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The Influence of Augmented Reality on Purchase Intention Among South African Gen Z: Retailing Perspective

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Purpose: This research investigates the impact of Augmented Reality (AR) on the purchase intentions among South African Generation Z consumers within the retail industry. AR technology, which overlays digital content onto the physical world, transforms the retail experience by offering immersive product interactions. This study explores how perceived usefulness, ease of use, and attitudes towards AR influence purchase intentions among Gen Z, a tech-savvy demographic highly responsive to digital innovation. Using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) as guiding frameworks, the research examines AR's role in enhancing the retail experience, thereby shaping consumer behaviour. Design/methodology/approach: The study employed a quantitative research approach and utilised non-probability sampling. A representative sample of 221 participants was chosen from a population of 27.5 million Gen Z's. Convenience sampling methods was employed. The data collection process involved the utilisation of structured questionnaires, while the subsequent data analysis was conducted using SPSS Version 28. Findings: Usefulness, attitude, ease of use and skill are statistically ($p < 0.05$) relevant to purchase intention. Furthermore, attitude ($\beta = 0.412$) is the strongest predictor of purchase intention, followed by usefulness ($\beta = 0.306$) while ease of use is the weakest predictor of purchase intention.

Keywords: augmented reality, generation Z, technology acceptance model, theory of planner behaviour

Introduction

Augmented Reality (AR) has captivated consumers worldwide by offering a unique combination of virtual and real-world experiences. This technology has revolutionised how humans see and interact with their environment, revolutionising customers' engagement with products, brands, and peers (Poushneh, 2018). As technological breakthroughs continue to change consumer behaviour, augmented reality stands out as a major innovation in the retail industry. AR delivers immersive experiences by combining the physical and digital worlds, allowing consumers to explore and engage with products in unprecedented ways (Hoffman, Moreau, Stremersch, & Wedel, 2022). AR technology overlays digital information onto real-world environments, allowing users to interact with virtual elements through smartphones, tablets, smart glasses, and other devices (Eru, Topuz, & Cop, 2022; Schwarz, 2022; Hilper & Zumstein, 2023). This interactive element enhances the consumer journey, offering both convenience and engagement by allowing customers to envision products in their own space before purchasing. Brands integrate AR into their platforms, transforming the typical buying experience into a dynamic, interactive engagement (Lavoye, Mero, & Tarkiainen, 2021). The global AR industry is witnessing substantial

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growth, with forecasts estimating it will expand from $31.97 billion in 2019 to $375.90 billion by 2031. Additionally, retail stands to gain from this expansion, with a projected increase of more than $12 billion by 2027 (SkyQuest, 2024). Leading brands namely, L'Oréal, Adidas, and Macy's have successfully implemented AR technologies, enhancing customer engagement through virtual fitting rooms, interactive product displays, and personalised shopping experiences. This approach reduces product returns by allowing customers to make informed decisions (Lee & Xu, 2020).

AR's popularity is especially high among Generation Z, a group recognised for its digital proficiency and demand for immersive experiences. Generation Z, born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, is now a dominant force in the consumer market, driven by their affinity for innovation and new technologies (Schwarz, 2022). Therefore, understanding how this generation engages with augmented reality in retail environments is crucial given their increasing spending power. In South Africa, the retail industry is undergoing a significant transformation, driven by technologies like AR, artificial intelligence, and contactless payments (Dabo, 2024). According to Statista (2023), the AR and VR (Virtual Reality) market in South Africa is expected to generate US$95.5 million in revenue by 2024. This growth is fuelled by younger consumers' enthusiasm for digital experiences, making AR a critical tool for retailers aiming to capture this tech-savvy audience (Baykal, 2020; Weaver, 2022; Uzunoglu, 2024). Despite the global adoption of AR in retail, there is a significant gap in research focused on its impact within the South African environment, particularly among Generation Z consumers. While studies in regions such as Asia and Europe have explored AR's adoption in retail experiences around the world, limited attention has been paid to how this technology influences consumer behaviour in emerging markets such as South Africa (Mekonnen, 2024; Wun, 2022; TechNavio, 2024). This study aims to fill this gap by investigating how Augmented Reality (AR) influences the purchase intentions of Generation Z in South Africa. Furthermore, the study will explore how AR can enhance retail experiences and drive engagement among this demographic.

