

Online shopping experiences: A quantitative investigation into hedonic value, trust, and risk in the South African retail industry

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this quantitative study is to investigate the experiences of online shoppers as regards hedonic value, trust, and risk associated with their online shopping. Furthermore, the study sought to investigate whether the respondents of different gender, age, education, and income have different online shopping experience (hedonic value, trust, and risk). Data was collected through an online survey in South Africa of consumers who has shopped online from 2019 to 2020. A total of 164 usable questionnaires were included in the final quantitative data analysis. The results of the study show that online shopping provides a promising avenue for consumers to find the latest products and services. However, the overall hedonic experience was inadequate in providing dimensions such as escape, learning experience, adventure-seeking, and fun activities. Considerable effort is essential to win the trust of online shoppers in South Africa. The ability to judge product quality and compare its quality emerged as a concerning risk factor to customers. The experience of hedonic value for male online shoppers was slightly lower than for females. Significant differences were found between the income and hedonic value of online shoppers. Based on these findings, recommendations were offered that will hopefully enhance online shopping.

Keywords: Online shopping, Experience, Hedonic value, Trust, Risk, Quantitative research, South Africa

INTRODUCTION

Electronic commercial (e-commerce) transactions involve transferring money and buying and selling goods or services using the Internet (Branchi 2020). Globally, business-to-consumer e-commerce sales have grown from €1.96 billion to €14.2 trillion since its inception in 1995 (Laudon & Traver 2016). E-commerce has created many advantages for consumers and businesses, including “reduced costs, increased productivity, reduced processing time, extended market reach, and increased customer loyalty” (Rahayu & Day 2016). Due to these benefits, various industries have changed the way they sell products and services to maximise the effectiveness of business operations (Rahayu & Day 2016).

Internet and mobile technology have never been more advanced and readily available as it is currently (Smith 2018). About 2 billion desktop computers and laptops globally have an Internet connection, and over \$300 million worth of smartphone devices were sold in 2010 compared to \$1.5 billion in 2020 (Loisy 2020; O’Dea 2020). There is a continuous expansion of the Internet’s geographical footprint globally and in January 2020, 57% of the world had access to the Internet, which accounts for 4.5 billion people (Roser, Ritchie & Ortiz-Ospina 2020). There are more than 400 million Internet users in Africa. However, many find it difficult to shop online due to challenges in the local

distribution of goods and services (Desvaux 2020). The telecommunications sector in South Africa, combined with transport and storage, contributes substantially (R231.9 billion in 2020) to South Africa's gross domestic product (Kamer 2021).

Consumers in South Africa are changing their shopping habits and increasingly leaning towards faster and more convenient online shopping (Rawlins 2020). The South African e-commerce market recorded revenue of \$4 062 million in 2020 and is expected to grow by 10% annually from 2020-2024 (ecommerceDB 2021).

