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RESEARCH TITLE

The Effectiveness of Website Quality on Store Visits for E-Retail Stores in Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

The rapid digital transformation of the retail sector has heightened the need for e-retailers to understand how website quality influences consumer behavior, yet previous research has largely focused on isolated website attributes without examining their combined effects within the Zimbabwean context. Despite the growing adoption of e-commerce in Zimbabwe, limited scholarly attention has been paid to how website information quality, mobile compatibility, website design, and website ease of use collectively impact online satisfaction and subsequent store visits. Using a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design and structured questionnaires to gather data from 384 customers of Pick n Pay's e-retail services in Harare, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) findings revealed that website design is the strongest predictor of online satisfaction, while mobile compatibility emerged as the most significant driver of website ease of use. However, website information quality and mobile compatibility showed insignificant effects on online satisfaction, suggesting that consumers treat these as basic expectations rather than satisfaction drivers. The study further established that both online satisfaction and website ease of use significantly drive store visits, which in turn positively influence revisit intentions and store recommendations. While e-retailers benefit from increased customer engagement and loyalty, challenges such as mobile optimization

difficulties, navigation complexities, and the inability to replicate personalized in-store interactions continue to undermine the customer experience. The study therefore recommends that e-retailers invest in professional website design, enhance mobile compatibility, simplify website navigation, and implement customer feedback mechanisms to foster online satisfaction, while calling for future research to expand geographic scope and incorporate qualitative approaches to deepen understanding of consumer perceptions in Zimbabwe's evolving e-retail landscape.

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My profound gratitude goes to my family for the unwavering support they gave me throughout my study journey. I am indebted to all the people around me and influenced my psychological and morale support during my research project. Special thanks to my supervisor Dr P. Mukucha for his guidance and support in the project. The journey of this project was heartwarmingly educational and it is with thanks to the research participants, without their responses, the research would not have succeeded.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family and friends who gave me the zeal and energy to continue studying in order to attain this qualification and unwavering emotional support throughout the period of study.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Digital technology has fundamentally reshaped the way business is conducted in the modern era. Retail practice is one domain in which technology's influence has been especially marked of late (Smith, 2022). To keep pace with the fast-rising expectations of customers, today's firms have come to recognise that strong digital platforms must be built into their operations. This pattern is visible across businesses worldwide, and e-retailing in Zimbabwe is one example, where firms are leveraging website quality to sharpen their competitive edge (Chikandiwa, Contogiannis, & Jembere, 2013).

1.2 Background of the Study

The present era has brought about pronounced shifts in how people buy goods, driven by digital technology. Across the globe, firms are harnessing advanced tools to lift their performance by giving shoppers a simpler, more efficient experience. In practical terms, consumers can now compare, browse, and buy products from anywhere using these

technologies. González (2021) observes that businesses adopting such tools are seeing gains in satisfaction, efficiency, and the quality of customer service.

Pick 'n' Pay ranks among the better-known supermarkets in Zimbabwe, and the firm has invested heavily in raising the quality of its website. The Harare branch in particular has worked to equip its website with advanced e-retailing capabilities. Given the competitiveness of the market and customers' growing reliance on technology to make purchases, Pick 'n' Pay understands how much a strong website matters. The Harare branch therefore offers a fitting setting for this research.

So which elements make for a successful online retailing website? Smith and Jones (2022) point to accurate product information, mobile compatibility, appealing design, and straightforward navigation as some of the key ingredients. When a website runs smoothly even on mobile phones and supplies detailed product information, shoppers gain the convenience of buying at any hour without depending on in-store sales staff. Such websites thus do more than make shopping easy; they also work to the retailer's advantage.

This is, of course, rarely simple to pull off. Many Zimbabwean e-retailers, Pick n Pay among them, contend with obstacles such as unreliable internet access, customers' worries about the security of online payments, and the high cost of maintaining a website (Nguyen & Chen, 2025). Beyond the technology itself, there are also human-centred challenges, such as customers' wish for the personal interaction that only a physical store can provide. Brown (2023) notes that some shoppers continue to prefer face-to-face contact.

For Pick n Pay's Harare website, striking this balance matters because it bears directly on customer satisfaction. Customers grow frustrated and abandon a website when it is hard to navigate, slow to load, or thin on information. Their experience improves, by contrast, when the site is easy to use, professionally designed, mobile-friendly, and accurate in the information it supplies, which in turn drives more visits and greater loyalty to the store.

In short, the way the Pick n Pay website is designed and run is of real consequence. This study sets out to examine how particular website-quality dimensions, namely information quality, mobile compatibility, visual appeal, and ease of use, relate to customer satisfaction and, through it, to the intention to revisit or recommend the online retailer. The question carries weight in Zimbabwe, where online shopping continues to take root and expand.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The uptake of digital technology has reshaped the customer experience throughout the retail sector. This swift transformation has, however, given rise to problems that weigh on the quality of online shopping. Recent figures suggest that while 70% of e-retailers report having successfully launched their websites, over half of customers feel frustrated when they cannot make sense of a site or find the product information they need (Smith, 2023). Furthermore, 60% of online shoppers say that weak website design produces inefficiencies and a loss of the personal touch.

1.4 Main Objective

The study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of website quality on store visits for e-retail stores in Zimbabwe.

1.5 Secondary Objectives

- The effect of website information quality on online satisfaction and website ease of use will be explored.
- The effect of mobile compatibility on online satisfaction and website ease of use will be analyzed.
- The influence of website design on online satisfaction and website ease of use will be investigated.
- The relationship between online satisfaction and consumers' intent to perform a store visit will be determined.
- The extent to which website ease of use affects the frequency of store visits will be examined.
- The effect of a store visit on customers' future intent to revisit will be studied.
- The link between a store visit and recommending the store to others will be investigated.
- Which aspect of website quality (i.e., information quality, mobile compatibility, or design) best predicts online satisfaction will be determined.
- The mediating roles of online satisfaction and ease of use on the effects of website factors on physical store traffic will be analyzed.
- Advice to retailers for enhancing their websites to drive store visits will be provided.

1.6 Research Hypotheses

H_1: The information quality of the website has a positive and significant effect on online satisfaction.

H_2: The mobile compatibility has a positive and significant effect on online satisfaction.

H_3: The website design has a positive and significant effect on online satisfaction.

H_4: The information quality of the website has a positive and significant effect on website ease of use.

H_5: The mobile compatibility has a positive and significant effect on website ease of use.

H_6: The website design has a positive and significant effect on website ease of use.

H_7: Online satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on store visit.

H_8: Website ease of use has a positive and significant effect on store visit.

H_9: Store visit has a positive and significant effect on revisit intention.

H_{10}: Store visit has a positive and significant effect on store recommendation.

1.7 Assumptions of the Study

The research rests on several core assumptions: that the data needed will be readily available from e-retail consumers; that economic conditions will hold steady over the study period; that respondents will give honest, dependable accounts of their experiences on the e-retailing sites; that the responses gathered from the chosen population will be free from manipulation by supervisors or other outside parties; and, finally, that the study's timeframe and sample fairly represent the wider online consumer population in Zimbabwe.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

The study concerns itself with how website quality performs in driving store visits for e-retail outlets in Zimbabwe. It will run from March 2026 to May 2026 and will focus on customers who have shopped at any Zimbabwean e-retail store during the previous twelve months. The work targets areas with high internet and online-shopping penetration, such as the cities of

Harare and Bulawayo. In sectoral terms, the study confines itself to e-retailers that sell physical goods to consumers, leaving aside other online sectors.

1.9 Significance of the Study

To E-Retail Stores in Zimbabwe

This study holds considerable value for Zimbabwe's e-retailers as a means of improving how efficiently they operate and deliver service. High-quality websites make it possible to streamline customer interaction and to ease the search for information and the act of purchasing. The result can be faster service delivery, shorter waiting times, and a better standard of service overall. Raising website quality can lift customer satisfaction while keeping costs down for e-retailers. The study will help identify how website quality might be strengthened and which aspects deserve the most attention so that a store can run efficiently and stay competitive in its digital setting.

For the Customers

Examining how website quality bears on store visits is highly pertinent for e-commerce customers, since it brings to light how much the overall experience can be enhanced through website quality. Sites built on quality design, accurate information, and secure payment facilities provide prompt assistance and round-the-clock interaction. Customers obtain answers to their queries far more quickly, whether they need help resolving a problem or seek details about particular products. Investigating the question and demonstrating its effect can therefore help e-retailers arrive at solutions that raise customer satisfaction.

To Bindura University of Science Education

The study's findings may also assist in improving the efficiency of the university's administrative and internet-based academic processes. High-quality websites can streamline some administrative tasks by automating them, including the handling of queries and the upkeep of student records. This saves time and lightens the load on the staff who carry out such work. Assessing how website quality can boost the efficiency of these processes at Bindura University will help the institution conserve resources and allocate them more effectively.

For Students at Bindura University

For Bindura University students, research on how website quality affects electronic retailing speaks to the prospect of improving students' access to information and services through good websites. Quality websites can give immediate answers to students' queries about course information, timetables, and the procedures for dealing with various university matters. Students would thus be able to obtain what they need at any time, sparing themselves needless frustrations such as long waits. Studying how website quality makes this possible points to a future of easier access to all forms of necessary support.

