Cleave, 2020; Menon & Muraleedharan, 2020). Once surveys were completed the data collected was transferred to an excel sheet and downloaded by the researcher which was used for analysis.

1.7.6 Data Analysis

The raw data from the questionnaires were then coded, labelled, and cleaned in Microsoft excel, allowing the data to be efficiently exported to the statistical software programmes, SPSS 28 and AMOS 28.

The descriptive data was analysed using SPSS as it is a statistical data analysis package that is usually used to conduct an in-depth analysis of numerical data (Silver Lake Consulting, 2021). The AMOS programme was used to examine the relationships hypothesised within this study as it allows researchers to create and validate predictive models (Foley, 2018). Through Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) the accuracy of the measurement model was analysed by testing the reliability and validity of the scale utilised (Fan, et al., 2016). The

validity and internal consistency reliability of the measurement instruments utilised were determined by assessing the factor loadings, inter-correlation matrix, Cronbach alpha, and the item to total correlation.

Once the reliability and validity of the scale was confirmed, the model fit was tested. Lastly, path analysis was performed to measure the correlation of the latent variables to the overall construct being measured.

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

During any research study, it is of utmost importance to be cognisant of ethical issues (Pettersson, 2015). Ethical clearance was obtained from a Johannesburg-based University before any data was collected; protocol number: H21/05/41.

The first aspect was to inform respondents as to what the study was exploring, this is important because respondents need to understand why they were being included in the study (Malik, 2017). The following ethical considerations were adhered to as per standard academic practice (Enago Academy, 2022; Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018; Resnik, 2020). An introductory letter was used to inform the following respondents what the study was about. The respondent also remained anonymous thus protecting their privacy; they were made aware of the anonymity aspect beforehand. Information collected from individuals was safeguarded. The data collected was handled by the researcher, thus ensuring the security and privacy of the respondents' information. The raw data collected is stored in a password-protected computer and will be securely stored for a minimum of three years after the study has occurred.

1.9 SIGNIFICANCE AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Websites are a platform for information retrieval and have many functions that can be used (Raad, 2018). This study looked further into websites, more specifically, the website characteristics that influence consumers' online purchase intention. Previous studies about digital marketing have been done in the banking sector and commerce industries, thus there is a lack of literature on the topic concerning other industries (Chinenye & Emmanuel, 2017; Lizovskaya, et al., 2019; Long, 2015; Wang & Pho, 2009).

The fast-food industry is considered to be a large, fast-paced industry within the economy (Roy, 2018). This study intended to inform and assist marketing managers within the fast

food industry by providing them with research and evidence regarding the website characteristics which motivate consumers' online purchase intention of fast food. This research further enables marketing managers within the fast-food industry to make informed decisions regarding their websites. Evidence proven in this study enables managers to confidently implement their online strategies regarding their websites.

However, the aim of this study is not only to assist marketing managers within the fast-food industry but also to provide valuable knowledge to scholars. This study is proven through an empirical model which was quantitatively tested, thus enabling future researchers to make use of the information gathered within their studies. This study opens an opportunity for scholars to test the same model in different industries or market types as well as allows scholars to build better future models. The insights found within this study not only relate to those studying website characteristics but also extends the applicability of the Technology Acceptance Model and Flow Theory to the fast-food industry within developing markets. This indicates that information from this research study can be used to aid or for the development of future research models.

1.10 RESEARCH REPORT STRUCTURE

Section 1: Overview of the study – This will entail the introduction, problem statement, objectives and questions, and the range of research.

Section 2: Literature Review, Conceptual Model, and Hypotheses Progress – This will simply entail the theory of the research, which will consist of grounding theories, construct development, and hypotheses development along with the conceptual model.

Section 3: Research Methodology – This explains the approach taken for this study and why these approaches were used.

Section 4: Analysis of data and Outcomes – This consists of expressing the collected data and the outcomes.

Section 5: Discussion and Conclusion – This is an overview of the outcomes produced by this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section discusses the grounding theories and literature that aid the construct development of this study. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Theory of Flow are discussed as they ground the understanding of website characteristics and the role they play in online purchase intention. The second section explores and defines the empirical literature that supports the construct development. Followed by, a general discussion of the hypotheses development with the use of relevant academic literature.

2.1 GROUNDING THEORIES

This study is grounded by the technology acceptance model and the theory of flow. The technology acceptance model grounds this theory as perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness are website characteristics measured against online purchase intention in this study. The theory of flow was also acknowledged as this theory applies to how the different website characteristics affect a consumer's online experience based on their flow experience.

2.1.1 Technology Acceptance Model

TAM evolved from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) to “provide an explanation of the determinants of computer acceptance that is general, capable of explaining user behaviour across a broad range of end-user computing technologies, and user populations, while at the same time being both sensible and theoretically justified” (Lai, 2017). The theory of reasoned action (TRA) explained people's actions by identifying the causal connections between various components; beliefs, attitudes, and intention, these components were studied using actual and intended behaviour as determinants (Fitriana & Kusumawati, 2019). However, the difference between the theory of reasoned action and the technology acceptance model is that the technology acceptance model replaces those determinants with perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness in order to determine the person's attitude towards using the system (Buabeng-Andoh, 2018).

The technology acceptance model was developed to improve our understanding of user acceptance processes as well as to provide the theoretical basis for practical “user acceptance testing” (Chang, 2020). The technology acceptance model helps explain the reasons for the adoption of an information system by a user (Durodolu, 2016). The TAM model proposes

that perceived usefulness (PU) and ease of use (EOU) play a vital role in the adoption of information systems (Khurshid, et al., 2022). Therefore, reiterating that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are seen as the two major variables when determining behavioural intention (Chao, 2019).

The determinants perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, of the technology acceptance model, have been shown to affect the adoption of information systems/technology by users, especially with regard to online purchase intention (Chaichi & Kei, 2021). Findings also state that perceived ease of use influences both perceived usefulness and the consumers' attitude toward using a system (Chang, 2020).

With technological advances emerging at an ever-increasing rate and with the constant introduction of new products into the market, many theories have been developed surrounding the acceptance of these innovations by consumers (Malik, 2017). For example, a study confirmed that the technology acceptance model supported customers' adoption of internet banking in Egypt (Fawzy & Esawal, 2017). TAM has also supported the study that examined the influence of perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and subjective norm on online purchase intention through social media (Ying, et al., 2021). Hence, researchers agree that it is appropriate to state that there is a correlation between online shopping and the technology acceptance model, as this specific model has often been used to study online user behaviour (Cho, 2015; Dasan & Chung, 2015). This research study provides additional literature for scholars to reference with regard to the influence of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness on consumers' purchase intention within the fast-food industry. In addition, the technology acceptance model also addresses why users accept or reject a website as well as how their personal beliefs and attitudes affect their usage behaviour (Cho, 2015). This idea is explored further to substantiate the idea that website characteristics influence consumers' online purchase intention within the fast-food industry.

Furthermore, an individual's attitude towards online shopping is determined by perceived consequences associated with online shopping, past experiences, and attitude towards other shopping channels which can be regarded as prominent beliefs as postulated by the technology acceptance model (Michael-Olomu, 2020). The variables perceived ease of use as well as perceived usefulness are both used to measure the influence website characteristics have on consumer online purchase intention (Athapaththu & Kulathunga, 2018), thus, making

it appropriate to incorporate the technology acceptance model as the grounding theory of this study.

Although, the technology acceptance model explains that the adoption/acceptance of technology is influenced by perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. This study is also examining additional factors that affect the adoption of technology, such as trust, security, visual & audio elements, interaction & involvement, time-saving orientation, web design, relative advantage, and service factors. Thus, other grounding theories need to be reviewed besides the technology acceptance model, to account for these additional characteristics.

2.1.2 Theory of Flow

It is proposed that flow assists online behaviours such as browsing, shopping, and repeat purchases (Temel & Armağan, 2022). In accordance with the theory, it is argued that when consumers are navigating through a website they are in a state of flow resulting in more time spent on the website (Obada, 2013). Furthermore, it explains that Flow could be explained as a pleasant experience, where people in a state of flow are immersed in their activity of actions that transit flawlessly into another, thus displaying an inner logic of their own and creating harmony (Cherry, 2022).

It has been argued that flow experiences within an environment are partially based on the interpretation of stimuli within said environment by the individual, in other words, a person-environment transaction (Lavoie, et al., 2022). Thus, the stimulus projected within a website has the potential to enhance the e-commerce environment and eventually result in a purchase (Carlson, et al., 2013; Lavoie, et al., 2022). This correlates with the constructs referred to in this study as web design, visual and audio elements all play a role in the environmental stimuli of a website (Lorenzo-Romero, et al., 2016).

Hoffman and Novak (1996) proposed that online flow is a cognitive state experienced during navigation, this study was one of the conceptual foundations of the Theory of Flow. This cognitive state has been characterised as an 'optimal experience', that has been said to have many positive marketing consequences, including increased consumer learning, exploratory behaviour, and positive affect that arguably leads to the intention to return to the site (Bonaiuto, et al., 2016). The importance of creating a conducive online environment is reiterated by the fact that the impact of flow on both purchase intentions as well as intention to return is strong (Chen & Hsu, 2017; Pu, et al., 2015).

Utilising the theory of flow was found to create positive customer experiences with regard to e-commerce (Pu, et al., 2015). Website characteristics such as perceived ease of use and trust as well as visual aesthetics all play a role in the creation of Flow that a consumer experiences whilst shopping online (Liu, 2013). This suggests that the website characteristics measured within this study have the ability to increase online purchase intention by creating a feeling of flow.

2.2 CONSTRUCT DEVELOPMENT

In this section, aspects relating to consumer behaviour, online purchase intention, and e-commerce will be reviewed from previous studies and articles. These aspects enable greater insights into the main components of the study. The understanding of the constructs developed will be subsequently used in the hypotheses development

2.2.1 Fast Food Industry

This subsection discusses the Fast food Industry in terms of the Global Market Environment and the South African Market. The most popular fast-food franchises in these two markets are also reviewed.

2.2.1.1 Global Fast Food Market Environment

The rise of globalisation, urbanisation, and its impact on consumer lifestyles has produced an augmentation in the global demand for fast food as consumers continue to rely on the convenience of fast food (Insight, 2018). Even in recessionary times, sales of fast-food franchises continued to grow (UKEssays, 2018). It was also found that fast food is the preferred choice of meal in the current modernized society (UKEssays, 2018). This indicates that consumers hold fast food at a high level of importance in their daily lives.

Fast food can be defined as the most emerging food item in the world (Xiao, et al., 2017). In Sri Lanka, majority (54%) of the young generation consumes fast food, and 37.8% of the total amount of monthly income is spent on food items (Mishra, 2016). Since the majority of fast-food consumers consist of the young generation, most fast-food businesses use the Internet and Social Media to interact with customers (Jayasinghe & Dissanayaka, 2020). By using the internet and social media, vendors are able to interact with many more customers specifically by utilising attractive images, videos, sound clips, fonts, etc, thus, indicating that

visual and audio elements improved customer engagement within the fast food industry in Sri Lanka (Jayasinghe & Dissanayaka, 2020).

According to Euromonitor (2015), the 100% home delivery market in Malaysia has a value of RM253 million (approx. R947 million). This is especially evident in the fast-food segment that provides delivery to homes (Yeo, et al., 2017). One of the major players that provide fast-food delivery services in Malaysia is Kentucky Fried Chicken, however, the demand for delivery services has led to smaller food retailers also providing delivery services with the help of food delivery intermediaries (Yeo, et al., 2017).

On the other hand, nearly one-third of the New Zealand population consumed fast food and 14% of the population consumed restaurant food on any one day (Smith, et al., 2013). Once again, younger adults (19 – 30 years of age) were the highest consumers of fast food. The higher intake of fast food in the younger generations followed international trends and the factors that encouraged the consumption of fast food by Australian adults (20 – 45 years) were busy lifestyles, long working hours, and not knowing how to cook (Smith, et al., 2013). This promotes the idea that perceived usefulness and time-saving orientation play a defining role in fast-food purchase intention.

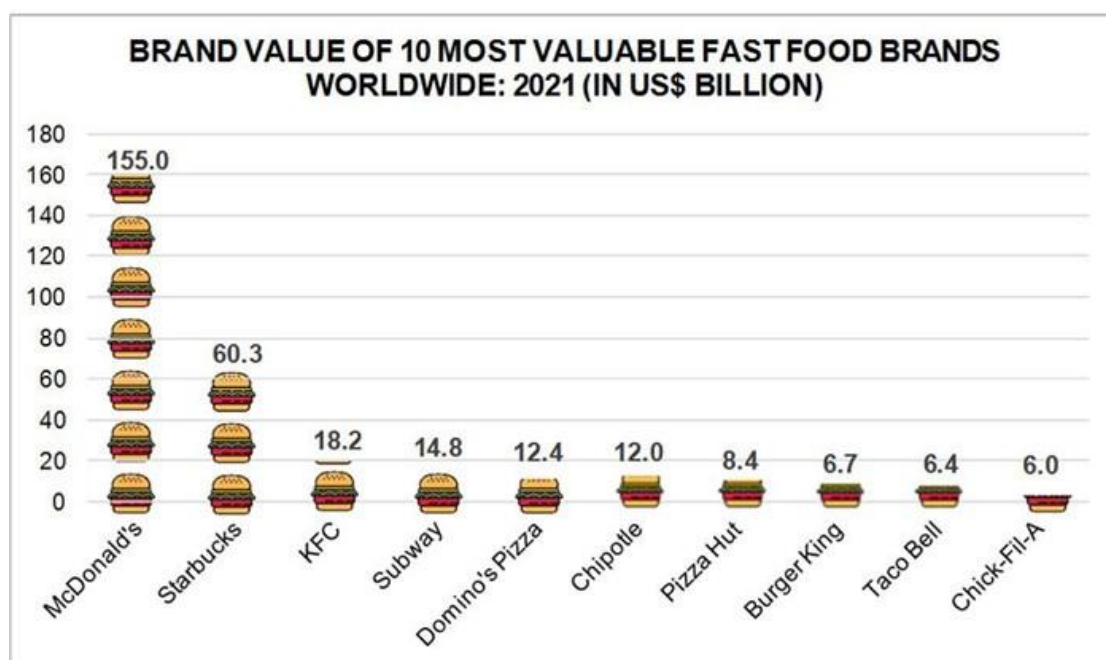
In the Philippines, the growth of fast-food chains is largely attributed to the increasing growth of the population as well as due to the changing characteristics of Filipino consumers (Flores, 2014). Filipino people find comfort in food, as they believe food brings people together (Mina, et al., 2020). Filipinos possess a genuine appreciation for family gatherings; this aids the food industry in the Philippines to grow at a phenomenal rate (Masigan, 2019). This has also led to fast-food culture becoming a vigorously uprising trend among youngsters (Mina, et al., 2020).

Fast-food restaurants offer standardized meals and prices to customers around the world (Cengel & Yildirim, 2013). The menu at times is characterised to the local culture and delights (Etemad-Sajadi & Rizzuto, 2013). The emergence of dual-income households has also increased the practice of dining outside rather than cooking at home due to people being busy and having tight schedules, fast-food provides convenience and relief from this stress (Farooqui & Alwi, 2019). It is said that the changing lifestyles, and lack of time people have, have led to increased consumption of ready-to-eat meals and eating out (Bahauddin, et al., 2020). Examples of fast-food restaurants include McDonald's, KFC, Burger King Etc.

The evolution of fast-food franchises and the advancement of technology has led to an increasing consumer trend of using self-ordering and delivery applications (apps) to order fast food (Quoquab, et al., 2019). However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it had been reported by the McDonald's Corporation in 2020 that its global sales had decreased by 23.9% in the second quarter (Reuters, 2020). COVID-19 has led to a dramatic shift in consumer behaviour demand, as their interest has moved away from restaurants and towards food consumed at home (Chen, et al., 2021), which also means consumers' use of fast food websites and applications has increased due to the pandemic (Brewer & Sebby, 2021). For fast-food franchises to survive, they had to adapt to the situation and make critical changes to meet the new consumer behaviour demand (Chen, et al., 2021).

A study conducted in Bangladesh stated that the Government's response to survive the pandemic can be discussed in terms of responses from the labour side, responses from the government, and lastly, responses from social protection and employment institutions (Kuddus, et al., 2021). To fight against the impact of COVID-19, the labour response would need the restaurant business to operate on an online platform (Kuddus, et al., 2021). To survive this global crisis, some young entrepreneurs introduced a new concept called “cloud Kitchen”, since customers could no longer come to the restaurant, the restaurant decided to reach them.

