



RESEARCH ARTICLE

DOES M-SERVICESCPE INFLUENCE REPURCHASE INTENTIONS IN MOBILE BRANDED OTAs

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the influence of m-servicescapes on customers' repurchase intentions within the mobile commerce environment. Recognising the gap in research on how mobile design and environmental factors affect customer retention and repurchase behaviours, this research transfers and adapts the traditional servicescape concept to m-commerce. The study utilises a quantitative descriptive research design, collecting data through online questionnaires from 639 participants who made accommodation bookings via mobile OTA platform devices. By examining the recontextualized dimensions of m-servicescape, specifically aesthetic appeal, layout and functionality, content, privacy and security, and ubiquity, the research investigates their impact on repurchase intentions. Results indicate that layout and functionality, privacy and security, and ubiquity significantly influence repurchase intentions, highlighting the importance of these elements in the design of mobile commerce platforms to foster customer retention and enhance competitive advantages. This study not only contributes to the theoretical development of m-servicescape literature but also offers practical insights for mobile businesses in designing environments that enhance customer repurchase intentions.

KEYWORDS

m-servicescape, repurchase intention, m-commerce, OTA

1. INTRODUCTION

Advancements in mobile technology and apps have significantly enhanced m-commerce shopping experiences (Albayrak et al., 2023; Tran and Chang, 2024). This, along with the consequences of Covid-19, that encouraged contactless commerce, resulted in increased use of mobile devices for shopping purchases fueling customer migration from e-commerce to m-commerce platforms (García-Milon et al., 2021; PwC, 2020; Tran and Chang, 2024). However, the rising popularity of mobile apps, sites and platforms overall are not an accurate indication of the success of m-commerce (mobile commerce) sites, as evidenced by customers often take the time to browse through mobile websites and apps but generally exit these platforms without making any purchases (Albayrak et al., 2023; Kumar et al., 2021; Zhani et al., 2022). To further complicate matters, many mobile customers tend to abandon or delete apps shortly after downloading them (Lim et al., 2021; Zhani et al., 2022). Researchers add that even in cases where apps are not deleted, the sheer range of alternatives coupled with the relative ease of switching between service providers through mobile technology has significantly hindered attempts by businesses develop and retain a consistent customer base and continued app usage (Li and Fang, 2019; Omar et al., 2021).


While the critical importance of ensuring customer retention as means to remain competitive is acknowledged by various scholars and practitioners, a notable lack of research pertaining to the impact of mobile environmental factors on repurchase intentions or continued platform usage persists (Albayrak et al., 2023; Fernandes and Barfknecht, 2020; Tran and Chang, 2024). In fact, the majority of extant m-commerce studies tend to focus predominantly on the adoption of mobile

technologies rather than exploring how unique shopping characteristics via mobile channels affect consumer behaviour and repurchase intentions (Fernandes and Barfknecht, 2020; Lim et al., 2021).

Considering the increasing engagement of customers in m-commerce and the gaps highlighted above there is an evident need to enhance our understanding of how mobile design and environmental factors that influence m-commerce customers' revisit and repurchase behaviours (Lim et al., 2021; Tseng et al., 2022). Thus, this study will endeavor to address these gaps by exploring the impact of the unique mobile environmental factors, specifically m-servicescape dimensions, on repurchase intentions.

Extant literature was examined to identify suitable dimensions for the current study's proposed m-servicescape model. Traditionally servicescape research proposed ambient conditions, layout and functionality, and signs, symbols, and artifacts as dimensions of physical servicescapes (Baker, 1986; Bitner, 1992). Harris and Goode (2010) extended the servicescape concept to the e-commerce context and suggested that the e-servicescape dimensions should represent the online environment, adopting aesthetic appeal (ambient conditions) and layout and functionality from traditional servicescape models. In addition, they proposed financial security as a more suitable third dimension than signs, symbols, and artifacts, which relate to tangible factors of the physical service setting (Harris and Goode, 2010)). The e-servicescape model of Harris and Goode is well recognized and applied in literature (Amer, 2021; Darmawan, 2019; Eklund and Söreng, 2021; Zhani et al., 2024).