To the Researcher

This research adds meaningfully to the existing scholarship on electronic retailing and website quality. The understanding gained through the study deepens insight into the issues bound up with integrating digital technology into the retail industry. More importantly, it can serve as a springboard for future inquiry into other facets of website use, ethics, and customer experience, allowing the researcher to contribute to the wider body of knowledge.

1.10 Definition of Key Terms

Quality of Website refers to how functional, user-friendly, informative, attractive, and secure an e-retailing website is. Its constituent variables are website information quality, mobile compatibility, website design, and website ease of use (Loiacono, Watson, & Goodhue, 2007).

Website Information Quality concerns the degree of accuracy, completeness, freshness, and relevance of the product or service information carried on an e-retailing website (DeLone & McLean, 2003).

Mobile Compatibility denotes how well an e-retailing website works on mobile devices, such that the site can be viewed comfortably on a phone (Mavetera & Kahiya, 2020).

Website Design covers the aesthetic and functional features of an e-retailing website, including its colour scheme and typography (Aladwani & Palvia, 2002).

Website Ease of Use gauges how user-friendly a website is (Davis, 1989).

Online Satisfaction relates to how well a customer judges that the online offering meets or surpasses expectations, and it is shaped both by the quality of the website itself and by the shopping experience as a whole (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Store Visit means that the customer has visited the e-retail website, whether to seek information or to make a purchase (Gefen, Karahanna, & Straub, 2003).

Visit Intention concerns the likelihood that a customer will return to the website for future browsing and purchasing (Mao & Lyu, 2017).

Recommend Store captures customers' willingness to suggest the store to other people (Hung, 2017).

1.11 Layout of the Study

The structure of this study includes five chapters as follows:

Chapter I – This chapter gives an introduction to the study by describing its background, research problem, research objectives, hypotheses, assumptions, delimitations, significance, definition of terms, and the overall arrangement of the study.

Chapter II – Literature review that contains an overview of relevant literature related to website quality, online customer satisfaction, and behaviors, as well as the theoretical/conceptual framework underlying the study.

Chapter III – Discussion of the research methodology, including the research design, research population, sampling process, data collection instruments, and analysis method.

Chapter IV – Presentation and discussion of the research findings and recommendations for e-retailers and future researchers.

Chapter V – Summary, conclusions, and recommendations for e-retailers and future researchers.

1.12 Chapter Summary

Chapter One set out the background to the study, identified the key variables, and gave a short overview of the work. It also clarified the study's purpose, significance, assumptions, delimitations, and limitations, along with the structure of the thesis. The present chapter turns to the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that underpin the study and offers a critical review of the relevant literature.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Chapter One introduced the study on how effectively website quality drives store visits for e-retail outlets in Zimbabwe, setting out the background, problem statement, objectives, and hypotheses. This chapter undertakes a critical review of the existing literature, concentrating on how website quality is conceptualised, on the relevant theoretical frameworks, on empirical evidence at the global, regional, and local levels, and on the research gaps that emerge. The review aims to build a foundation for understanding how the dimensions of website quality, namely information quality, mobile compatibility, design, and ease of use, shape online satisfaction, which then influences store visits, revisit intention, and store recommendation. The chapter also draws on scholarly articles and journals pertinent to the field, thereby exposing the gaps that remain unfilled.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework depicts how the independent variables, the mediating variable, and the dependent variables relate to one another in this study. The independent variables are the website-quality dimensions of information quality, mobile compatibility, design, and ease of use; the mediating variable is online satisfaction; and the dependent variables are store visit, revisit intention, and store recommendation. The framework proposes that these website-quality dimensions feed into online satisfaction, which in turn affects store visits, revisit intention, and store recommendation, and it provides the structure against which the study's hypotheses are tested.

The variables are positively related, such that a rise in the website-quality dimensions raises online satisfaction, which in turn yields more frequent store visits, firmer revisit intentions, and favourable store recommendations (Makudza, 2020).

This is illustrated in Figure 2.1 below



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2.2.1 Website Information Quality

Information quality on a website encompasses the accuracy, completeness, currency, and relevance of the product and service information carried on the e-retail site (DeLone & McLean, 2003). Sound information quality enables customers to make well-judged purchase decisions by reducing risk and uncertainty. According to Blut (2016), fulfilment processes involve supplying customers with the correct, promised products, which means presenting accurate product descriptions covering pricing, availability, and specifications. When customers trust the product information on a site, they come to trust the business and, as a result, feel satisfied and form positive behavioural intentions toward it.

2.2.2 Mobile Compatibility

Mobile Compatibility

Mobile compatibility concerns how well a site performs when reached from a mobile device, taking in such features as design, fast loading, touch-based navigation, and a layout that adapts to different screen sizes. Given the rise of mobile internet use in Zimbabwe, Mavetera and Kahiya (2020) regard mobile compatibility as one of the essential building blocks of website quality. Zehir and Narcikara (2016) likewise observe that system availability, mobile compatibility included, weighs heavily on customer satisfaction. A failure to optimise sites for mobile use will cost a retailer a large share of its customers.

2.2.3 Website Design

Website design takes in both the aesthetics and the functionality of an e-retail site, covering layout consistency, colour scheme, typeface, visual hierarchy, navigation, and the overall professionalism of the site (Aladwani & Palvia, 2002). Good design shapes how the site is perceived and projects a professional image to the customer. The visual-appeal element of design is treated as one of the website-quality dimensions that affect usefulness and enjoyment (Loiacono, Watson, & Goodhue, 2007). Customers tend to linger longer when they find a site visually attractive and professionally designed.

2.2.4 Website Ease of Use

A website's ease of use concerns how readily customers can navigate it and accomplish their goals on an online retail site (Davis, 1989). The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) holds that ease of use strongly shapes users' acceptance of new technologies. When customers find a site easy to use, they are more likely to use it and to form favourable attitudes toward the business. Elements of ease of use include clear navigation bars, a logically structured design, minimal effort to reach one's goals, an effective search facility, and a straightforward checkout process (Gefen, Karahanna & Straub, 2003).

2.2.5 Online Satisfaction

Online satisfaction describes how far customers feel that the online services meet or exceed their expectations (Kotler & Keller, 2016). It serves as the mediating variable in this study, which is to say it helps account for how the various website-quality dimensions affect store visits, revisit intention, and store recommendation. Leninkumar (2017) notes that customer satisfaction is shaped by the experience that follows the consumption of a good or the use of a service. Fernandes and Pedroso (2017) define customer satisfaction as the capacity to produce a positive or negative feeling after consumption. In e-retailing, online satisfaction hinges on several factors, including website information quality, mobile compatibility, design, and ease of use.

2.2.6 Store Visit

A store visit refers to a situation in which customers come to the e-retail site for various purposes, such as browsing, gathering information, or buying (Gefen et al., 2003). In e-retailing, store visits make up both the initial and the ongoing relationship between customers and the site. Where website quality is high, customers are drawn to visit because they find the process enjoyable, convenient, and productive.

2.2.7 Revisit Intention

Revisit intention concerns how likely a consumer is to return to the e-retail site in future (Mao & Lyu, 2017). Rita et al. (2019) describe revisit intention as one of the principal behavioural outcomes of consumer satisfaction. Consumers form positive intentions to revisit the sites on which they have had good experiences, which builds customer loyalty and long-

run profitability. Revisit intention rests largely on website features such as information quality, design, usability, and mobile capability.

2.2.8 Store Recommendation

Store recommendation refers to customers' willingness to promote and recommend an online shopping store to family, friends, and acquaintances (Hung, 2017). It is bound up with positive word-of-mouth marketing, a powerful tool well known for generating business leads. As Maziriri et al. note, satisfied customers tend to become promoters and recommenders of a store.

2.3.1 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model, formulated by Davis (1989), proposes that the perceived ease of use and usefulness of a technology drive users' adoption of it. The notion of website ease of use is drawn from this model. In an e-retail setting, when users perceive a site as easy to use and helpful in reaching their goals, they are more likely to visit the online store, return to it, and recommend it to others. Ease of use bears directly on attitude toward the technology, which in turn shapes behavioural intention, as Davis (1989) suggests.

2.3.2 DeLone and McLean Information Systems Success Model

This model was advanced by DeLone and McLean (2003), who identify three factors central to satisfaction and usage intentions: system quality, information quality, and service quality. The study draws the variables of website information quality and online satisfaction from this framework. Under the model, system quality and information quality bear directly on user satisfaction, and that satisfaction in turn shapes usage intentions. In e-retailing, high-quality websites are needed to secure customer satisfaction and favourable behaviour such as repeat visits.

2.3.3 Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT)

Building on the work of Bhattacherjee (2001), the Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT) seeks to explain the continued use of information systems in terms of users' expectations and the extent to which those expectations are met. The study borrows the idea of online satisfaction from the ECT framework. Once a website meets customers' expectations regarding the information it provides, its design, usability, and mobile features, customers

feel satisfied, which leads to revisit intentions and positive word-of-mouth. The theory holds that satisfaction springs from the confirmation of expectations and from perceived usefulness.