Figure 2.1: Brand Value of the 10 Most Valuable Fast Food Brands Worldwide (2021)



Source: [Kantar](#); Graphics by Insight Survey

2.2.1.2 South African Fast Food Market

South Africa started to experiment with the concept of fast food in the 1960s with the American franchise hamburger restaurant, called Wimpy (IPL, 2022). Since then, there have been two age groups that have undergone dramatic changes in their eating habits, these age groups are 12 -18 years and 19 – 29 years (Bahatgeg, 2021). The fast-food and foodservice industries responded to these changes by making fast-food outlets increasingly available to these clients through longer operating hours, delivery options, and convenient locations, such as shopping malls and drive-through facilities (Kanyana, et al., 2016).

Fast food is big business in South Africa (Mackay, et al., 2013). It is one of the most emergent sectors as well as one of the largest contributors to franchise turnovers and opportunities (Thomas & Deshmukh, 2018). One of the reasons fast-food franchises are on the rise in South Africa is due to the convenience and introduction of easy-to-use services such as Order In, Mr. Deliver, Uber Eats, and franchises offering delivery services (Martinuzzi, 2019). As well as, despite changing lifestyles and a sluggish economy, South Africans are embracing the consumption of affordable, large-portioned, and immediate fast food (Wingrove & Urban, 2017)

There were 8661 fast-food restaurants in South Africa as of 2014 (Habanabakize, 2020). This resulted in an overcapacity of fast-food restaurants in South Africa as the market was not large enough to support that many fast-food restaurants (Mhlanga, 2018). An estimated 25 million people frequently visit fast-food restaurants every year (Green, 2014). Showing that there are far more restaurants per person than in most countries, including BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) (Mhlanga, 2018).

The South African fast-food industry was previously characterised by an oligopolistic market structure (Nair, 2016), however, fast food became more popular, especially in urban areas. This was because more than 60% of the South African population lives in urban areas (Research, 2019), and due to their busy schedules, they tend to rely on fast food. The fast-food industry in South Africa has been experiencing significant growth in both the number of franchises and total revenue (Habanabakize, 2020).

KFC is the biggest fast-food franchise in South Africa, followed by McDonald's (Insight, 2018). They are the biggest players due to their ability to effectively increase online purchase intention (Insight, 2018). For example, free delivery, combo, and meal deals also attract the

budget-conscious fast-food craver with Google searches rising for keywords such as “McDonald's Snack Box”, “Big Mac Meal” and “KFC Bucket for 1” (Martinuzzi, 2019).

There is a huge presence of food delivery companies with online apps, such as Mr. D and Uber Eats, which have significant power to shift demand across restaurants (Swart, 2017). These food delivery companies are not only able to offer different prices for different restaurants to customers but are also able to influence customers on a particular restaurant to visit (Mhlanga, 2018). Thus, the presence of food delivery companies with online applications and websites has marginally increased their influence on consumers (Swart, 2017). In South Africa, the spend on online food delivery has also experienced significant growth amid the Covid-19 pandemic, almost doubling in value between 2019 and 2020 (Survey, 2021). In particular, the Uber app remains the most used delivery app, whilst Mr. D Food recorded the largest increase in usage (140%) since the start of the lockdown (Survey, 2021). This shows that technology has played a significant role in the growth of the fast food industry.

This is also shown by websites as they build active relationships between companies and their website visitors (Chang, 2015). Websites thus have the ability to increase profitability within the fast-food industry by reaching consumers through an online medium (Ling, 2018).

Figure 2.2: Top 6 Fast Food Brands in South Africa (2017)



Source: Insight Survey 2017

2.2.2 Internet Use in South Africa

A large number of South African consumers use the Internet to acquire information with regard to products, services, and special offers (International Trade Administration , 2021). Shopping on the internet involves whole, or part purchase of products, and services through an online medium (Lutkevich, 2022). It has been proven that time spent on the internet by South African users is higher than that of American and European users; this is confirmed by the fact that South Africans spend roughly 8 hours 23 minutes online every day whereas Americans spend an average of 6 hours and 38 minutes a day (Villiers, 2019).

More than 77% of internet users aged 16 to 64 say they buy something online each month (Kemp, 2021). In South Africa, a study indicated that 70% of all the respondents made purchases using the Internet in 2020 (Deloitte Digital, 2021). This influences the study as it indicates that digital marketing and online purchase intention have the ability to grow exponentially in South Africa when executed effectively. For this reason, it is important to understand which website characteristics encourage South Africa's Internet users to purchase online.

The concept of online shopping has revolutionised how consumers shop and therefore it is imperative to understand the factors/ characteristics of websites and how they influence consumers' purchase intention (Makhitha, 2019). Although the use of the internet and internet technology is rising steadily in Africa, the challenge remains that online shopping in South Africa is outmatched by online shopping in developed countries such as the United Kingdom, The United States of America and China which are considered the leaders in online shopping (Makhitha, 2019).

The South African Market, is not a 'bricks or clicks' environment as in one or the other but rather a 'brick and clicks' environment, where each one complements the other (Van Niekerk, 2020). There are 18.4 million online shoppers in South Africa, according to eShop World (2018). It is also stated that there is going to be a steady growth of online shoppers, and should eventually reach 24.8 million in 2021 (World, 2018).

Figure 2.3: Number of Online Shoppers in South Africa (In Millions)



Source: eShop World

BizCommunity (2017) states that there is a total of 65% of South Africans aged 16 years and older that are now active online, this adds up to roughly 25 million. The largest population of users (30%) are aged between 25 and 35 (Lama, 2020). South African online users are much younger compared to global statistics, with 60% falling under the 35 age bracket versus 34% globally (Van Niekerk, 2020).

Clothing and electronics are the favourite internet purchases in South Africa, however, since COVID-19 grocery delivery apps have experienced growth (Deloitte Digital, 2021). In the six months between June and November 2020, South African consumers mostly used food delivery services weekly (36%), online retailers monthly (42%), and online classifieds less than once a month (34%) (Deloitte Digital, 2021). South African consumers have thus been integrated into the online shopping platform.

Although South Africa has fallen behind with regard to internet penetration, we must not forget that the internet plays a vital role in our everyday lives (Kemp, 2022). For example, currently, all major commercial banks in South Africa offer Internet Banking facilities to their customers (Redda & Surujlal, 2020). Indicating that trends are moving online, as consumers are becoming more at ease with using online tools to complete their tasks.

Of the 54 million South Africans, 46% of them are active internet users, whether it's at home, work, or school (Chavan, 2013). With regard to social media accounts, it is stated that around 22% of the South African population have active accounts and 146% of the population have mobile connections, which means that people have multiple devices (Theko, 2020). The

increase in internet adoption indicates that digital technologies in South Africa are on the rise and sooner rather than later (Theko, 2020).

South African consumers are becoming more digitally confident and open to sharing details such as credit card information, personal details, and physical addresses for shipping purposes (Mpinganjira, 2017). It is seen that online shopping is gaining more popularity, especially among the middle and upper classes (Mpinganjira, 2017). The growth of internet penetration in South Africa does not show any trend of slowing down (Cuna, 2020). This indicates that most businesses will make the shift to e-commerce (Cuna, 2020; KPMG, 2017).

2.2.3 E-Commerce

E-Commerce is defined as purchases and sales of goods and services transacted over the Internet (Cho, 2015). Research shows that consumers' shopping behaviours in the online environment differ from those in traditional retail stores (Rai, et al., 2019).

Online shopping has redefined the way people shop (Assocham, 2017). Shopping today is not just an essential activity but a form of entertainment (Amirtha & Sivakumar, 2018). The study based in India concluded that with the help of technology the complexities of shopping are simplified, which helps women lead lives of convenience (Amirtha & Sivakumar, 2018). E-commerce supports women of all family life cycle stages, by offering different benefits to improve their quality of life (Amirtha, et al., 2021).

E-commerce is a vehicle for sustainable national development in Nigeria, to which e-commerce services could significantly contribute to the growth and development of Nigeria, although major challenges can be faced due to the lack of reliable internet connection (Ojedokun, 2019). Nonetheless, e-commerce has the ability to promote entrepreneurship, create job opportunities, increase foreign exchange and aid the development of small to medium-scale businesses (Ojedokun, 2019). This indicates that e-commerce has the opportunity to aid the growth and development of countries' economies; this can be taken into account with regard to the South African market as well.

Ecommerce in South Africa is growing rapidly with R10bn in clients in 2017 (Mapande & Appiah, 2018). The high mobile penetration is driving the increase of buyer trust in online transactions (Smith, 2018), which is leading to e-commerce exceeding expectations within the business industry. South African online spend was determined to increase to more than 53 billion Rand in 2018 with an anticipated yearly growth rate of 15% through 2021 (Hussein &

Baharudin, 2017). Thus, local online retailers are changing channels to have the capacity to increase the value of their buyer base (Harms, et al., 2022).

Website development influences the e-commerce process (Hidayat, et al., 2020). Thus, to achieve a competitive advantage, website characteristics and web development as a whole must improve and prove competence to the consumer (Smart Insights, 2020). Website development must take into consideration the concept of flow (Mahnke, 2014), in order to improve competence and gain a competitive advantage.

2.2.4 Website Characteristics

There are several types of website characteristics that influence consumers (Hayder, 2017). However, the influence of these characteristics depends on the website or the nature of the research (Hussain, et al., 2021).

The web has evolved over the years to become our primary means of expression and communication (Doosti, 2017). Website design has also evolved drastically over the years, from simple static pages of text on gray backgrounds in the mid-1990s to the visually rich, interactive, and responsive designs of today (Chen, 2017). No longer limited to text, the evolving visual features of websites are important signals of larger societal shifts in humanities technologies, aesthetics, cultures, and industries (Doosti, 2017).

In IS literature, various factors are shown to influence the success of a website in regard to customer retention (Go, 2021). Website characteristics are considered to be relationship marketing initiators regarding e-commerce (Xia & Chae, 2021). Therefore reiterates the importance of understanding websites and website characteristics regarding a firm's online marketing strategy to increase online purchase intention.

Marily (2015) found there are six main aspects of website characteristics that are considered important to consumers: usability, visual aspects, technical adequacy, security, communication, and prestige. This research will focus on five functional and five relational characteristics. Functional characteristics include perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and security as well as visual and audio elements and website design quality. The five relational attributes are namely trust, interaction and involvement as well as the time-saving orientation concept, relative advantage, and service factors. The main role of these characteristics is to incorporate the human interaction and social relationships experienced in the real world into the digital world (Toufaily, 2016).

Website characteristics are one of the core factors that will influence a consumer's intention to purchase online (Doulatatabadi & Sheng, 2020). A website that provides a good virtual experience to visitors with high-rate website features can boost the rate of return by increasing consumers' online purchase intention (Firnkes, et al., 2021). Website characteristics were shown to have a positive and significant relationship with online purchase intention of generation Z, hence, a website with good characteristics can increase the online shopping intention of Gen Z (Doulatatabadi & Sheng, 2020).

It is noted that previous research studies have empirically tested a vast number of website cues, some of which include: visual appeal, website quality, media format, and functional convenience and how these cues relate to online impulse purchases (Liu, 2013; Maraqa & Rashed, 2018). There is a proposed term called 'webmospherics' which includes website aspects such as frames, graphics, text, pop-up windows, media dimensions, and site layout parameters (Lin & Liu, 2019). This study intends to evaluate the influence of visual and audio elements and perceived ease of use, along with other factors, on online purchase intention. Since the variables measured in this study correlate with the definition of 'webmospherics' it indicates that those variables also affect online impulse purchase intention.

According to the signalling theory, consumers use company signals to deduce service characteristics when they face incomplete or asymmetric market information (Guo & Wu, 2016). The stimuli people perceive and process while shopping online, for instance, the website's environmental elements, affects their purchasing behaviour (Liu, 2013). Environmental incentives, related to security and privacy, service quality, and entertainment, help mitigate the uncertainties that consumers identify in relation to purchase complexity and this benefits their decision-making process with regard to purchases online (Prodanova, et al., 2020).

2.2.5 Consumer Behaviour

Marketers are always trying to understand how consumers think and behave in relation to the products, services, or experiences they bring to the market (Chang, 2020). To understand the minds of the consumer, marketers need to understand what determines a consumer's intentions (Robinson, 2021). According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, an individual's performance of a certain behaviour is determined by his or her intent to perform that behaviour (Kan & Fabrigar, 2017). Intent itself is informed by attitudes toward the behaviour

and the perception about whether the individual will be able to successfully engage in the target behaviour (LaMorte, 2019).

Behavioural Intention is a consumer's intention to carry out an activity in the future (Wahyudin, et al., 2020). Consumers' behaviour and intention to purchase new products are influenced by the seller's reputation and the consumers' confidence level (Susanne & Kenning, 2015). This is because consumer behaviour is predictable from their intentions (Chugh, 2019; Krumme, et al., 2013). This also means that the seller needs to ensure that their reputation allows the consumer to build confidence in the brand or product they are selling.

However, a consumer's intention to shop online is dependent on the level of convenience and risk provided in an online store channel (Wahyudin, et al., 2020). The purchasing of daily needed products was found that ease and convenience had a significant and positive impact on their attitude as well as their behavioural intention, especially in terms of payment and delivery services (Wahyudin, et al., 2020).

Determining consumers' behaviour is vital when they communicate with a company through technology since in this way companies can tailor marketing strategies that will ensure the continuity and stability of the B2C relationship (Rajaobelina, et al., 2013). When a customer has the desire to maintain a relationship with the seller, this gets expressed by their decision to purchase repeatedly (Mpinganjira, 2014). Thus, the seller needs to ensure that their marketing strategies are personalised to meet the consumers' needs through technology to maintain said relationship with the consumer (Dwivedi, et al., 2021).

Consumers often make unintended purchases through spontaneous and intuitive behaviour after being exposed to stimuli, which is referred to as an impulse purchase (Liu, 2013). It has been suggested that webmospherics have the ability to replace atmospherics, which are provided by physical stores, thus providing the necessary stimuli required to encourage an online impulse purchase (Paz & Delgado, 2020). Website attributes such as visual appeal and website ease of use can affect a consumer's emotions and personality which triggers one's online purchase intention (Liu, 2013). It is vital for companies to understand what cues encourage online purchase intention and to try and ensure that consumers do not regret their purchase choice.

Four vital aspects are correlated with consumers' attitudes toward buying FMCD products (Garg, et al., 2019). The four aspects are information processing, experience processing, decision processing, and word of mouth (Herold, 2015). The consumer buying behaviour of consumer A may be different from that of consumer B, especially during the decision-processing stage (Garg, et al., 2019). Thus, results in the idea that there are specific factors that influence consumers and their online buying behaviour/ purchase intentions.

2.2.6 Purchase Intention

Purchase Intention is one of the major concepts studied in marketing literature (Karimi Alavijeh & Afshamejad, 2016). The best predictor of consumer purchase behaviour is consumer purchase intention (Zahra, et al., 2020). Thus, to fully understand consumers' purchase behaviour, purchase intention needs to be understood.

Online purchase intention, which is also known as online shopping intention, refers to the power and willingness of the consumer to buy products through the internet (Doulatabadi & Sheng, 2020). This study examines and provides knowledge regarding the website characteristics that influence online purchase intention of fast food.

Purchasing a product through an online platform is a progressively common practice for consumers worldwide (Cho, 2015). Customers from various age groups utilise the Internet as an alternative channel for the acquisition of goods and services (Cho, 2015). Online shopping intention is an important factor that can be used to predict actual purchase behaviour (Lim, et al., 2016), as it reveals people's willingness to complete a purchase. A person's intention can be easily influenced by some factors and can lead to a change in that person's behaviour (Kan & Fabrigar, 2017). One of the factors that may affect online purchase intention is website characteristics. Therefore it is essential to understand which website characteristics influence consumers' online purchase intention.

Repurchase intention is a buyer's intention to buy products or services from a vendor or online store after they have a positive experience (Setyorini & Nugraha, 2016). A study based in Indonesia found that there are around 2.4% of people who use the internet to sell online and 0.9% to shop online (Fitriana & Kusumawati, 2019). Both online selling and shopping activities that involve e-commerce are growing exponentially (Fitriana & Kusumawati, 2019). To increase repurchase intention, e-commerce marketplaces are always competing to build trust and eliminate the risk associated with their transaction (Carstens, et al., 2019).

E-Commerce is accomplishing continuous growth in the retail environment within South Africa (Export.gov, 2019). Although the e-commerce sector in South Africa is growing rapidly, South African online services must observe the USA, UK (United Kingdom), and China to improve our online retail offering (Tucker, 2019). With China and the USA being the two countries with the highest amount of revenue from e-commerce sales, it is indicated that South Africa needs to increase its knowledge and marketing strategies to better equip itself to compete within the e-commerce sector (Clement, 2019).

