



The Effect of Hedonic Motivation in E-Commerce Platforms on Purchase Intention among Working Millennials in the UAE

Chloe Valdez Nisperos¹, Humera Siddiqi², Dr. Ain Bemisal Alavi³, Angeleena Yalamanchili⁴ & Muhammad Junaid⁵

^{1,2,3,4}Business and Management, Bath Spa University - RAK Campus, UAE, Email: chloednise@gmail.com, humera@bathspa.ae, ain@bathspa.ae, angeleena@bathspa.ae

⁵Quaid-i-Azam School of Management Sciences, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan, Email: junaid@qau.edu.pk

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Corresponding Author:

Humera Siddiqi

Email:

humera@bathspa.ae

ABSTRACT

This study examines how hedonic motivation, the enjoyment and pleasure derived from using digital retail platforms, influences purchase intention among working Millennials in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), with life satisfaction proposed as a mediator. The study addresses an important gap, as e-commerce is central to the UAE's digital economy, yet the psychological mechanisms shaping Millennial purchasing behaviour remain underexplored in the GCC. A positivist, deductive approach was adopted using a quantitative, cross-sectional survey. Purposive sampling targeted working UAE Millennials aged 30–45 who actively use platforms such as Amazon.ae, Noon, Shein, and Temu. Data were collected through an 11-item questionnaire incorporating validated measures of hedonic motivation, life satisfaction, and purchase intention. Of 153 responses received, 151 were valid. All scales demonstrated strong internal reliability (hedonic motivation: $\alpha = .93$; life satisfaction: $\alpha = .89$; purchase intention: $\alpha = .95$). Pearson correlations showed significant positive relationships among hedonic motivation, life satisfaction, and purchase intention (all $p < .001$). Mediation analysis using Baron and Kenny's four-step procedure, supported by the Sobel test ($z = 3.16$, $p = .002$), confirmed that hedonic motivation significantly predicted both life satisfaction and purchase intention, while life satisfaction also significantly predicted purchase intention. Life satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between hedonic motivation and purchase intention, and the final model explained 60% of the variance in purchase intention. The study extends UTAUT2 by incorporating a wellbeing mechanism, provides evidence from the UAE context, and offers practical guidance for e-commerce platforms seeking to enhance consumer engagement and purchasing intention among Millennials.



1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

The digital retail industry across the world has experienced unprecedented changes in the last ten years, with e-commerce becoming one of the key areas of consumer behavior. In the UAE, about 99% of the population owns a mobile device (Statista, 2024). Because of this, the country is one of the highest in the world in regards to smartphone penetration. E-commerce revenues are currently estimated at exceeding USD 9 billion by 2026. This rapid growth is due to the Government's heavy investment in e-commerce. E-commerce has been identified as a priority to achieve the country's sustainable development goals as part of the UAE's National Strategy for the Digital Economy (UAE Ministry of Economy, 2022). Given these considerations, the development of e-commerce will not only change various dynamic social and economic relationships that exist today, but also provide background for the most efficient national development processes of e-commerce as an online platform. This emphasis makes it highly applicable to study the evolution of consumer behavior when it comes to purchasing online.

Within this context, the Millennial cohort, individuals born between 1981 and 1996 (Pew Research Center, 2019), occupies a position of particular analytical importance. Millennials constitute the largest segment of the UAE's active workforce and account for a disproportionately high share of e-commerce transactions. They are distinguished not only by their digital nativity but by a generationally distinct orientation toward consumption: whereas preceding generations prioritised functional utility and product ownership, Millennials have been consistently documented as placing greater value on experiential quality, platform enjoyment, and the affective dimensions of the shopping process (Bilgihan, 2016; Hwang and Mattila, 2019). This generational shift renders the hedonic dimensions of e-commerce platforms, the fun, entertainment, and pleasure derived from browsing and interacting with digital retail environments, particularly salient as antecedents of purchasing behaviour among this demographic.

Hedonic motivation, formally defined within the technology acceptance literature by Venkatesh, Thong and Xu (2012) as the enjoyment or pleasure derived from using a technology, has been established as a significant predictor of behavioural intention across a range of digital contexts. However, the psychological pathway through which hedonic platform experiences translate into purchase intention remains underspecified in the existing literature. This study proposes that life satisfaction, an individual's global cognitive evaluation of their own quality of life (Diener et al., 1985), functions as a mediating variable in this relationship. This theory is based on hedonic psychology. Behaviors on a platform may improve a person's sense of well-being. When a person's psychological well-being is improved, they can become more willing to spend and more likely to make a purchase.

1.2 Research Problem and Rationale

Despite the theoretical appeal of this mediated model, empirical evidence remains absent. Several limitations in the existing literature motivate the present inquiry. First, and most critically, virtually all hedonic motivation research in e-commerce has been conducted in Western or East Asian contexts, primarily the United States, the United Kingdom, South Korea, and China, which differ from the UAE in fundamental ways. The UAE's consumer market is characterised by a large expatriate majority (approximately 88% of the population), a collectivist cultural orientation that coexists with high individual digital engagement, and a uniquely advanced logistics infrastructure that includes one-hour delivery services such as Noon Now (Statista, 2024). These contextual specificities inhibit the findings from Western samples from being directly transferable and present a significant gap in the literature.

Second, while hedonic motivation has been linked to purchase intention in prior studies (Hew, Lee, Ooi and Wei, 2015; Overby and Lee, 2006), the psychological mechanisms mediating this relationship have rarely been tested. The construct of life satisfaction, well established in positive psychology (Diener et al., 1985; Lyubomirsky, King and Diener, 2005), has not been examined as a mediator between hedonic platform motivation and purchase intention in a digital retail context. This represents both a theoretical gap and an opportunity to integrate the positive psychology and consumer behaviour literatures in a novel and empirically testable way.