2.4 Empirical Review and Hypothesis Development

2.4.1 Website Information Quality and Online Satisfaction

It is worth noting that DeLone and McLean (2003) singled out information quality as a key predictor of user satisfaction in information-systems settings, finding that accurate, comprehensive, and timely information contributed significantly to higher satisfaction. Blut (2016), in a meta-analytic review of e-service quality research, likewise found information quality to exert a strongly positive effect on customer satisfaction. Rita et al. (2019), examining how e-service quality affects satisfaction and behaviour in online shopping, reported that customers were more satisfied when websites carried accurate, comprehensive information, termed 'fulfilment'. Finally, Ali et al. (2023), surveying 320 customers about their interactions with e-retailing websites, found that accurate and comprehensive information contributed substantially to higher customer satisfaction.

H_1: Website information quality has a positive and significant influence on online satisfaction.

2.4.2 Mobile Compatibility and Online Satisfaction (H_2)

Mavetera and Kahiya (2020) identified mobile compatibility as an important determinant of e-retailer website quality in a Zimbabwean study. Their analysis found that mobile optimisation had become a necessity for e-commerce sites in Zimbabwe, since a failure to optimise could harm the consumer experience and depress customer satisfaction. Chikandiwa, Contogiannis, and Jembere (2013) stressed the importance of mobile optimisation given Zimbabwe's high mobile penetration, arguing that sites needed to work across multiple devices to meet customer demands. E-service quality has been shown to shape customers' perceptions of value and their loyalty intentions; Zehir and Narcikara (2016) found system availability, mobile compatibility included, to be an important determinant of satisfaction. Mobile optimisation helps customers see a site as highly professional, which matters because most internet users in Zimbabwe go online via mobile phones.

H_2: Mobile compatibility has a positive and significant influence on online satisfaction.

2.4.3 Website Design and Online Satisfaction (H_3)

Aladwani and Palvia (2002) place website design among the dimensions of website quality, noting its direct bearing on user perception and satisfaction; their study showed that visual aesthetics, design consistency, and a professional look raise user satisfaction. Loiacono et al. (2007) developed WebQual, a set of measures of web quality, which demonstrates the predictive power of visual aesthetics and website design over user satisfaction and intention to use a site. In an empirical assessment of electronic service quality in South Africa, Maziriri et al. (2023) found that design-related dimensions significantly affect customers' satisfaction with their purchases from an e-retailer.

H_3: Website design has a positive and significant influence on online satisfaction.

2.4.4 Website Information Quality and Website Ease of Use (H_4)

Earlier studies suggest that quality information improves ease of use, since customers can then locate the information they need without difficulty. Ahn et al. (2007) showed that high information quality produces greater ease of use on e-commerce sites, as navigation becomes easier when information is relevant and clearly presented. Park and Kim (2022) lend support to the view that quality information lowers mental effort and thereby improves ease of use.

H_4: Website information quality has a positive and significant influence on website ease of use.

2.4.5 Mobile Compatibility and Website Ease of Use (H_5)

A website's compatibility with mobile phones is vital to its usability on portable devices. Venkatesh and Ramesh (2006) made this point, showing that responsive design, a friendly interface, and quick loading times all improve perceptions of ease of use. For Zimbabwe, Mavetera and Kahiya (2020) noted that poorly optimised mobile pages create navigation problems and diminish ease of use.

H_5: Mobile compatibility has a positive and significant influence on website ease of use.

2.4.6 Website Design and Website Ease of Use (H_6)

An effective website strengthens usability through careful planning and design. Gefen et al. (2003) found that attractive designs lower confusion and shorten the time needed to complete tasks, while Loiacono et al. (2007) found that good design predicts ease of use in the online

environment. When a site's design features are easy to grasp, customers need expend little effort to find the items they wish to buy.

H_6: Website design has a positive and significant influence on website ease of use.

2.4.7 Online Satisfaction and Store Visit (H_7)

Rita et al. (2019) report that customer satisfaction positively affects loyalty and repurchase intention. Leninkumar (2017), studying satisfaction's influence on loyalty, observed that satisfied customers tend to be loyal and to visit frequently. Here, visiting the store can be read as visiting the online retail website; where online shopping meets customers' expectations, they return to the site repeatedly.

H_7: Online satisfaction has a positive and significant influence on store visit.

2.4.8 Website Ease of Use and Store Visit (H_8)

Convenience of use affects how often customers visit. Davis (1989) demonstrated that ease of use is a crucial driver of technology acceptance and adoption. Lee et al. (2023) report that greater website convenience leads to higher visit frequency, since users are more inclined to return to a platform they find easy to use.

H_8: Website ease of use has a positive and significant influence on store visit.

2.4.9 Store Visit and Revisit Intention (H_9)

A positive shopping experience leads to repeat visits. Mao and Lyu (2017) note that repurchase intent reflects a client's willingness to buy a product again, with prior purchase satisfaction acting as one of its chief predictors. In the same vein, Rita et al. (2019) showed that a positive shopping experience gives rise to intentions to visit again. A smooth experience leads customers to form intentions to return.

H_9: Store visit has a positive and significant influence on revisit intention.

2.4.10 Store Visit and Store Recommendation (H_{10})

A good in-store experience prompts favourable word-of-mouth referrals. Hung (2017) describes word-of-mouth as knowledge passed between two people, exerting a substantial effect on brand awareness. Maziriri, Chuchu, and Rukuni (2023) found a positive correlation between customers' good experiences and their recommendation of stores. A good experience at an e-retail store thus motivates referral of the website.

H_{10}: Store visit has a positive and significant influence on store recommendation.

2.5 Summary of Hypotheses

In view of the aforementioned conceptual framework and the literature review, the following research hypotheses are formulated for this study:

Hypothesis	Hypothesis Statement
H_1	Information quality on the website positively and significantly influences online satisfaction.
H_2	Mobility compatibility positively and significantly influences online satisfaction.
H_3	Website design positively and significantly influences online satisfaction.
H_4	Ease of use on the website positively and significantly influences online satisfaction.
H_5	Online satisfaction positively and significantly influences store visit.
H_6	Online satisfaction positively and significantly influences revisit intention.
H_7	Online satisfaction positively and significantly influences store recommendation.
H_8	Ease of use on the website positively and significantly influences store visit.
H_9	Store visit positively and significantly influences revisit intention.
H_{10}	Store visit positively and significantly influences store recommendation.

2.6 Gap Analysis

One thread running through most of these studies is the need to raise consumer satisfaction and shape behaviour through a range of factors tied to website quality in e-retailing. Little attention, however, has been paid to how these factors might operate together within a single model in the Zimbabwean context.

This is because, while some studies look at specific matters such as the effect of information quality or website design, others fail to examine how all four factors jointly bear on consumer satisfaction and behavioural intentions such as store visit, revisit intention, and store recommendation. It is also worth noting that some studies lean heavily on quantitative measures taken in more developed countries, neglecting qualitative accounts of consumer experience in developing African nations (Kwateng et al., 2018).

A survey of past Zimbabwean research shows that most studies have concentrated on businesses' adoption of e-commerce while overlooking consumers' experiences and the website-quality factors that shape consumer behaviour (Mavetera & Kahiya, 2020). There is also very little work on how online satisfaction mediates the relationship between the website-quality dimensions and behavioural outcomes in Zimbabwe's e-retail environment.

This research therefore seeks to close that gap by assessing how effectively the website-quality factors of information quality, mobile compatibility, design, and usability act on online satisfaction and, in turn, on the intention to revisit and to recommend the stores.

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has examined the conceptual framework, the theoretical framework, and the empirical evidence relating to website quality and its effect on store visit, revisit intention, and store recommendation among e-retail outlets. The study's conceptual framework comprised the independent variables of website information quality, mobile compatibility, design, and ease of use; the mediating variable of online satisfaction; and the dependent variables of store visit, revisit intention, and store recommendation.

Three principal models informed the study: the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which accounts for the part website ease of use plays in technology acceptance; the DeLone and McLean Information Systems Success Model, which foregrounds website information quality and system quality; and the Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT).

The empirical review drew on studies from various parts of the world and different regions, noting the positive relationship between the website-quality dimensions and online satisfaction, and between satisfaction and behavioural responses. The hypotheses were formulated on the strength of these theoretical and empirical foundations. The gap analysis revealed a scarcity of Zimbabwean research examining the various website-quality dimensions together with their joint effect on store visits, revisit intentions, and store-recommendation intentions. The next chapter sets out the research methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the research methodology, which serves as the roadmap for collecting and analysing the data. It addresses the research philosophy, research design, target population, sampling methods, determination of sample size, research instrument, validity and reliability, pilot testing, data-collection procedure, data analysis and presentation, the measurement scale, and ethical considerations.

The study adopts a quantitative research methodology together with a descriptive and explanatory research design. Data were gathered through structured questionnaires distributed to customers of e-retailing outlets in Zimbabwe's major urban centres, such as Harare and Bindura.