Literature Review

Technology Acceptance Model

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which was first introduced by Fred Davis in 1986, is a widely recognised framework that aims to offer a comprehensive explanation of the process of how an individual comes to use, accept, and utilise new technological innovations (Zaineldeen, Hongbo, Koffi, & Hassan, 2020). This model includes two main variables: perceived usefulness and ease of use. Teo and Wong (2023) highlight how TAM proposes that the decision to utilise technology is shaped by the following constructs: attitude, behavioural intention to use perceived usefulness (PU), and perceived ease of use (PEOU). A technology's ease of use and perceived usefulness shape a user's beliefs about it. These beliefs then influence the user's overall attitude towards the technology, ultimately determining whether they will adopt it. The theory further suggests that a person's intention to use a particular framework mediates their actual usage, influencing their behaviour (Zaineldeen et al., 2020; Teo & Wong, 2023). Davis (1985) suggests that attitudes "is the emotional state towards adopting a technology" and perceived usefulness is described as "the amount to which the system will benefit the individual" influence intention. Consequently, a positive attitude and high perceived usefulness result in a high intention to use technology (Rejali, Aghabayk, Esmaeli, & Shiwakoti, 2023).

Theory of Planned Behaviour

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) was established to explain human behaviour. Icek Ajzen developed the TPB in 1980 as an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). It has since become a popular model for explaining and forecasting human behaviours in various fields, notably health, consumer behaviour, and environmental behaviour ("Theory of Planned Behaviour—The Behavioural Scientist", 2024). Azjen's (1985) cognitive Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) suggests that an individual's decision to engage in a specific behaviour is based on their intention to engage in that behaviour (Brookes, 2023). TPB is an explanatory and predictive model of attitudinal-behavioural reactions based on the following factors: attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control (Mohr & Kühl, 2021). Saleem, Kamarudin, Shoaib, and Nasar (2021) claim that people's actions are influenced by their intentions, which are shaped by their attitude towards the behaviour, the opinions of those around them, and their perception of their ability to carry out the behaviour. Furthermore, Bosnjak, Ajzen, and Schmidt (2020) claim that behavioural beliefs produce a positive or negative attitude towards the behaviour, while normative beliefs produce perceived social pressure or subjective norms. Lastly, control beliefs promote perceived behavioural control or self-efficacy. Perception of behavioural control moderates the impact of attitude towards behaviour and subjective norms on intention. In addition, the Theory of Planned Behaviour stipulates that consumers form their opinions about their attitudes based on their personal beliefs about a specific product or service and their evaluation of the potential outcomes. These attitudes can be influenced by the social norms derived from the objective standards of faith in consumption and the motivation to comply with them (Ruangkanjanases et al., 2020). Therefore, in conjunction with perceptions of behavioural control, these determinants significantly contribute to the variability observed in individuals' actual behavioural manifestations (Gu & Wu, 2019).

Hypotheses Development

The interrelationship between usefulness and purchase intention. The connection between usefulness and the intention to purchase holds great significance since it provides marketers and businesses with insights into how consumers make purchasing decisions. According to Kamel, Elsayeda, and Enaba (2022), usefulness refers to how a consumer's perception and decision to learn or utilise a specific system or technology will enhance their performance or actions based on its functionality, effectiveness, and efficiency (Keni, 2020). Purchase intention refers to the likelihood of consumers planning or being willing to buy a specific product or service in the future based on how they perceive its usefulness (Kamel et al., 2022). Abbot (2022) has demonstrated that when customers perceive a product or service associated with AR as valuable, they are more likely to intend to buy it. The study further emphasises that AR offers consumers a captivating, interactive, and absorbing experience with the product, which influences behavioural intention. This enhances their overall shopping experience and builds confidence in consumers' purchasing decisions (Abbot, 2022). Consumers' satisfaction and ongoing use of technology are directly affected by its usefulness, which is a crucial factor in technology usage and adoption (Yim, Chu, & Sauer, 2017). Customers are naturally practical and focused on their goals, so they actively seek informative, valuable, helpful, and worthwhile experiences (McLean, Al-Nabhani, & Wilson, 2018). When consumers find a product or service useful, it leads to a positive attitude towards it, influencing their intention to purchase (Kamel et al., 2022). Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H1: Usefulness has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention.