Third, working Millennials specifically, as distinct from the broader adult population have received insufficient attention as a study population in UAE e-commerce research. Their combination of disposable income, digital sophistication, and experience-oriented consumption makes them an ideal population for examining the hedonic dimensions of online purchasing, and their underrepresentation in existing GCC-focused studies constitutes an empirical gap this study directly addresses.

1.3 Research Question and Objectives

1.3.1 Main Research Question

How does hedonic motivation experienced when using retail and e-commerce platforms influence purchase intention among working Millennials in the UAE?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study makes contributions at three levels. Theoretically, it extends the UTAUT2 framework (Venkatesh, Thong and Xu, 2012) by incorporating a wellbeing mediator: life satisfaction, into the relationship between hedonic motivation and behavioural intention, introducing a psychological depth that existing technology acceptance models do not accommodate. It bridges the positive psychology and consumer behaviour literatures further, in a way that has practical implications for understanding how platform experiences shape purchasing decisions beyond the immediate transactional moment.

Contextually, this study presents the first empirical foundation for the development of this mediated model in the UAE e-commerce scene, an economically significant market, yet is academically underrepresented. This satisfies the demand for an improved geographic representation in digital consumer research, as noted by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019). Additionally, according to the UAE National Strategy for Digital Economy (UAE Ministry of Economy, 2022), research aimed at building a data-based comprehension of the motives driving digital consumer behavior aligns with the country's initiatives to develop e-commerce.

Practically, if life satisfaction does mediate the relationship between hedonic motivation and purchase intention, it points to the potential opportunities for e-commerce players that are active in the marketplace to experience a notable change in customer purchasing behavior by investing in an affective experiential online platform that improves the general online experience beyond transactional efficiency. Given the size of Millennial participation in the UAE digital retail space, these findings are of immediate practical importance to platform developers and e-commerce marketers in the region.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Hedonic Motivation: Theoretical Foundations

2.1.1 The Utilitarian–Hedonic Distinction

The conceptual distinction between utilitarian and hedonic motivation has been foundational to consumer behaviour research since the 1980s. Utilitarian motivation refers to the cognitive, goal-directed, and efficiency-oriented dimensions of a consumption experience, the degree to which a product or service fulfils a functional need (Babin, Darden and Griffin, 1994). In contrast, hedonic motivation concerns the pleasurable, fun, exciting, and stimulating elements of consumption. This involves the positive emotions that is associated with shopping or using a platform, regardless of any consumption results. (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003; Babin, Darden, and Griffin, 1994).

This differentiation bears specific significance in the analysis of digital retail. Initial connotations of technology acceptance focused on perceived usefulness and ease of use with respect to adoption.

Examples of their early development are captured by Davis's (1989) Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the first version of the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) by Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, and Davis (2003). Despite the high predictive capacity of these models regarding workplace technology, their applicability to hedonic consumption environments such as online retail was limited. Childers, Carr, Peck and Carson (2001) were among the first to demonstrate empirically that hedonic motivations operate as independent and significant predictors of online shopping behaviour, a finding that challenged the utilitarian assumptions embedded in earlier acceptance models. The partial explanatory failures of TAM in leisure and entertainment technology contexts further underscored the need for a model that explicitly incorporated affective drivers (van der Heijden, 2004).

2.1.2 Hedonic Motivation in UTAUT2

To address this theoretical gap, Venkatesh, Thong and Xu (2012) developed UTAUT2, which built upon UTAUT's framework and included three additional constructs regarding consumer-facing technologies, namely, hedonic motivation, habit, and price value. Of these additions, hedonic motivation, operationalised as the fun or pleasure derived from using a technology, demonstrated one of the strongest and most consistent effects on behavioural intention, explaining variance beyond what utilitarian predictors could account for. Crucially, Venkatesh, Thong and Xu (2012) found that hedonic motivation moderated the effect of other UTAUT2 constructs, suggesting it functions not merely as an additive factor but as a psychologically prior orientation shaping how users interpret and respond to other platform attributes.

However, it is important to engage critically with the scope conditions of Venkatesh, Thong and Xu's (2012) findings. The UTAUT2 validation was conducted using a large-scale panel from the United States and Hong Kong, two contexts characterised by relatively individualist consumer cultures and mature e-commerce infrastructure. The model's cross-cultural generalisability to collectivist, emerging, or hybrid market contexts such as the UAE has not been empirically verified. Research in cross-cultural consumer psychology consistently demonstrates that the relative weighting of hedonic versus utilitarian motivations varies across cultural contexts (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2011; Hofstede, 2001). In collectivist cultures, social approval and peer influence may interact with hedonic motivations in ways not captured by a model validated exclusively in individualist settings, suggesting that UTAUT2 effect sizes in the UAE context may differ meaningfully from those reported in Western samples.

2.1.3 Hedonic Motivation and Millennial Consumers

The theoretical salience of hedonic motivation is heightened when Millennials are the population focus. Research shows that there is a generational shift in consumer purchasing. Baby Boomers and Gen X consumers focus on product utility, quality, and value; but Millennials focus on the quality of the shopping experience, product display, and the emotions that arise when making a purchase (Bilgihan, 2016; Hwang and Mattila, 2019). This is a functional response to the context of the Millennials where the focus on the social aspect of technology shaped the consumer experience expectation as a place of engagement and not a utility. This is because Millennials have been brought up during the emergence of digital platforms that prioritize entertainment and social connection, which influenced their inclinations to see digital environments as experiencing rather than merely functional.