Following the notion of extant literature, this study argues to transfer some existing e-servicescape dimensions and include aesthetic appeal

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since this is also a relevant mobile environmental factor that warrant inclusion in an m-servicescape scale (Xhani et al. 2022). However, this study suggests adapting the layout and functionality dimension founded on the suggestion that the unique nature of a particular context should be considered (Ballantyne and Nilsson, 2018; Sohn and Groß, 2020). Based on a review of m-commerce literature, this study removes relevance of information, one of the sub-dimensions of layout and functionality included in e-servicescape research, given that this is such a critical factor within m-commerce (Chen and Chang, 2018; Chi, 2018; Patel et al., 2020). Subsequently this study propose content as a distinct m-servicescape dimension. This study further proposes the inclusion of privacy and security as an m-servicescape dimension. This aligns with m-commerce literature that often reports that besides financial security, that privacy and reputation, are other important factors influencing m-commerce customers' perceptions regarding safe and secure mobile transactions (Kaushik et al., 2020; Rodríguez-Torrico et al., 2019). Subsequently, another additional dimension namely, ubiquity, was identified by other studies investigating mobile shopping platform characteristics (Hsieh et al., 2021; Rodríguez-Torrico et al., 2019).

The results of this study could potentially provide practical value to m-commerce service platforms in terms of understanding how to design mobile sites and apps can retain customers and enable them to withstand competitors within m-commerce markets. This study will also be valuable to academia as it makes a contribution to the limited m-servicescape theory. The study proposes to add privacy and security, content and ubiquity as additional dimensions in the m-servicescape model since they provide insight into the distinctive nature of mobile commerce. Although these dimensions have not been tested in m-servicescape contexts to date, they have been suggested as important mobile environmental factors due to their influence on mobile customers' behaviors (Chen and Chang, 2018; Hsieh et al., 2021; Rodríguez-Torrico et al., 2019; Stocchi et al., 2019). The following section will discuss the five proposed m-servicescape dimensions.

2. LITERATURE OVERVIEW

2.1 Aesthetic Appeal

Servicescape theorists at first included ambient conditions as a dimension of the servicescape, confirming that environmental aspects such as temperature, air quality, sound, music, and odour influence service customers (Baker, 1986; Bitner, 1992). This concept was later adapted to the e-commerce context by Harris and Goode who described ambient conditions as the aesthetic appeal or visual attractiveness of a website (Harris and Goode, 2010). Aesthetic appeal plays an important role in this context as it not only attracts customers, but also entertains them and encourages continued browsing (Eklund and Söreg, 2021; Hsieh et al., 2021). Moreover, customers' cognitive and affective evaluations of website aesthetics influence their subsequent trust and purchase intentions (Amer, 2021; Harris and Goode, 2010).

Scholars noted that visual stimuli on e-commerce and m-commerce platforms differ with the smaller screens of mobile devices being one significant difference (Chopdar and Balakrishnan, 2020; Hsieh et al., 2021; Kumar et al., 2018; Zhani et al., 2022). Additionally, it is proposed that the visual appeal of mobile platforms is enhanced through the use of mobile technology and high-resolution images (Kumar et al., 2018; Patel et al., 2020). Visually appealing mobile stimuli not only attract users but also provide pleasure and enjoyment to m-commerce customers (Chopdar and Balakrishnan, 2020; Hsieh et al., 2021; Kumar et al., 2021). Thus, the aesthetic appeal of mobile platforms can reduce bounce rates, increase impulsive shopping, facilitate satisfaction that results in the future use of mobile websites and encourage revisit intentions among m-commerce customers (Chi, 2018; Kumar et al., 2018; Lee, 2018; Liu et al., 2019).

Therefore, this study proposes the following alternative hypothesis:

H1: Aesthetic appeal will have a significant effect on repurchase intention

2.2 Layout and Functionality

The layout and functionality dimension were introduced as an important environmental factor of physical service settings (Bitner, 1992). This dimension was adopted as an e-servicescape dimension which represents the structure and organisation of websites within an e-servicescape context (Amer, 2021; Harris and Goode, 2010). Eklund and Söreg emphasise that proper layout and functionality play a pivotal role in the e-servicescape, as this facilitates the navigation of online platforms and ensure a pleasant online shopping experience (Eklund and Söreg, 2021; Tran and Stratton, 2020).