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

Despite the impressive revenue and projected growth rates of online shopping in South Africa, the sector still faces several challenges. These challenges include, among others, an upsurge in online scams, perceived risks (financial, product/service, or privacy risk), and website trust associated with online shopping sites (Kühn & Petzer 2018; Malapane 2019). These challenges hold several implications for firms trading online and contribute to low conversion rates in online shopping (Malapane 2019; Clement 2020). Existing research has examined the important role of trust and perceived use, as well as the risk associated with e-commerce (Joubert & van Belle 2013; Pentz, du Preez & Swiegers 2020). However, contextual representation of online shopping experience incorporating hedonic value, trust, and risk appears scant in studies focusing on online shopping in South Africa. Many researchers identify customer experience as an essential dimension (Albayrak, Karasakal, Kocabulut & Dursun 2020; Izogo & Jayawardhena 2018; Widagdo & Roz 2021). Furthermore, few empirical studies exist on whether online shoppers of different demographics (gender, age, education, income) have different experience of hedonic value, trust, and risk in the online shopping experience in South Africa. Consumer demographics related to online shopping experiences assist in understanding the behaviour of online shoppers. This neglect presents research opportunities for examining the online shopping experience in a single study. Thus, two primary objectives motivated this study. The first objective was to investigate online shoppers' experiences based on the hedonic value, trust, and risk associated with their online shopping. Secondly, the study sought to investigate whether the respondents of different gender, age, education, and income have different online shopping experience (hedonic value, trust, and risk). It is anticipated that the findings and recommendations will contribute to the growth of the online industry by providing valuable information to businesses trading online and customers' experience with online shopping, specifically as regards hedonic value, trust, and risk. This information will assist online retailers with their strategic decision-making and enhance their online shoppers' experience while remaining competitive.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The retail industry is an important pillar of the South African economy. In 2017, the industry generated R1 trillion in sales, suggesting that "approximately R31 900 was spent per second by consumers across the industry during 2017" (Statistics South Africa 2018). Compared to other years, retail spending increased by 2.9% in 2017 compared to 2016. This is higher than the 1.7% annual growth increase in 2016 but lower than the 3.3% in 2015 (Statistics South Africa 2018). Farfan (2019) indicates that retail groceries and supermarkets are the sectors with the highest growth potential. Contemporary shopping experience within the retail industry takes place either in brick-and-mortar stores or online (Kushwah & Sing 2019:2). In brick-and-mortar stores, for example, the physical presence of products and sales assistants, and other customers are important for assisting customers in inspecting products and their quality, as well as to check availability and develop personal relationships with salespeople (Schramm-Klein, Swoboda & Morschett 2007:22). Online shopping offers customers an opportunity to buy products or services on the Internet. The benefits of online shopping include convenience, accessibility, and distribution function (Kushwah & Sing 2019:2). This study focuses on online shopping experience.

There is a growing acknowledgement that customer experience is a key driver of satisfaction, loyalty, word of mouth, and competitive advantage (Pei, Guo, Wu, Zhou & Yeh 2020; Roozen & Katidis 2019). A customer's experience is an outcome of a process where they either participate in, or are involved in, a company's delivery of goods or services (Hu & Jasper 2018:153). Shopping experience involves a customer's psychological state, including cognitive and affective experiential components (Singh 2019:4). Thus, online shopping experience covers the mental

and subjective perceptions of interaction with a company's value proposition online (Klaus 2013; Rose, Hair & Clark 2011). Among others, the current study analyses hedonic value (Albayrak, et al. 2020; Hirschman & Holbrook 1982), trust (Hajiha, Shahriari & Vakilian 2014; Nagy & Hajdú 2021) and risk (Bashir, Khwaja, Mahmood, Turi & Latif 2021) as variables that can influence the online shopping experience. Therefore, online shopping experience is a secondary dependent factor measured by three independent factors (hedonic value, trust, and risks). A discussion of these factors is provided below.

Hedonic shopping experience

Hedonic experience is associated with multisensory, fantasy, escape, pleasure, enjoyment, emotive, and entertaining aspects of a shopping experience with a product or service (Albayrak, et al. 2020; Hirschman & Holbrook 1982:92; Picot-Coupey, Krey, Huré, & Ackermann, 2021). A person's hedonic experience is also driven by psychological needs such as emotion, satisfaction, prestige, and other subjective feelings (Widagdo & Roz 2021). Aesthetics and perceived enjoyment facilitate hedonic value (Akel & Armağan 2021). Online shopping aesthetics include shapes, colours, fonts, animation, movements of products and services, while perceived enjoyment results from any gratifying performance, which includes fun or how enjoyable it is to use the technology (Akel & Armağan 2021:7108). Arousal, telepresence, time distortion, and website quality have also been identified as factors influencing hedonic shopping experience (Albayrak, et al. 2020; Lim 2014; Widagdo & Roz 2021). Ali, Li, Hussain and Bakhtawar (2020) also concluded that adventure-seeking, and idea shopping satisfy hedonic value desires and positively affect 'obsessive-compulsive' buying on the Internet. Hedonic value is key to shopping experience as it facilitates customer loyalty (Albayrak, et al. 2020; Picot-Coupey, et al. 2021).