This generational orientation has direct implications for e-commerce behaviour. E-commerce platforms such as Noon and Shein deploy gamified interfaces with curated visual feeds, countdown flash sales, and personalized browsing that creates and foster engagement for their users. For Millennial users, such a browsing experience holds an intrinsic value that becomes a form of entertainment or leisure activity rather than a goal-directed task. This renders hedonic motivation a more central, rather than peripheral, determinant of their purchasing behaviour relative to older consumer cohorts.

2.2 Prior Empirical Evidence: A Critical Comparative Analysis

Hedonic motivation and consumer purchase intention have been shown to relate to each other across various digital commerce contexts. In an online retail context, Overby and Lee (2006) found that hedonic value had a positive purchase intention and showed an independent, positive predictive relationship with a standardized coefficient of $\beta = .31$. Finding that hedonic motivation was the most reliable predictor of mobile purchase intention ($\beta = .47$) that was also greater than performance expectancy and social influence, Lee, Ooi, Wei, and Hew (2015) also found value of mobile commerce adoption in Malaysia. Although the reported results of the value of social commerce intention and information sharing behaviors in Kim's (2015) study were also less pronounced compared to those reported by Hew et al. (2015), hedonic values and related social commerce intention also predict social commerce platform intent and usage in South Korea.

Critical analysis of this evidence base indicates significant limitations. The inconsistency of effect sizes across these studies, ranging from modest to strong, suggests that the magnitude of the hedonic motivation–purchase intention relationship is moderated by contextual factors that existing studies have not systematically examined. Overby and Lee (2006) studied a general United States adult online shopping sample; Hew et al. (2015) examined mobile app users in Malaysia; Kim (2015) focused on social commerce platform sharing in South Korea. Each of these contexts differs in platform type, cultural orientation, and consumer demographics, yet no study has examined whether these contextual differences systematically explain the variance in reported effect sizes. This analytical gap limits the cumulative theoretical value of the extant literature.

Furthermore, the geographical distribution of this evidence base is strikingly narrow. Not a single study in the mainstream UTAUT2-linked hedonic motivation literature has been conducted in the GCC or UAE context. Venkatesh, Thong, and Xu (2012) validated the UTAUT2 model in the context of various global samples. In the UAE, the digital economy is complex and sophisticated; limited literature examine the connection between hedonic drive and well-being indicators, such as life

satisfaction. The mediation process of how hedonic motivation leads to purchase intention has been overlooked in the literature. In suggesting life satisfaction as the mediator of the effect, the current study aims to provide theoretical underpinnings for how the psychological link between platform enjoyment and purchase intent occurs.

2.3 Life Satisfaction: Theoretical Foundations and Relevance

2.3.1 Conceptualisation and Measurement

Satisfaction with life is one of the most researched aspects of subjective well-being. According to Diener et al. (1985), life satisfaction is a cognitive-judgmental process in which people evaluate the general quality of their lives using their own and self-determined criteria. This definition distinguishes life satisfaction from affective components of subjective well-being (such as positive and negative affect) by emphasising its reflective, evaluative nature: it represents a summary judgement of how well one's life circumstances compare with one's aspirations and standards. The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS), developed by Diener et al. (1985), operationalises this construct through five items and has been found to have excellent psychometric qualities among a wide range of demographics, which includes a strong convergent and discriminant validity and high internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha generally $\alpha = .80-.89$) (Pavot and Diener, 1993).

2.3.2 Life Satisfaction, Hedonic Experience, and Wellbeing

Positive psychologists focus on the link between hedonic experience and life satisfaction. In the meta-analysis of 225 studies, Lyubomirsky, King, and Diener (2005) found statistically important evidence that the emotional side of hedonic experience, positive affect, is a big predictor of life satisfaction, resulting in a mean effect size of $r = .44$. Diener (2000) claims that within the confines of objective life conditions, individuals that have a greater number of positive and pleasurable experiences claim a higher level of life satisfaction. Self-determination theory developed by Ryan and Deci (2000) adds depth to the analysis—hedonic wellbeing that results in increased life satisfaction is attained by engaging in activities that satisfy the intrinsic needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy.

2.3.3 Life Satisfaction and Consumer Behaviour

Studies in this field have confirmed that greater life satisfaction is characterized by diminished loss aversion and psychological barriers to spending, and increased tolerance of discretionary spending (Lyubomirsky, King, and Diener, 2005). Increasing consistency with Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions, positive emotions broaden the individual's cognitive and behavioral options, and are associated with approach behaviors, including spending. Transferring this notion to e-commerce, positive affect is generated by hedonic platform motivation, which positively affects the individual life satisfaction, and subsequently reduces psychological spending barriers and increases intention to spend.

2.4 The Mediating Role of Life Satisfaction: A Critical Justification

The main theoretical advancement of this study proposes that life satisfaction acts as a mediator in the relationship between hedonic motivation and purchase intention. For a mediation claim to stand, the researcher must elaborate the temporal order of the variables, as well as the mechanism in which the independent variable brings change to the mediator, and the process in which the mediator influences the dependent variable (Baron and Kenny, 1986).

The temporal order of the proposed model holds in a theoretical sense. For the purposes of this model, hedonic motivation is viewed as a precursor disposition of platform usage. Hedonic motivation is seen as representing the user's directing disposition toward platform usage. Over a

period of time, the platform of interest is experienced in a hedonic way; these contribute to the individual's lifetime satisfaction. Life satisfaction, in this theoretical construct, enhances purchase intention through the psychological constructs explained in Section 2.4.3 of this paper. Such a relational order of constructs of a given model is consistent with the existing paradigms that explain the relational constructs of hedonic experience, subjective well-being, and its resultant behaviour (Fredrickson, 2001; Lyubomirsky, King and Diener, 2005).

