

Disclosure of the use of AI tools

This thesis is the authors' original work. All research design decisions, data collection (including in-store observations, digital walkthroughs, document collection, and netnographic sampling), data interpretation, theoretical development, analysis, and argumentation were conceived and carried out by the authors.

To improve readability and language clarity, the authors used two generative AI tools—ChatGPT and DeepL—as editing support only. Specifically, these tools were used to (1) refine sentence-level grammar, punctuation, and spelling; (2) improve academic tone, coherence, and flow; (3) reduce repetition and enhance concision while preserving meaning; and (4) suggest alternative phrasings for improved readability. The tools were not used to generate empirical claims, fabricate observations, create data, or produce interpretations. They were not used to conduct literature searches, to add uncited sources, or to replace the authors' judgement in analysis and theoretical framing.

No research data were uploaded to any AI tool. The authors did not upload observation notes, screenshots, images, documents, datasets, or any personal data to ChatGPT or DeepL. AI assistance was limited to language polishing on author-written text.

All AI-assisted edits were reviewed by the authors. The authors verified that the revised text accurately reflects the underlying empirical material and intended meaning, and they take full responsibility for the final content of the thesis, including all claims, references, and conclusions.