Multiple scholars argue that layout and functionality are also a crucial factor of mobile apps. In the m-commerce service setting context, layout refers to the arrangement, structure, and adaptability of the mobile platform, while functionality indicates how effectively the platform's layout and features enable users to achieve their goals (Rodríguez-Torrico et al., 2019; Sunarsono et al., 2018; Zhani et al., 2022). Building on this, most of the researchers note that the organisation and layout of menus, icons, and buttons on mobile platforms influence both navigational ease and convenience of use, facilitate simple, convenient transactions and enhanced app-interface quality (Omar et al., 2021; Rayburn et al., 2022). Ensuring that these and other benefits are available to customers, proper layout and functionality is essential m-commerce platform factors, as they significantly enhance customer satisfaction and, in turn, foster inclinations to purchase and repurchase platform's offerings (Patel et al., 2020). Empirical evidence supports this, confirming that aspects such as a positive navigation experience can significantly boost customer satisfaction and trust, consequently, mobile repurchase intentions (Liu et al., 2019; Rodríguez-Torrico et al., 2019; Zhani et al., 2022).

Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: Layout and functionality will have a significant effect on repurchase intention

2.3 Privacy and Security

As with content, privacy and security were not initially included as a dimension of traditional servicescape models. However, the anonymous and remote nature of online transactions raised previously unconsidered concerns regarding perceived risks among e-commerce and later m-commerce customers. This prompted the inclusion of financial security as a necessary dimension of e-servicescape models (Amer, 2021; Eklund and Söreg, 2021; Harris and Goode, 2010). Financial security, which customers associate with the safety of a payment processes and policies, impacts trust and purchase decisions significantly in both e-commerce and m-commerce contexts (Nazlan et al., 2021; Tran and Stratton, 2019; Wu et al., 2017).

In addition to financial security, m-commerce customers also value privacy protection, particularly due to concerns about unauthorized access and misuse of personal data stored on their smartphones (Rodríguez-Torrico et al., 2019; Zhani et al., 2022). These concerns can lead customers to adopt a more cautious approach when interacting with an m-commerce site, ultimately inhibiting transactions (Rodríguez-Torrico et al., 2019; Sohn and Groß, 2020; Talwar et al., 2020; Zhani et al., 2022). However, when customers believe that an m-commerce platform is secure and protects their privacy, it significantly enhances trust and stimulate purchase intentions (Agag and El-Masry, 2016; Talwar et al., 2020). From the m-commerce literature review it further became evident that reputation are a factor that could serve as an additional sub-dimension to the newly proposed privacy and security dimension. This decision was motivated by scholars who stress that mobile platforms with established reputations succeed to foster trust and reduce feelings of uncertainty linked with m-commerce transactions (Kaushik et al., 2020; Rodríguez-Torrico et al., 2019).

Taking the information discussed above into account this study proposes that:

H3: Privacy and security will have a significant effect on repurchase intention

2.4 Content

Content, that was not initially included as a dimension in the traditional servicescape models, was later incorporated as a relevance of information sub-dimension in e-servicescape models due to the pivotal role it plays in shaping customer evaluations of websites (Harris and Goode, 2010). Scholars add that content provides important tangible cues in online transactions that creates positive first impressions and attract customers (Luo et al., 2021; Min et al., 2021). Content also plays a crucial role on mobile platforms, where quality information serves as a significant stimulus that can influence the behaviour of m-commerce customers and help to instill confidence and reduce uncertainties associated with m-commerce transactions (Camilleri et al., 2023; Chen and Chang, 2018; Chi, 2018; Taiminen and Ranaweera, 2019).

For instance, high-quality content can enhance customer satisfaction, trust, and loyalty towards the app (Chi, 2018; Herrando et al., 2018; Kaushik et al., 2020; Sarkar et al., 2020). This, in turn, positively impacts customers' intentions to purchase or use and reuse the app in the future (Chi, 2018; Fernandes and Barfknecht, 2020; Min et al., 2021). Some researcher caution however, that while high-content information can help

attract customers and foster loyalty, poor-quality content can jeopardise these benefits (Boonsiritomachai and Sud-On, 2020). To avoid this outcome, app or site designers should take steps to ensure that the content shared on mobile platforms represent high-quality information that is accurate, complete, clear, comprehensible, useful, and reliable (Chen and Chang, 2018). Doing so will not only reduce apprehension or uncertainties that customers may have about using the app but also provide them with the confidence to make transactions (Camilleri et al., 2023; Hsieh et al., 2021; Min et al., 2021; Shukla and Rodrigues, 2021).