The proposed mediation does have a noticeable limitation. The SWLS takes a 'snapshot' of a person's perception of their life and how satisfied they are with it. Using the SWLS to describe their life satisfaction becomes problematic because life satisfaction as a cognitive construct is more stable than it is transient. One would have a much better chance of measuring a shift in these individuals' satisfaction through repeated engagement with the e-commerce platform, rather than through a one-time e-commerce platform engagement. The mediation is proposed to operate at the trait level. Over a long span of time, it is plausible that they would develop a tendency toward greater purchase intention because they report higher life satisfaction, as a result of greater hedonic motivation in their e-commerce engagement. It should be noted that this longitudinal mechanism cannot be directly tested within the cross-sectional design of the present study, which represents a noted methodological limitation detailed in Chapter 3.

2.5 Purchase Intention: Conceptualisation and Prior Research

According to Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal (1991), purchase intention is the eventual likelihood of a consumer performing a purchase of the goods or services defined in the purchase offer. It is one of the widely studied models in marketing research. It is established as an immediate, and reliable predictor of real shopping behaviour (Pavlou and Fyngenson, 2006). Consumers undertaking research indicate an increase in the intent to purchase a digital shopping service platform, despite the presence of utilitarian factors like price and convenience, the overall hedonic enjoyment of the digital shop is relevant (Overby and Lee, 2006).

Gap of intention behaviour is a situation in which an individual (Pavlou and Fyngenson, 2006) expresses high intent to buy a good or service offer from a vendor, yet they fail to follow the logical step of making the intended purchase. It is relevant in the hedonic shopping context because browsing enjoyment is positively associated with the overall degree of intent to purchase a product, however, it does not convert into tangible sales. Gap of intention behaviour is an abstract metric to potentially justify the shortcomings of hedonic shopping behaviours. It is arguably the standard metric to measure in striving to achieve the pre-purchase stage of research.

2.6 The UAE E-Commerce Context and Millennial Consumers

The UAE represents a distinctive and commercially significant context for this inquiry. With a population of approximately 9.9 million, where an estimated 88% of the population are expatriates originating from more than 200 nationalities (Statista, 2024), the UAE's consumer market defies straightforward cultural classification. Its e-commerce ecosystem is characterised by exceptionally high adoption rates, a competitive multi-platform landscape dominated by Amazon.ae, Noon, Shein, and Temu, and an advanced logistics infrastructure that includes same-day and one-hour delivery services unavailable in most markets where hedonic motivation research has been conducted. This infrastructure detail is theoretically significant. The compression of delivery time to as little as one hour transforms the e-commerce purchase from a delayed-gratification transaction into a near-instantaneous consumption experience. For hedonic shoppers, this means the pleasure of the browsing and purchase decision is followed almost immediately by the pleasure of receipt, potentially amplifying the total hedonic reward associated with the platform interaction. Existing studies, conducted in markets with standard two-to-five day delivery windows, cannot

capture this amplified hedonic mechanism. The UAE context may therefore produce stronger hedonic motivation effects than those documented in Western literature.

2.7 Critical Synthesis and Research Gaps

This section identifies three related gaps that justify the current study. The geographical gap: almost all research on hedonic motivation in e-commerce occurs in the West or East Asia. The GCC region is almost entirely excluded, and the phenomena concerning other regions cannot be researched in a vacuum. The applicability of findings to the consumer context of the UAE cannot be postulated without empirical ascertainment (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).

The mediating gap of the psychological process of e-commerce users: hedonic motivation among e-commerce users has been linked to the motivation to purchase, and the mediating psychological process has been omitted altogether. The available research on the subject regard this linkage as a direct relationship and are completely unaware of the possible mediating variables of the psychological state of wellbeing, and life satisfaction and hedonic motivation in the GCC region. The demographic specificity gap: the working populace of UAE's Millennials has not been treated as a distinct demographic group in the e-commerce hedonic motivation research, despite the Millennials' demographic orientation toward the hedonic dimension of platform attributes, and thus this group, in theory, is the group in which motivation is expected to be most influential.

2.8 Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

The conceptual framework illustrates a mediated model suggesting that hedonic motivation (independent variable) impacts life satisfaction (mediator) and results in the formation of purchase intention (dependent variable) in a direct and indirect manner. This model combines aspects of the UTAUT2 (Venkatesh, Thong and Xu, 2012), the SWLS (Diener et al., 1985), and Dodds, Monroe and Grewal (1991) scale of purchase intention. The visual display of the model is shown in Figure 2.1.

As outlined in Table 2.1, there are three distinct formal hypotheses, designed to test: H1 (hedonic motivation $\rightarrow$ life satisfaction), H2 (life satisfaction $\rightarrow$ purchase intention), and H3 (hedonic motivation $\rightarrow$ purchase intention via a direct pathway), where H3 facilitates the capacity to measure if the type of mediation is either partial or complete (Baron and Kenny, 1986).



Figure 2.1. Conceptual model: Hedonic motivation, life satisfaction, and purchase intention.

Figure 2.1. Conceptual model: Hedonic motivation, life satisfaction, and purchase intention.

Table 2.1. Research hypotheses.

Hypothesis	Relationship
H1	Hedonic Motivation → Life Satisfaction (positive effect hypothesised)
H2	Life Satisfaction → Purchase Intention (positive effect hypothesised)
H3	Hedonic Motivation → Purchase Intention (positive direct effect hypothesised)

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the study's methodological structure. Here, the research philosophy, approach, design, sampling technique, and data collection method are all explained and justified. Each research question and its goals impose their own restrictions, and the informed judgments taken regarding the restrictions have been commented on wherever appropriate. This chapter follows the sequence of Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill's (2019) research onion framework, with philosophical assumptions paving the way to methodological data collection and analysis.