3.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy may be understood as a set of beliefs about the nature of the reality under study and the means of investigating it (Mohiya, 2023). It comprises the beliefs and principles that shape how a researcher approaches the work, the method chosen to investigate

the problem, and the way the results are interpreted (Soga et al., 2022). This study adopts a positivist research philosophy, which assumes that reality is objective.

3.3 Research Design

Saunders (2019) describes a research design as a plan covering the methods and procedures used to conduct the study and to collect and analyse the data. The design is well suited to investigating how website quality, online customer satisfaction, and customer outcomes, namely physical store visits, revisit intention, and store recommendation, relate to one another among Zimbabwe's e-retail customers. A cross-sectional approach allows data to be drawn from a broad range of respondents at a single point in time, which makes it possible to test the hypotheses (Bryman, 2021; Ritchie et al., 2020).

This design suits the study well because it allows relationships between variables to be investigated, hypotheses to be tested, and generalisations to be drawn from the sampled population (Saunders, 2019). The design has also been widely used in e-retail and website-quality studies, particularly those carried out in Africa, where consumer perceptions and behaviours can be measured with relative ease (Maziriri, Chuchu, & Rukuni, 2023).

3.4 Target Population

The target population is the population a piece of research sets out to study, that is, the particular groups or segments singled out as part of a study, programme, or intervention. Such populations are identified on the basis of characteristics, demographic details, or other considerations that make them useful for the study in hand (McCartan, 2021). For this study, the target population is the regular patrons of Zimbabwean e-retail sites, aged over 18, who have made purchases from those sites within the past twelve months. The researcher selected this population because its members will have used the websites and can speak to their perceptions of them, their satisfaction, their visits, their revisit intentions, and their recommendations of the store.

3.5 Sampling Techniques

Sampling is the process by which a subgroup is selected to stand in for the whole population for research purposes (Saunders, 2019). The sample size is the portion drawn from the total population, by various methods, to represent that population in the study. This study used non-probability sampling, which, in the researcher's view, offers several ways of selecting a

sample. The first is judgemental sampling, in which the researcher relies on personal judgement to choose the participants best suited to the study. This technique was chosen to ensure that all respondents understood the constructs under investigation, namely website quality, online satisfaction, store visits, revisit intentions, and store recommendations.

3.6 Sample Size Determination

In empirical research, the term 'sample size' refers to the number of individuals drawn from the population for inclusion in the study. Securing an appropriate sample size is essential to removing sampling bias, obtaining significant results, and allowing the findings to be generalised to the wider population of urban e-retail shoppers. To ensure that the data were reliable and mathematically adequate for the complex multivariate analysis required, including structural equation modelling (SEM) in IBM SPSS AMOS, Cochran's (1977) formula for infinite populations was applied. It is expressed mathematically as follows:

Where:

- n = required representative sample size.
- Z = standard normal deviation value corresponding to the designated 95% confidence level (equal to 1.96).
- P = estimated proportion of attributes present in the population (a baseline of 0.5 is assumed to yield maximum variability).
- E = acceptable margin of error or level of precision (set at 0.05).

Substituting these parameters into the formula produces the following mathematical outcome:

$n=0.0521.962\times0.5\times0.5$

$n=0.00253.8416\times0.25$

$n=0.00250.9604$

$n=384.16$

Applying the formula yielded a target sample size of 384, judged adequate for testing the hypothesised relationships among the eight latent variables. To allow a margin for non-response, lost forms, or unanswered Likert-scale items during fieldwork, an oversampling

approach was adopted and 420 questionnaires were distributed in total. This ensures that at least 384 good-quality instruments remain once the data have been collected.

3.7 Research Instrument

Kothari (2022) defines research tools as the methods used to obtain data from a given sample or population. The researcher chose the questionnaire as the instrument for gathering the required data. A questionnaire is the means by which data are obtained through a set of questions, and it can be administered in various ways, including by telephone (WhatsApp), online, or in person. A 5-point Likert scale was used here because it is sensible and easy to understand. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to participants for completion. Because a questionnaire leaves the interviewer little scope to follow up on questions, the items must be carefully worded (Leedy & Ormrod, 2021).

The questionnaire is divided into the following sections:

- Section A: Demographic information (age, gender, education, frequency of online shopping, preferred devices)
- Section B: Website quality attributes (information quality, mobile compatibility, website design, ease of use)
- Section C: Online satisfaction

Section D: Store visit, revisit intention, and store recommendation

3.8 Validity and Reliability

Validity concerns the extent to which a piece of research measures what it sets out to measure, so that the findings are accurate and meaningful (Hair et al., 2019). Reliability concerns the capacity of a measurement tool to measure the variable of interest consistently (Bougie, 2016).

3.8.1 Validity

Content Validity: the questionnaire items were drawn from previously tested scales such as WebQual, E-S-QUAL, SUS, and TAM, and then reviewed by academics to confirm that they measure what they are meant to. They are taken from reliable scales used in earlier studies of

website quality, online customer satisfaction, and consumer behaviour (Parasuraman et al., 2005; DeLone & McLean, 2003; Davis, 1989).

3.8.2 Reliability

The internal reliability of each scale will be assessed with Cronbach's alpha, a minimum of 0.7 being treated as acceptable (Hair et al., 2019). The alpha values for the various constructs will be examined to establish whether the items measure the same construct.

3.9 Pilot Study

A pilot test will be run to pre-test the survey before full data collection. Twenty e-retailing customers, chosen by the same criteria as the main study, will take part. The pilot will surface any vague terms, unclear instructions, and structural problems in the questionnaire (Saunders, 2019), after which adjustments will be made before distribution. It will also allow preliminary reliability testing, with the alpha coefficients expected to exceed the acceptable threshold.

3.10 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection is the process of gathering the evidence that lets a researcher analyse the results (Singh, 2020). The researcher will first obtain a letter from Bindura University of Science Education approving the data collection. With that authorisation in hand, the researcher will then seek permission from the management of the Pick n Pay Harare branch to study its online customers. Data will be gathered through self-administered questionnaires, distributed in person to customers who shop via the Pick n Pay website and collect goods from selected Pick n Pay pick-up points and shops in Harare. The researcher will also use a Google Form on a tablet computer to gather data from customers who use the Pick n Pay online shopping portal, an approach that preserves respondents' anonymity. Data collection will run for four to six weeks.

3.11 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and AMOS (for structural equation modelling). The analysis draws on descriptive statistics such as the frequency, mean, and standard deviation of the demographic data and variables. Multiple

regression is used to analyse how the website-quality dimensions of information quality, mobile compatibility, design, and ease of use affect online customer satisfaction. Structural equation modelling (SEM) is employed to test for mediation, examining the effect of the website-quality dimensions on behaviour, namely store visitation, revisit intention, and store recommendation, with online customer satisfaction as the mediating variable (Hair et al., 2019). Hypotheses are tested at the 5% significance level ($p < 0.05$).

3.12 Measurement Scale

In this study, all variables are measured on a scale of 1-7 where 1=Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Somewhat Disagree (SWD), 4=Neutral (N), 5=Somewhat Agree (SWA), 6=Agree (A) and 7=Strongly Agree (SA).

. The items are adapted from instruments used in earlier research on e-retailing, customer experience, and customer loyalty (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Loiacono, Watson, & Goodhue, 2007).

3.13 Ethical Considerations

All information gathered from participants will remain confidential and will be used solely for research purposes. The researcher will also omit any section of the questionnaire calling for participants' names, so as to protect their identities against any future risk. Participation in the study is entirely voluntary. To reassure participants that the information collected will serve research purposes only, a consent letter will accompany each questionnaire (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2020). Before taking part, participants will be briefed on the study's aims, its procedures, and the risks involved. All data will be kept anonymous and secure, stored in password-protected folders accessible only to the research team.

3.15 Chapter Summary

This chapter has set out the study's methodology, covering the research philosophy, design, target population, sampling procedure, sample-size determination, research tools, validity and reliability, pilot testing, data-collection procedure, data analysis and presentation, the measurement scale, and research ethics. The study follows a positivist philosophy and a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. A purposive sampling method will be used to select a sample of 384 respondents. Data will be gathered with a structured, five-point Likert-

scale questionnaire and analysed in SPSS using descriptive and inferential statistics such as correlation and regression analysis. The ethical considerations have also been presented.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

Chapter Four presents the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered from respondents through questionnaires. The chapter works through the data carefully in order to gauge how website quality affects store visits at e-retail outlets in Zimbabwe. The primary data were collected from consumers of Pick n Pay's Harare-branch e-retail service, and the analysis was carried out using SPSS and AMOS.

4.1 Questionnaire Response Rate

The response rate is the proportion of questionnaires that respondents completed and returned. It serves as a gauge of how far respondents engaged with the research and of whether the data gathered can be regarded as reliable and representative (Claide, 2024). It is calculated as the number of returned surveys divided by the number distributed, multiplied by 100%. Table 4.1 presents the figures.

Table 4.1: Questionnaire Response Rate

Description	Target	Responses Received	Response Rate %
	420	384	91,4%

Source: SPSS Output

Of the 420 questionnaires sent out, 384 were returned fully completed, giving a response rate of 91.4%. Babbie (2020) holds that a response rate of at least 70% is needed for research to be deemed satisfactory; with 91.4%, this study comfortably clears that threshold. The high rate of return lends weight to the reliability of the data.