Based on the discussion above the current study proposes the following hypothesis:

H4: Content will have a significant effect on repurchase intention.

2.5 Ubiquity

Ubiquity, as distinctive factor of m-commerce platforms, refers to the use of wireless connections and portable devices that offer m-commerce customers the flexibility to engage in transactions at any time and place (Chopdar and Balakrishnan, 2021; Leong et al., 2021; Hsieh et al., 2021; Rodriguez-Torrico et al., 2019). Given that this feature is not inherent to physical service settings or in stationary desktop computers it explains the exclusion of ubiquity in earlier servicescape and e-servicescape studies. Multiple scholars reported that the ubiquitous character of m-commerce platforms significantly contributes to the rising popularity of mobile transactions since they afford customers the convenience of shopping and making mobile payments on the go (Jebarajakirthy and Shankar, 2021; Omar et al., 2021; Hsieh et al., 2021). Beyond convenience, the constant connection offered by mobile platform serves as a source of comfort and confidence for customers, as it allows various opportunities to communicate and interact with the business, thereby fostering trust (Chopdar and Balakrishnan, 2020; Falcao et al., 2019; Lee, 2005). Consequently, when customers perceive a site or platform as trustworthy, reliable, and secure, their concerns about risks diminish, which not only encourages them to revisit websites but also increases their inclination to repurchase from mobile platforms (Chopdar and Balakrishnan, 2020; Falcao et al., 2019; Sarkar et al., 2021).

Therefore, taking the information discussed above into account this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H5: Ubiquity will have a significant effect on repurchase intention

2.5 Repurchase Intention

Repurchase intention is defined as continued use or purchase intention exhibited by customers regarding a particular brand or online platform (Al-Adwan et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2019). Ferdianto adds that an intention to repurchase via a mobile platform develops when customers' pervious purchase experience met customer's expectations and resulted in a satisfactory experience (Ferdianto, 2022). The significant value of customer retention in m-commerce is widely recognised by researchers and practitioners alike, as acquiring new customers is generally five times more costly than retaining existing ones (Albayrak et al., 2023; Majeed et al., 2022). Retention rates are a significant concern in m-commerce where repurchase intentions are crucial for securing market share and increasing profits (Albayrak et al., 2023:4; Nisaa and Susanto, 2021). Various aspects contribute to retaining customers in an online environment. For instance, functional, fun, and easy-to-use platform features that entertain and provide both utilitarian and hedonic value foster positive customer attitudes towards the platform and enhance their inclination to repurchase the products and/or services it offers (Avclar and Alkevi, 2017).

Similarly, perceived usefulness and ease of use are potent contributors to customer repurchase intentions on m-commerce platforms, as they simplify shopping experiences and facilitate positive usage experiences (Ferdianto, 2022; Kumar and Kashyap, 2022). Besides service/product features and benefits, satisfaction and trust also play crucial roles in securing customer retention (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Scholars explain that after a transaction, customers will compare their pre-purchase expectations with their post-purchase experiences, and if these expectations are met or exceeded, they will be satisfied (Chiu and Cho, 2021; Nazir et al., 2023). Consequently, with each satisfying purchase, the customer's inclination to repurchase will become stronger (Chiu and Cho, 2021). According to some studies, trustworthiness also plays a pivotal role in securing customer repurchase intentions in an online context (Fernandes and Barfknecht, 2020; Yang et al., 2019).

Authors note that transactions conducted via mobile devices are perceived as riskier than traditional transactions since perceived risks spur concerns and uncertainty among mobile shoppers, which in turn discourages their intentions to make further or repeated online purchases (Kumar and Kashyap, 2022; Yuniarti et al., 2022). However, enhancing a customer's trust in the platform serves as a means for overcoming these concerns, as it strengthens both their belief in the credibility of the platform and the future performance of the associated businesses, thereby stimulating repurchase intentions (Al-Adwan et al., 2022; Kumar and Kashyap, 2022).

3. THE PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Figure 1 below illustrates the hypothesised relationships between the constructs under investigation, as proposed by the literature discussion above.