3.2 Research Philosophy

This analysis adopts the positivist stance in research methodology. According to positivist philosophy, reality can exist without the presence of an observer. This allows the researcher to objectively analyze the social realm, generating knowledge through the formulation of hypotheses and analysis of data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). This philosophy fits the analysis as it seeks to gauging the social infrastructure motivations and satisfaction, and intention to buy, and analyze the hypothesized links among forms of measurement. Reliability of measurement and the comparability of results across studies, which the researcher hopes to achieve, advocate the use of validated, standardized scales which are accepted within a positivist framework.

An interpretivist framework was to some extent taken into account. In most cases, interpretivism offers a better-scoped approach to understanding the meanings of different individuals through the subjective experiences they undergo. In most cases, the research employs interviews as a means of data collection. An interpretivist framework would provide informative details about how a section of the Millennial cohort narrate their experiences within the context of e-commerce. Unfortunately, it would neither lead to the statistical analysis of directional hypotheses, nor result in generalizable outcomes to the larger population (Bryman and Bell, 2015). A positivist philosophy stands out as the most coherent epistemological approach to such a study; defined constructs and hypotheses, and the seek to achieve generalizability.

3.3 Research Approach

This study has taken a deductive approach, which works in line with the hypothetico-deductive methodology (Bryman and Bell, 2015). With deductive reasoning, one moves from the theory to the data, which means that the researcher has to derive hypotheses from the theories, here UTAUT2 and the SWLS, and empirically validate those hypotheses. The aim of this study is to converge constructs and relationships that hypothetically must exist from the theory. It is shown in chapter two, the literature reviews widely and consequently proves the existence of the theory and constructs for each of the relationships. An inductive approach creates a theory from the data, which entails that theory constructs would be discovered, which in our case is not the case. The approach is to create a theory by measuring and therefore relationships are created and not discovered.

3.4 Research Design

Two methods describe the survey design of the study as being quantitative and cross-sectional. Given the nature of the research objectives that call for both the measurement of constructs on a standard scale and the use of statistics to be able to substantiate the relationships hypothesized, the use of quantitative techniques is necessary for the study. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), these are the methodologically appropriate tools. The study employs an explanatory approach where beyond merely providing a description of the population hedonic motivation and the population's purchase intention, the study aims to explain the relationship between these two variables and evaluate one of the specific mediating mechanisms.

In a cross-sectional design, data is typically collected from all respondents in a single time period, which is the conventional design in the wider literature on UTAUT2 (e.g., Hew et al., 2015; Venkatesh, Thong and Xu, 2012). A longitudinal design would provide a strong argument for the mediation proposed since life satisfaction is seen as being a relatively stable construct (Pavot and Diener, 1993); however, this was rejected as impractical within the academic calendar constraints of the dissertation. Qualitative methods were excluded for their inability to facilitate statistical hypothesis testing. In addition, given the clarity of the theoretical framework and the presence of validated instruments across the three constructs, mixed methods were deemed superfluous.

3.5 Sampling Strategy and Sample Size

3.5.1 Sampling Method

This research defined a purposive sampling approach. Purposive sampling referred to the choice of participants that have the relevant characteristic to the research focus (Bryman and Bell, 2015). This approach captures the most methodological rigor available for the study because the research frameworks have three overlapping eligibility conditions that the general UAE population randomly sampled would not satisfy.

The participants must be employed in the first place. From a theoretical perspective, the purchase intention construct would be devalued, and participants would not be considered passive, non-productive. A purchase intention construct, in the first place, would not be of much value. Intention would be in the construct, and a working adult would not have comparable purchasing constraint, and therefore, would be a construct, in this context, a relatively employed individual. They must be between the ages of 30 and 45 (i.e. born between 1981 and 1996), when the generationally described hedonic focus was discussed. Third, they must be using e-commerce platforms in the UAE, since platform usage is a primary requirement for the e-commerce purchase hedonic motivation. Purposive sampling is not a method of choice, rather, the not-so-theoretically-valued study lacking a defined constraint interpretation approach is relevant.

3.5.2 Sample Size Justification

The sample size target was 150 respondents, based on three methodological underpinning elements. First, Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2019) state that at least 10 samples are needed per each predictor variable in multiple regression analysis, in order to achieve parameter stability and power. With three constructs in the mediation model, the absolute rule of thumb suggests a sample size of 30. At the same time, Hair et al. (2019) warn that this minimum is applicable only to established models with high expected effect sizes and that a more conservative minimum should be in place when a first-time model is being evaluated in a particular context.

Second, MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West, and Sheets (2002) proved by way of a Monte Carlo experiment that about 150 samples typically ensure power ($1 - \beta \geq .80$) for detecting

mediated effects of moderate size, the plausible effect size range given the theoretical relationships reviewed in Chapter 2. For a model untested in the UAE context, this framework was the more rigorously methodologically appropriate basis for the sample target.

Third, a sensitivity analysis for linear multiple regression with two predictors, assuming a medium effect size ($f^2 = .15$), $\alpha = .05$, and power of .80, was conducted using G*Power 3.1 (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang and Buchner, 2007), which suggested that a sample of 119 participants was the minimum required sample. Therefore, 150 respondents was considered a significant excess of the statistical minimum within the context of this research given that the sample target accounted for possible incomplete responses and the untested context of the study.

A total of 153 responses were collected. After two respondents were excluded for declining to provide informed consent, the final sample was 151 participants. Not only did respondents exceed the target of 150, but the final sample also fulfilled the three parameters of an adequate study sample size. Further, all criteria were fully met for a sample size sufficient to enable the mediation analysis.