2.3 HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

The numerous studies cited to validate and support this hypothesis development are based on a variety of industries and markets, namely developed and emerging markets. The following section provides an in-depth discussion of the specific website characteristics measured with regard to this study and the hypotheses developed for this study.

2.3.1 Relationship between Perceived Ease of Use and Consumer Online Purchase Intention within the Fast-food Industry

Perceived ease of use is defined as an individual's belief that the use of new technology will be effortless (Cho, 2015). However, the term 'effort' does not solely refer to the physical and mental effort in online shopping, but also the level of effort in learning to use the system (GroB, 2018). It is said that ease of use refers to the degree of ease with which one can also use a system (Malik, 2017). Applying this definition with regards to online shopping, ease of use indicates that using the Internet to shop online will involve minimal effort and the idea of minimal effort increases a consumer's desire to purchase goods/services online. A construct that is the opposite of perceived ease of use is perceived complexity which is defined by Rogers (1995) as "the degree to which an innovation is perceived as difficult to understand and use". This correlates with the technology acceptance model which believes that if a consumer perceives a system as easy to use, the higher the likelihood of adoption of the said system by the consumer (Hubert, et al., 2018).

This suggests that the ease of use of technology regarding the website and the extent to which the consumer is satisfied with the online purchase experience is the foundation for determining consumer preferences (Raad, et al., 2018). Online purchase intention can be described as the consequence of preference, attitude, and satisfaction (Cho, 2015; Setyorini &

Nugraha, 2016). Thus, indicating a possible correlation between perceived ease of use and online purchase intention.

Ease of understanding is an essential factor that influenced online shopping (Hung & Cant, 2017). Online shopping sites should contain unambiguous language and instructions (Hung & Cant, 2017). However, the fact that there are 11 official languages in South Africa which could lead to language barriers has not yet been studied. This supports the need for this study.

In the context of online shopping, perceived ease of use is referenced as the customers' perception that they will be able to interact with the e-commerce site with ease (Cheema, 2013). With regards to this specific study, reference is made to the ease of navigation and use of the website, ensuring that a customer experiences easy navigation and can easily locate what they require. When navigation is at its best, empirical research revealed that this advantage increases the performance of a website and decreases the chance of errors (Maraqa, 2018), which can lead to greater satisfaction experienced by the consumer and consequently increased purchase intention.

The indicator perceived ease of use is a key predictor of the intention to use a technology system (Putri, 2021). The enjoyment of online grocery shopping is also positively related to ease of use (Putri, 2021). This indicates that perceived ease of use has the potential to be a key website characteristic used to encourage consumers' online purchase intention as well as to increase their intention to use online platforms with regard to the purchasing of fast food.

Clothing and accessories (41.3%), food and drinks (36%), computer products, and software (12.7%), are commodities respondents usually buy online (Farah, 2020). This shows that food and drinks are the second largest commodity bought online, thus, indicating that fast food is a major player in the world of e-commerce and, that perceived ease of use is one of the prominent factors that can affect the online purchase intention of consumers with regards to fast-food.

Thus, it can be hypothesised that there is a positive relationship between perceived ease of use and a consumer's online purchase intention.

H1: There is a positive relationship between perceived ease of use and consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry.

2.3.2 Relationship between Perceived Usefulness and Consumer Online Purchase Intention within the Fast-food Industry

Perceived usefulness is defined as the idea that the use of new technology will lead to the enhancement or improvement of an individual's performance (Charness & Boot, 2016). According to the Technology Acceptance Model, customers tend to use online websites that significantly affect their performance (Huseynov & Yildirim, 2019). This states that perceived usefulness is when consumers feel that shopping online increases their efficiency and positively affects their entire purchase process (Cheema, 2013).

Perceived usefulness has a positive relationship with intention to use (Collier & Kimes, 2013), which indicates that if a consumer perceives a website as useful; this could increase their purchase intention. Companies should focus on perceived usefulness as it is a key factor (Yang & Geetha, 2019), due to consumers being more concerned about the quality of service delivered to them such as effectiveness in the ordering of food process, customization of the food menu design by the consumer, ability to save time to make the order and reduce queuing time (Yang & Geetha, 2019). All these variables showed significant influence regarding the intention to use. Therefore, perceived usefulness, with regard to orders taken through technological devices, can be used to attract more consumers as well as retain loyal customers.

Perceived usefulness can be used in a mediating role of eWOM messages and the intention to buy online (Matute, et al., 2016). This was also confirmed by a study investigating the influence of eWOM credibility on visit intention (Nechoud, et al., 2021). This means that perceived usefulness not only affects purchase intention on its own but also facilitates other variables in encouraging the online purchase intention of consumers.

Perceived usefulness has a strong positive relationship with consumers' perception of online food delivery apps (Muhamad, et al., 2020). Hence, this indicates that perceived usefulness is both important and impactful with regard to consumers' online purchase intention of food. This means that when perceived usefulness is implemented effectively, this can increase the chances of consumers choosing to purchase fast food online (Muhamad, et al., 2020).

Shopping online allows consumers the opportunity to save time, evade crowded markets, solve parking problems, and allows consumers to access online stores 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, free from stress and the necessitate to carry heavy items (Cho, 2015), these are all

facilitators of perceived usefulness with shopping online. This indicates a possible positive relationship exists between the perceived usefulness of a website and the consumers' online purchase intention. Therefore it is hypothesised that:

H2: There is a positive relationship between perceived usefulness and consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry

2.3.3 Relationship between Trust and Consumer Online Purchase Intention within the Fast-food Industry

Trust is of great importance in online commerce (Nagy & Hajdu, 2021). Consumer confidence has a positive effect on a consumer's intention to buy (Jamil, et al., 2021). Meaning the higher the consumer's trust in an online store, the more willing the consumer will be to go through the buying process (Tasin, 2017). Trust is especially crucial when the consumer perceives that there is a financial risk associated with the activity (Nagy & Hajdu, 2021). Client trust increases as time progresses and as the client perceives that the supplier is dependable and performs ethically, it is seen as a basic factor for making fulfilled and faithful clients in e-commerce (Chaparro-Pelaez, et al., 2015).

Trust is more crucial in the e-commerce landscape than in brick-and-mortar stores (Putri, 2021), due to the environment lacking sensory evaluation, this gives consumers a stronger feeling of uncertainty and risk (Putri, 2021). Trust is an indicator that plays a vital role in examining the actual behaviour of the consumer (Akroush, et al., 2015). It is such an important variable that, to a certain degree, has the ability to influence the success of an online enterprise or initiative (Rainie & Anderson, 2017).

A well-designed website can build trust among consumers (Engness, 2020). As the consumers' trust increases, confidence towards the site and product increases too (Hsu, 2013). Trust cannot exist without risk (Fjaeran & Aven, 2021). Consumers have a feeling of uncertainty and that there is risk associated with online shopping (Bergman, 2017). It is said that a consumer's perceived risk influences their acceptance of digital aspects (Malik, 2017). Not only does trust lessen the perceived risk felt by consumers but also aids in influencing online repurchase intention (Setyorini & Nugraha, 2016). In other words, this means that trust helps attract and retain loyal customers.

The brand name is one of the most important factors when it comes to providing a consumer with trust (Bedgood, 2019). Sevim (2014) agreed that brand names are important factors

especially when the main physical features and functional properties of a product are unknown. Brand names assist the concept of trust as it influences and pushes consumers toward the use of e-commerce (Douglas, 2021). When a consumer considers a website trustworthy; it refers to the consumer's faith in the site as well as a reduction in risk and uncertainty (Maraqa, 2018). It is, therefore, hypothesised that:

H3: There is a positive relationship between trust and consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry.

2.3.4 Relationship between Security and Consumer Online Purchase Intention within the Fast-food Industry

The fear a consumer feels from the possibility of exploitation of their money or credentials often tends to outweigh the benefits they receive from shopping online (Vasić, et al., 2019). Therefore, websites need to ensure that the consumers' personal information is secured (Sevim, 2014). A study found that privacy in a United States clothing store has a significant effect on consumers' online purchase intention (Toufaily, 2016).

A study conducted in South Africa also found that security was an essential factor with regard to shopping online, as 96.6% of the respondents in that study agreed that the protection of their personal information was an important factor that influenced their online purchases (Hung & Cant, 2017). Thus websites need to ensure they have systems in place that protect the consumer's personal information so the consumer will feel more at ease and willing to purchase goods/services online.

Studies have identified that security issues and concerns are the main barriers to the adoption of internet commerce in general and m-commerce in particular (Chau & Deng, 2018; Lee & Wong, 2016; Sarkar, et al., 2020; Zhu, et al., 2019). Online retailers, online banking and financial services, and other online service providers employ a secure socket layer (SSL) to secure encrypted connections between servers and browsers (Kang, et al., 2021). This protects sensitive information such as credit card and personal information (Kang, et al., 2021), by ensuring these systems are in place helps ease the perceived risk felt by consumers.

A statistical analysis measuring the impact of Covid-19 on e-commerce in Nigeria (Otaru & Enegesele, 2021), found that the Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on e-commerce as there was an increase in customer purchasing behaviour with regard to e-commerce

platforms (Otaru & Enegesele, 2021). This study also revealed that factors such as privacy and transaction security positively impacted e-commerce purchase intention.

Security has a significant influence on customer retention regarding online commerce platforms (Ifeoma & Chikwado, 2019). This is because when web retailers monitor visitors' and customers' preferences through cookies without their knowledge, this is perceived as a privacy risk (Deloitte, 2020). Consumers are afraid of online fraud, for example, on the 23rd of August 2019, the FBI department of Los Angeles released an 80-man list of Nigerians suspected to have been involved in one of the largest online frauds in US history (Ifeoma & Chikwado, 2019). Hence, the presence of perceived risk is associated with the fear of providing financial details on e-commerce websites, fear of multiple deductions from an account, and doubt about the capacity of web vendors to deliver purchased products and deliver them on time (Oluwafemi, et al., 2016). This indicates that fear ultimately leads to the consumer not feeling comfortable enough to purchase online, thus, decreasing their online purchase intention. This hypothesizes that security positively influences online purchase intention of fast food. The study, therefore, tests the following hypothesis:

H4: There is a positive relationship between security and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry

2.3.5 Relationship between Visual and Audio Elements and Consumer Online Purchase Intention within the Fast-food Industry:

Research into the influence of images has repeatedly shown that they serve as important and relevant visual cues (King, et al., 2014). Images are believed to be a powerful trigger for recollection and memory (Zinko, et al., 2021). In a study, participants were shown advertising material for Disneyland that depicted a visitor shaking hands with Bugs Bunny, after reading the story, over 30% of the participants said they remembered meeting and shaking the hand of Bugs Bunny when they had visited Disneyland, it should be noted that Bugs Bunny is a Warner Bros character and cannot be found in Disneyland (Zinko, et al., 2021). Human information processing is influenced by visual stimuli, even when the stimulus is flawed or irrelevant (Downen, et al., 2019).

The visual elements are part of the website design that is mainly focused on the information and the aesthetic beauty of the website (Collinge, 2017). Since we feel trust towards another human by seeing his/her face, this considers that we can get the same kind of feeling towards

a company by viewing their website's graphical interface (Bergman, 2017). Thus, suggesting that the graphical and visual features of a website are crucial for an online shop's trust. This also suggests that there is a relationship between trust and visual elements of a website that influences online purchase intention.

To achieve the desired purchase decision, companies need to change a negative emotion to a positive emotion to sell their products (Decker, 2021). The business community would benefit significantly by applying the right tools, in other words, visual and audio elements, which would elicit positive emotions toward the consumers' purchase decision (Pramudya & Seo, 2019). However, the idea of Emotion-Oriented e-commerce is fairly new, thus it needs to be investigated further in relation to the online purchase intention within the fast food industry.

It is said that visual elements have contributed positively to consumers' plans to buy products (Adam & Ali, 2014). Visual elements and Instagram promotions were also proven to increase the flow of sales (Fetrisnggi & Suryadi, 2020). This insinuates that the positive view by consumers of a visual presentation can lead to a stronger desire to purchase the product (Fetrisnggi & Suryadi, 2020), and in essence, increase purchase intention.

Visual identity is what creators want to reveal and at the same time, it connotes a particular meaning of the iconic sign (Salih, 2016). However, a study exploring the visual component of destination brands as a tool for communicating sustainable tourism offers (Adamus-Matuszyriska, et al., 2021), argues that advertising communication often allows for free interpretation of the message, this freedom of interpretation limits visual identity and even sometimes imposes verbal text for consumers to understand the meaning (Adamus-Matuszyriska, et al., 2021). For example, a slogan usually accompanies and specifies what a brand signature/ logo is about.

Visual images without written words are seen as not comprehensible in some instances (Adams, et al., 2014). While visual images are attractive they are unable to communicate the full message; this indicates that language techniques needed to be included to fully correspond the intended message (Nuckols, 2020). This means text and images work hand in hand to get the intended message to effectively reach the consumer.

Multimodality is defined as a term that refers to several types of modes in human communication such as visual, audio, written, oral, and spatial (Pan, 2015; Rizvi, et al.,

2020). A textual pattern used such as bold and capitalised letters, the placement of objects in the visual, and the use of symbolic language all play an important role in attracting and persuading viewers and consumers (Rizvi, et al., 2020). Emphasis is also put on the use of colours, as colour plays a very important role in the advertising of a product (Decker, 2021). As colour selection has the ability to increase the attractiveness and persuasion of the picture or product (Ciotti, 2020). This means that websites need to choose both their visual and textual modes wisely to effectively persuade the consumer to make an online purchase (Fillmore, 2020). Companies need to ensure that their visual identity is able to efficiently communicate their message to their customers (Levanier, 2020).

The Internet relies mainly on text and image content as a primary way of retrieving and delivering information (Loiacono, et al., 2013). However, businesses often ignore website accessibility, which is to their detriment since people with disabilities control over \$175 billion in disposable income (Loiacono, et al., 2013). Over 75% of people without disabilities believe that companies should make their products and services accessible to those with disabilities (Kennedy & Jain-Link, 2019). This would mean adding audio elements to websites to make the information available to those who are visually impaired.

It has been stated that the more visually appealing a website is, the more pleasure a consumer experiences while interacting with the website (Liu, 2013). From this increased pleasure experienced the likelihood of the consumer purchasing a good or service from that specific website increases too. Therefore it is hypothesised that:

H5: There is a positive relationship between the visual and audio elements of a website and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry

2.3.6 Relationship between Interaction and Involvement and Consumer Online Purchase Intention within the Fast-food Industry

Interaction and involvement on websites include electronic word of mouth. Electronic word of mouth is defined as a positive or negative statement made by potential, actual or former customers towards a product or company, which is made available to a large number of people or institutions through the internet (Ling, 2018). Consumers are given the opportunity to read other consumers' experiences with the website along with the products offered (Pettersson, 2015). The use of reviews online can also determine how often user reviews influence consumer decision-making, this can be seen from the number of helpfulness polls

(Raad, et al., 2018), indicating that when shopping online consumers find it helpful to read reviews from other consumers, which eventually influence their final purchase decision. Apart from that, electronic word of mouth is also considered a form of an informal communication channel between the customer and seller via the internet (Ling, 2018). Customers often express their personal opinions regarding service experiences through social media or consumer text comments (e-WOM) (Poturak & Turkeyilmaz, 2018). In a sense, through these platforms, they express their true feelings about the product or service (Chen, et al., 2017). This e-WOM affects other social media users' purchase intention, it has become one of the important reference sources for customers' online purchase decisions, hence, customer satisfaction with the product or service has great importance to online marketing (Chen, et al., 2021). A study proposing a text mining scheme to discover customer satisfaction from text comments and social media (Chen, et al., 2021), with specific reference to the fast-food industry, found that text reviews in social media have recently been shown to be influential in customers' attitudes and purchasing behaviours. Moreover, it was discovered through online reviews that consumers value food and service quality as the most important factors when purchasing fast food online.

Online shoppers often rely on the experiences of other shoppers to form a perception about the quality of the products (Sethi, et al., 2018). Thus, when people post about their purchases, they have the ability to create positive word of mouth (Mosley, 2017). Shoppers also undertake several activities before reaching their final purchase decision (Hall & Towers, 2017). This could include seeking content from different retailers and asking for social validation of their decision from both their offline and online social networks (Hall & Towers, 2017). This, once again, reiterates the importance of social media and positive word of mouth for companies and their online platforms.