Trust in online shopping

Trust is of vital importance in the online shopping context as it helps to minimise risk and increase customer loyalty (Bagla & Sancheti 2018; Nagy & Hajdú 2021). Trust influences online shopping attitude and intentions (Alharthey 2020). Trust refers to the customer's self-assurance in online shopping, the expectations regarding the ability of the user to use the store, and the benevolence and integrity of the online store/retailer towards the customer (Yu, Balaji & Khong 2015). Website reputation, website quality, and E-word-of mouth communications are crucial elements of trust in online shopping (Alharthey 2020). The ability or competence of the service provider in providing reliable and desirable performance will enhance trust in online shopping (Zhao, Koenig-Lewis, Hanmer-Lloyd & Ward 2010). In the online shopping context, integrity has to do with the online retailer's ability to provide timely and accurate information, maintain commitment, act ethically and create an environment that facilitates confidentiality (Yu, Balaji & Khong 2015). The higher the consumer's trust in the online shop, the higher the probability that a purchase will be made (Nagy & Hajdú 2021).

Risk associated with online shopping

Perceived risk refers to consumers' anxieties in relation to making a purchase (Bashir, et al. 2021). These anxieties are high, especially when purchasing online (Bashir et al. 2021). Managing perceived risks in online shopping improves consumer purchases and minimise anxieties (Tham, Dastane, Johari & Ismail 2019). Product risk, convenience, and return policy have an impact on online shopping behaviour (Tham et al. 2019). Financial risk, performance risk, and psychological risk are also antecedents of perceived risk (Cha & You 2018). Financial risk can be defined as a risk that consumers perceive because of the possibility of higher monetary expenditure or loss of money because of fear that the product may not be delivered (Cha & You 2018). The performance risk is the possibility of failure to deliver or the ordered product failing to perform to the consumer's expectations (Cha & You 2018; Hong 2015). When a consumer uses online shopping, the capability to examine product quality may be limited. The inability to touch and try the product generally results in increased performance risk (Cha et al 2018). Psychological risk is the frustration or mental anxiety caused by the apprehension that the use or possession of a product will not match the shoppers' personality or style (Fang, Wen, George & Prybutok 2016; Cha et al 2018).

Demographic profile of respondents

Knowledge of consumer demographic profiles assists with market segmentation and allocating resources to the target market's specific needs (Lin, Featherman, Brooks & Hajli 2019; Kim, Galliers, Shin, Ryoo & Kim 2012). Online shopping experience is typically influenced by gender, age, education, and income of consumers (Hou 2020; Kim et al. 2012). The effect of hedonic value has been found to be stronger in female consumers than in male consumers (Yang & Lee 2010). Lin, et al. (2019) concludes that gender moderates the influence of perceived risk on attitude towards online products and consumer purchase decision. Statistically significant differences have also been established between hedonic value and the income of online consumers (Kim, et al. 2012). Previous research indicates that age of consumers significantly affects online shopping while gender, income and education have no significant influence on consumer behaviour towards online shopping (Makhitha, van Scheers & Mogashoa 2019). This study also explains whether respondents of different gender, age, education, and income have different experiences of hedonic value, trust, and risk in online shopping. These findings assist in understanding the behaviour of online shoppers and contribute to the literature on online shopping experiences.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a quantitative methodology. This allowed the researchers to collect numerical data and use statistical techniques for data analysis (Dudovskiy 2019). The target population included South African consumers who have shopped online over the last 24 months and who are over the age of 19 years. Consumers from this age had the highest online purchasing penetration in 2020 (Coppola 2020). A structured questionnaire was used to gather the necessary information for the study. The questionnaire had three sections. The first section contained the cover letter highlighting the purpose of the study and sought consent from the respondents to participate in the study. The covering letter of the questionnaire further encouraged potential respondents to share the survey link with other potential respondents (Etikan 2016). The second section contained the screening questions to ensure that only qualifying respondents participate in the study. The second section of the questionnaire also determined the profile of the respondents. The third section of the questionnaire contained the statements measuring the constructs in the study. All the statements measuring the hedonic value, trust and risk were adapted from previous studies (Alba & Williams 2013; Herabadi, Verplanken & van Knippenberg 2009; Hirschman & Holbrook 1982; Dai, Forsythe & Kwon 2014; Yu, Balaji & Khong 2015; Suh & Han 2003; Cha & You 2018). A 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1) was used to measure the constructs in the study. To ensure face and content validity, two subject experts in the field of marketing management at a public university were approached to scrutinise the measuring items. Their input helped to restructure three items relating to the hedonic value. Two items related to trust, and three items to risk. Thereafter, the questionnaire was pilot tested with 20 potential respondents who have shopped online within the past 24 months. The pilot study resulted in refining two items relating to trust and eliminating one item relating to risk. The data collection process took place on QuestionPro - a web-based survey platform between August and October 2020 after ethical clearance was granted. The link to the online survey was shared through the researchers' mail list and relied on respondents who were available and willing to participate in the study (Wiid & Diggins 2013).