3.5.3 Participant Recruitment

Respondents were recruited through a combination of online professional networks and in-person distribution within the target demographic. The survey was distributed to working UAE Millennials (from 30 to 45 years) who frequently use e-commerce. The respondents were recruited in person to ensure that the conditions of eligibility were met. Recruitment was done in professional and social contexts. Google Forms was used to collect the responses in order to preserve anonymity.

3.6 Data Collection Instrument

3.6.1 Survey Instrument Design

Data were collected via a structured and self-administered online questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. The use of an online survey is appropriate for this study population: Millennial e-commerce users are by definition digitally literate and comfortable with online questionnaire formats, and digital distribution minimises the logistical barriers associated with the UAE's geographically dispersed expatriate workforce (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). The questionnaire comprised a demographic screening section (Section A) and a measurement section (Sections B–D) containing 11 validated measurement items in total.

3.6.2 Measurement Instruments

All three constructs were measured using validated Likert-scale instruments from the published literature. Table 3.1 provides a summary of the instruments. The total survey instrument comprises exactly 11 measurement items excluding demographics: 3 items for Hedonic Motivation, 5 for Life Satisfaction, and 3 for Purchase Intention.

Table 3.1. Summary of measurement instruments.

Construct	Source	Items	Scale
Hedonic Motivation (IV)	Venkatesh, Thong and Xu (2012) – UTAUT2	3	5-point Likert
Life Satisfaction (Mediator)	Diener et al. (1985) – SWLS	5	5-point Likert

Construct	Source	Items	Scale
Purchase Intention (DV)	Dodds, Monroe and Grewal (1991)	3	5-point Likert
Total items (excluding demographics)		11	

The Hedonic Motivation scale comprises three items drawn directly from Venkatesh, Thong and Xu (2012): (1) Using retail or e-commerce platforms is fun; (2) Using retail or e-commerce platforms is enjoyable; (3) Using retail or e-commerce platforms is very entertaining. These items show the experiential and emotional aspects of using a platform and enjoying the browsing process, focusing on how appealing the user interface is, rather than the desirability level of the products offered. It's crucial to note that hedonic motivation in this study refers to the platform itself and the browsing experience, not the products that are purchased. This is an important conceptual distinction.

The Life Satisfaction scale comprises the five items from the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985). These five items evaluate the overall quality of life in terms of idealness, situational and personally satisfying, achieved goals, and desired counterfactuals. These scale items have a very high degree of reliability, with a noted range of internal consistency of 0.80 - 0.89 (Pavot and Diener, 1993). The three items of the Purchase Intention scale were developed from the works of Dodds, Monroe and Grewal (1991): (1) I am likely to engage in the purchase of products from these retail or e-commerce platforms in the future; (2) It is likely that I will purchase products from these platforms; (3) I would in fact purchase products from these platforms

3.6.3 Pilot Testing

Before sending out the questionnaire to the study sample, a pilot study was conducted on three to five individuals who belong to the target sample. The pilot study aimed to achieve two objectives. The first objective was to determine the face validity of the survey items, in that each item distinctly captures the intended variable. The second objective was to identify concerns regarding cultural or linguistic clarity in light of the UAE's multilingual, multinational context where nuanced English may be interpreted in various ways by the different expatriate communities.

3.7 Data Analysis Plan

Data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics. The following four procedures were applied:

3.7.1 Reliability Analysis

Using Cronbach's alpha, the internal consistency reliability of the three scales were evaluated. With reference to Nunnally (1978), the alpha coefficient's minimum requirement for research is $\alpha \geq .70$. Each of the three scales completed this requirement, signifying that no item-level revisions were warranted prior to conducting the inferential tests.

3.7.2 Descriptive Statistics

All demographic variables and construct scores were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions. This analysis created a profile of the sample, characterized the response distribution for each construct, and detected possible ceiling or floor effects that would narrow the data range and reduce the efficacy of inferential tests.

3.7.3 Correlation Analysis

For all pairwise relationships between three construct composite scores, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated. This provided initial insights into the expected connections and the strength and direction of the bivariate relationships, before the regression analyses. Moreover, multicollinearity diagnostics were carried out, including tolerance and variance inflation factors. All intercorrelations were below the $r > .85$ threshold suggested by Hair et al. (2019), and no problematic collinearity was found.

3.7.4 Regression and Mediation Analysis

Multiple linear regression was used to test the hypothesised relationships specified in H1, H2, and H3. The mediating role of life satisfaction was tested using the Baron and Kenny (1986) four-step mediation procedure:

Step 1: Purchase intention (dependent variable) was regressed on hedonic motivation (independent variable) to establish the total effect (c path), testing H3 as a total effect. A significant relationship is required to proceed.

Step 2: Life satisfaction (mediator) was regressed on hedonic motivation (independent variable) to establish the a path, testing H1.

Step 3: Purchase intention (dependent variable) was regressed on life satisfaction (mediator), controlling for hedonic motivation, to establish the b path, testing H2.

Step 4: Purchase intention (dependent variable) was regressed on hedonic motivation while controlling for life satisfaction. A reduced or non-significant independent variable coefficient relative to Step 1 indicates partial or full mediation respectively.

The significance of the indirect effect ($a \times b$ path) was assessed using the Sobel test (Sobel, 1982), which provides a formal test of whether the reduction in the independent variable's coefficient is statistically significant. It is understood that Baron and Kenny's (1986) method has been criticized because of the causal inference assumptions in the literature (Hayes, 2013) and has been improved by today's approaches such as Preacher and Hayes's (2004) bootstrapping procedure, which has the benefits of higher statistical power and bias-corrected confidence intervals for indirect effects. While Baron and Kenny's (1986) method will always have a place, it is simplistic and overwhelmingly acceptable for the undergraduate level, and the four steps will be relatively easy to interpret in conjunction with the theoretical model that has been outlined in Chapter 2.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

Established scales from prior published research were used for the three constructs to ensure construct validity. Content validity is bolstered via the scales' theoretical basis found in the literature. Discriminant validity confirmed the presence of unique constructs (no correlation $r > .85$) using an intercorrelation matrix. This lent evidence that the three constructs that the author separates were not overlapping. For mediation effect interpretation, construct overlap is not a concern (Hair et al., 2019). Internal reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha as detailed in Section 3.7.1.