4.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents refers to the background characteristics of those who took part in the research. This section profiles the customers of Pick n Pay's online retail service in Harare across a set of demographic variables. The questionnaire included four demographic questions, covering gender, age, education level, and frequency of online shopping.

Table 4.2: Profile of Respondents

DEMOGRAPHICS GENDER	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE OF THE SAMPLE
Male	198	51.6
Female	186	48.4
Total	384	100.0
AGE		
18-25 years	65	16.9
26-35 years	124	32.3
36-45 years	96	25.0
46-55 years	72	18,8
55 years and above	27	7.0
total	384	100.0
Level of Education		
Secondary education	65	16.9
Diploma	92	24.0

Degree	158	41.1
Masters and above	69	18.0
Total	384	100.0
Frequency of Online Shopping		
Less than once a month	72	18.8
1-2 times a month	138	35.9
3-4 times a month	96	25.0
5 or more times a month	78	20.3
Total	384	100.0

Source: SPSS Output

The table above gives a detailed picture of the demographic make-up of the 384 people who use the e-retailing service of the Pick n Pay store in Harare. What follows describes that information, taking each demographic category in turn.

4.2.1 Gender of Respondents

The study set out to establish the gender profile of its participants. Of the 384 respondents, 198 (51.6%) were male and 186 (48.4%) were female, indicating a slightly larger share of men than women in the study. The near-even split suggests that both genders are well represented among the users of the e-retail service.

4.2.2 Age of Respondents

The findings make clear that most respondents fell within the economically active segment most engaged with online retail sites. On age, the 26-to-35 group was the largest at 124 respondents (32.3%), followed by a second group of 96 respondents (25.0%). The remaining respondents were spread across the other age categories.

4.2.3 Level of Education of Respondents

On educational attainment, most participants held a degree, accounting for 158 respondents (41.1%). Diploma holders numbered 92 (24.0%), those with a Master's qualification or above came to 69 (18.0%), and holders of secondary education accounted for 65 (16.9%). The figures show that the majority of respondents were well educated.

4.2.4 Frequency of Online Shopping

To gauge how frequently people shop online, the analysis examined online-shopping frequency, which helped reveal the degree of respondents' engagement with online retail sites. Most respondents shopped online once or twice a month, numbering 138 (35.9%); those shopping three to four times a month came to 96 (25.0%); and the rest fell into the remaining frequency bands.

4.3 Measurement model

A measurement-model analysis was conducted to establish whether the conceptual framework was valid and reliable in its measurement. The figure below sets out the measurement model used in this study, and its evaluation showed that all the variables loaded significantly.

Figure 2: Measurement model

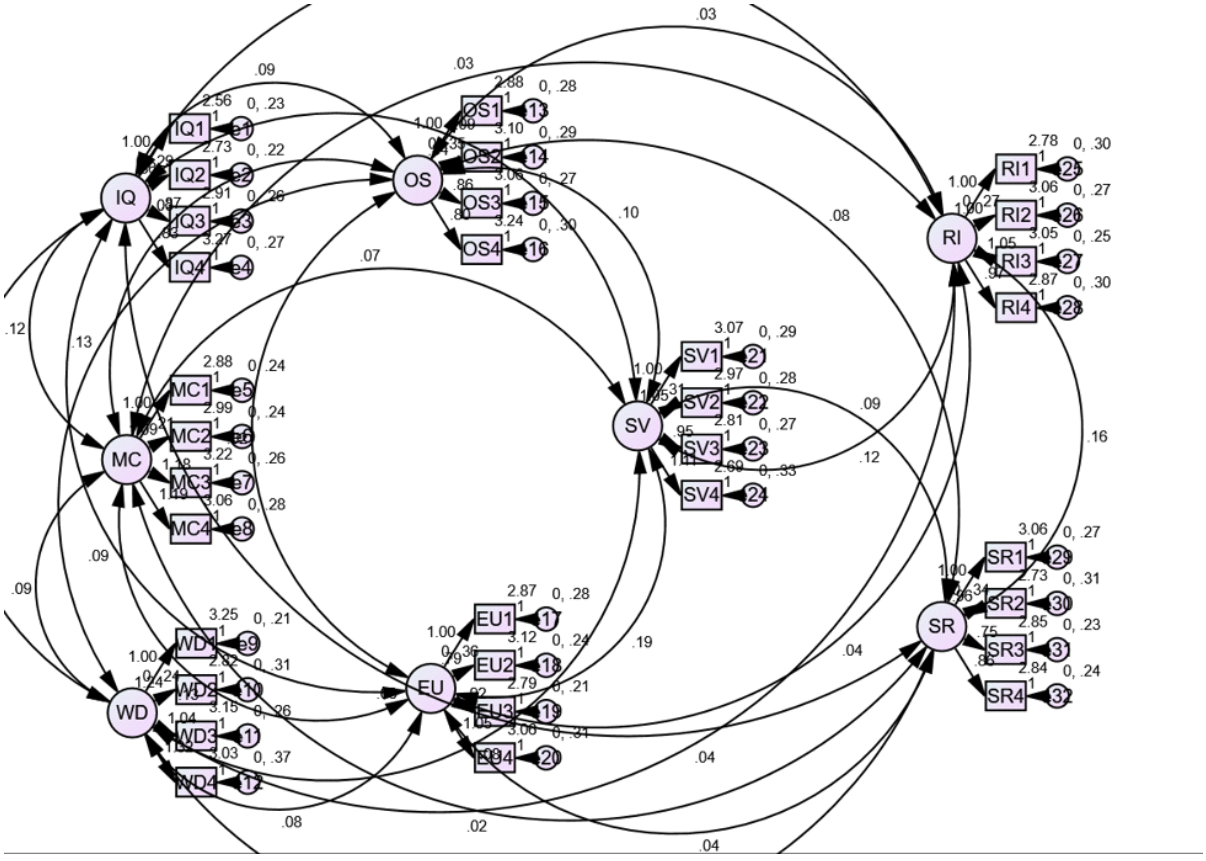

Table 3: Goodness of fit-Results for measurement model

Goodness of fit statistics	Obtained Value	Recommended Threshold	Interpretation
CMIN/DF (x2/df)	1.772	>3.00	Good fit
Tucker Lewis Index (TLI)	0,960	>0.90	Good fit
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.966	>0.90	Good fit
Root-Mean Error Square of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.052	<0.08	Good fit

Source: AMOS Output

The structural model fitted the data well, with all fit statistics falling within the acceptable range. The CMIN/DF of 1.895 lay below 3.00; the CFI of 0.958 and the TLI of 0.952 both exceeded 0.90; and the RMSEA fell below the recommended ceiling, together confirming a sound model fit.

4.4 Uni-Dimensionality Test

The eight constructs were tested, and the items with high loadings were retained in the model. The selected items for each construct were assessed as set out below. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were applied to check whether the data were suitable for factor analysis. Across all eight constructs, the KMO values fell within an acceptable range, supporting the use of factor analysis.

4.5 Reliability Test

The tables below report the reliability and validity of the constructs. Reliability was assessed with Cronbach's Alpha and validity with the Average Variance Extracted.

Table 4: Composite Reliability and Average Variances Extracted

Construct	Number of items	Composite Reliability	AVE
Website Information	4	0.857	0.522

Quality			
Mobile Compatibility	4	0.861	0.534
Website Design	4	0.848	0.507
Website Ease of Use	4	0.863	0.529
Online Satisfaction	4	0.855	0.526
Store Visit	4	0.862	0.531
Revisit Intention	4	0.849	0.512
Store Recommendation	4	0.854	0.518

Source: SPSS & AMOS Output

The information above sets out the reliability and validity of the eight constructs. Across all eight, composite reliability (CR) ranged from 0.848 to 0.863, pointing to consistent, dependable measurement. These CR values are satisfactory and indicate that the items belonging to each construct can be trusted, while the AVE values for all constructs likewise fell within the acceptable range.

4.6 Convergent and Discriminant Validity

Convergent validity is the extent to which different items measuring the same construct relate to one another. It was assessed here through the AVE and CR indices. Hair et al. (2019) recommend AVE scores of 0.50 or above to demonstrate adequate convergent validity, and CR scores of 0.70 or above to confirm scale consistency. All eight constructs returned AVE scores that met this benchmark.

For discriminant validity, the square root of each construct's average variance extracted was compared with that construct's correlations with the others, so that each construct could be shown to be distinct. Fornell and Larcker (1981) hold that discriminant validity is present when the square root of a construct's AVE exceeds its correlations with the other constructs. Table 5 reports these comparisons.