This study followed the sampling technique by Comrey and Lee (2013) which recommended that a sample size of 300 would be adequate and good for statistical analysis. However, a total of 164 usable questionnaires were received for the data analysis. This represents a response rate of 54.7%. The Statistica computer software version 13.5 was used for the data analysis. The analysis included the profile of the respondents, descriptive statistics and reliability of measuring items (means score, standard deviation, Cronbach's alpha), correlation analysis, independent t-test, and ANOVA.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

It emerged from Table 1 that more females (53.7%) participated in the study compared to males (45.7%). A large proportion of the respondents were between 30-39 years (48.2%). More than two-thirds of the respondents have a degree or postgraduate qualification, and over 50% of the respondents earn more than R 19 999 per month.

TABLE 1
PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

	Frequency	Percentage	
Gender	Male	75	45.7
	Female	88	53.7
	Total	163	99.4
	Missing System	1	0.6
Age	20-29 years	30	18.3
	30-39 years	79	48.2
	40-49 years	33	20.1
	50-59 years	18	11
	60+ years	4	2.4
Education	Grade 12 or below	28	17.1
	College certificate	24	14.6
	University diploma or degree	56	34.1
	Postgraduate qualification	56	34.1
Monthly income	Below R5 000	10	6.1
	R5 000 - R9 999	17	10.4
	R10 000 - R19 999	51	31.1
	Above R19 999	86	52.4

The mean scores, standard deviation, and Cronbach's alphas of the items on the 5-point Likert scale are displayed in Table 2. In terms of the hedonic value, the lowest mean score (M=2.63) was found for the statement that "shopping online provided me with an escape from things that I need to do". The statement that "online shopping platforms provide a good place to find the latest products and services" attracted the highest mean score (M=4.17) for hedonic value. Regarding trust, the highest mean score (M=4.06) was found for the item stating that "When I trust the online store, it affects my intention to shop". Two statements namely: "I find it risky to shop online in South Africa" (M=2.82) and "I am concerned that I may not receive the item purchased" (M=2.98) attracted the lowest mean scores for the risk factor. The standard deviation values were below 2.0, suggesting that there are no issues of outliers (Yang, Rahardja & Franti 2019:2). The Cronbach's alpha (CA) values are acceptable for all three factors. The CA values ranged from 0.696 to 0.747, indicating adequate reliability (Ursachi, Horodnic & Zait 2015).

The validity of the data was established by assessing the correlation coefficients between the variables (Hair, Wolfenbarger, Ortinau & Bush 2010). Pearson Product Moment of correlation analysis was conducted

TABLE 2
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND RELIABILITY OF MEASURING ITEMS

		Mean	Std. Dev.	Cronbach's Alpha
HEDONIC VALUE				0.706
HV1	I experience a sense of adventure when shopping for products using an online website	3.62	0.853	
HV2	Online shopping platforms provide a good place to find the latest products and services	4.17	0.697	
HV3	I get so absorbed in online shopping that I lose track of time	3.05	1.118	
HV4	Online shopping provides a learning experience about a brand, product, or services	3.76	0.798	
HV5	I visit online shopping websites just for the fun of it not actually to purchase any products	3.19	1.1	
HV6	I shop online because I want to and not because I have to	3.95	0.912	
HV7	Shopping online provides me with an escape from things that I need to do	2.63	1.178	
HV8	When I am bored I browse online shopping websites	3.07	1.231	
HV9	I usually find what I need using online stores	3.76	0.798	
TRUST				0.747
T1	When I trust the online store, it affects my intention to shop	4.06	0.827	
T2	I trust e-commerce websites in South Africa	3.37	0.753	
T3	The web retailer is one that keeps promises and shows commitment	3.59	0.708	
T4	I trust this online retailer because it keeps my best interest in mind	3.43	0.718	
T5	The online retailer is trustworthy	3.49	0.66	
T6	The online retailer acts ethically and creates an environment for maintaining confidentiality	3.56	0.728	
T7	The online retailer provides timely and accurate information about products and services	3.73	0.721	
RISK				0.696
R1	I find it risky to shop online in South Africa	2.82	0.967	
R2	I am concerned that I may not receive the item purchased	2.98	1.003	
R3	It is difficult for me to judge products' quality adequately (e.g. colour, fabric texture, fit, etc.)	3.78	0.914	
R4	It is difficult for me to compare the quality of similar products online	3.57	1.063	