External validity, or how well the findings can be applied to other contexts beyond the initial study, is a noted shortcoming of purposive sampling. This sampling technique not only fails to meet the requirements for presuming a given population, but also constructs the basis for formal statistical sampling (Bryman and Bell, 2015). For this reason, the findings can be seen as pointing within the studied population, as opposed to all the working Millennials in the UAE.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

This research falls within Bath Spa University's ethical framework's simple case. Therefore, we are not handling any vulnerable groups, no sensitive information, or participants who are unaware of the research. Before a data collection began, the Fast Track Ethical Approval Form was sent to the Simple Case portal meeting the module requirement that no data collection may begin without ethical approval.

Before taking the questionnaire, participants were asked to give informed consent. The survey's introduction stated the purpose of the study and the participants were made aware that their involvement was voluntary and that they were allowed to withdraw at any time without penalty. It was also stated that under no circumstances would the researcher's personally identifying information be collected. All data was collected using Google Forms, and a secured vault was made on a password protected Google Drive which only the researcher had access to. Once the project was completed the collected data was to be erased in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR, 2018).

3.10 Limitations of the Methodology

A number of methodological limitations are identified. The cross-sectional design means that the analysis of mediation lacks the ability to demonstrate temporal precedence, although it can demonstrate that the data supports the hypothesized sequence (Bryman and Bell, 2015). The strongest evidence of the mediation temporal dynamics can only be captured by a longitudinal design. The validity of the findings pertaining to the wider population of UAE Millennials remains a limiting factor due to the non-probability purposive sampling. Furthermore, the phenomenon of common method bias is likely to be present due to the use of self-reported measures, which was assessed using Harman's single-factor test; the result and its interpretation are reported in Section 4.5. Lastly, the authors of the research proposal specified that data collection was to be done via the distribution of links across WhatsApp and LinkedIn. Nonetheless, the offline participant recruitment was utilized to comply with participant inclusion, and subsequently, to enhance the quality of the collected data, though the data was still gathered via Google Forms.

4. Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the statistical analysis results that were performed on information gathered from 151 valid survey respondents. Data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics following the sequential analytical plan outlined in Chapter 3. The chapter is organised into seven sections: sample characteristics (Section 4.2), reliability analysis (Section 4.3), descriptive statistics (Section 4.4), correlation analysis (Section 4.5), hypothesis testing (Section 4.6), mediation analysis (Section 4.7), and a chapter summary (Section 4.8). Results are presented objectively throughout; interpretation and discussion in relation to the wider literature are reserved for Chapter 5.

4.2 Sample Characteristics

Table 4.1 presents demographic information for the 151 respondents. The sample demographics were majorly separated into two age groups, which accounted for the majority of respondents: 30-34 years ($n = 60$, 39.7%) and 40-45 years ($n = 58$, 38.4%). The 35-39 age group had the fewest responders ($n = 33$, 21.9%). The sample had a broad gender representation. Males comprised 52.3% ($n = 79$) and females 45.7% ($n = 69$). Gender non-conforming respondents were 3 (2.0%). The respondents in full-time ($n = 141$, 93.4%) and part-time employment ($n = 10$, 6.6%) gave demographic support for the transaction construct of the purchase intention variable. The sample

was mainly economically active, having the means and ability to spend. Geographically, Dubai was the dominant emirate of residence ($n = 105$, 69.5%), followed by Sharjah ($n = 30$, 19.9%), with the remaining emirates collectively accounting for 10.6% of the sample: Abu Dhabi ($n = 7$, 4.6%), Ajman ($n = 5$, 3.3%), Ras Al Khaimah ($n = 3$, 2.0%), and Umm Al Quwain ($n = 1$, 0.7%).

Table 4.1. Sample Characteristics (N = 151)

Sample Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Age		151	100.0
	30–34	60	39.7
	35–39	33	21.9
	40–45	58	38.4
Gender		151	100.0
	Male	79	52.3
	Female	69	45.7
	Prefer not to say	3	2.0
Employment Status		151	100.0
	Full-time employed	141	93.4
	Part-time employed	10	6.6
Emirate of Residence		151	100.0
	Dubai	105	69.5
	Sharjah	30	19.9
	Abu Dhabi	7	4.6
	Ajman	5	3.3
	Ras Al Khaimah	3	2.0
	Umm Al Quwain	1	0.7
E-Commerce Platform Usage Frequency		151	100.0
	Daily	27	17.9
	Several times a week	44	29.1
	Once a week	34	22.5
	Less than once a week	46	30.5

Note. Percentages may not sum to exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

4.3 Reliability Analysis

Applying Cronbach's alpha, internal consistency reliability was assessed for each of the three measurement scales. According to Nunnally (1978), a minimum coefficient of $\alpha \geq .70$ is required for research purposes, with values above .80 considered as good and above .90 considered excellent. The Hedonic Motivation scale (three items) achieved $\alpha = .93$, as presented in Table 4.2, which indicates an excellent reliability. The Life Satisfaction scale (five items) achieved $\alpha = .89$, indicating good-to-excellent reliability. The Purchase Intention scale also showed excellent reliability, with $\alpha = .95$, from three items. All three scales met the threshold as each was well over the $\alpha = .70$ threshold. Item-level diagnostics did not reveal scales that suffered as a result of poor performing items so deletion of items was not necessary to justify moving on to the inferential testing phase.