The interrelationship between attitude and purchase intention. The link between attitude and purchase

intention is important in consumer behaviour and marketing. Attitude is a psychological construct influenced by various elements, including cognitive assessment (thinking process), beliefs and values, and emotional attachment to any object (Khan, Hameed, & Akram, 2022). Furthermore, an internal mental state determines an individual's choice of action, assessment and evaluation of the costs and benefits of doing that action, and perception of a product or service (Nosi, Zollo, Rialti, & Ciappei, 2020; Jose et al., 2022; Huang, 2022). According to Khan et al. (2022), a positive attitude towards a product or brand can result in a positive purchase intention. In other words, when a consumer has a favourable attitude towards a product, they are more likely to intend to purchase it (Khan et al., 2022). Therefore, a favourable attitude to a product or service can lead to a higher purchase intention, whereas a negative attitude can result in a lower purchase intention (Kotler et al., 2020; Solomon et al., 2020). After considering this discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Attitude has a significant and positive influence on purchase intention.

The interrelationship between ease of use and purchase intention. The correlation between ease of use and purchase intention in Augmented Reality (AR) retailing is a crucial element in consumer behaviour research. According to Ghobadi et al. (2022), ease of use refers to an individual's personal perception of how effortless it is to use an object or system. In the context of their study, it pertains to the ease of acceptance of AR with minimal effort. Their findings indicated that users are more likely to accept AR technology and develop an intention to use it when they perceive it to be easy to use and effective in assisting them. Similarly, Kamel et al. (2022) emphasised that the absence of difficulty in this aspect is a critical determinant that influences user intentions when adopting new technology. According to research conducted by Raška and Richter (2017) and Butt, Ahmad, and Muzaffar (2024), AR applications that are user-friendly tend to generate a positive attitude among consumers, especially if they improve the shopping experience. Abbott (2022) corroborated this finding, revealing that interactive and immersive experiences with AR increased consumers' perception of its usefulness, ultimately leading to higher satisfaction and a greater likelihood of purchase. In addition, Trivedi, Kasilingam, Arora, and Soni (2022) discovered that the ease of use of AR has a positive effect on purchase intentions, as it increases consumers' willingness to buy products. Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H3: Ease of use has a significant and positive influence on purchase intention.

The interrelationship between skills and purchase intention. The intention to use and modify product usage is largely dependent on how effectively a product's ease of use and usefulness are communicated (Davis, 1989; Lindh et al., 2020). Lindh et al. (2020) highlighted the critical role of usability and adapting to consumers' digital skills, emphasizing that users with higher digital proficiency can navigate and utilize technology more effectively. Similarly, McLean and Wilson (2019) explored the impact of AR features in brand mobile applications, finding that interactive AR elements significantly enhance user engagement and positively influence technology acceptance factors, such as perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. In the context of Augmented Reality (AR), the skills required to interact with AR-enabled platforms can be a decisive factor in shaping purchase intention, particularly among Gen Z consumers who are more accustomed to technology. According to Abrar (2018), consumers with proficient AR skills tend to have greater confidence when engaging with AR interfaces, which in turn boosts their purchase intention. This increased skill level allows users to fully engage with AR features, such as virtual try-ons or product demonstrations, making the shopping experience more immersive and personalized. The higher engagement level and smoother interaction foster a sense of control and trust, leading to stronger purchase intentions and positive word-of-mouth (Abrar, 2018; Konstantoulaki, Rizomyliotis, Ang, & Nguyen, 2024). Thus, when Gen Z consumers possess the necessary skills to effectively

navigate and use AR technology in retail, they are more likely to engage deeply with the content, feel confident in their shopping decisions, and ultimately be persuaded to complete a purchase. Based on this understanding, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Skill has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention

Problem Investigated

In today's rapidly transforming digital world, integrating Augmented Reality (AR) technology into consumer experiences has become a focal study of interest for marketers worldwide. As an immersive technology, AR enhances consumers' buying decisions and interactions (Barta, Gurrea, & Flavian, 2023). Consumers use augmented reality applications on smartphones, tablets, smart glasses, and mirrors (Eru et al., 2022; Schwarz, 2022; Hilpert & Zumstein, 2023). A study by Goga, Paelo, and Nyamwena (2019) states that the transformation of the retail landscape has been facilitated by introducing digital and online platforms driven by the influence of e-commerce. As discussed in the introduction, it is crucial to understand that this evolution has created opportunities for companies to expand their reach, engage with a broader customer base, customise offerings to individual preferences, implement competitive pricing strategies, and enhance consumer experiences, ultimately leading to elevated overall consumer satisfaction (Goga et al., 2019). However, the absence of research on expanding and utilizing digital tools within the retail sector represents a critical problem in determining whether AR has a significant or positive influence on the purchase intentions of South African Gen Z consumers. This presents an opportunity for retailers to innovate and utilize tools such as Augmented Reality as a strategic resource to gain a competitive advantage, given the rise of e-commerce, and to bridge the engagement and loyalty gap between retailers and South African Generation Z consumers.

Tan, Chandukala, and Reddy (2022) suggest that AR bolsters sales by mitigating uncertainty and instilling consumer confidence in purchases. On the contrary, marketers within the retail sector can monitor consumer behaviour, ignite curiosity, and position specific brands as innovative or distinctive, thereby enhancing the engagement of the in-store shopping experience and providing companies with a competitive edge. A study was undertaken by Watson, Alexander, and Salavati (2018) to demonstrate how adopting an experienced AR retail application may favour purchasing intentions. The findings indicate positive emotional reactions determine the impact (Watson et al., 2018). Lavoye et al. (2021) note that as the academic study on augmented reality in retail and e-commerce expands, it is important for researchers to perform literature reviews to assess previous findings and identify domains for future research. Despite this growing interest in augmented reality mobile applications, an in-depth study of its impact on the purchasing habits of South African Gen Z remains unexplored. South Africa, with a substantial Generation Z demographic (Reporter, 2020), represents a pivotal market for examining the impact of augmented reality on purchasing intentions. Given the continually evolving consumer preferences of this cohort, traditional retail strategies may not resonate as effectively. Consequently, comprehending the role of augmented reality in shaping their purchase intentions is of critical importance. From a retail perspective, the lack of sufficient insight and empirical data pertaining to this subject matter constrains the capacity of South African retailers to drive purchase intentions, capitalize on AR's ability to reduce uncertainty in online shopping, and create a more immersive, personalized shopping experience that resonates with this tech-savvy demographic (Goga et al., 2019; Eru et al., 2022). Moreover, limited research in the South African context diminished the potential for businesses to engage with their intended audience effectively. Ultimately, without a clear understanding of how AR can impact purchasing behaviour, retailers may struggle to differentiate themselves in

an increasingly competitive and digitalized market, leaving a significant gap. This gap limits the ability of South African retailers to leverage AR as a tool for driving purchase intention, engaging customers, and enhancing overall sales outcomes through practical examples such as virtual try-ons before making a purchase, which can reduce the number of product returns for online purchases, a major pain point for retailers (Schwarz, 2022; Hilpert & Zumstein, 2023). Crucially, this digital and virtual experience can be highly appealing to the tech-savvy younger generation of consumers, who are increasingly demanding cutting-edge shopping experiences before they spend their money. AR technology has expanded beyond retail, with the banking and telecommunications industries increasingly adopting it to enhance customer engagement and improve services. Alam et al.'s (2021) research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on AR marketing and its impact on consumer behaviour, particularly among young consumers in Malaysia's beauty and makeup sector. The study emphasises the necessity to grasp consumer perceptions and behaviours in the context of AR marketing, particularly in influencing purchase intention among Malaysian Gen Z consumers (Alam et al., 2021; Teo & Wong, 2023). Conversely, Kamel et al. (2022) investigated the impact of AR advertising features on purchase intention in the Egyptian furniture industry. Findings suggest the impact of entertainment and informativeness of AR commercials on purchasing intention, emphasising the value of delivering engaging and information positively influences consumer behaviour within the Egyptian market (Kamel et al., 2022). Further, Erdmann, Mas, and Arilla (2023) studied the impact of AR on consumers' online purchase intention by assessing the impact of immersion of the Spanish eCommerce consumers, taking into account the effect of AR devices and technological complexity to determine the role of individual preferences on online purchase intention using AR technology in Spain (Erdmann et al., 2023; Schwarz, 2022). In banking, AR is used for data visualization, ATM location, and interactive financial services (Butt et al., 2024), while in telecommunications, it's used for immersive product demonstrations and virtual tech support (Palma et al., 2022). Despite extensive research in these sectors, AR's impact on the retail industry, particularly in South Africa, remains underexplored. This gap in research is significant as Gen Z's evolving preferences highlight the need to understand how AR influences retail purchase intentions, especially in areas like product interaction and experiential shopping. Nonetheless, various research on augmented reality has been conducted in different countries, but its impact on purchase intention in the South African market, particularly the Gen Z cohort, is unknown. Therefore, this research aims to determine the link between AR technology and consumer behaviour within the South African Gen Z demographic. This study seeks to bridge a gap in research by performing a thorough analysis of the impact of augmented reality on purchase intention among South African Gen Z consumers. The research seeks to provide insights for organisations within the retail industry looking to utilise AR technology to engage and appeal to this generation effectively, as a result, to gain an understanding of the key forces influencing purchase intention among South African Gen Z.