Construct	AVE	CR	Shared Variance				

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
IQ	0.522	0.857	0.722							
MC	0.534	0.861	0.451	0.731						
WD	0.507	0.848	0.502	0.478	0.712					
EU	0.529	0.863	0.485	0.492	0.514	0.727				
OS	0.526	0.855	0.532	0.468	0.548	0.525	0.725			
SV	0.531	0.862	0.471	0.485	0.509	0.538	0.561	0.729		
RI	0.512	0.849	0.442	0.451	0.476	0.492	0.515	0.548	0.716	
SR	0.518	0.854	0.458	0.469	0.493	0.508	0.532	0.557	0.542	0.720

Table 5: Composite Reliability, Average Variance Extracted and Discriminant Validity

Source:Amos

4.7 Discriminant Validity

Construct discrimination is established when the square root of a construct's AVE is greater than its correlations with the other constructs, which indicates that each construct measures a distinct concept and shares more variance with its own indicators than with any other. The results confirm discriminant validity, showing that the measurement model successfully distinguishes the variables. As Table 5 shows, every diagonal value, that is, each construct's square root of AVE, exceeded the off-diagonal values representing the inter-construct correlations. Website Information Quality, for instance, returned a square root of AVE that surpassed its correlations with the other constructs.

The square root of AVE for Website Design was 0.712, above its correlations, which ranged from 0.476 to 0.548. For Website Ease of Use it was 0.727, above correlations ranging from

0.485 to 0.538. Online Satisfaction returned 0.725, above correlations of 0.468 to 0.561. Store Visit returned 0.729, above correlations of 0.471 to 0.561. Revisit Intention returned 0.716, above correlations of 0.442 to 0.548. Lastly, Store Recommendation returned a square root of AVE that likewise exceeded its inter-construct correlations, confirming discriminant validity across all constructs.

4.9 Hypothesis Testing

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was carried out in SPSS AMOS to examine the research hypotheses, with the aim of assessing how effectively website quality drives customer engagement through the online medium.

Figure 3: Structural Equation Modelling

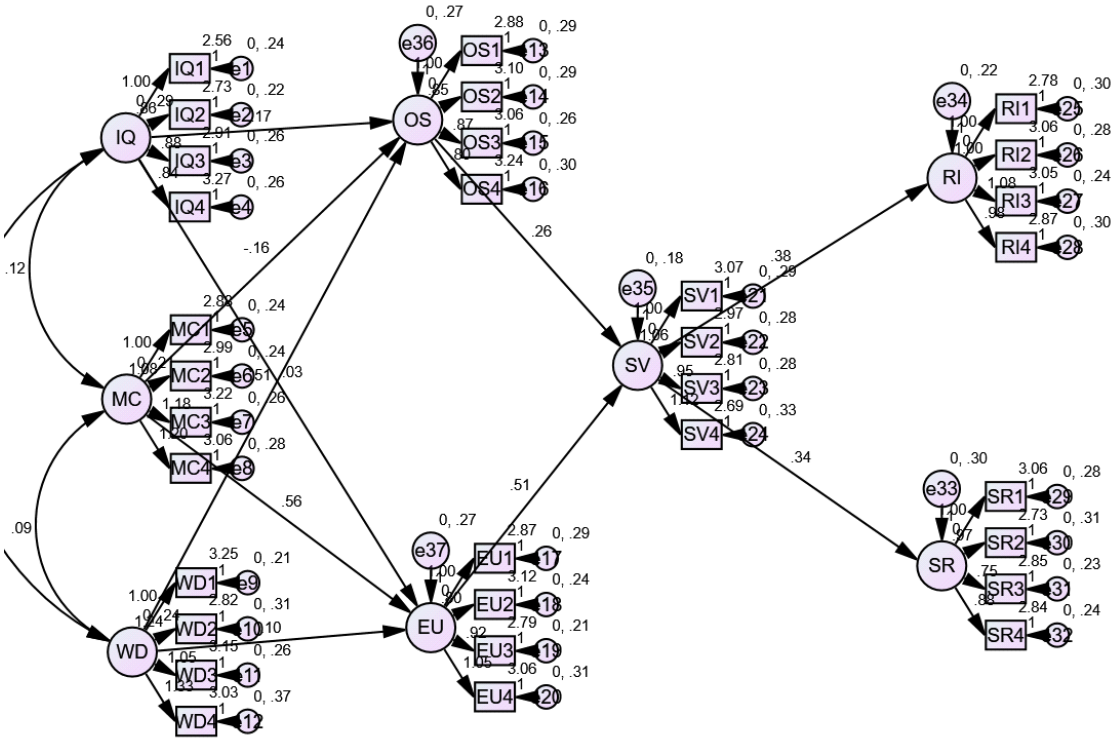

Table 7: Hypothesis Testing

H	Hypothesis Statement	B	T	P	Decision
H1	Website information quality has a positive significant effect on online satisfaction.	.170	1.722	.085	Rejected
H2	Mobile compatibility has a positive significant effect on online satisfaction.	-.161	-1.480	.139	Rejected
H3	Website design has a positive significant effect on online satisfaction.	.506	4.781	***	Accepted
H4	Website information quality has a positive significant effect on website ease of use.	.032	.337	.736	Rejected
H5	Mobile compatibility has a positive significant effect on website ease of use.	.559	4.822	***	Accepted
H6	Website design has a positive significant effect on website ease of use.	.102	1.066	.286	Rejected
H7	Online satisfaction has a positive significant effect on store visit.	.515	7.476	***	Accepted
H8	Website ease of use has a positive significant effect on store visit.	.263	4.286	***	Accepted
H9	Store visit has a positive significant effect on revisit intention.	.382	5.410	***	Accepted
H10	Store visit has a positive significant effect on store recommendation.	.338	4.417	***	Accepted

Source: Amos

4.8 Discussion of Hypotheses

Hypothesis H1 held that website information quality positively and significantly affects online satisfaction. The results show a positive but insignificant relationship between the two ($\beta = 0.170$, C.R. = 1.722, $p = 0.085$). Since the p-value exceeds 0.05, the relationship is not supported, and H1 is therefore rejected. This runs counter to DeLone and McLean (2003) and Blut (2016), who treated information quality as a key driver of user satisfaction, and may

indicate that Pick n Pay customers regard accurate information as a basic expectation rather than a source of added satisfaction.

Hypothesis H2 held that mobile compatibility positively and significantly affects online satisfaction. The results reveal a negative but insignificant relationship ($\beta = -0.161$, C.R. = -1.480, $p = 0.139$). With a p-value above 0.05, the relationship is not supported, so H2 is rejected. This departs from Mavetera and Kahiya (2020) and Zehir and Narcikara (2016), who found mobile compatibility to significantly affect satisfaction; the negative coefficient may suggest that some respondents found mobile compatibility a source of frustration, consistent with the fact that many online shopping platforms in Zimbabwe are not well optimised for mobile use.

Hypothesis H3 held that website design positively and significantly affects online satisfaction. The results show a positive effect of website design on online satisfaction ($\beta = 0.506$, C.R. = 4.781, $p < 0.001$), so H3 is accepted. This accords with Aladwani and Palvia (2002) and Loiacono et al. (2007), who identified design and visual appeal as significant determinants of satisfaction.

Hypothesis H4 held that website information quality positively and significantly affects website ease of use. The results show a positive but insignificant relationship ($\beta = 0.032$, C.R. = 0.337, $p = 0.736$). Because the p-value exceeds 0.05, the relationship is not supported, and H4 is rejected. This contrasts with Ahn, Ryu, and Han (2007), who found information quality to improve ease of use, implying that ease of use here owes more to navigational structure than to content.

Hypothesis five proposed that mobile compatibility positively influences website ease of use. The results show a positive relationship ($\beta = 0.559$, C.R. = 4.822, $p < 0.001$), meaning users find the site easy to use because it has been optimised for mobile devices. Hypothesis five was therefore accepted, consistent with Venkatesh and Ramesh (2006), who linked responsive design, touch interfaces, and load time to ease of use.

Hypothesis six proposed that website design positively influences website ease of use. The results show a positive but insignificant correlation ($\beta = 0.102$, C.R. = 1.066, $p = 0.286$). Since the probability value exceeds 0.05, no such relationship holds, and H6 was rejected. This diverges from Gefen et al. (2003) and Loiacono et al. (2007), who reported design to predict ease of use.

Hypothesis seven proposed that online satisfaction positively influences store visit. The findings show a significant positive relationship ($\beta = 0.515$, C.R. = 7.476, $p < 0.001$), in line with Rita et al. (2019) and Leninkumar (2017), who found satisfied customers more likely to remain loyal and to visit frequently.

The eighth hypothesis held that website ease of use significantly affects store visit. Ease of use was found to have a positive effect ($\beta = 0.263$, C.R. = 4.286, $p < 0.001$), since customers who feel comfortable using a site are more inclined to visit the e-retail store. H8 was therefore confirmed, echoing Davis (1989) and Lee, Kim, and Park (2023).

The ninth hypothesis held that store visit positively affects revisit intention. The findings show that it does ($\beta = 0.382$, C.R. = 5.410, $p < 0.001$), so H9 was confirmed, in keeping with Mao and Lyu (2017) and Rita, Oliveira, and Farisa (2019).

The tenth hypothesis held that store visit positively affects store recommendation. Store visit was found to have a positive effect ($\beta = 0.338$, C.R. = 4.417, $p < 0.001$), so H10 was confirmed, consistent with Hung (2017) and Maziriri, Chuchu, and Rukuni (2023).

