

E-Shopping

Internet penetration and access to the World Wide Web is growing at a rapid pace in South Africa. Progressively internet users have become online consumers, buying books, music, insurance, electronics, furniture, groceries, jewellery, travel and other products and services online. With the internet becoming a major distribution channel, as well as the main source of product and service information, the task of attracting customers to company websites and online offerings becomes a strategic necessity.



A study was conducted by Dawid Botha, a [Master's](#) student in the [Department of Marketing Management](#), which investigated the relationship between online customer satisfaction and six online shopping experience elements, namely usability, interactivity, online trust, aesthetics, the marketing mix and online customer service. The study specifically took place in a South African online retail environment.

The rapid growth of online shopping in South Africa highlights the importance of designing online retail stores with customer satisfaction as the focal point. Customer satisfaction is directly linked to customer loyalty, and even more so in an online environment where alternative outlets are readily available. The better companies understand their customers, the better they can present their product offerings and increase their competitive advantage. Customers who are dissatisfied will not return leading to a loss of income and market share.

Four of the online experience elements namely usability, interactivity, trustworthiness and marketing mix indicated a positive relationship to online customer satisfaction. However, trustworthiness and customer satisfaction showed the strongest positive relationship to one another.

As a result, online retail firms in South Africa should enhance the perception of the trustworthiness of their website in the first instance through security certificates and secure payment facilities. The perception of the firm's website may be further enhanced by simply ensuring that the secure nature of the website is communicated clearly and consistently with the consumers on the site.

The positive relationships between the online experience elements and online customers' satisfaction in the South African e-commerce environment will give retailers insight into and knowledge of the country's online consumer. This will enhance the ability of online retailers to design and develop a more successful web offering in order to achieve organisational goals.

This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [Master's degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2014 with the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by Dawid Botha under the supervision of [Mr. T. Kotzé](#).