There are two types of influences that have been identified: normative and informational (Long-Crowell, 2021). Normative influences refer to the tendency to conform to the expectations of others (Nechoud, et al., 2021), whilst informative influences refer to the tendency to accept information from another consumer which then affects your buying behaviour (Nechoud, et al., 2021). E-WOM is seen as important information (informative influence), thus, influencing consumers purchasing behaviour (Mavragani, et al., 2019). The effects of normative and informative social influences on consumers' purchase decisions are relatively strong because many consumers decide to purchase products based on the comments and likes of their social media contacts (Kwahk & Kim, 2017). This means that

reviews and comments about a company's website or the products they sell on said website possibly influence current and future customers' purchase intention of the product or service (Gandasari, et al., 2020).

The Internet also empowers consumers by providing new channels of expression (Shen & Wang, 2021). For example, consumers can now use their reviews to vote down a product if they are unhappy. One in four social media users has used the Internet as a platform to complain about bad purchasing experiences (Causon, 2015). The KPMG Global Online Consumer Report (KPMG, 2017) shows that there is approximately 31% of online consumers that share their experiences on Facebook and 11% of them do so on online platforms. If a company is to successfully utilise its website and e-commerce platform, it must remember that the consumers' voice is important (Sharma, 2022).

Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) is a very important place for consumers to give their opinion and is considered more effective than traditional word of mouth (Diventy, et al., 2020). E-WOM is a form of exchange of information and knowledge on social media (Charo, 2015). A study found that social media marketing did not influence purchase intention, however, it did influence purchase decisions (Diventy, et al., 2020). Whereas, electronic word of mouth influenced purchase intention, however, there was no influence on purchase decisions. This suggests that social media plays a vital role in concluding purchase decisions of a product or brand, but electronic word of mouth has a more significant role in promoting consumers' purchase intention rather than purchase decisions.

This is important as it influences how consumers perceive the products and services of that company. It is a type of word of mouth, which means that it can also affect how other people view the product (Malik, 2017). Word of mouth is especially important when trying to recruit new customers (Ngoma, et al., 2019). If a business experiences negative word of mouth it can affect other consumers' behaviour towards the product or service (Huete-Alcocer, 2017). It is therefore hypothesised that:

H6: There is a significant relationship between the interaction and involvement of consumers with the website and the consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry

2.3.7 Relationship between Time-saving orientation and Consumer Online Purchase Intention within the Fast-food Industry

Online buying is very convenient in today's fast-paced world and aids time-saving orientation (Loureiro & Breazeale, 2016). Shopping online allows the user to shop from the comfort of their work or home environment and get the items delivered at a convenient time, which also allows the consumer to use his/her time for other tasks which may be of a higher priority (Baluch, 2022). As mentioned previously, one of the most important situational factors expected by consumers whilst online shopping is the convenience and accessibility provided.

In recent years due to people having hectic lifestyles, they have grown to dislike waiting for food at a restaurant and would prefer to have their food delivered to them and eat in the comfort of their own homes (Yeo, et al., 2017). This means they prefer having to use minimal effort and getting their food as fast as possible (Chai & Yat, 2019). Time-saving orientation is seen as one of the major contributing factors to influencing the behavioural intention of consumers on their online purchase intention (Khalil, 2014). Time-saving orientation has been found to have a significantly positive influence on behavioural intention to adopt online shopping (Ganapathi, 2015; Sultan & Uddin, 2011; Zendehdel, et al., 2015).

Findings from other studies found that there was a significant relationship between consumer satisfaction and the efficiency of online delivery (Chan, et al., 2016; Naidoo & Botsi, 2021). It was also discovered that delayed delivery brought a negative effect on consumer satisfaction (Victor, 2020), which shows that on-time delivery and time-saving orientation are extremely important to consumers when purchasing fast food online. Consumers utilize food delivery services that allow them to put an order in the shortest time without having to go through a traditional process (Dazmin & Ho, 2019), so much so that the consumer's time-saving orientation was found to be the more significant factor compared to the consumers' price-saving orientation (Dazmin & Ho, 2019).

Time-saving orientation has a strong relationship with post-usage usefulness because the more time the user can save the more valuable and useful the service is perceived (Prabowo & Nugroho, 2018). All these factors tend to increase consumers' preference to purchase online rather than having to go to physical stores (Prabowo & Nugroho, 2018). This further explains that the website characteristics need to perhaps incorporate time-saving and efficiency in order to increase consumers' online purchase intention with regard to fast food. People who are income rich but time-poor find online shopping attractive because it helps

them save time (Punj, 2012). This explains that in a world where everyone seems to be income-rich but time-poor (Harford, 2018), online shopping is growing, and considering food is a daily necessity, fast-food websites play an important role in the growth of the online fast-food market. This establishes the following hypothesis:

H7: There is a positive relationship between time-saving orientation and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry

2.3.8 Relationship between Website Quality and Consumer Online Purchase Intention within the Fast-food Industry

Due to the increasing number of internet users, the role of websites is becoming increasingly important for marketing within various business fields (Semuel, 2019). Website quality structures the majority of opinions from the consumers towards the website, this is because website quality increases the effectiveness of the messages delivered to the audience and consumers (Ling, 2018).

Perceived quality of a website is defined as, “users’ evaluation of a website’s features meeting users’ needs and reflecting overall excellence of the website” (Reitsamer, et al., 2014). High-quality websites are able to attract more customers than competing low-quality e-commerce websites and this is because quality builds sustainable competitive assets (Rares, 2014). This indicates that the web design quality of e-commerce websites is highly important to consumers and businesses, as the purchase intention of consumers is potentially influenced by web design quality and offers a competitive advantage for businesses.

The quality of a website from a technical point of view influences trust and participation in e-commerce (Wiharto, et al., 2021). It was also proposed that website quality directly affected consumer satisfaction (Al-Manasra, et al., 2013). A study determining the factors that influence the online shopping intention of Generation Z in Malaysia, discovered that website quality was one of the most significant website characteristics that affected online shopping intention, furthermore, it concluded that marketers should put more effort into the design of a website and its customer services, in order to increase online shopping intention (Doulatabadi & Sheng, 2020).

It is assumed that website quality is a vital factor in e-commerce because a consumer’s perception of the website quality directly affects their willingness to shop online (Nia & Shokouhyar, 2020). Consumers’ behaviours change based on a website’s quality level

(Ahmad, et al., 2017). This means their willingness to purchase online increases with the quality of the website, thus, the higher the quality the more likely a consumer will be willing to purchase online. Success in the e-commerce field requires factors such as website design quality and interaction with users to be competent (Nia & Shokouhyar, 2020).

The role of influencing users online is the ability of the web design itself (Raad, et al., 2018). This means that the content of a website can attract buyers to the website (Barone, 2022). The quality of the website can also be known as the presentation aspect, as the design represents the emotional appeal consumers experience in relation to the website as well as towards the products that are offered (Ho, 2017).

H8: There is a significant relationship between website design quality and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry

2.3.9 Relationship between Relative Advantage and Consumer Online Purchase Intention within the Fast-food Industry

Relative advantage is explained as the characterisation of how much technology advancement is seen as better or better than ever (Mapande & Appiah, 2018). Relative Advantage is also referred to as the degree to which someone sees an innovation offering greater advantages compared to previous technologies when doing the same thing (Cahyono & Susanto, 2019). Relative advantage was proven to positively influence the adoption of e-commerce (Mapande & Appiah, 2018). This then supports the idea of relative advantage being a characteristic that has the power to influence a consumer's online purchase intention because if consumers see technology advancement in a positive light they are more likely to embrace and encourage the use of said technological advancement (Nazir & Tian, 2022). The adoption of e-commerce sites must occur for the desired result of online purchase intention by consumers to be reached (Lai, 2017).

Relative advantage in terms of mobile banking services (Yusaivi, et al., 2021), shows that the greater the relative advantage, the greater the potential use of mobile banking services.

Relative advantage has consistently been a strong predictor of technology adoption and is also shown to influence millennial customers' use of online banking services (Yusaivi, et al., 2021). If this study was solely reviewing technology acceptance and applied the learning to websites, this would mean relative advantage influences millennials' use of websites (Payne, et al., 2018). However, it needs to be taken into consideration that the better consumer

knowledge is about new IT (Fry, et al., 2018), the more it will increase the understanding of the relative advantage of technology (Fry, et al., 2018). Thus, knowledge also shapes a person's relative advantage perception of IT (Sugandini, et al., 2020). Perceived relative advantage, web quality, and e-WOM are shown to influence attitudes, which then influence the consumers' adoption of technology (Sugandini, et al., 2020). This is important because consumers need to adopt the technological advancement of websites offering consumers the opportunity to purchase fast food online, for purchase intention to occur.

A study investigating how the website characteristics: relative advantage, complexity, and compatibility, affect the adoption of a website (Musa, et al., 2015), found that all the characteristics had a significant effect on the adoption of a website. The coefficient of relative advantage was shown to be 0.160 which depicts a fairly good result (Musa, et al., 2015), indicating that relative advantage plays a part in consumers' acceptance and adoption of a website which then increases the probability of purchase intention.

This indicates that since relative advantage positively influences the adoption of e-commerce, it may positively influence consumers' online purchase intention. It is therefore hypothesised that;

H9: There is a positive relationship between relative advantage and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry

2.3.10 Relationship between Service Factors and Consumer Online Purchase Intention within the Fast-food Industry

Ecommerce service quality is the assessment from the genuine experience of the administration of the online market (Moghavvemi, et al., 2018; Sobihah, et al., 2015). Adequate service is the ability to solve customers' problems and concerns before they occur, however, in the context of e-commerce the service factors include customer service and delivery service (Mkhize, 2019). Service quality has been viewed as a noteworthy factor to which companies can gain an upper hand and uplift their competitiveness (Moghavvemi, et al., 2018). Hence, quality customer service continues to gain importance.

Today, thanks to the Internet, the quality of customer service has improved (Shamsath-Begam, 2020), with 24-hour automated online customer support ready to provide customers with the right support. This helps companies provide better services and resist difficult

environments (Shamsath-Begam, 2020). Providing better service quality increases the chances of achieving consumer satisfaction (Khadka & Maharjan, 2017).

Service quality is based on the comparison of expected service and perceived service (Chib & Kumar, 2021). This means that customer dissatisfaction occurs when the service quality delivered does not meet the service quality expectations of the consumer (Vu, 2021). Service quality directly affects customer satisfaction (Vu, 2021), thus, indicating that companies should put effort into increasing the level of service quality. Companies in the fast food industry should conduct regular audits and surveys to enhance their abilities to deliver better services as well as reduce the service quality gap through the induction of technology (The Restaurant Times, 2018). It was also discovered that KFC outperforms McDonalds in terms of service quality and, thus, resulting in better customer satisfaction (Chib & Kumar, 2021).

A study conducted in South Africa found that service factors, namely the delivery service aspect, were shown to be considered an important factor in relation to its influence on consumer online buying satisfaction (Rudansky-Kloppers, 2014). Therefore, taking into consideration that service factors influence online buying behaviour it is then hypothesised that:

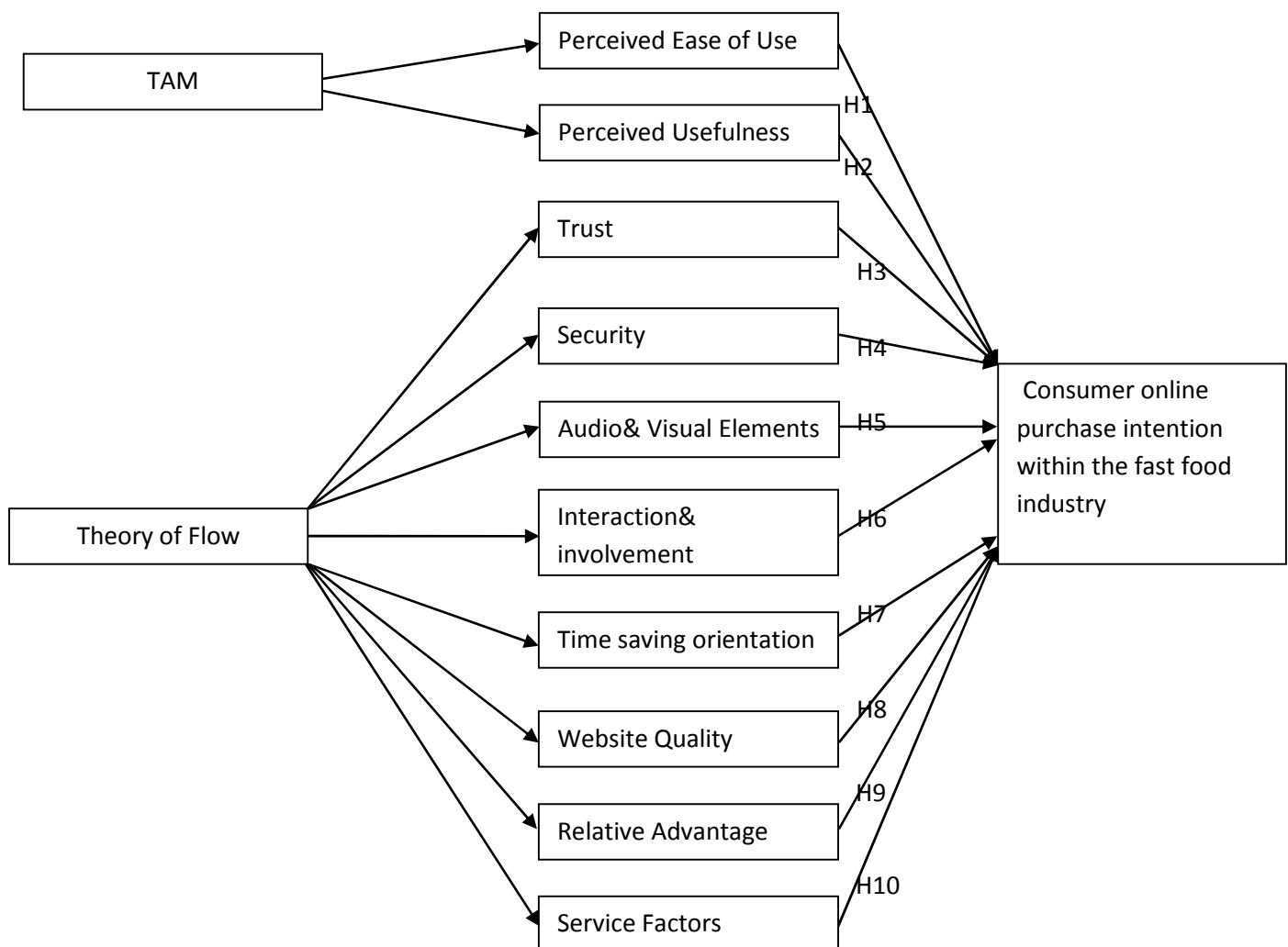
H10: There is a significant relationship between Service Factors and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry

As mentioned above, studies have shown that website characteristics such as perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, trust, security, visual and audio elements along with interaction and involvement, time-saving orientation, website design quality, relative advantage, and service factors all possibly influence consumers' online purchase intention. Prior literature was used as a basis for developing and substantiating the proposed hypotheses. Additional research was required to gain knowledge of how these characteristics influence consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry. This study expects to solve this knowledge gap. The subsequent section explains the research methodology employed to test the conceptual model.

2.4 CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Based on the literature presented, several relationships between the relevant variables are proposed. Figure 2.4 visually illustrates the hypothesised website characteristics that influence consumers' online purchase intention within the fast-food industry.

Figure 2.4: The hypothesised website characteristics that influence consumers' online purchase intention within the fast-food industry



Source: Compiled by Researcher (2020)

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes details on the research philosophy, research design, research approach, sampling design, data collection method, and data analysis procedures used for this study.

3.1 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

Research philosophy is a belief about the specific technique in which data ought to be gathered, analysed, and utilised (Ramakrishnan, 2013). There are four main categories, Positivism, Interpretivism, Critical, and Pragmatism (Kivunja, 2017). However, positivism is the philosophy employed for this quantitative study.

3.1.1 Positivism

Positivism is the belief that reality is stable and can be observed and described from an objective viewpoint (Ramakrishnan, 2013). The positivism research philosophy is observable and measurable (Washika, et al., 2021). It is also believed that observable facts must be isolated and that the observations have the ability to be repeated (Ramakrishnan, 2013). Positivists prefer quantitative methods because they have good reliability and representativeness (Thompson, 2015). The positivist tradition believes that quantitative studies allow researchers to get a conspectus of society in a wholesome sense and reveal social trends (Thompson, 2015).