Research Objectives

- To determine how Augmented Reality influences the attitudes of Generation Z towards purchasing decisions.
- To assess the impact of Augmented Reality on the purchasing skills of Generation Z.
- To evaluate the influence of the perceived usefulness of Augmented Reality on the purchase intentions of Generation Z.
- To examine how the perceived ease of use of Augmented Reality affects the purchase intentions of Generation Z.

Research Methodology

Positivism is a scientific method that looks at observable and measurable facts (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). This method is suitable as we are seeking truthful outcomes that are independent of the research as hypothesis testing will be conducted and empirical data will be analysed in our research. A deductive method was suitable as it supports the positivist research philosophy. Deduction is a method that is highly structured, consisting of a large sample. This research project employed a survey research strategy to determine the influence of Augmented Reality on purchase intention among South African Generation Z in the retail perspective. A survey research project is associated with the deductive approach to quantitative research as it enables researchers to collect data that can be quantitatively analysed to find explanations of the relationships that exist between variables (Saunders et al., 2019).

A quantitative research method was applied as compared to the other existing options which are qualitative or mixed method approaches (Saunders et al, 2019). The subset can be identified to be specifically Generation Z residing in South Africa who are between the ages of 18-27 who are frequent retail shoppers. A non-probability sampling method, convenience sampling, was applied for the distribution of the questionnaires. The questionnaire was distributed electronically with a link being sent to the respondents. The maximum sample size was 221 South African Generation Z respondents.

Results and Findings

Table 1

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Respondents' characteristics	Number of respondents	Percentage
Gender		
Male	79	35.7
Female	140	63.3
Other—prefer not to say	2	0.9
Total	221	100%
Age		
18-20	36	16.3
21-23	93	42.1
24-26	73	33.0
27 and older	19	8.6
Total	221	100%
Highest level of education		
No formal schooling	0	0.0
Primary	0	0.0
Secondary	25	11.3
Tertiary	183	82.8
Trade qualification complete	13	5.9
Other	0	0.00
Total	221	100%
Province		
Eastern Cape	4	1.8
Gauteng	163	73.8
Kwa-Zulu Natal	9	4.1
Limpopo	28	12.7
Mpumalanga	6	2.7
Northern Cape	2	0.9
North-West	5	2.3
Western Cape	4	1.8
Total	221	100%

Exploratory factor analysis was employed in the research as factors that influence purchase intentions among Gen-Z consumers who have not been researched from a South African perspective, or a retailing perspective. Additionally, the principal component extraction method was used for the EFA due to the use of a large sample size of 221. Therefore, the strength of the intercorrelations, factor analysis could be applied to this research.