to determine the relationships among the variables. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) and the strength of correlation was interpreted as: $|r| < 0.3$ = Small relationship; $0.3 < |r| < 0.5$ = Medium relationship and $|r| > 0.5$ = Large relationship (Soderstrom 2008). The results indicate a moderately significant positive relationship between hedonic value and trust ($r=0.391$) and between trust and risk ($r=0.313$). A small correlation was found between hedonic value and risk ($r=0.1$) however, it was statistically insignificant. The results suggest that there is a relationship between the variables identified to measure online shopping experience.

**TABLE 3
CORRELATIONS**

	HV	Trust	Risk
Hedonic value	1	.391**	0.1
Trust		1	.313**
Risk			1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Independent sample test

An independent sample test was performed to compare the means of two distinct groups to establish whether there is statistical evidence that the associated population means are significantly different (Ross & Willson 2017:9). Levene's test is performed as an assumption test for the independent sample t-test. Therefore in the current study, Levene's test was used for only the gender as it was the only demographic profile with two categories. The remaining demographic profile variables have three or more categories and therefore made use of the ANOVA test which has its assumption tests. As Levene's test for equality of variances (see Table 4) was insignificant ($F = 0.003$, $Sig = 0.959$), the independent sample t-test assumption of equal variances is satisfied. The independent sample t-test was performed to determine whether the mean score differed between male and female respondents. It was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean Hedonic value score according to gender ($t = -2.962$, $df = 161$, $sig = 0.004$).

**TABLE 4
GENDER: LEVENE'S TEST FOR EQUALITY OF VARIANCE**

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Hedonic value	Equal variances assumed	0.003	0.959	-2.962	161	0.004*
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.962	156.9	0.004
Trust	Equal variances assumed	1.534	0.217	-0.62	161	0.536
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.614	148.62	0.54
Risk	Equal variances assumed	1.523	0.219	0.196	161	0.845
	Equal variances not assumed			0.194	147.46	0.847

* $p < 0.05$

Upon review of the group statistics (see Table 5), female respondents scored significantly higher ($M = 3.572$, $SD = 0.51885$) than the male respondents ($M = 3.3304$, $SD = 0.51922$) for Hedonic value. Cohen's d (0.465) between males and females indicates that there is a small practical significance.

**TABLE 5
GENDER: GROUP STATISTICS**

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Cohen's d
Hedonic value	Male	75	3.3304	0.51922	0.06	
	Female	88	3.572	0.51885	0.0553	0.465636

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test

ANOVA was performed to investigate whether there are statistical differences between age, education, and income and the identified factors. No significant differences were found for age and education and the factors in the study (see Table 6A and 6B). The ANOVA test revealed a significant difference between the respondents' hedonic value and income ($F=2.80$, $df=163$, $p=0.042$) (see Table 6C).

**TABLE 6A
ANOVA FOR AGE**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Hedonic value	Between Groups	2.121	4	0.53	1.882	0.116
	Within Groups	44.804	159	0.282		
	Total	46.925	163			
Trust	Between Groups	0.146	4	0.036	0.167	0.955
	Within Groups	34.562	159	0.217		
	Total	34.707	163			
Risk	Between Groups	4.355	4	1.089	2.195	0.072
	Within Groups	78.88	159	0.496		
	Total	83.236	163			

* $p<0.05$

**TABLE 6B
ANOVA FOR EDUCATION**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Hedonic value	Between Groups	0.12	3	0.04	0.137	0.938
	Within Groups	46.805	160	0.293		
	Total	46.925	163			
Trust	Between Groups	0.382	3	0.127	0.594	0.62
	Within Groups	34.325	160	0.215		
	Total	34.707	163			
Risk	Between Groups	2.558	3	0.853	1.691	0.171
	Within Groups	80.677	160	0.504		
	Total	83.236	163			