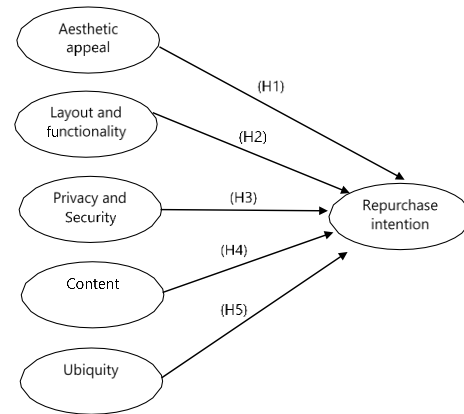


Figure 1: Conceptual Model (Source: Authors own depiction)

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Population, Research Design, Data Collection and Sampling Approach

To reach the objective of this study a quantitative descriptive (cross-sectional) research design was utilised to collect data from South Africans who used mobile websites or apps to make accommodation bookings using OTAs (online travel agencies) such as Booking.com, LekkerSlap, Airbnb, Trip Advisor, Safari.com etc. This research method and design was selected to depict the relationship between m-servicescape dimensions and repurchase intentions when making accommodation bookings via their preferred mobile OTA platforms. The target population for this study included all South African individuals above the age of 18 who had made use of mobile OTAs' platforms to make accommodation bookings within the last six-months prior to the study. Given that OTAs do not disclose the personal details of their customers, and because a complete list of South Africans that make use of mobile OTA platforms are not available, a sample frame could not be constructed. Thus, non-probability sampling was used and executed through a combination of convenience sampling.

The data required for the study were acquired through the use of computer-administered surveys, chosen for their inexpensive, flexible, swift, and real-time data capturing capabilities (Wiid and Diggins, 2021). To ensure a representative sample of the population, Facebook groups from all nine provinces in South Africa, that focussed on accommodation or holiday enquiries and had over 2,000 members, were identified and selected for data collection using the search terms 'accommodation' and 'holiday'. A total of 639 valid/useable responses were obtained, which exceeds the recommended sample size of 500 for model development in non-probability sampling (Hair et al., 2017).

4.2 Questionnaire Development and Data Analysis

This study employed a structured questionnaire with multi-item scales to collect the desired data. The first section of the questionnaire included an introduction that explained the purpose of the study and featured screening questions to ensure that respondents were above the age of 18 and had used a mobile device for bookings within the past six months. This specific time frame was selected to ensure that respondents could adequately recall the environmental cues present on the mobile OTA platform they had previously used. The constructs of this study were measured using closed-ended questions on a five-point Likert scale, with response options ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire was developed by combining various validated scales whose reliability had been previously established in various studies, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Previous research used to compile the questionnaire.

| Constructs | Scale or statement source |
|------------------------|---|
| Aesthetic appeal | Harris and Goode, 2010 |
| Layout & functionality | Harris and Goode, 2010 |
| Privacy & security | Harris and Goode, 2010; Rodriguez-Torrico <i>et al.</i> , 2019 |
| Ubiquity | Rodríguez-Torrico <i>et al.</i> , 2019 who adapted a scale of Lee, 2005 |
| Content | Chi, 2018 who adapted their scale from Kim and Niehm, 2009 |
| Repurchase intention | Harris and Goode, 2010 |

4.3 Data Analysis

The collected data was analysed by using the statistical programmes IBM SPSS (version 27) and Mplus 8.3. The descriptive statistics were calculated with the use of IBM SPSS as well as Cronbach’s alpha coefficients. Mplus, on the other hand was used to determine the relationships between the m-servicescape dimensions (aesthetic appeal, layout and functionality, privacy and security, content and ubiquity) and repurchase intention. In addition, Mplus was also used to apply latent variable modelling via structural equation modelling (SEM). The Maximum Likelihood was considered as the most suitable for multivariate normal data to establish parameter estimation in the SEM. Since Mplus produces a zero-order correlation matrix, this allows investigation of correlations between the latent variables. As per sound statistical practices, the effect sizes for the correlation values were based on $r \geq 0.50$ representing a large practical effect (Hair *et al.*, 2019).