According to Hidayah, Utami, and Fajrisani (2020), the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test evaluates whether factor analysis is suitable. The results of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test indicated that the factor analysis for the five constructs was adequate, with a measure of sampling adequacy of 0.855, confirming the suitability of the data for factor analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity yielded a chi-square value of 581,513 with 10 degrees of freedom and a significance level of $p < 0.001$, further supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. High KMO values between 0.5 and 1.0 indicate that factor analysis is appropriate, while values below 0.5 suggest it is not (Sutisna, Amriely, & Awaluddin, 2020). The Bartletts' test score of above 0.6 and the p-value of less than 0.05, as shown in Table 2, further support this conclusion.

Table 2

KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy		0.855
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	581.513
	Df	10
	Sig.	< 0.001

Reliability

According to Rose and Johnson (2020), a construct is considered reliable if its Cronbach's Alpha is 0.7 or higher. For an item to be valid in factor analysis, it must have a factor loading of at least 0.4.

Table 3

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of Reliability

Construct	Number of items	Sample reliability using Cronbach alpha (α)
Ease of use	3	0.850
Usefulness	8	0.826
Skills	3	0.827
Attitude	5	0.795
Purchase intention	4	0.813

Examination of the Research Hypotheses

Based on the results of the Pearson Product Moment correlation and multiple regression results discussed in the previous sections, Table 4 presents the results for the following hypotheses.

Table 4

Results of Correlation Analysis

Hypothesis	Statistical analysis technique used	Result of the analysis	Comment
H1: Usefulness has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention.	Pearson correlation	0.699**	Accepted
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001	
	Multiple regression β	0.306	
H2: Attitude has a significant and positive influence on purchase intention.	Pearson correlation	0.696**	Accepted
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001	
	Multiple regression β	0.412	

Table 4 to be continued

H3: Ease of use has a significant and positive influence on purchase intention.	Pearson correlation	0.424**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001	Accepted
	Multiple regression β	0.035	
H4: Skill has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention	Pearson correlation	0.566**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001	Accepted
	Multiple regression β	0.074	

Based on the results, usefulness, attitude, ease of use, and skill are statistically ($p < 0.05$) relevant to purchase intention. As presented in Table 4, attitude ($\beta = 0.412$) is the strongest predictor of purchase intention, followed by usefulness ($\beta = 0.306$) while ease of use is the weakest predictor of purchase intention.

Practical Managerial Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusions

Retailers should actively integrate Augmented Reality into their online and in-store experiences to cater to the tech-savvy Generation Z. Given AR's potential to enhance customer engagement and reduce uncertainty in online shopping, businesses should focus on developing user-friendly, immersive AR applications that offer personalized experiences. This can be achieved through virtual try-ons, product demonstrations, and interactive features tailored to the preferences of Gen Z consumers. Additionally, continuous improvements in digital literacy initiatives and AR-related marketing strategies could further boost adoption rates, making AR an essential tool for driving purchase intentions and long-term customer loyalty in South Africa's evolving retail landscape. These suggestions can help retailers optimize their digital strategies, enhance customer satisfaction, and remain competitive in a rapidly evolving market. The incorporation of augmented reality in retailing offers an unconventional and interactive purchasing experience that could significantly change consumer behaviour, particularly among the tech-savvy Generation Z cohort (Riar et al., 2022). Given the growing body of literature on AR in retail, there is a clear gap in understanding its unique implications on purchase intention within the South African environment, particularly for Gen-Z customers (Fan et al., 2020). By concentrating on this group, the study addresses the need to investigate how AR technology can be exploited to optimise retail tactics and generate sales (Lavoye, 2023). The outcomes of the investigation present valuable information to retail establishments seeking to engage with and attract Gen-Z shoppers, who are recognized for possessing distinct buying tastes and exceptionally high expectations for digital experiences (McLean & Wilson, 2019). Furthermore, this study will contribute to the understanding of the digital revolution within retail and its effects on consumer involvement (Sozer, 2021; Yoo, 2023). Considering the rapidly evolving capabilities of AR technology and its ability to transform the retail sector, this study is both modern and paramount (Heller et al., 2024). This research aims to address the missing knowledge by investigating the relationship between AR technology, purchase intention, and Gen-Z consumer behaviour in South Africa. The findings of this research will not only elevate academic knowledge but will have implications for retailers intending to break new ground to stay competitive in a progressively digital world (Hoffmann & Mai, 2022).

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