* $p<0.05$

**TABLE 6C
ANOVA FOR INCOME**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Hedonic value	Between Groups	2.341	3	0.78	2.801	0.042*
	Within Groups	44.584	160	0.279		
	Total	46.925	163			
Trust	Between Groups	0.669	3	0.223	1.049	0.373
	Within Groups	34.038	160	0.213		
	Total	34.707	163			
Risk	Between Groups	1.745	3	0.582	1.142	0.334
	Within Groups	81.491	160	0.509		
	Total	83.236	163			

* $p<0.05$

A multiple comparison using Tukey HSD test was performed based on the ANOVA results for income of the respondents to assess where significant differences occurred. It emerged that there is a significant difference between the mean difference of a paired comparison for respondents whose monthly income is R5000-R9999 and those earning above R19 999 ($p=0.024$) (see Table 7). The mean score for those earning R5000-R9999 ($M=3.79$) was higher than those earning above R19 999 ($M=3.39$) (see Table 8).

**TABLE 7
TUKEY HSD TEST FOR INCOME**

Dependent variable	(I) Monthly income	(J) Monthly income	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Hedonic value	Below R5000	R5000 - R9 999	-0.26405	0.21037	0.593	-0.8102	0.2821
		R10 000 - R19 999	0.0671	0.18256	0.983	-0.4069	0.5411
		Above R19 999	0.13798	0.17637	0.862	-0.3199	0.5959
	R5 000 - R9 999	Below R5 000	0.26405	0.21037	0.593	-0.2821	0.8102
		R10 000 - R19 999	0.33115	0.14783	0.117	-0.0527	0.715
		Above R19 999	.40204*	0.14011	0.024	0.0383	0.7658
	R10 000 - R19 999	Below R5 000	-0.0671	0.18256	0.983	-0.5411	0.4069
		R5 000 - R9 999	-0.33115	0.14783	0.117	-0.715	0.0527
		Above R19 999	0.07088	0.09329	0.872	-0.1713	0.3131
	Above R19 999	Below R5 000	-0.13798	0.17637	0.862	-0.5959	0.3199
		R5 000 - R9 999	-.40204*	0.14011	0.024	-0.7658	-0.0383
		R10 000 - R19 999	-0.07088	0.09329	0.872	-0.3131	0.1713

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

**TABLE 8
DESCRIPTIVE FOR INCOME**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean			
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Mini	Maxi
Hedonic value	Below R5 000	10	3.5333	0.58514	0.18504	3.1148	3.9519	2.89	4.67
	R5 000 - R9 999	17	3.7974	0.56824	0.13782	3.5052	4.0895	3	5
	R10 000 - R19 999	51	3.4662	0.55778	0.07811	3.3094	3.6231	2	4.78
	Above R19 999	86	3.3953	0.49444	0.05332	3.2893	3.5014	2.33	4.67
	Total	164	3.4675	0.53655	0.0419	3.3847	3.5502	2	5

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of online shoppers based on hedonic value, trust, and risk associated with their online shopping. Furthermore, the study sought to investigate whether the respondents of different gender, age, education, and income have different online shopping experience (hedonic value, trust, and risk). The results of this study showed that except for item HV2, the items measuring hedonic value were below the mean score of 4.0. This suggests that respondents seemed not to agree with the statements regarding their experiences of hedonic value in online shopping in general. The lowest mean score ($M=2.63$) was recorded for item HV7, which implies that the online shopping experience offered little value or opportunities for consumers to escape from daily routine activities. Moreover, the results show that female online shoppers have experienced favourable hedonic value ($M=3.57$) than males ($M=3.33$). The findings in this study confirmed the view of Yang and Lee (2010)

that female online consumers have a stronger desire for hedonic value than male consumers. It is important to focus on strategies that will enhance the hedonic value offered specifically to female consumers shopping online. The results of the study also revealed that there is a significant difference between hedonic value and income of online shoppers. The finding is consistent with a previous study by Kim et al. (2012), which suggested a significant difference between hedonic value and income of Internet shoppers. This indicates that income is necessary to shop online. A significant difference was found for customers earning R5000-R9999 and those earning above R19 999 per month. The mean score for those earning R5000-R9999 ($M=3.79$) was higher than those earning above R19 999 ($M=3.39$). Attention and resources should enhance the hedonic value offered to online shoppers earning above R19 999.