To considered indices to assess the fit of the measurement model to the

data the measurement model (confirmatory factor analysis [CFA]), the comparative fit index (CFI) with a cut-off value of above 0.90, the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) with a cut-off value of above 0.90 and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) with a cut-off value up to 0.10 was applied (Van de Schoot *et al.*, 2012). Lastly, the indirect function of the model was specified according to the hypotheses to investigate the potential mediating variables in the research model through Mplus. Bootstrapping was used for resampling purposes using 5000 draws to test mediation and bias-corrected 95 percent confidence intervals in the output, focusing on the size of the indirect effects. This necessitated an investigation to assess whether the indirect effects would not cross zero at that level.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Sample Profile

Most respondents who participated in this study were full-time employed (45.7%) females (69.7%) who had been making use of their preferred mobile OTA’s mobile services for between 3 to 4 years (28%). The ages of the respondents were almost evenly spread with 30.4% aged between 18 – 24 years, 31.1% aged between 25 – 45 years, 30.2% aged between 46 – 59 years and 8.3% aged 60 years and older.

5.2 Measurement Model

The results from the confirmatory factor analysis showed that all items significantly loaded onto their corresponding latent variables with values ranging from 0.58 to 0.94 (above the suggested threshold of 0.5) (Hair *et al.*, 2019). The results also revealed that the specified model was an acceptable fit to the data: CFI = 0.93, TLI = 0.92, RMSEA = 0.04. The standard errors established accuracy in the estimation of the values as each of the standardised estimates were small. The results reflected in Table 2 demonstrates the statistics for the correlation matrix for the latent variables, as well as the AVE and the Cronbach’s reliability estimates on the diagonal.

Table 2: Correlation matrix, AVE and Cronbach Alpha’s

| Variables | AVE | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|-----------------------------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. Aesthetic appeal | 0.78* | (0.92) | - | | - | - | - |
| 2. Layout and functionality | 0.80* | 0.72* | (0.95) | | - | - | - |
| 3. Privacy and Security | 0.79* | 0.56* | 0.79* | (0.95) | - | - | - |
| 4. Content | 0.67* | 0.58* | 0.77* | 0.85* | (0.93) | - | - |
| 5. Ubiquity | 0.70* | 0.31** | 0.53* | 0.77* | 0.67* | (0.86) | - |
| 6. Repurchase intention | 0.69* | 0.53* | 0.72* | 0.77* | 0.71* | 0.64* | (0.87) |

**Medium effect size ($0.30 \leq r < 0.50$) *Large effect size ($r \geq 0.50$)

Notes: AVE, average variance extracted. Cronbach’s coefficient values on the diagonal in parentheses for each construct.

Table 2 shows that the composite reliability (CR) values, presented in parentheses on the diagonal, ranged from 0.86 to 0.95, thereby indicating high factor reliability. Table 1 also illustrates that almost all correlations between the latent constructs were large ($r \geq 0.50$), except for the one medium correlation ($r = 0.31$) between aesthetic appeal and ubiquity. The AVE for any two individual constructs was greater than the squared correlation estimates between them, thus confirming discriminant validity

among the constructs assessed. Convergent validity can also be confirmed as all the AVE values were above the cut-off value of 0.50.

5.3 Structural Model

The results of the structural paths for the proposed measurement model are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Structural paths of the latent variables

| H | Path | β | SE | p-value | Result |
|----|---|---------|------|---------|-----------------------------|
| H1 | Aesthetic appeal → Repurchase intention | -0.12 | 0.11 | 0.272 | Hypothesis unsupported |
| H2 | Layout and functionality → Repurchase intention | 0.45 | 0.17 | 0.007 | Hypothesis supported |
| H3 | Privacy and security → Repurchase intention | 0.29 | 0.14 | 0.030 | Hypothesis supported |
| H4 | Content → Repurchase intention | 0.08 | 0.10 | 0.452 | Hypothesis unsupported |
| H5 | Ubiquity → Repurchase intention | 0.16 | 0.07 | 0.023 | Hypothesis supported |

β : beta coefficient; SE: standard error; p-value: two-tailed statistical significance

The results of the structural paths reveal that hypotheses 2, 3 and 5 were supported. Specifically, repurchase intention was statistically significantly influenced by layout and functionality (H2; $\beta = 0.45$; SE = 0.17; $p < 0.007$), privacy and security (H3; $\beta = 0.29$; SE = 0.14; $p < 0.030$) and ubiquity (H5; $\beta = 0.16$; SE = 0.07; $p < 0.023$).