Positivism is implemented to search for the reason and consequences of relationships between variables (Park, et al., 2019). Positivism paradigms attempt to contribute explanations and produce predictions that are based on measurable outcomes (Kivunja, 2017). This coincides with the basis of this study as it intends to gather measurable data and apply the findings from the research to the population. This is possible with positivism because of the *generalisability* assumption, which explains that the findings formulated from the research project in one scenario should be relevant to other situations by empirical deduction (Kivunja, 2017). Post-positivism acknowledges that reality is flawed and that the truth is not absolute but probable (RePrac, 2016).

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research designs are represented in the form of exploratory, descriptive, explanatory, or predictive research methods (Wyk, 2019). However, for this particular study only explanatory and descriptive research forms are referenced.

Explanatory research is the use of secondary sources to provide evidence that helps us comprehend the problem faced more efficiently (Gradesfixer, 2019). This is referred to as an analytical study as it seeks to identify links between the variables and the research problem (Wyk, 2019). It is not employed to give us definite evidence but rather to aid researchers in understanding the problem more efficiently through speculation based on literature and earlier evidence (Taboola, 2018). Some of the advantages of explanatory research are that it increases the knowledge of a problem which also means better conclusions (Yousaf, 2017).

The other research approach taken is a descriptive research approach which is an attempt to investigate whilst providing explanations and also discovering new information apropos of a topic; it is the use of primary sources (Gradesfixer, 2019). Descriptive Research involves the identification of attributes of a particular phenomenon based on an observational basis (Voxco, 2022). The main objective of descriptive research is to contribute a precise and valid representation of the variables and their influence on the research problem (Wyk, 2019). This research design was chosen as primary data was required to assist in understanding how the website characteristics affect the consumers' online purchase intention.

Taking into consideration the facts mentioned above, it was concluded the research design for this study, which is to determine whether website characteristics influence consumers' online purchase intention within the fast-food industry, is the descriptive and explanatory research design.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH: Qualitative vs Quantitative

Qualitative research is empirical research in which the data collected is not in numerical form (Mcleod, 2019). The form of data collected in qualitative research is open-ended responses such as; interviews, participant observations, and reflections (Aspers & Corte, 2019).

Qualitative research usually produces more particular or specialised results, which focus more on the depth and breadth of the problem (Subedi, 2016). However, this type of research design and data collection is not required for this particular study; hence a quantitative method approach was taken.

Quantitative research assembles data in the form of a numerical statistical nature which can be categorised or measured (Mcleod, 2019). Quantitative research is based on precise measurement with the use of validated data collection instruments (LeTourneau University, 2022). The results of quantitative research normally consist of findings that can be generalised and applied to other populations as it focuses on testing a specific hypothesis which then leads to statistical reports with correlations, comparisons, and statistical findings (LeTourneau University, 2022). Quantitative research methods aid the researcher with testing the hypothesis and theories with the data (MCPHS Libraries, 2021), which is appropriate for this study.

This research study is testing the proposed conceptual model and measures the effects that certain website characteristics have on consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry. Thus, a quantitative study is a more fitting research form of approach.

3.4 SAMPLE DESIGN

This section discussed the target population, sampling frame, sampling size, and sampling method used.

3.4.1 Target Population

This study occurred in South Africa, in the Gauteng province. The population for this study is Generation Z & Generation Y consumers who are students at the Johannesburg-based University. Younger consumers are more comfortable using technology (Jiang, 2018), making them the ideal target population for this study.

3.4.2 Sampling Frame

Generation Z & Generation Y tend to be the most appropriate sampling frame for this study considering the data was collected from a Johannesburg-based University. This was the part of the population that was targeted, the younger generation particularly as they use social media and online platforms more often thus they are more exposed to digital marketing (Bolton, et al., 2013; Jiang, 2018). The sample frame consisted of male and female respondents.

3.4.3 Sample Size

For this particular study, a sample size of 300 respondents was targeted. However, 202 surveys were achieved. With the assistance of a sample calculator, a sample size of 200 was proven to hold adequate statistical power considering the approximate population of 35 000 students within a Johannesburg university, a 7% rate of error, and a 95% confidence level. An acceptable margin of error typically falls between 4% and 8% at the 95% confidence level (PollFish, 2022).

Scale development, Factor Analysis, and SEM requires a large sample size since the sample affects the accuracy and generalisability of results (Boateng, et al., 2018; Kyriazos, 2018). Specific fit indices also ‘react’ in a different way when small sample sizes are utilised along with model estimators, for instance, the chi-square test is sensitive to sample size and may fail to reject an unfit model as well as incorrectly reject an adequate model due to a sample size being less than 200 (Kyriazos, 2018).

Furthermore, the chi-square test is not the only model fit indices that is sensitive to sample size as the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is oversensitive in rejecting true population models when a sample of less than 200 is used (Garrido, et al., 2016; Shi, et al., 2018). Similar to RMSEA, the Tucker-Lewis Index is also prone to false model rejections when the sample size is less than 200 (Shi, et al., 2018). Therefore to measure accurate model fit indices the sample size should consist of 200 or more respondents in a study.

3.4.4 Sample Method

This determines which respondents are included and which ones are excluded from the research (Khalifa, 2020). The researcher used a non-probability sampling method and in particular, the convenience sampling technique. The respondents are from a Johannesburg-based University due to the ease of access and availability of respondents, which correlates with the convenience sampling technique (QuestionPro, 2022). Convenience sampling tends to be the most uncomplicated and economical sampling technique commonly used (Bhat, 2019).

Probability sampling means that each sample has an equal chance to be selected (Statistique Canada, 2021). This method has to define the population with precision as these methods cannot be used for populations that are too vague, for example, if the target population is university students; it means any university student from any part of the globe is a part of the

population for a specific study, which is not feasible (Alvi, 2016). Probability Sampling would have been too time-consuming and expensive for this study (Statistique Canada, 2021). Therefore, non-probability sampling was used for this study.

Non-probability sampling states that every element in the populace does not get an equitable likelihood to participate in the study and no form of random selection is made; instead, the assortment of the sample is made on the subjective judgment of the individual conducting the research (Alvi, 2016). Some advantages of non-probability sampling are that these methods require minimal exertion as well as use less time and are economically efficient (Lehdonvirta, et al., 2021). However, some of the disadvantages include that this technique is prone to systematic inaccuracies and sampling biases (Wilson, 2014). The sample is also not an accurate representation of the populace and they are hard to generalise to the population (Acharya, et al., 2013; Balance: Small Business, 2019).

Convenient sampling is the technique used for this study as this considers participants who are easily accessible or convenient to be a part of the study (Balance: Small Business, 2019). This method is more practical and efficient especially when the target population has a broad spectrum (Etikan, et al., 2016). After analysing the probability and non-probability sampling methods available, it was speculated that the non-probability convenient sampling technique was the appropriate sampling method for this specific study.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Research techniques are the many different methods of collecting data (Cote, 2021). The data collection method used for this study was supposed to be questionnaires distributed by hand, i.e. self-administered questionnaires. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, online surveys have become the most appropriate tool for primary data collection (Koning, et al., 2021; Singh & Sagar, 2021). Therefore, online surveys were used for this study.

3.5.1 Research Instrument

A research tool can either be developed by the researcher from scratch or based on existing research instruments from previous research studies (USC Libraries, 2022). For this study, some questions were created by the researcher with the background knowledge gained from the literature review, and other chosen questions were derived from previous studies which also explored the relationships between the independent variables: perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, trust, security, visual and audio elements, interaction and involvement,

time-saving orientation, website design quality, relative advantage, and service factors with purchase intention (Chai & Yat, 2019; Cho, 2015; Dachyar & Banjarnahor, 2017; Muhamad, et al., 2020; Yeo, et al., 2017). The references for the studies taken into consideration are shown in the attached table 3.1. The responses of individuals were measured using the Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree. In the questionnaire, the demographic questions examined information on gender, age, and internet access. Demographic information provides a description of respondents which allows the researcher to determine whom the research findings generalise and allows for comparisons to be made across replication studies (Connelly, 2013).

3.5.2 Administration of the Questionnaire

For this study, online questionnaires were administered to gain primary data on the topic. The survey was distributed to respondents online through a link that was emailed and made available through social media networks to representatives of the sample, which is known to be acceptable academic practice (Lehdonvirta, et al., 2021; Moraes, et al., 2021).

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

This section reviews the data analysis methods that were performed for this study. Factors such as descriptive statistics, factor analysis, reliability analysis, validity testing, model fit, and hypothesis testing are also mentioned. Ethical considerations of the study are also discussed in this section.

Firstly, the data collected was exported from the program used to conduct the survey to an Excel spreadsheet. The raw data from the questionnaires were then coded, labelled, and cleaned in Microsoft excel which then allowed the data to be exported to the statistical software programmes; SPSS 28 and AMOS 28.

SPSS was used to analyse and evaluate the descriptive data collected to further understand the trend and interpret the information through a systematic process. SPSS is useful for data analysis and surveys as it assists with analysing and transforming the data between different data variables (Silver Lake Consulting, 2021). SPSS also allows for the output to be obtained through graphical representation so that researchers can easily understand and interpret the results (Silver Lake Consulting, 2021). The AMOS programme was used to examine the relationships hypothesised within this study as it allows researchers to create and validate predictive models (Foley, 2018).

The Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique was utilised because of its unique features and robustness while analysing the findings of the survey (Dat, et al., 2021). SEM offers an explanatory power that evaluates the model by measuring the discrepancy amount in the dependent variables of the model (Tarka, 2018). This measurement model suggests that scholars should consider the outer loadings of the items to establish convergent validity (Hair, et al., 2014). Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to test the accuracy of the measurement model by confirming the reliability and validity of the data constructs used in this study.

The internal consistency reliability of the measurement instruments utilized was determined by assessing the Cronbach alpha and examining the item to total correlation (Din, et al., 2015). The validity of the measurement model was assessed through convergent validity through factor loadings and discriminant validity with the use of the Inter-Construct Correlation Matrix. Other studies have shown that testing the discriminant validity and convergent validity is an effective method for testing the overall validity of the measurement model (David Alarcón, 2015; Engellant, et al., 2016; Icen, 2020).

Once the reliability and validity of the scale was confirmed, the model fit was tested. Lastly, path analysis was performed to measure the correlation of the latent variables to the overall construct being measured.

3.6.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics revolve around summarizing and organizing the data so that it can be easily understood and interpreted (Narkhede, 2018). There are two types of descriptive statistics, namely the measure of central tendency and the measures of variability (Narkhede, 2018). Measures of central tendency include the mean, median, and mode which refers to the idea that there is a single number that best sums up the entire set of measurements (Bhandari, 2022). The measure of variability includes standard deviation which refers to the spread or dispersion of the data collected (Frost, 2020). This study utilises the mean and standard deviation to analyse the data collected. Once the descriptive statistics were analysed, the accuracy of the measurement model was analysed by testing the reliability and validity of the scale.

3.6.2 Factor Analysis

This is a technique used to establish a smaller amount of factors by reducing the large number of variables gathered (Lani, 2019). It extracts the maximum common variance from all the variables and deposits them into a common score, and then this common score is used for further analysis (Lani, 2019). This method assumes there are only linear relationships between the variables (Lani, 2019). Researchers then look at the factor loadings as the correlation coefficient between variables (Tavakol & Wetzel, 2020). This was reviewed for the purposes of this study.

3.6.3 Reliability Analysis

Reliability is based on the notion that individual items ought to produce results that maintain consistency with the overall survey (WAC Clearing House, 2022). Cronbach introduced a measure that was the alternative to splitting the data gathered in two in every possible way and computing the correlation coefficient for each split (Statistics Solutions , 2022). The average of these values is then considered to be Cronbach's Alpha, which has become the most common scale of reliability (Chiang, et al., 2015). Cronbach's alpha is at an acceptable threshold when it is between 0.6 – 0.7 and if it is 0.8 or greater than it is considered to have a very good level of reliability (Ursachi, 2015).

3.6.4 Validity Testing

Construct validity must be measured as it examines what primary construct is being evaluated, two important parts need to be considered when measuring construct validity, namely convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Icen, 2020). Convergent validity is the extent to which two instruments intended to assess the same construct are interrelated, convergence is when the correlation between these instruments is high (Ursachi, 2015). Discriminant validity, however, is the scale to which two measures are formed to measure similar, but conceptually different constructs are interrelated, a low to moderate correlation being the proof of discriminant validity (Ursachi, 2015). For the current study, factor loading was used to measure convergent validity and the inter-construct correlation matrix was utilized to measure discriminant validity (David Alarcón, 2015).

3.6.5 Model Fit Indices

Fit Indices assist the researcher to assess the fit of their structural equation models to their data (Stone, 2021). The Chi-Square Value, GFI, IFI, TLI, CFI, and RMSEA were all tested for model fit within this study. These indices are discussed in further detail in Chapter 4. Once the model fit was confirmed, the path analysis was tested.

3.6.6 Hypothesis Testing

Once the measurement model and model fit was confirmed the path analysis was tested. Proposed hypotheses were tested through path coefficients and assessing the p values.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

During any research study, it is of utmost importance to be cognisant of ethical issues (Pettersson, 2015). Ethical clearance was obtained from a Johannesburg-based University before any data was collected; protocol number: H21/05/41.

This includes among other aspects how respondents were treated. The first aspect was to inform the respondents as to what the study is about, this is important because respondents needed to understand why they were being included in the study (Malik, 2017).

As per standard academic practice, the following ethical considerations were adhered to: (1) it was the researcher's responsibility to ensure that no respondent was harmed in any way due to the study (Resnik, 2020); this included both physical and emotional harm. (2) An introductory letter was used to inform the respondents about the study (Enago Academy, 2022). (3) The respondent also remained anonymous thus protecting their privacy; they were made aware of the anonymity aspect beforehand, and this was done with the use of a Participatory Information Sheet (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018). (4) Participation was strictly voluntary and anonymous (Enago Academy, 2022). (5) Information collected from individuals is safeguarded (University of Nevada, 2021). (6) The data collected was only handled by the researcher, thus ensuring the security and privacy of the respondents' information (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018). This study does not disclose any of the respondents' personal information. (7) The raw data collected is stored in a password-protected computer and will be kept for a minimum of three years after the study has occurred (Holland & Linvill, 2019). (8) The analysis and results of the findings are depicted clearly and accurately (Bhandari, 2022). The discussion of the results is also shown in the

most transparent way possible, without any intentional biases. Ethical considerations were of utmost importance to the researcher when analysing the data provided by respondents.

The research design, sampling design, data collection methods, instruments, and data analysis procedure used in this study were discussed in this chapter. The following chapter interprets the data collected and highlights the results of the analysis.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the demographics and accuracy of the measurement model were analysed. The measurement model was tested by analysing the reliability and validity of the scale. Once the accuracy of the measurement model was confirmed, the model fit was tested through multiple indices. Lastly, the path analysis was analysed once the model fit was confirmed.

The data collected was analysed through AMOS 28 and SPSS 28. This study collected 204 responses but after data clean-up, 2 responses were eliminated due to incomplete data.

4.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive Statistics are a summary of descriptive coefficients from the selected data (Hayes, 2022). Descriptive statistics can be broken down into measures of central tendency (mode, median, and mean) and measures of validity as well as reliability (Kenton, 2019). These statistics are summarised to give meaning to the data collected by observing the patterns that have emerged (Lund, 2018).

4.1.1 Demographic Statistics

This section contains the demographic profile of the respondents for this study and also includes a discussion about their age, gender & accessibility to the internet.

Table 4.1: Demographic Frequency

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	139	68.8
Male	59	29.2
Prefer not to say	4	2
Age		
18 - 25	122	60.4
26 - 35	36	17.8
35 - Older	44	21.8
Access to Internet		

Yes	201	99.5
No	1	0.5

Source: Data Collected by Researcher (2022)

The gender profile consisted of three options; male, female, and the option to not disclose this information. 202 respondents participated in this research. As illustrated above, there was a majority of female respondents (68.8%) meaning 139 were female respondents, followed by 29.2% male respondents (59 male respondents) whilst 2% preferred not to disclose their gender profile (4 respondents preferred not to disclose). It also needs to be taken into consideration that the University of Witwatersrand has a population consisting of 54.64% female and 45.34% male, which also explains the greater response from female respondents than male respondents (Wits, 2019).

As depicted in Table 4.1, there were a number of respondents of various ages, the majority falling within the Gen Z population of 18 – 25 years of age. The second-largest age profile group was 35 and older, followed by 26 – 35-year-olds; both these age groups demonstrated a total response rate of 39.6%. The variety of age groups allows us to get a broader view of the South African population and their interaction with fast food websites.