Trust in online shopping is still an issue in South Africa. The results relating to trust show that except for item T1 ($M=4.06$), the mean scores for the remaining items measuring trust were below 4.0 but above 3.0. This seems to point to the view that most online shoppers did not agree with the statements relating to trust. They seem to be neutral in their responses. Customers' confidence in the service provider to provide a consistent service, act ethically, and offer desirable performance in fulfilling their needs as intended are generally still concerns that online retailers in South Africa need to overcome. The findings in the current study substantiate previous studies by Yu, et al. (2015) and Zhao, et al. (2010) which indicate that service provider integrity and competence increases trust in online shopping. Literature sources indicate that risk associated with online shopping is still an issue to be addressed by online stores (Bashir et al. 2021; Cha & You 2018; Tham et al. 2019). Contrary to these, this study indicated that South African shoppers do not find it risky to shop online and were not concerned with the delivery of products they have purchased. However, they seem to be apprehensive about their inability to adequately judge and compare product quality (e.g. colour, fabric texture, fit) before purchase. The findings thus link up with the previous study by Cha and You (2018) which found that when consumers are unable to touch and try the online product before making a purchase decision, it results in increased performance risk.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Online shopping has grown in many parts of the world. In the contemporary business environment, customers are searching for a pleasurable experience in online shopping. This study has established that online shopping provides a good place for consumers to find the latest products and services. However, the overall hedonic experience such as escape, learning experience, adventure-seeking, and fun activities was very low. Enhanced hedonic experience may increase online shopping in South Africa. Therefore, it is recommended that activities such as learning experience (detailed online information about a brand, product, or services) should be provided to assist customers in making the right purchase decision. The online shopping website should include fun (product contests or pop-up games that will help consumers navigate through several promotional products, for example). This might assist customers to escape from their routine activities. Since the experience of hedonic value for male shoppers was slightly lower than for females, it is recommended that more hedonic value initiatives should target female shoppers. For example, online contests and promotion for females are encouraged. In terms of income, a conscious effort should be made to devote resources towards enhancing the hedonic value for online shoppers who are earning above R19 999.

Trust plays a pivotal role in online shopping. Customers desire that the online retailer fulfil promises efficiently and provide excellent service to ensure maximum return on their investment. Several of the responses relating to trust had a mean score of below 4.0. Therefore, it is concluded that the respondents did not agree with the statements. A lot of effort is required to win the trust of online shoppers in South Africa. The findings can be used as part of the planning and strategy approach for online store design and functionality as well as marketing communications. Therefore, it is recommended that a definite time period be indicated on the website for when purchased goods will be delivered and it should be adhered to. Accurate detailed information should be provided on the website to assist the customer with their purchase choice. Online retailers should prioritise the interest of customers in all business dealings. It is also vital for online retailers to act ethically in an environment that will uphold the respondents' personal information. Regarding risks, the ability to judge product quality and compare the quality of the products emerged as a concern for customers. From a managerial point of view, online retailers are encouraged to consistently offer quality products and services to customers. Online retailers should also offer customers guarantees, no risk, and a no-cost return policy.

This will help build confidence and minimise the risk associated with online shopping. Finally, to be competitive in the online shopping context, online stores should constantly seek feedback from customers, listen to concerns raised, and respond to changes in expectations.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

As in many other studies, this study is not without limitations. Firstly, as explained by the literature, this study focused on only three factors (hedonic value, trust, and risk) to investigate the experience of online shoppers in South Africa. Future research should look beyond these factors to understand the experiences of online shoppers in South Africa. The study can also be repeated in different countries to generalise the findings. The study did not determine the relationship between the independent variables (hedonic value, trust, risk) and the dependent variable (online shopping experience). Future research should strive to establish these relationships. The study has made significant academic and industry contributions, but the small sample size will not permit the findings to be generalised to the entire South African population. Future research should attempt to use a large sample size in an effort to generalise the findings. Finally, this study adopted the quantitative research methodology. Future research should attempt to utilise the qualitative or mixed-method. This would give respondents an opportunity to interact and share their opinions regarding their online shopping experiences.

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