Hypotheses 1 and 4 however were not supported as repurchase intention was not statistically significantly influenced by aesthetic appeal (H1; $\beta = -0.12$; SE = 0.11; $p < 0.272$) or content (H4; $\beta = 0.08$; SE = 0.10; $p < 0.452$). A summary of the significant

relationships identified in the SEM model is presented in Figure 2.

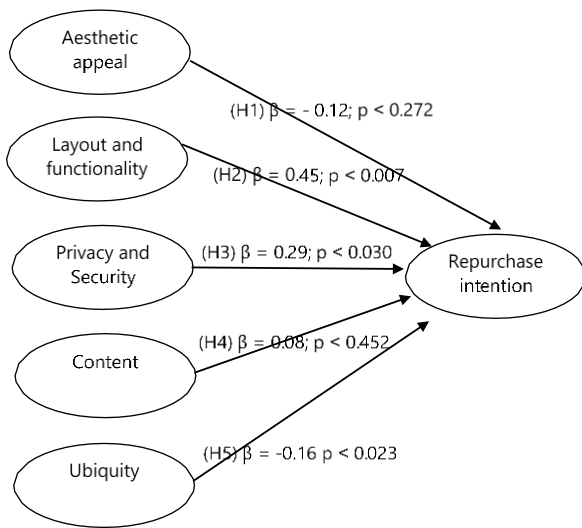


Figure 2: Results of proposed relationships

6. DISCUSSION

The significant growth of m-commerce resulted in fierce competition amongst mobile businesses and the consequent need to understand drivers of repurchase intentions amongst mobile customers. Thus, the focus of this study was to determine how various design aspects of mobile apps and website influence future repurchase intentions. Towards this end, the results of this study reveal that layout and functionality exert a statistically significant influence on repurchase intention (H2). The results of the current study also support the relationship between privacy and security and repurchase intentions (H3), which is regarded as a unique finding. This study is among the first to examine the direct relationship between this construct and repurchase intention under the servicescape umbrella. This confirmation aligns with the findings of empirical results that revealed that the reputation and guarantees of a mobile business, along with safety and security measures, govern mobile customers' safety experiences (Rodríguez-Torrico et al., 2019). These experiences influence mobile shoppers' satisfaction, from which, as proposed by the current study, repurchase intentions develop. Similarly, the results also corroborate the research outcomes of who confirmed the impact of privacy on continuation intention, and who established that perceptions regarding security and privacy risks affect the continued use of specific mobile apps (Gao et al., 2015; Hammouri et al., 2021). These findings further lend support to prior research focusing on mobile customers' feelings of vulnerability when exposing their personal and financial information through smartphones for mobile purchases (Mohseni et al., 2018; Rodríguez-Torrico et al., 2019). Subsequently, it was revealed that a statistically significant relationship existed between the unique ubiquitous m-commerce characteristic and repurchase intention, thus confirming H5. This empirical finding corresponds with results obtained which provided evidence that ubiquitous connectivity influences m-commerce customers' trust and attitude which can have a positive impact on mobile purchases (Falcoa et al., 2019).

Conversely, the results obtained by the current study did not show a significant relationship between aesthetic appeal and repurchase intentions (H1). A possible explanation for these results could be that the aesthetic appeal scale used was originally developed for the e-commerce context. Scholars have previously noted the differing nuances in the visual aesthetics of e-commerce and m-commerce platforms, as well as the impact of smaller screens on mobile aesthetics (Chopdar and Balakrishnan, 2020; Kumar et al., 2018). Therefore, different results might be obtained if a scale specifically designed to measure the impact of mobile cues on customers' perceptions and subsequent repurchase intentions were used. Additionally, the findings of the current study contradict the proposed relationship between content and repurchase intentions (H4). These results differ from those suggested by Yip and Mo (2020), who stated that information quality (a core element of content), would impact purchase intentions. According to a study, inconsistent results can be attributed to differences in measurement tools or scales (Lee and Min, 2021). However, as this is the first study to the researcher's knowledge to introduce content as a standalone dimension of m-servicescape, these pioneering results still hold value for m-servicescape literature.

6.1 Theoretical Significance/Contributions

To the best of the researchers' knowledge, the current study is the first to empirically test the relationship between unique dimensions of the mobile shopping environment, or m-servicescape, discussed above and repurchase intention. Moreover, unlike the majority of previous studies that emphasised either customer's adoption of m-commerce or initial purchase intentions, this study explores continuous usage and repurchase intentions. This study diverges from the other m-servicescape studies of which explored the holistic impact of m-servicescape, (Lee, 2018; Sherafudeen and Sahoo, 2022). Instead, this study differs by examining the effects of individual m-servicescape dimensions.