The data collected showed that 99.5% of respondents have internet access, with one respondent exclaiming their lack of access to the Internet. However, questionnaires were collected through an online platform (Google forms), and it can be concluded that all respondents do have access to the internet. The respondents' access to the internet is imperative for this research as it is required to accurately measure the online purchase intention of fast food. A consumer would not be able to purchase goods online without the ability to access the internet.

In summary, we see females forming the majority of the gender profile, and the ages of 18 – 25 (Generation Z) contributing to the majority of the age composition. Also, as concluded above almost all respondents have access to the Internet.

4.1.2 Variable Descriptive Statistics

The independent variables measured within this study were perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, trust, security, visual and audio elements, interaction and involvement, time-saving orientation, website quality, relative advantage, and service factors. These independent

variables were measured based on how they affect consumers' online purchase intention of fast food, thus indicating online purchase intention as the dependent variable.

As depicted in Table 4.2, respondents reacted positively to the items measured within the perceived ease of use construct. A strong agreement that a fast food website should require minimal effort, be easy to navigate, clear and understandable, and overall easy to use was shown. Websites also make purchasing fast food online more convenient and efficient indicating that they are perceived as useful especially when comparing prices from the different fast-food franchises and getting the latest fast food offers.

Trust is shown to play a critical role in consumers' online purchase intention of fast food with more than 70% of respondents stating that the trustworthiness of a website is important to them and that they are more likely to purchase from a website they trust. When asked about their hesitation to provide their information on websites, the majority of respondents were neutral, however, skewing toward the idea that hesitation and concern does occur as to whether the transaction will take place effectively. Respondents do experience perceived risk when using websites to make online purchases, and hence the majority of the participants were neutral about the idea of using their credit cards to make purchases online as well as the believability that the information is kept confidential. This confirms that protective payment steps and a good authentication of a website are required to encourage purchasing online more frequently. More than 85% of respondents believe that websites should not give their personal information to other agents.

Visual & audio elements showed a positive influence on online purchase intention of fast food, this is proven by the data as the bulk of the respondents strongly agreed on all the questions mentioned. Respondents also strongly agree that fast food websites should allow consumers to share their online fast food purchase experience on the website, as they like to read reviews of other customers' online purchase experiences. Social media was also shown to provide a viable solution for them to share their online purchase experience with others.

Time-saving orientation is important when purchasing fast food online. For example, purchasing fast food online saves the respondents time within their busy lifestyle as well as allows them to accomplish activities within the purchasing process more efficiently. Respondents are also able to gather information more conveniently and promptly with the use of websites. Websites need to ensure that the purchasing process occurs as quickly as possible because the majority of the participants strongly agreed that they prefer purchasing

fast food online so that they don't have to face traffic jams, search for parking and stand in queues.

Participants responded favourably to the idea that website content and design affect their online purchase intention, and that more specifically fast food websites must be customizable to the individual's specific needs and desires. Throughout the website, the customer inquiry and homepage should be easily accessible as well as that the homepage should provide a clear indication of the site's point of contact and contents. Most importantly, respondents prefer to purchase fast food from a high-speed and high-quality website.

Respondents felt that technological advancements make their life easier and that they liked having access to online fast food services at any time. The respondents also agreed that delivery services offer better efficiency when purchasing fast food and that their shopping productivity increases when they shop online.

Participants strongly agreed to the fact that the quality of the delivery service influenced their desire to purchase from the website again. Good customer service encouraged them to purchase from a specific franchise and that fast food services should deliver the food at an appropriate temperature. Fast food websites also allow for each customer to be treated equally.

Table 4.3: Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

	Frequency (%)				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
PI1	1 (0.5%)	1 (0.5%)	33 (16.3%)	95 (47%)	72 (35.6%)
PI2	0	5 (2.5%)	29 (14.4%)	100 (49.5)	68 (33.7%)
PI3	1 (0.5%)	1 (0.5%)	13 (6.4%)	84 (41.6%)	103 (51%)
PI4	0	3 (1.5%)	11 (5.4%)	68 (33.7%)	120 (59.4%)
PI5	7 (3.5%)	17 (8.4%)	37 (18.3%)	90 (44.6%)	51 (25.2%)
PI6	4 (2%)	14 (6.9%)	51 (25.2%)	83 (41.1%)	50 (24.8%)
PI7	1 (0.5%)	7 (3.5%)	18 (8.9%)	96 (47.5%)	80 (39.6%)

PI8	1 (0.5%)	3 (1.5%)	26 (12.9%)	98 (48.5%)	74 (36.6%)
PI9	1 (0.5%)	7 (3.5%)	43 (21.3%)	95 (47%)	56 (27.7%)
PI10	0	5 (2.5%)	33 (16.3%)	90 (44.6%)	74 (36.6%)

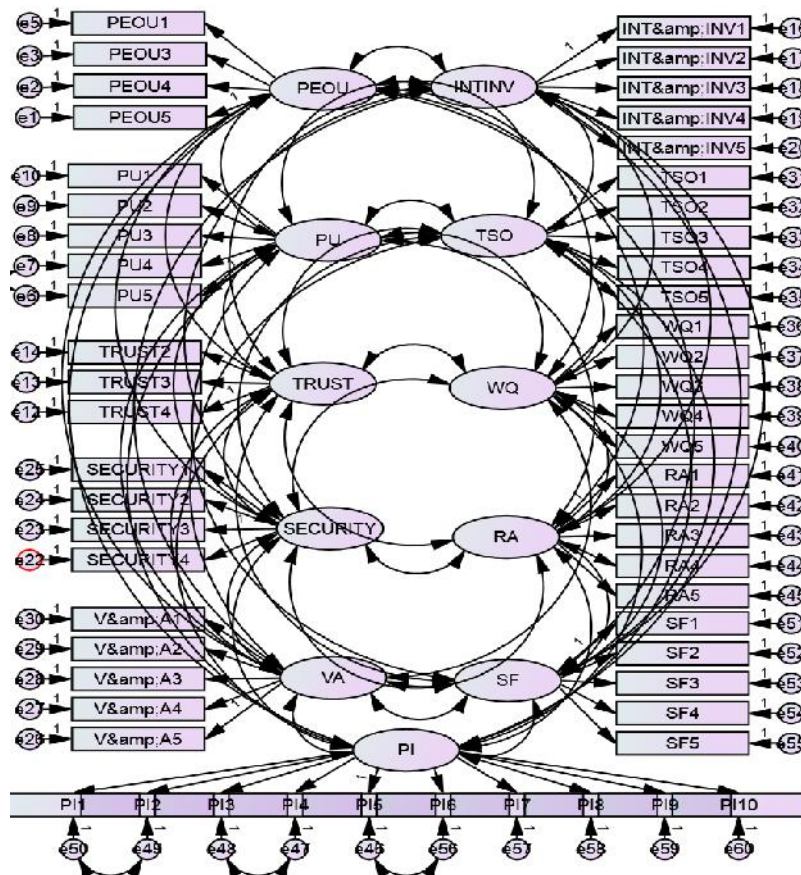
Source: Based on Data Collected (2022)

Table 4.3 depicts that all the website characteristics tested received favourable results as they play a role in the online purchase intention of fast food. The majority of respondents agree that 80% of the website characteristics share a positive/significant relationship with online purchase intention within the fast food industry. However, we see that when it came to trust and security, the respondents strongly agreed that these website characteristics are important when purchasing fast food online.

4.2 CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

A confirmatory factor analysis was performed to analyse latent variables which are free from measurement errors, as per standard academic practice (Kenny, 2016). Confirmatory Factor Analysis is a method used for large amounts of data to shrink it making it more manageable and understandable (Stephanie, 2019). It is also used to generate standard regression weights from the 10 constructs in the conceptual model, provided in chapter 2. The standardised regression weights (Factor loadings) were used to measure convergent validity within this study. The model below represents the results of the confirmatory factor analysis performed on a sample that contained 202 respondents.

Figure 4.1: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model



Source: Based on Data Analysis (2022)

Table 4.4: Measurement Model Accuracy

		Descriptive Statistics		Reliability Test		
		Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach Alpha	Item to total	Factor Loadings
Perceived Ease of Use	Perceived Ease of Use 1	4.48	0.74	0.83	0.55	0.57
	Perceived Ease of Use 3	4.53	0.71		0.65	0.70
	Perceived Ease of Use 4	4.71	0.54		0.79	0.92
	Perceived Ease of Use 5	4.72	0.53		0.74	0.88
Perceived Usefulness	Perceived Usefulness 1	4.40	0.72	0.79	0.52	0.68
	Perceived Usefulness 2	4.29	0.74		0.62	0.72
	Perceived Usefulness 3	3.94	0.92		0.60	0.78
	Perceived Usefulness 4	4.00	1.07		0.58	0.52
	Perceived Usefulness 5	4.20	0.86		0.53	0.49
Trust	Trust 2	4.67	0.57	0.51	0.14	0.35
	Trust 3	2.87	1.10		0.36	0.58
	Trust 4	3.74	0.84		0.55	0.75
Security	Security 1	3.70	0.94	0.81	0.68	0.75
	Security 2	3.12	1.12		0.67	0.82
	Security 3	3.45	0.89		0.65	0.72
	Security 4	3.97	0.99		0.52	0.60
Visual & Audio Elements	Visual & Audio 1	4.54	0.65	0.62	0.24	0.44
	Visual & Audio 2	4.36	0.85		0.30	0.47
	Visual & Audio 3	3.94	1.07		0.41	0.49
	Visual & Audio 4	4.27	0.79		0.60	0.80
	Visual & Audio 5	4.05	1.02		0.36	0.42
Interaction & Involvement	Interaction & Involvement 1	3.95	1.01	0.75	0.49	0.59
	Interaction & Involvement 2	3.73	1.06		0.55	0.68
	Interaction & Involvement 3	4.25	0.82		0.60	0.73
	Interaction & Involvement 4	4.05	1.05		0.58	0.65
	Interaction & Involvement 5	3.21	1.10		0.33	0.44
Time-Saving Orientation	Time-Saving Orientation 1	4.17	0.84	0.81	0.63	0.70
	Time-Saving Orientation 2	3.99	0.88		0.54	0.64
	Time-Saving Orientation 3	4.04	0.86		0.67	0.75
	Time-Saving Orientation 4	4.31	0.82		0.54	0.63
	Time-Saving Orientation 5	4.17	0.99		0.58	0.66
Website Quality	Website Quality 1	4.15	0.89	0.73	0.40	0.55
	Website Quality 2	4.50	0.60		0.59	0.78
	Website Quality 3	4.54	0.63		0.60	0.83

	Website Quality 4	3.70	1.11		0.27	0.32
	Website Quality 5	4.46	0.73		0.50	0.61
Relative Advantage	Relative Advantage 1	4.36	0.73	0.74	0.48	0.61
	Relative Advantage 2	3.50	1.03		0.53	0.61
	Relative Advantage 3	3.71	0.99		0.56	0.63
	Relative Advantage 4	3.82	0.99		0.49	0.53
	Relative Advantage 5	4.45	0.65		0.48	0.64
Service Factors	Service Factors 1	4.49	0.73	0.67	0.43	0.64
	Service Factors 2	3.99	0.88		0.42	0.48
	Service Factors 3	4.49	0.62		0.47	0.66
	Service Factors 4	3.42	1.04		0.32	0.36
	Service Factors 5	4.49	0.68		0.38	0.55
Purchase Intention	Purchase Intention 1	4.17	0.75	0.87	0.46	0.47
	Purchase Intention 2	4.14	0.75		0.60	0.61
	Purchase Intention 3	4.42	0.68		0.52	0.53
	Purchase Intention 4	4.51	0.67		0.50	0.53
	Purchase Intention 5	3.80	1.02		0.53	0.53
	Purchase Intention 6	3.80	0.96		0.61	0.61
	Purchase Intention 7	4.22	0.79		0.72	0.79
	Purchase Intention 8	4.19	0.75		0.67	0.70
	Purchase Intention 9	3.98	0.82		0.57	0.63
	Purchase Intention 10	4.15	0.78		0.64	0.74

Source: Based on Data Collected (2022)

4.3 RELIABILITY

The reliability of the measurement instruments utilised was determined by assessing the Cronbach alpha and examining the item to total correlation.

Cronbach's Alpha is a measure of internal consistency, which means how closely related a set of items are within a group (UCLA, 2021). Thus, to measure the internal consistency of the constructs within this study, Cronbach's Alpha was examined. For reliability to be considered acceptable Cronbach's Alpha should be 0.6 – 0.7 (Taber, 2018). If it is 0.8 or greater than it is considered a very good level of reliability (Ursachi, 2015). If constructs exceed 0.95 then this indicates that the items are redundant (Cho, 2015). All constructs except trust showed acceptable reliability. Trust indicated a slightly questionable internal reliability; however, as depicted in table 4.2 respondents believe that trust does affect their online purchase intention of fast food.

Item to total correlation is the measure of the reliability of a multi-item scale (Flom, 2022). It is the correlation between an individual item and the total score without that item (Flom, 2022). Values above 0.3 indicate a good correlation, however, anything below 0.3 should be considered to be removed (Silva, 2017). Anything below 0.3 means something different from the scale is being measured (Silva, 2017). In some instances where the item-to-total was below 0.3, this item was removed before statistical analysis. Hence, most of the figures shown in the tables above represent the reliable nature of the items used for this study. This also demonstrates that reliable measurement instruments were utilised.

4.4 TESTING FOR VALIDITY

This study assessed convergent validity using factor loadings and discriminant validity with the use of the Inter-Construct Correlation Matrix.

Convergent validity refers to how closely the new scale is related to other variables and other measures of the same construct (Krabbe, 2017). Factor loadings were used to determine convergent validity in this current study. The factor loadings obtained from the confirmatory factor analysis are represented in Table 5.4. Factor loadings above 0.5 are considered practically significant or acceptable (Cho, 2015). The majority of the items' factor loadings obtained in this study were 0.5 or greater which means that the items meet the required threshold and that the items can be considered acceptable in support of convergent validity.

The inter-construct correlation matrix was used to measure discriminant validity.

Discriminant Validity is expressed by data that measures constructs that should not be highly related or highly correlated (Hubley, 2014). From a theoretical point of view, discriminant validity focuses on the validity of the construct, which has the ability to discriminate between the measures of dissimilar constructs (Hubley, 2014).

Figure 4.2: Inter–Construct Correlation Matrix

Inter-Construct Correlation Matrix											
	PEOU	PU	TRUST	SECURITY	VA	INTINV	TSO	WQ	RA	SF	PI
PEOU	1.000										
PU	,302	1.000									
TRUST	,211	,502	1.000								
SECURITY	,096	,345	,796	1.000							
VA	,252	,283	,176	-,069	1.000						
INTINV	,250	,357	,179	,295	,477	1.000					
TSO	,258	,759	,246	,278	,403	,405	1.000				
WQ	,434	,415	,319	,143	,642	,523	,497	1.000			
RA	,204	,624	,435	,345	,520	,616	,752	,573	1.000		
SF	,251	,630	,440	,309	,373	,474	,553	,578	,586	1.000	
PI	,251	,592	,286	,161	,588	,416	,579	,640	,663	,685	1.000

Source: Based on Data Collected (2022)

The inter-construct correlation matrix was utilised to determine the discriminant validity of the measurement model, which is confirmed to be standard practice by Ronkko & Cho (2022). Discriminant validity is achieved when the inter-correlation matrix values are lower than 0.8 (O'Rourke & Hatcher, 2013). The results for the above correlation matrix show that all inter-correlation values are less than 0.8; this means all correlations are significant.

As depicted in the matrix above, there are mostly positive correlations between the constructs. Positive relationships indicate that when one variable increases/decreases the other variable increases/decreases as well (McLeod, 2020). The security and visual & audio elements constructs shared a negative correlation of - 0.069, which means when security on the website increase the importance of visual elements decreases and vice versa (McLeod, 2020; Nikolas, 2021). It is shown that all the correlations support the argument and measure the same conceptual structure. There are also very low correlations between the constructs which indicates that items were not redundant and that the relationship between constructs was low due to the broader view of questions asked (Hubley, 2014). Therefore discriminant validity was proven due to the low correlation presented above (Engellant, et al., 2016).

4.5 MODEL FIT

Model Fit Indices provide information for researchers to assess the fit of their structural equation model to their data (Stone, 2021). The indices examined for this particular research were Chi-Square, Goodness of Fit (GFI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). Literature shows that a minimum of 3 indices, mainly CFI, TLI & RMSEA, should depict acceptable results for model fit to be proven (Shi, et al., 2018; Stanley & Edwards, 2016; Xia & Yang, 2019).