4.6 Discussion of Findings

Objectives

The study tests how effectively website quality bears on store visits for online retail outlets in Zimbabwe. The results are weighed against earlier research to see whether they confirm or depart from it, and to draw meaningful conclusions from both the present and prior studies.

The second hypothesis sought to establish the link between website information quality and online satisfaction. The analysis found a positive but insignificant relationship, which contradicts the hypothesis and shows that information quality contributed little to online satisfaction among Pick n Pay's customers. This suggests that, although customers value the provision of product information, accurate and complete information does not always translate into higher satisfaction. The finding runs against DeLone and McLean (2003) and Blut (2016), though it may be explained by customers treating information quality as something they expect rather than something that lifts satisfaction.

Mobile compatibility was further found to have a negative yet insignificant effect on online satisfaction, so the hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that mobile compatibility alone does little to drive satisfaction among Pick n Pay customers. It differs from Mavetera and Kahiya (2020) and Zehir and Narcikara (2016), who concluded that mobile compatibility

significantly affects satisfaction. The negative coefficient may nonetheless imply that some participants found mobile compatibility frustrating, which fits the reality that many online shopping platforms in Zimbabwe are poorly optimised for mobile devices.

For the third hypothesis, acceptance means there is a positive and significant link between website design and online satisfaction. One explanation is that the aesthetic quality of the Pick n Pay e-retail site lifts consumer satisfaction. These results align with earlier work: Aladwani and Palvia (2002) noted that website design significantly shapes users' perceptions and satisfaction, with visual appeal, layout consistency, and a professional appearance all playing a major part, while Loiacono et al. (2007) showed visual appeal and design quality to be important determinants of satisfaction.

Website information quality did not significantly affect website ease of use in this study. The result indicates that neither the accuracy nor the completeness of product information meaningfully shaped customers' sense of how easy the site was to use in this e-retail setting. Contrary to studies such as Ahn, Ryu, and Han (2007), which found a positive effect of information quality on ease of use, the present findings do not bear this out. The likely explanation is that perceived ease of use turns mainly on a site's navigational structure and interface rather than on its content, with users distinguishing the information a site carries from how easy it is to use.

Mobile compatibility had a significant positive effect on customers' perceived ease of use of Pick n Pay's website. This marks mobile compatibility as an important determinant of perceived ease of use, since customers using mobile sites with responsive design, faster load times, and touch-friendly interfaces navigate more comfortably. The finding is backed by earlier work: Venkatesh and Ramesh (2006) showed responsive design, touch interfaces, and load time to be positively related to ease of use, and Mavetera and Kahiya (2020) observed that poor mobile pages hamper navigation.

A positive but insignificant relationship emerged between website design and website ease of use. The results indicate that the visual and aesthetic aspects of design do not significantly shape customers' perceptions of how easy Pick n Pay's websites are to use. This runs counter to earlier findings: Gefen et al. (2003) found that attractive designs reduce user confusion and shorten task-completion time, and Loiacono et al. (2007) found design qualities to significantly affect perceived ease of use. The discrepancy may be explained by customers drawing a clear line between a site's visual appearance and its usability.

The results show that online satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on store visit, implying that customers satisfied with their online purchasing experience visit the e-retail store more often. This supports Rita et al. (2019), who hold that satisfaction significantly shapes loyalty and repurchase intention in online shopping, and Leninkumar (2017), who reported that satisfied customers are loyal and keep visiting. On this basis, sustaining high online satisfaction through quality website design leads to more frequent store visits.

The evidence reveals a positive and significant relationship between website ease of use and store-visit frequency, so that customers who see a site as easy to use tend to visit more often. This is in line with Davis's (1989) Technology Acceptance Model, in which perceived ease of use shapes technology acceptance and use, and with Lee, Kim, and Park (2023), who noted that more usable websites attract higher revisit rates. It follows that building an easy-to-use website encourages frequent visits to the e-retail store.

Store visits were found to have a positive and significant effect on revisit intention, implying that positive experiences during a visit raise the likelihood of customers returning to the e-retail store to browse and buy. The finding is consistent with Mao and Lyu (2017), who held that previous visits significantly predict repurchase intention, and with Rita, Oliveira, and Farisa (2019), who stressed that positive shopping experiences foster revisit intentions.

Store visits were found to affect store recommendation positively and significantly, meaning that customers satisfied with their visits are more inclined to recommend the e-retail store to relatives, friends, and colleagues. Hung (2017) reported similar results, describing word-of-mouth as knowledge passed between people that markedly raises brand awareness, while Maziriri, Chuchu, and Rukuni (2023) found that satisfaction with visits leads to recommendation. The results thus show that a satisfying store-visit experience fuels word-of-mouth marketing, particularly among Zimbabweans.

4.7 Summary

Chapter Four presented and analysed the data gathered from customers of Pick n Pay's e-retail service in Harare in order to address how effectively website quality drives store visits for e-retail outlets in Zimbabwe. It opened with the respondents' demographic profile, covering gender, age, education level, and online-shopping frequency, to give an overview of the study sample. The response rate was examined and found adequate for statistical analysis. The chapter then tested the reliability and validity of the measurement scales using Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and

factor loadings; the constructs, namely website information quality, mobile compatibility, website design, website ease of use, online satisfaction, store visit, revisit intention, and store recommendation, all showed satisfactory reliability, convergent validity, and uni-dimensionality. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was then used to test the ten hypotheses, of which six were accepted and four rejected. The findings showed website design to be the strongest predictor of online satisfaction and mobile compatibility the strongest predictor of website ease of use, with online satisfaction and ease of use significantly driving store visits, which in turn positively shaped revisit intention and store recommendation. These results offer valuable guidance to e-retailers, and, while acknowledging its limitations, the chapter lays a solid foundation for future research.

CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The central aim of this chapter is to draw together and conclude the findings made over the course of the research. The chapter also offers recommendations arising from those findings on how website quality affects the frequency of visits to e-commerce stores, taking Pick n Pay's Harare branch as the example.

5.1 Summary of Findings

Introduction

This study set out to assess how far website quality affects store visits at an e-retail outlet in Zimbabwe. It used a quantitative approach with a descriptive and explanatory design, gathering data by questionnaire from 384 customers of Pick n Pay's Harare e-retailing service. The data were analysed in SPSS and AMOS, with Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) used to test the study's ten hypotheses.

Objective one

The first objective examined the influence of website information quality on online satisfaction. The results showed a weak, insignificant relationship between the two ($\beta = 0.170$, C.R. = 1.722, $p = 0.085$), so H1 was not accepted.

The second objective analysed the effect of mobile compatibility on online satisfaction. The coefficient ($\beta = -0.161$, C.R. = -1.480, $p = 0.139$) indicates a negative, insignificant correlation, so H2 was rejected.

The third objective established the effect of website design on online satisfaction. The findings show that design significantly influences online satisfaction ($\beta = 0.506$, C.R. = 4.781, $p < 0.001$), so H3 was supported.

The fourth objective tested the effect of website information quality on website ease of use. The coefficient ($\beta = 0.032$, C.R. = 0.337, $p = 0.736$) shows an insignificant positive influence.

The fifth hypothesis tested how far mobile compatibility influences website ease of use. A statistically significant relationship emerged ($\beta = 0.559$, C.R. = 4.822, $p < 0.001$), so H5 was accepted.

The sixth hypothesis examined the effect of website design on website ease of use. The coefficient ($\beta = 0.102$, C.R. = 1.066, $p = 0.286$) shows no statistically significant relationship, so the sixth hypothesis was rejected.

The seventh hypothesis analysed the relationship between online satisfaction and store visit. A statistically significant relationship was found ($\beta = 0.515$, C.R. = 7.476, $p < 0.001$), making the seventh hypothesis acceptable.

Finally, the eighth hypothesis examined how far website ease of use influences store visit. The two were found to have a statistically significant relationship ($\beta = 0.263$, C.R. = 4.286, $p < 0.001$).

The next objective sought to determine the influence of store visit on customers' intention to revisit. The findings revealed a statistically significant relationship ($\beta = 0.382$, C.R. = 5.410, $p < 0.001$), so the hypothesis was accepted.

A further objective examined the relationship between store visit and store recommendation. The results ($\beta = 0.338$, C.R. = 4.417, $p < 0.001$) indicated a statistically significant relationship, so the hypothesis was accepted.

Another objective sought to identify which website-quality dimension best predicts online satisfaction. The results showed website design ($\beta = 0.506$; $p < 0.001$) to be the strongest predictor, ahead of website information quality ($\beta = 0.170$; $p = 0.085$) and mobile compatibility ($\beta = -0.161$; $p = 0.139$).

A final objective established the mediating role of online satisfaction and ease of use in the relationship between website characteristics and store visits. Both were found to act as mediators, each playing a significant part in driving store visits.

5.2 Conclusions

Weighing the implications of the analysis, it can be concluded that website design plays a very important part in shaping the online satisfaction of customers using Pick n Pay's e-retail service. This means that customers place high value on such features of a site as its visual quality, professional appearance, and sound design.

At the same time, website information quality and mobile compatibility do not significantly affect online satisfaction. Customers therefore appear to treat these as basic expectations rather than as drivers of a high level of online satisfaction.