Furthermore, other than the m-servicescape study of Zhani et al. (2022), that used the dimensions proposed in earlier e-servicescape research, this study expand the m-servicescape concept by identifying unique dimensions that are representative of m-commerce service settings. The linkage between these unique m-servicescape dimensions and repurchase intentions provides further theoretical value to the scarcely researched m-servicescape concept. The focus on repurchase intention as an outcome of the mobile environment's impact aligns with the general consensus among academics, who view repurchase intentions as crucial to the survival of mobile businesses in today's competitive environment (Albayrak et al., 2023; Fernandes and Barfknecht, 2020; Tseng et al., 2022). This novel research confirmed the impact of the additional dimensions such as privacy and security and ubiquity, that was previously untested in the m-servicescape research. Lastly, this study enriches academic literature by representing pioneering work that draws from earlier servicescape and e-servicescape research to recontextualize the servicescape concept for the m-commerce context. It is supported by research findings that confirm statistically significant relationships between specific mobile environmental cues and repurchase intentions.

6.2 Managerial Implications / Practical Significance

This research offers practical insights into the atmospherics of a mobile service setting (i.e., m-servicescape) and its impact on mobile customers' repurchase intentions. Moreover, the validation of the proposed m-servicescape dimensions as antecedents to repurchase intentions provides crucial information for designing m-commerce platforms that marketing researchers and practitioners can use to enhance the mobile shopping experience and secure customer retention. Taking this into account it is recommended that designers of mobile websites and apps should focus on creating visually appealing aesthetics that not only attract mobile customers but also provide enjoyment, encouraging future purchase intentions. Enhancing interface quality can be achieved with high-resolution, media-rich visuals, made possible through advanced mobile technology. Secondly, layout and functionality are critical for establishing satisfaction and enhancing the mobile shopping experience; this can be achieved through well-organized, user-friendly layouts tailored for smaller screens, facilitating quick and easy navigation for mobile customers. Thirdly, given the risks associated with fraud and misuse of personal information in m-commerce, the privacy and security dimension is paramount. Reducing perceived risks can be addressed by ensuring the reputation of the mobile business is solid and trustworthy. Fourthly, the need for accurate and complete information is particularly crucial in the sale of intangible services at arm's length via mobile platforms; regularly updating content to ensure quality information is shared is essential. Finally, optimizing the application of the ubiquity dimension, one of the most valuable aspects of m-commerce, can save mobile customers time and effort and in turn strengthen aspects such as trust in and desire to use a specific m-commerce platform.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Although this research offers valuable insights for marketing practitioners, app designers, and researchers interested in mobile platforms, it does have limitations. For instance, the study's focus on accommodation booking within South Africa may limit the generalizability of the findings to other service industries or geographical locations. Thus, it is recommended that future studies could test the proposed m-servicescape model in different countries or within other mobile service contexts, such as booking flights and other travel-related services. Future research should also expand the m-servicescape model by incorporating additional dimensions like e-WOM, ease of use, interactivity, and promotional programmes offered by m-commerce businesses (Tran and Stratton, 2019). Moreover, emerging mobile technologies such as augmented reality and artificial intelligence could be explored for their impact on m-servicescape dimensions. Lastly, examining the moderating effects of demographics such as gender, education, and age on m-servicescape could provide deeper insights.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The authors maintain that they have no competing interests in relation to the current article to declare. Moreover, they confirm that any aspects that could inappropriately influence (bias) their work has been declared. This includes any potential competing interests such as employment, consultancies, stock ownership, honoraria, paid expert testimony, patent applications/registrations, and grants or other funding.

SUBMISSION DECLARATION AND VERIFICATION

The authors confirm that the work described in this submission has not been published previously (except in the form of an academic thesis). It is not under consideration for publication elsewhere and its publication is approved by all co-authors. The authors agree that, if accepted, it will not be published elsewhere in the same form, in English or in any other language, including electronically without the written consent of the copyright holder. To ensure originality, the authors consent to the article being checked by the originality detection service Crossref Similarity Check

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