

# FOREWORD

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### **NAVIGATING THE DIGITAL WAVE IN MODERN RETAIL: INSIGHTS AND IMPLICATIONS**

Welcome to this new issue of the Retail and Marketing Review, a thoughtful exploration into the diverse and ever-changing spheres of consumer behaviour, digital integration, and retail strategies across a range of industries and regions. With a special focus on the African, Bangladeshi and German markets, this issue presents empirical studies and literature reviews to offer a comprehensive understanding of these subjects.

The inaugural article pinpoints the crucial factors influencing purchasing behaviour within Johannesburg's sports apparel market. This exhaustive research presents an invaluable guide, enabling businesses to competently navigate and compete in this strenuous environment. Moreover, practical recommendations emerge from the study. The focus in the next article then shifts to the importance of user-generated content in shaping consumer-based brand equity, with the spotlight on Cape Metropole's major retailers. It was found that user-generated content does indeed exert an influence on consumer-based brand equity. This offers an intriguing glimpse into the interplay between modern consumers and brand identities in our increasingly interconnected world. Carrying on the theme of branding in the digital realm, the influence of online sensory branding experiences on brand loyalty is explored. This groundbreaking research provides an understanding of the diverse online interactions that foster brand loyalty. Remaining in the digital realm another article empirically explores the influence of factors such as security, audio-visual quality, time-saving orientation, relative advantage, and trust on the intention to purchase from fast food websites in South Africa. Its findings show a positive correlation between the selected independent variables and purchasing intentions, underscoring potential implications for both academia and industry. The banking industry is drawn into the dialogue on the implications of the digital world in a study that investigates consumer adoption factors of chatbots within South Africa's banking industry. This topical exploration is set against the backdrop of the swift digital metamorphosis engulfing the financial sector.

Moving out of South Africa, the Bangladeshi online retail environment is discussed in an empirical study which assesses the factors that affect customers' online purchasing intentions. The insights from this burgeoning digital market could have implications for similar markets across the globe. A further article comprises a thoroughly composed review and meta-analysis on the critical retail service factors gleaned from literature. This amalgamation acts as a dense resource for industry stakeholders and academics, spotlighting the foundations of successful retail services.

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Wrapping up this issue, a comparative study offers detailed insights into German customers perceived risks of purchasing Over The Counter (OTC) drugs from pharmacies at different degrees of digitalization compared to brick-and-mortar pharmacies. This analysis unveils the complex relationship between healthcare and digitalization, offering a fresh viewpoint on consumer risk perceptions and shows that customers prefer non-digitalized pharmacies for shopping and rate their risk as the lowest.

In sum, this issue presents a panoramic view of consumer behaviour and digital transformation across diverse industries and global landscapes. We trust that these scholarly contributions will spark inspiration and catalyse further dialogue on these significant topics.

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