Chi-Square is a statistic commonly used for testing relationships between categorical variables (Statistic Solutions, 2022). Usually, a value lower than 1 indicates poor fit, and greater than 3 will indicate that the model needs to be improved (Deveci, 2015). The CFA model indicates an acceptable fit as it is 1.83 which is greater than 1 but less than 3.

The Goodness of Fit Index is a measure of the fit between the hypothesised and the observed covariance matrix (Stephanie, 2017). The GFI ranges between 0 and 1, with a value greater than 0.8 indicating an acceptable model fit (Prasetyo, et al., 2021). The model above presents a GFI of 0.7, however, this feature can prevent accurate results when the sample size is low and the GFI fit indices can rise as the sample size increases (Civelek, 2018).

Incremental Fit Index is a group of indices that do not use chi-square in its raw form but compares the chi-square to a baseline model (Van Laar & Braeken, 2022). The required threshold for a good fit is 0.8 for IFI (Abedi, et al., 2015). The current study observed an IFI of 0.8 which is close to 1, which indicates an acceptable fit considering the constructs measured showed good reliability and validity results.

The Tucker-Lewis Fit Index is less sensitive to sample size (Cangur & Ercan, 2015). A good fit is represented by a threshold above 0.9 according to this index and an acceptable fit is >0.8 (Omprakash, et al., 2021). The results obtained for this study were 0.76 which meets the requirement of an acceptable fit and the constructs measured depicted good reliability and validity results.

The Comparative Fit Index assumes that the latent variables are uncorrelated and compares the sample covariance matrix with this null model (Fan, et al., 2016). Values from 0.95 to 1 indicate a perfect fit and from 0.9 to 0.95 indicates a good fit (Finch, 2020) and 0.8 indicates

an acceptable fit (Abedi, et al., 2015). Hence, this study has an acceptable fit with a CFI of 0.8.

The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation is the “badness of fit” index that quantifies the level of approximate fit (Hallquist, 2019). Values between 0 and 0.08 are indicators of good fit (Shi, 2020). However, this study has an RMSEA of 0.064 which indicates a good model fit (Civelek, 2018).

Table 4.5: Model Fit with CFA

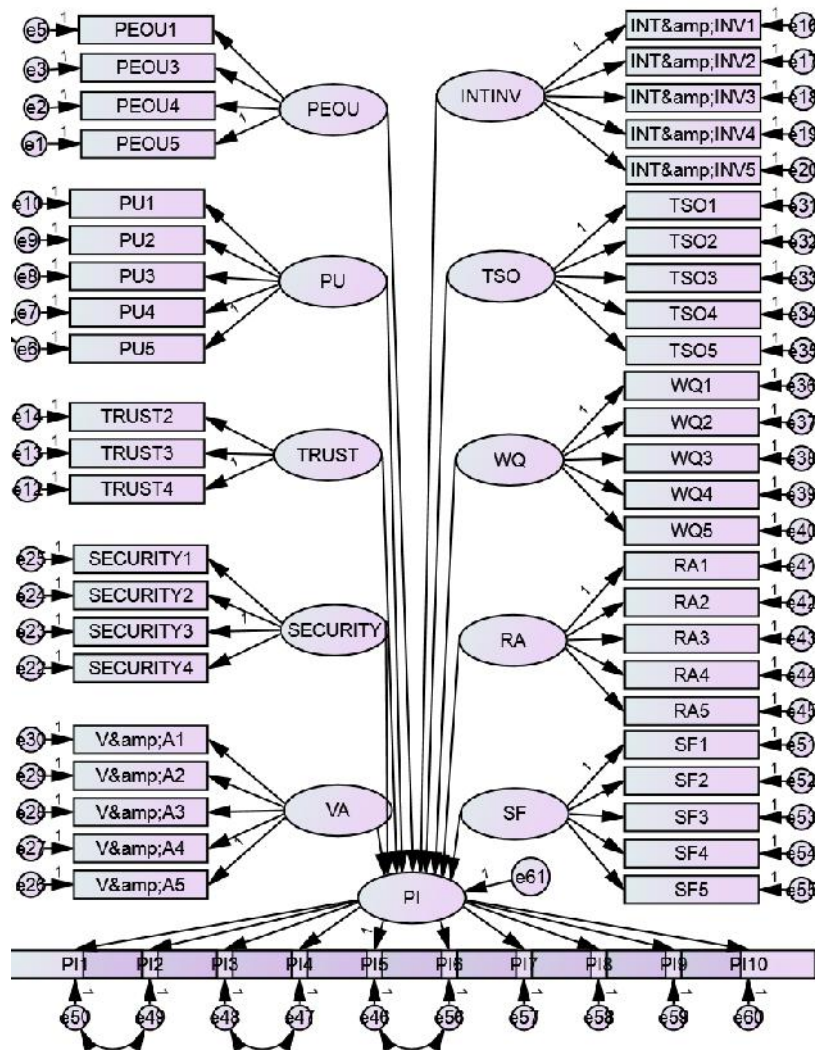
Model Fit Indices	Acceptable Threshold	Current Study	Decision
Chi-Square Value	<3	1.830	Acceptable
Goodness of Fit	>0.8	.70	Below threshold
Incremental Fit Index	>0.8	.80	Acceptable
Tucker Lewis Index	>0.8	.80	Acceptable
Comparative Fit Index	>0.8	.80	Acceptable
RMSEA	<0.08	.064	Acceptable

Source: Based on Data Collected (2022)

4.6 PATH ANALYSIS

Path analysis is used to assess the effects of a set of variables acting on a specified outcome via multiple causal pathways (Columbia Public Health, 2022). As per academic practice, proposed hypotheses were tested and path coefficients along with the p values were assessed (Greenland, et al., 2016; Meyer, et al., 2017). The illustration below is the structural model which is also referred to as the path model. It is shown that the independent variables: Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU), Perceived Usefulness (PU), Trust, Security (SEC), Visual and Audio Elements (V&A), Interaction and Involvement (INT&INV), Time Saving Orientation (TSO), Website Quality (WQ), Relative Advantage (RA) and Service Factors (SF) all have a direct effect on the online purchase intention (PI) within the fast food industry.

Figure 4.3: Path Analysis Model



Source: Based on Data Collected (2022)

4.7 HYPOTHESIS TESTING

The results of the path coefficient and interpretation of the proposed hypotheses with their corresponding p -values and the outcomes of their respective relationships are depicted and explained below.

Figure 4.4: Hypothesis Testing Results

Proposed Hypothesis relationship	Hypothesis	Path Coefficients	P-Values	Supported/Rejected
PEOU → PI	H1	,258	***	Supported and significant
PU → PI	H2	,111	,003	Supported and insignificant
TRUST→ PI	H3	,056	,883	Supported and insignificant
SECURITY → PI	H4	,254	***	Supported and significant
VA → PI	H5	,145	,010	Supported and insignificant
INTINV → PI	H6	,176	***	Supported and significant
TSO → PI	H7	,245	***	Supported and significant
WQ → PI	H8	,140	***	Supported and significant
RA → PI	H9	,163	***	Supported and significant
SF → PI	H10	,211	***	Supported and significant

Level of significance: *** = $p < 0.001$

Perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, trust, security, visual elements, time-saving orientation, and relative advantage were all proven to have a positive relationship with online purchase intention within the fast food industry. Interaction and involvement, website quality, and service factors were proven to have a significant influence on consumers' online purchase intention of fast food. Thus indicating almost all hypotheses tested within this study were supported.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

This study measured the website characteristics; perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, trust, security, visual and audio elements, interaction and involvement, time-saving orientation, website quality, relative advantage, and service factors with how they influence consumers' online purchase intention of fast food. These factors were measured using a 5-point Likert scale and distributed in the form of an online questionnaire. The results, recommendations, and limitations are discussed below.

5.1 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This study examined the website characteristics that influence consumers' online purchase intention of fast food. It attempted to extend the technology acceptance model and flow theory by exploring the influence of perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, trust, security, visual elements, interaction and involvement, time-saving orientation, website quality, relative advantage, and service factors with online purchase intention of fast food.

H1: There is a positive relationship between perceived ease of use and consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry.

The findings proved there is a positive relationship between perceived ease of use and consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry. Existing literature correlates with these findings; consumers are more willing to purchase goods/ services from a website that is easy to navigate and that requires minimal mental and physical effort (Cho, 2015; Malik, 2017; Raad, et al., 2018)

H2: There is a positive relationship between perceived usefulness and consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry.

The findings proved there is a positive relationship between perceived usefulness and consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry. This correlates with the existing literature which shows that purchasing fast food online is perceived as more useful, convenient, and efficient for consumers, due to their busy lifestyles (Cheema, 2013; Muhamad, et al., 2020; Yang & Geetha, 2019)

H3: There is a positive relationship between trust and consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry.

Trust was proven to have a positive, but insignificant, relationship with consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry. These findings did not correlate with other studies examining trust (Nagy & Hajdu, 2021; Putri, 2021; Tasin, 2017). A study examining the role of online trust within the Banking Industry found trust to be an important factor to consumers regarding the relationship between website characteristics and customer loyalty (Berraies, 2015). The role trust plays in online purchase intention would need to be investigated further to clearly define the relationship between trust and consumers' online purchase intention within the fast food industry.

H4: There is a positive relationship between security and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry.

The results showed that there is a positive relationship between security and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry. Consumers experience perceived risk when purchasing fast food online which then leads to the consumer being hesitant to purchase online (Poon & Tung, 2022). Thus, this study found that websites should provide protective payment steps and good authentication so that consumers feel secure, which allows them to provide their sensitive details such as their financial data i.e. credit card details. These findings are supported by the study which examined the importance of security aspects in the electronic environment (Davidavičienė, et al., 2019).

H5: There is a positive relationship between the visual and audio elements of a website and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry.

The results showed that there is a positive, but insignificant, relationship between the visual and audio elements of a website and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry. The data indicated that although respondents agreed that visual & audio elements are important within a fast food website, they are not a driving factor behind the online purchase intention of fast food. These results contradict the results of other studies (Adam & Ali, 2014; Bergman, 2017; Pramudya & Seo, 2019). Therefore, this website characteristic needs to be investigated further.

H6: There is a significant relationship between the interaction and involvement of consumers with the website and the consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry.

The results indicated that there is a significant relationship between the interaction and involvement of consumers with the website and consumer online purchase intention within the fast-food industry. Respondents indicated that online reviews and social media affect their online purchase intention, as they perceive the reviews of consumers who had previously purchased the goods/service as valuable information. These results align with the findings of previous studies (Raad, et al., 2018; Yekbun & Piyumi, 2021)

H7: There is a positive relationship between time-saving orientation and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry

The findings indicated that there is a positive relationship between time-saving orientation and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry. Respondents agreed that purchasing fast food online helps them save time in their busy lifestyles as they are able to accomplish actions more quickly in the purchasing process. They are also able to avoid traffic jams, having to search for parking, and standing in queues. These findings correspond with previous studies (Chai & Yat, 2019; Dazmin & Ho, 2019; Yeo, et al., 2017)

H8: There is a significant relationship between website quality and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry.

The findings indicated that there is a significant relationship between website quality and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry. The results showed that website design affects the respondents' desire to purchase online. They further indicated that websites should have a clear indication of the site's content and points of contact as they prefer to purchase from high-quality and high-speed websites. These findings align with the results of previous studies (Rares, 2014; Wiharto, et al., 2021).

H9: There is a positive relationship between relative advantage and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry.

The results indicated that there is a positive relationship between relative advantage and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry. Respondents feel that technological advancements make their life easier. They also find that purchasing fast food online offers better efficiency and is rewarding. These findings correspond with previous

studies that investigated relative advantage within different sectors (Mapande & Appiah, 2018; Yusaivi, et al., 2021).

H10: There is a significant relationship between Service Factors and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry

The findings showed that there is a significant relationship between Service Factors and consumer online purchase intention in the fast-food industry. High-quality delivery services, good customer service, and quick responses to inquiries all had a significant influence on the consumers' online purchase intention. These findings align with the findings of previous studies as mentioned in Chapter 2 (Khadka & Maharjan, 2017; Mkhize, 2019; Vu, 2021).

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The website characteristics tested in this study were found to influence consumers' online purchase intention of fast food. This framework offers literature on the rarely observed South African fast-food industry; it is recommended that the findings from this study should be implemented in the design of fast-food companies' websites to ensure the success of influencing the consumers' purchase intention of fast food.

The academic merits of this study are significant as it provides valuable knowledge to scholars. This study is proven through an empirical model which was quantitatively tested, thus enabling future researchers to make use of the information gathered within their studies as well as encourage scholars to build better future models. This study not only relates to those studying website characteristics but also to those interested in the Technology Acceptance Model and Flow Theory. However, this study indicated that some characteristics played a more significant role than others, thus, it is recommended that further research and validation through a comparative study should be completed to clearly define the role specific characteristics play for fast food websites within the South African market. It is also recommended that this study be used as a base for the findings to be observed in other markets.

The fast-food industry is considered to be a large, fast-paced industry within the economy (Roy, 2018). These findings should assist marketing managers' decision-making with regard to their marketing strategy for their fast-food websites. The characteristics mentioned within this study should be taken into account when designing and managing their fast food websites to encourage consumers' online purchase intention of fast food.

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Firstly, this research study was only tested on university students in Johannesburg. This could limit the generalisability of the findings to other regions. Secondly, there is the opportunity for further investigation and validation of the model tested as only 202 respondents were considered for this study. The size of this sample may affect the reliability and representation of this study to the population.

5.4 CONCLUSION

This study found that website characteristics such as perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, trust, security, interaction & involvement, time-saving orientation, website quality, relative advantage, and service factors affected the consumers' online purchase intention of fast food. The main contribution of this study was gaining insights from consumers on which characteristics influence their online purchase intention; this study also provided information on which characteristics consumers considered most important. For example, perceived ease of use, website quality, and time-saving orientation of a website was considered to be more important than perceived usefulness to consumers.

It was also acknowledged that South Africans have a high internet usage rate, which increases the demand for the ability to purchase fast food online. The findings also conclude that the more frequently consumers purchased fast food online, the more they valued the website characteristics provided.

Marketers and researchers can use this study as a way to target consumers, by understanding what is important to them when purchasing fast food online and what website characteristics influence them the most. Utilising these website characteristics properly builds long-lasting relationships with consumers and increases their online purchase intention.