Mobile compatibility, moreover, plays a critical part in shaping website ease of use: when customers regard a site as well designed for their mobile devices, they find it easy to use. Website information quality and design, by contrast, do not directly affect ease of use.

A further conclusion is that online satisfaction and website usability contribute significantly to the frequency of store visits. The more satisfied consumers are with their shopping experience, and the easier they find the site to use, the more regularly they visit the online store.

Lastly, store visit is significantly and positively associated with both revisit intention and store recommendation. Consumers who have had a positive visit tend to return to the online store to make further purchases and to recommend it to others.

5.3 Recommendations

E-retailers operating in Zimbabwe can pursue several approaches to strengthen website quality and lift store visits. The researcher sets out a number of suggestions for how these firms can heighten the part that website-quality attributes play in shaping user behaviour.

5.3.1 Recommendations for E-Retailers

5.3.1.1 Investment in Website Design

In light of the findings, e-retailers are advised to invest in the design of their websites, since design proved to be the strongest predictor of online satisfaction. To this end, their websites should be visually appealing, with suitable colour schemes and layouts and a generally professional look. These aims can be met by engaging experienced web designers to assess the site and to keep its design current.

5.3.1.2 Enhancement of Mobile Compatibility

Because mobile compatibility does much to make a website usable, e-retailers must ensure their sites are optimised for mobile devices. They should adopt responsive design so that sites adjust to different screens, ensure quick loading over mobile connections, and provide touch-based navigation. Conducting mobile usability tests would help them uncover any problems users face on mobile devices.

5.3.1.3 Improvement of Website Ease of Use

E-retailers should also concentrate on making their websites easy to use, an important determinant of store visits. This can be achieved by improving the site's navigational structure, establishing a clear page hierarchy, providing an efficient search facility, and simplifying the checkout process. Usability testing would help reveal how best to improve a site's usability.

5.3.1.4 Enhancement of Online Satisfaction

Given that online satisfaction does much to encourage customers to visit, the soundest course for e-retailers is to find ways of raising it. These include ensuring that a site is not only

appealing but also meets customers' expectations in usability and other respects, and gathering customer feedback through surveys, feedback forms, and usability testing.

5.3.1.5 Encouraging Revisit Intentions and Recommendations

Because store visit is positively related to revisit intention and to store recommendation, e-retailers can capitalise on this by making the online experiences they offer memorable and pleasant. They might do so by launching loyalty schemes, sending personalised promotions, following up with customers after a transaction, and encouraging them to post reviews on social media, alongside introducing referral programmes.

5.3.1.6 Regular Monitoring and Evaluation

E-retailers must also put in place ways of monitoring and evaluating how well their website-quality strategies are working. These include tracking performance indicators such as website traffic, conversion rates, bounce rates, customer satisfaction indices, and net promoter scores. Such monitoring will help e-retailers pinpoint where improvements are needed and thereby raise website quality and generate more store visits.

5.3.2 Recommendations for Future Research

One suggested avenue for future research is to widen the geographical scope beyond Harare to other urban centres such as Bulawayo and Mutare, so as to improve generalisability. Future work might also investigate whether variables such as age, gender, and educational attainment moderate the effect of the website-quality constructs on customer behaviour and satisfaction. Researchers could likewise adopt other approaches, such as qualitative methods using in-depth interviews and focus-group discussions, to gain richer insight into consumer behaviour.

5.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the study's results, conclusions, and recommendations regarding how effectively website quality influences store visits at Zimbabwean e-retail outlets. The study found website design to be the most important factor in shaping online satisfaction and mobile compatibility the most influential in shaping website ease of use. Both significantly affect store visits, which in turn shape customers' revisit intentions and their recommendations of the stores. The recommendations offered here flow from these findings.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF COMMERCE

DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING

Dear Respondents

My name is Kudzanai Mafara, and I am a student at Bindura University of Science Education, pursuing a Bachelor of Commerce Honours Degree in Business Studies, majoring in Marketing. I am currently conducting a research study titled: "The Effectiveness of Website Quality on Store Visits for E-Retail Stores in Zimbabwe."

This study is part of the requirements for the completion of my degree. Its aim is to understand how different aspects of website quality influence your satisfaction and subsequent visits to online retail stores in Zimbabwe.

Your participation is crucial to the success of this research. I kindly ask for your support by completing the attached questionnaire truthfully and attentively. Please be assured that all information you provide will be treated with strict confidentiality and will be used exclusively for academic purposes.

Thank you for your cooperation and for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Contact Details

Phone number: 0777314707

Email: mafarakudzanai@gmail.com

INSTRUCTIONS

- Kindly tick in a box corresponding to your answer
- For clarity do not hesitate to ask
- All answers you will provide are neither right nor wrong.

SECTION A: Demographic Information

A1. Gender

1	MALE	
2	FEMALE	
3	PREFER NOT TO SAY	

A2. Age

	Below 19 years	
	20-29 years	
	30-39 years	
	40-49 years	

	50-59 years	

A3. Marital Status

1	Single	
2	Married	
3	Widowed	
4	Separated	

A4. Education Level:

1	Secondary	
2	Diploma	
3	Undergraduate degree	
4	Masters degree	
5	PhD	

A5: Occupation

1	House wife	
2	Paid employment	
3	Business person	
4	Retired civil servant	
5	Student	
6	Other	

A6. How often do you shop online from Zimbabwean e-retail stores?

1	Daily	
2	Weekly	
3	Monthly	
4	Only a few months	
5	Once a year	
6	rarely	

A8. What is your preferred device for online shopping?

1	Smart phone	
2	Tablet	
3	Laptop or Desktop	
4	Equally	

SECTION B: Website Quality Dimensions

This section seeks to understand your perception of the quality of e-retail store websites you have used. Using the Likert scale below, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

Using the Likert scale below, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements by using a scale of 1-7 where 1=Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Somewhat Disagree (SWD), 4=Neutral (N), 5=Somewhat Agree (SWA), 6=Agree (A) and 7=Strongly Agree (SA).

B1. Website Information Quality

		SD	**D**	**SWD**	**N**	**SWA**	**A**	**SA**
IQ1	The website provides accurate product information.							
IQ2	The website provides complete information about products (e.g., specifications, price, availability).							
IQ3	The website content is relevant to my shopping needs.							
IQ4	The product information on the website is updated regularly.							

B2. Mobile Compatibility

		SD	**D**	**SWD**	**N**	**SWA**	**A**	**SA**
MC1	The website loads quickly on my mobile device.							
MC2	The website display adjusts well to my phone screen.							
MC3	The website functions without errors on my smartphone/tablet.							
MC4	Navigating the website is easy on my mobile device.							

B3. Website Design

		SD	D	SWD	N	SWA	A	SA
WD1	The website has an attractive visual appearance.							
WD2	The layout is consistent across all pages.							
WD3	The colors and fonts make the site pleasant to use.							
WD4	The website uses high-quality images and graphics.							

B4. Website Ease of Use

		SD	D	SWD	N	SWA	A	SA
EU1	Learning to use this website is easy for me.							
EU2	I can easily find what I am looking for on this website.							
EU3	I can complete a purchase or task with minimal effort.							
EU4	I can complete a purchase or task with minimal effort.							

SECTION C: Online Satisfaction

This section seeks to understand your level of satisfaction with your experience on e-retail websites.

Using the Likert scale below, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements by using a scale of 1-7 where 1=Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Somewhat Disagree (SWD), 4=Neutral (N), 5=Somewhat Agree (SWA), 6=Agree (A) and 7=Strongly Agree (SA)

		SD	D	SWD	N	SWA	A	SA
OS1	Overall, I am satisfied with my experience on this e-retail website							
OS2	My experience with this website has met my expectations.							
OS3	I am happy with my decision to shop from this website							
OS4	I would continue using this website for future purchases.							

SECTION D: Behavioural Outcomes

This section measures your future behavioural intentions towards the e-retail store.

Using the Likert scale below, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements by using a scale of 1-7 where 1=Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Somewhat Disagree (SWD), 4=Neutral (N), 5=Somewhat Agree (SWA), 6=Agree (A) and 7=Strongly Agree (SA).

D1. Store Visit (actual or intended website visit)

		SD	D	SWD	N	SWA	A	SA
SV1	I frequently visit this e-retail website to browse or shop.							
SV2	I prefer visiting this website over others for similar products.							
SV3	I am likely to visit this website again in the near future.							
SV4	I spend considerable time browsing products on this website.							

D2. Revisit Intention

		SD	D	SWD	N	SWA	A	SA
RI1	I would recommend this e-retail website to friends or family.							
RI2	I will say positive things about this website to others.							
RI3	If someone asks me for advice, I will suggest this website.							
RI4	I am likely to revisit this website even without making a purchase.							

D3. Store Recommendation

		SD	D	SWD	N	SWA	A	SA
SR1	I would recommend this e-retail website to friends or family.							
SR2	I will say positive things about this website to others.							
SR3	If someone asks me for advice, I will suggest this website.							
SR4	I would encourage others to shop from this website.							

Thank you for your participation!