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APPENDICES

Table 4.2: Independent Variables - Website Characteristics

	Frequency (%)				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
PEOU1	2 (1%)	3 (1.5%)	9 (4.5%)	71 (35.1%)	117 (57.9%)
PEOU2	4 (2%)	16 (7.9%)	31 (15.3%)	78 (38.6%)	73 (36.1%)
PEOU3	2 (1%)	2 (1%)	7 (3.5%)	66 (32.7%)	125 (61.9%)
PEOU4	0	0	2 (1%)	51 (25.4%)	148 (73.6%)
PEOU5	0	0	2 (1%)	48 (23.9%)	151 (75.1%)
PU1	1 (0.5%)	3 (1.5%)	13 (6.4%)	83 (41.1%)	102 (50.5%)
PU2	1 (0.5%)	3 (1.5 %)	19 (9.4)	92 (45.5%)	87 (43.1%)
PU3	2 (1%)	11 (5.4%)	47 (23.3%)	80 (39.6%)	62 (30.7%)
PU4	6 (3 %)	16 (7.9%)	30 (14.9%)	69 (34.2%)	81 (41.1%)
PU5	1 (0.5%)	6 (3%)	34 (16.8%)	72 (35.6%)	89 (44.1%)
TRUST1	0	0	5 (2.5%)	43 (21.3%)	154 (76.2%)
TRUST2	0	1 (0.5%)	7 (3.5%)	50 (24.8%)	144 (71.3%)
TRUST3	23 (11.4%)	53 (26.2%)	68 (33.7%)	44 (21.8%)	14 (6.9%)
TRUST4	3 (1.5%)	9 (4.5%)	59 (29.2%)	97 (48%)	34 (16.8%)
TRUST5	8 (4%)	25 (12.4%)	28 (13.9%)	85 (42.1%)	56 (27.7%)
SECURITY1	2 (1%)	18 (8.9%)	61 (30.2%)	78 (38.6%)	43 (21.3%)
SECURITY2	16 (7.9%)	45 (22.3%)	61 (30.2%)	58 (28.7%)	22 (10.9%)
SECURITY3	2 (1%)	24 (11.9%)	82 (40.6%)	70 (34.7%)	24 (11.9%)
SECURITY4	3 (1.5%)	16 (7.9%)	37 (18.3%)	75 (37.1%)	71 (35.1%)

SECURITY5	8 (4%)	3 (1.5%)	6 (3%)	20 (9.9%)	165 (81.7%)
VIS/AUD1	0	3 (1.5%)	9 (4.5%)	65 (32.2%)	125 (61.9%)
VIS/AUD2	2 (1%)	7 (3.5%)	17 (8.4%)	66 (32.7%)	110 (54.5%)
VIS/AUD3	6 (3%)	13 (6.4%)	46 (22.8%)	60 (29.7%)	77 (38.1%)
VIS/AUD4	0	6 (3%)	25 (12.4%)	79 (39.1%)	92 (45.5%)
VIS/AUD5	5 (2.5%)	13 (6.4%)	30 (14.9%)	73 (36.1%)	81 (40.1%)
INT/INV1	4 (2%)	17 (8.4%)	33 (16.3%)	79 (39.1%)	69 (34.2%)
INT/INV2	8 (4%)	18 (8.9%)	46 (22.8%)	79 (39.1%)	51 (25.2%)
INT/INV3	1 (0.5%)	6 (3%)	25 (12.4%)	80 (39.6%)	90 (44.6%)
INT/INV4	6 (3%)	17 (8.4%)	19 (9.4%)	78 (38.6%)	82 (40.6%)
INT/INV5	12 (5.9%)	40 (19.8%)	73 (36.1%)	48 (23.8%)	29 (14.4%)
TSO1	2 (1%)	7 (3.5%)	24 (11.9%)	90 (44.6%)	79 (39.1%)
TSO2	3 (1.5%)	7 (3.5%)	40 (19.8%)	92 (45.5%)	60 (29.7%)
TSO3	2 (1%)	7 (3.5%)	37 (18.3%)	90 (44.6%)	66 (32.7%)
TSO4	1 (0.5%)	6 (3%)	22 (10.9%)	74 (36.6%)	99 (49%)
TSO5	5 (2.5%)	9 (4.5%)	29 (14.4%)	63 (31.2%)	96 (47.5%)
WQ1	2 (1%)	9 (4.5%)	27 (13.4%)	82 (40.6%)	82 (40.6%)
WQ2	0	2 (1%)	5 (2.5%)	85 (42.1%)	110 (54.5%)
WQ3	0	2 (1%)	9 (4.5%)	69 (34.2%)	122 (60.4%)
WQ4	6 (3%)	26 (12.9%)	50 (24.8%)	61 (30.2%)	59 (29.2%)
WQ5	0	3 (1.5%)	19 (9.4%)	62 (30.7%)	118 (58.4%)
RA1	1 (0.5%)	2 (1%)	19 (9.4%)	82 (40.6%)	98 (48.5%)
RA2	6 (3%)	22 (10.9%)	81 (40.1%)	52 (25.7%)	41 (20.3%)
RA3	3 (1.5%)	19 (9.4%)	61 (30.2%)	69 (34.2%)	50 (24.8%)

RA4	4 (2%)	15 (7.4%)	52 (25.7%)	74 (36.6%)	57 (28.2%)
RA5	0	2 (1%)	12 (5.9%)	81 (40.1%)	107 (53%)
SF1	1 (0.5%)	4 (2%)	10 (5%)0	67 (33.2%)	120 (59.4%)
SF2	1 (0.5%)	10 (5%)	42 (20.8%)	86 (42.6%)	63 (31.2%)
SF3	0	1 (0.5%)	10 (5%)	80 (39.6%)	111 (55%)
SF4	7 (3.5%)	30 (14.9%)	70 (34.7%)	62 (30.7%)	33 (16.3%)
SF5	1 (0.5%)	0	15 (7.4%)	69 (34.2%)	117 (57.9%)

Ethical Clearance

UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND
JOHANNESBURG

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14145 Pity

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE **PROTOCOL NUMBER: H21/05/41**

PROJECT TITLE Website characteristics that influence consumers online purchase intention within the fast-food industry

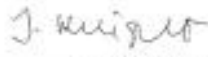
INVESTIGATOR(S) Miss G Pity

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT Economics and Business Science

DATE CONSIDERED 21 May 2021

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE Approved
Risk Level: Minimal

EXPIRY DATE 20 July 2024

DATE 21 July 2021 **CHAIRPERSON** 
(Professor J Knight)

cc: Supervisor : Professor F Mgiba

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and ONE COPY returned to the Secretary at Room 10004, 10th Floor, Senate House, University. Unreported changes to the application may invalidate the clearance given by the HREC (Non-Medical)

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to submit an amendment of the protocol to the Committee. I agree to completion of a regular progress report. For Minimal and Low studies, this is due annually on 31 December. For Medium and High Risk studies, this is due twice annually on 30 June and 31 December.


Signature

22 Jul 2021
Date

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES



OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY REGISTRAR

19 August 2021

Gabrielle Pillay
Student Number (1407082)
Master of Commerce
School of Business Sciences

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

"Website characteristics that influence consumers online purchase intention within the fast-food industry"

This letter serves to confirm that the above project has received permission to be conducted on University premises, and/or involving staff and/or students of the University as research participants. In undertaking this research, you agree to abide by all University regulations for conducting research on campus and to respect participants' rights to withdraw from participation at any time.

If you are conducting research on certain student cohorts, year groups or courses within specific Schools and within the teaching term, permission must be sought from Heads of School or individual academics.

Ethical clearance has been obtained. (Protocol number: H21/05/41)

Research Expiration: (20 July 2024)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicoleen Potgieter'.

Nicoleen Potgieter
University Deputy Registrar

Participation Information Sheet



Participant Information Sheet

10/07/2021

Subject: Website Characteristics That Influence Consumers' Online Purchase Intention within the Fast-Food Industry

Dear Sir / Madam,

My name is Gabrielle Pillay and I am a Masters student in Marketing at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project, and I am investigating the website characteristics that influence consumer online purchase intention within the fast food industry under the supervision of Dr Freddy Mgiba. The aim of this research project is to find out how specific website characteristics persuade you, as a consumer, to purchase fast food online.

As part of this project, I would like to invite you to take part in answering an online questionnaire. This activity will involve answering a few questions and will take around 15 minutes. By completing the questionnaire and clicking submit, this is taken as consent. These questionnaires will be stored in a password protected computer and only the researcher will have access.

There will be no personal costs to you if you participate in this project. You will not receive any direct benefits from participation but there are no disadvantages or penalties if you do not choose to participate or if you withdraw from the study. You may withdraw at any time or not answer any question if you do not want to. The questionnaire will be completely confidential and anonymous as I will not be asking for your name or any identifying information, and the information you give to me will be held securely and not disclosed to anyone else. I will be using a pseudonym (false name) to represent your participation in my final research report. If you experience any distress or discomfort at any point in this process, we will stop the interview or resume another time.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me on the details listed below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the university library website. The data collected from this research project will be stored in password protected computer and will be kept for 3 years. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,
Gabrielle Pillay

Consent Form



Consent Form

Subject: Website Characteristics that Influence Consumers Online Purchase Intention within the Fast Food Industry

Researcher: Gabriëlle Pillay

I, ..., agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below).

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous	YES	NO
---	-----	----

I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in her research report	YES	NO
---	-----	----

I agree that the information I provide may be used anonymously after this project has ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their own ethics clearance being obtained.	YES	NO
--	-----	----

..... (Signature)
..... (Name of participant)
..... (Date)

Questionnaire:**Website Characteristics that influence consumers' purchase intentions within the fast food industry****1. Gender Profile**

Male	Female	Prefer not to say
------	--------	-------------------

2. Do you have access to the internet?

Yes	No
-----	----

3. Age Profile

18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25

4. Perceived Ease of Use:

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I am more willing to use a website that requires minimal effort					
2	Using fast food websites to purchase food does not require much mental effort					
3	I prefer to purchase from websites that are easy to navigate					
4	Fast food websites should be clear and understandable					
5	I expect to purchase fast food online with ease					

5. Perceived Usefulness:

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I consider it useful to be able to purchase fast food online					
2	Websites make purchasing fast food online more convenient					
3	Purchasing fast food online is more efficient					
4	Websites make it easier to compare prices from the different fast-food franchises					
5	It is easier to stay updated with the latest fast food offers through websites					

6. Trust:

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	The trustworthiness of a website is important to me					
2	I am more likely to continue purchasing from a website I trust					
3	I would not hesitate to provide information to Fast food websites					
4	I trust that fast food websites are reliable regarding online purchases					
5	When transacting with fast food websites, I worry about whether they will perform as they are supposed to					

6. Security:

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I feel secure purchasing fast food online because protective payments steps occur before transactions					
2	I would utilize my credit card to purchase from Fast food websites					
3	My financial information is kept confidential					
4	A good authentication of websites leads me to purchase online frequently					
5	I think that Fast food websites should not give personal information to other agents					

7. Visual and Audio Elements:

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	The layout of a Fast food website should appear to be professionally designed					
2	When shopping online, pictures capture my attention more than text					
3	Websites should offer information in all of South Africa's official languages					
4	Colours are important in a Fast food website					
5	I believe audio elements on websites are essential for the visually impaired					

8. Interaction and Involvement:

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Online Reviews provide credible and valuable information when purchasing online					
2	Social media provides a viable solution to share my online shopping experience					
3	Fast food websites should allow consumers to share their experience of purchasing food online on the website					
4	I like to read the reviews of other customers' online purchase experience					
5	People who are important to me think that I should use food delivery websites to buy fast food					

9. Time Saving Orientation

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Purchasing Fast food online helps me save time with my busy lifestyle					
2	Websites allow me to gather information in a more convenient and timely manner					
3	I believe that food delivery services help me accomplish things more quickly in the purchasing process					
4	It is important to me that the purchasing of food is done as quickly as possible					
5	I prefer purchasing fast food online so that I don't have to face traffic jams, search for parking and stand in queues					

10. Website Quality

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	The website content and design affect my desire to purchase online					
2	Websites should offer easy access to customer inquiry/homepage throughout the site					
3	The homepage should have a clear indication of the site's contents and points of contact					
4	Fast food websites must be customizable to my individual needs and desires					
5	I prefer to purchase fast food from a high-speed and high-quality website					

11. Relative Advantage

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I like having access to online fast food services at any time					
2	Purchasing food from fast food websites is rewarding					
3	I can increase my shopping productivity when I shop online					
4	Delivery services offer better efficiency when purchasing fast food					
5	Technological advancements make life easier					

12. Service Factors

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	The quality of the delivery service influences my desire to purchase from the website again					
2	Fast food websites allow for each customer to be treated equally					
3	Good customer service encourages me to purchase fast food from a specific franchise					
4	Fast food websites respond to my inquiries promptly					
5	Fast food services should deliver the food at an appropriate temperature					

14. Purchase Intention

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Perceived Ease of Use affects my online purchase intention when purchasing fast food					
2	Perceived Usefulness affects my online purchase intention when purchasing fast food					
3	Trust affects my online purchase intention when purchasing fast food					
4	Security affects my online purchase intention when purchasing fast food					
5	Visual and audio elements affect my online purchase intention when purchasing fast food					
6	Interaction and Involvement affects my online purchase intention when purchasing fast food					
7	Time-saving orientation affects my online purchase intention when purchasing fast food					
8	The quality of the website affects my online purchase intention when purchasing fast food online					
9	Relative advantage affects my online purchase intention when purchasing fast food online					
10	Fast food service factors influence my online purchase intention					

Table 3.1: Questionnaire Sources

Constructs	Items	Source
Perceived Ease of Use	1. I am more willing to use a website that requires minimal effort	(GroB, 2018) (Malik, 2017)
	2. Using fast food websites to purchase food does not require much mental effort	(Raad, et al., 2018)
	3. I prefer to purchase from websites that are easy to navigate	(Maraqa, 2018)
	4. Fast food websites should be clear and understandable	(Hung & Cant, 2017)
	5. I expect to purchase fast food online with ease	(Cheema, 2013)
Perceived Usefulness	1. I consider it useful to be able to purchase fast food online	(Cho, 2015) (Muhamad, et al., 2020)
	2. Websites make purchasing fast food online more convenient	(Yang & Geetha, 2019) (Cho, 2015)
	3. Purchasing fast food online is more efficient	(Muhamad, et al., 2020) (Cheema, 2013)
	4. Websites make it easier to compare prices from the different fast-food franchises	(Yasmin, et al., 2015)
	5. It is easier to stay updated with the latest fast food offers through websites	(Yasmin, et al., 2015)
Trust	1. The trustworthiness of a website is important to me	(Nagy & Hajdu, 2021)
	2. I am more likely to continue purchasing from a website I trust	(Setyorini & Nugraha, 2016)
	3. I would not hesitate to provide information to Fast food websites	(Dachyar & Banjarnahor, 2017)
	4. I trust that fast food websites are reliable regarding online purchases	(Van Niekerk, 2020)
	5. When transacting with fast food websites, I worry about whether they will perform as they are supposed to	(Long, 2015)
Security	1. I feel secure purchasing fast food online because protective payments steps occur before transactions	(Prasetyo, et al., 2021)
	2. I would utilize my credit card to purchase from Fast food websites	(Dachyar & Banjarnahor, 2017)
	3. My financial information is kept confidential	(Yusaivi, et al., 2021)
	4. A good authentication of websites leads me to purchase online frequently	(Farah, 2020)
	5. I think that Fast food websites should not give personal information to other agents	(Prasetyo, et al., 2021)

Visual & Audio Elements	1. The layout of a Fast food website should appear to be professionally designed	(Nia & Shokouhyar, 2020)
	2. When shopping online, pictures capture my attention more than text	(Thorlacius, 2007)
	3. Websites should offer information in all of South Africa's official languages	(Wongkhamdi, et al., 2020)
	4. Colours are important in a Fast food website	(Nia & Shokouhyar, 2020)
	5. I believe audio elements on websites are essential for the visually impaired	(Education, 2004) (Loiacono, et al., 2013)

Interaction & Involvement	1. Online Reviews provide valuable information when purchasing online	(Dartey, et al., 2021)
	2. Social media provides a viable solution to share my online shopping experience	(Pomponio, 2020)
	3. Fast food websites allow consumers to share their experience of purchasing food online	(Jiang, et al., 2010)
	4. I like to read the reviews of other customers' online purchase experience	(Nechoud, et al., 2021)
	5. People who are important to me think that I should use food delivery websites to buy fast food	(Lee, et al., 2019)

Time Saving Orientation	1. I prefer to purchase fast food online due to my busy lifestyle	(Chai & Yat, 2019)
	2. Websites allow me to gather information in a more convenient and timely manner	(Kim, et al., 2004)
	3. I believe that food delivery services help me accomplish things more quickly in the purchasing process	(Yeo, et al., 2017)
	4. It is important to me that the purchasing of food is done as quickly as possible	(Yeo, et al., 2017)
	5. I prefer purchasing fast food online so that I don't have to face traffic jams, search for parking and stand in queues	(Chai & Yat, 2019) (Alreck & Settle, 2002)

Website Quality	1. The website content and design affect my desire to purchase online	(Cahyono & Susanto, 2019)
	2. Websites should offer easy access to customer inquiry/homepage throughout the site	(Hsu, 2013)
	3. The homepage should have a clear indication of the site's contents and points of contact	(Hsu, 2013)
	4. Fast food websites must be customizable to my individual needs and desires	(Pettersson, 2015)
	5. I prefer when fast food websites load at a	(Shamsath-Begam, 2020)

	high speed and response time	
Relative Advantage	1. like having access to online fast food services at any time	(Yusaivi, et al., 2021)
	2. Purchasing food from fast food websites is rewarding	(Yeo, et al., 2017)
	3. I am able to increase my shopping productivity when I shop online	(Lim & Ting, 2012)
	4. Delivery services offer better efficiency when purchasing fast food online	(Cahyono & Susanto, 2019)
	5. Technological advancements make life easier	(Mapande & Appiah, 2018)
Service Factors	1. The quality of the delivery service influences my desire to purchase from the website again	(Bahauddin, et al., 2020)
	2. Fast food websites allow for each customer to be treated equally	(Yildirim & Cengel, 2013)
	3. Good customer service encourages me to purchase fast food from a specific franchise	(Mkhize, 2019) (Moghavvemi, et al., 2018)
	4. The site quickly resolves the problems I encounter	
	5. Fast food services should deliver the food at an appropriate temperature	(Yildirim & Cengel, 2013)

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