Table 4.2. Reliability Statistics

Scale	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Interpretation
Hedonic Motivation (HM)	3	.93	Excellent
Life Satisfaction (LS)	5	.89	Good
Purchase Intention (PI)	3	.95	Excellent

Note. Alpha $\alpha \geq .70$ considered acceptable (Nunnally, 1978).

4.4 Descriptive Statistics

The value of the four composite score scales is represented in Table 4.3. With a mean of 3.78 (SD = 1.04) for the five-point cause scale, it can be interpreted that the working Millennials using the e-commerce platforms in the UAE show HM. The LS mean in the Life Satisfaction composite score was 3.75 (SD = 0.93). This indicates global life satisfaction was in the same range for the Millennials in the UAE. The highest of the three scores, Purchase Intention (PI_mean), was $M = 3.86$ (SD = 1.06). This suggests a similar moderate to high intention to make a future purchase from the e-commerce platforms. The means of all three scores were above the midpoint of 3.00, indicating the Millennials were an engaged and digitally active sample of the population. The standard deviations which ranged from 0.93 to 1.06, denote moderate variances in all three scores. Inspection of the frequency distributions confirmed that no ceiling or floor effects were present: responses were distributed across the full 1–5 range for each construct, and no more than a modest proportion of respondents clustered at either extreme. These distributional characteristics confirm the suitability of the data for inferential statistical analysis.

Table 4.3. Descriptive Statistics for Composite Scale Scores (N = 151)

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Hedonic Motivation (HM)	151	1.00	5.00	3.78	1.04
Life Satisfaction (LS)	151	1.00	5.00	3.75	0.93
Purchase Intention (PI)	151	1.00	5.00	3.86	1.06

Note. All variables measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). SD = standard deviation.

4.5 Correlation Analysis

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed for all pairwise relationships among the three construct composite scores. The results are presented in Table 4.4. Hedonic Motivation and Life Satisfaction were positively correlated with a large effect size ($r = .68$, $p < .001$). Life Satisfaction and Purchase Intention were also positively correlated ($r = .64$, $p < .001$) with a large effect size. The strongest of three pairwise correlations was between Hedonic Motivation and Purchase Intention ($r = .75$, $p < .001$), which reflects a large, positive relationship between enjoyment of the platform and the tendency to purchase. All three assessed correlations surpassed $r = .50$, indicating a strong bivariate effect and predominant support for the postulated correlations prior to regression analysis. The analysis of discriminant validity involved testing if any of the interrelations reached or exceeded the $r = .85$ benchmark, which suggests the presence of significant construct overlap (Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson, 2019). None of the correlations exceeded the mentioned threshold, supporting the assumption that the constructs are distinct, thereby ruling out multicollinearity as a significant concern for interpreting the regression. Hence,

the bivariate correlations support all three postulated directional relationships. As a preliminary assessment of common method bias, Harman's single-factor test was conducted by entering all 11 measurement items into an unrotated principal components analysis and constraining the solution to one factor. The single factor accounted for 64.12% of the total variance, which exceeds the 50% threshold recommended by Podsakoff et al. (2003). This result suggests that common method bias may be present to some degree and should be noted as a limitation of the study. It is acknowledged, however, that Harman's single-factor test is a conservative and widely-critiqued procedure: because it is conducted on items from theoretically related constructs measured on identical Likert scales in a single sitting, a dominant first factor is structurally expected even in the absence of bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The result should therefore be interpreted with caution rather than as definitive evidence of bias.

Table 4.4. Pearson Correlation Matrix (N = 151)

Variable	1. HM	2. LS	3. PI
1. Hedonic Motivation (HM)	—		
2. Life Satisfaction (LS)	.68***	—	
3. Purchase Intention (PI)	.75***	.64***	—

Note. *** $p < .001$. All correlations are significant at the $p < .001$ level (two-tailed). HM = Hedonic Motivation; LS = Life Satisfaction; PI = Purchase Intention.

4.6 Hypothesis Testing

The three hypotheses were tested using Baron and Kenny's (1986) four-step mediation procedure implemented through multiple linear regression in IBM SPSS Statistics. Results for each step are reported in the subsections below.

4.6.1 Total Effect of Hedonic Motivation on Purchase Intention (Step 1) According to Baron and Kenny (1986), step 1 requires significant total effects to be identified before mediation effects can be investigated. In this study, the simple linear regression identified a significant positive total effect on Purchase Intention by Hedonic Motivation ($B = 0.76$, $SE = 0.05$, $t = 13.95$, $p < .001$), where the total effect of Hedonic Motivation accounts for 57% of the variance of Purchase Intention ($R^2 = .57$). This result confirms that the prerequisite for mediation testing is satisfied and that a meaningful direct association exists between platform hedonic motivation and purchase intention in the sample. Results are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5. Simple Regression: Total Effect of Hedonic Motivation on Purchase Intention (Step 1)

Predictor	B	SE	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.97	0.21	4.68	.000
Hedonic Motivation (HM)	0.76	0.05	13.95	.000***

Note. Dependent variable: Purchase Intention (PI_mean). $R^2 = .57$, $F(1, 149) = 194.56$, $p < .001$. *** $p < .001$.

4.6.2 H1: Effect of Hedonic Motivation on Life Satisfaction (Step 2) Step 2 of the Baron and Kenny (1986) procedure tests whether the independent variable significantly predicts the proposed mediator. The simple linear regression of Life Satisfaction on Hedonic Motivation revealed a significant positive effect ($B = 0.60$, $SE = 0.05$, $t = 11.27$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .46$), indicating that for each one-unit increase in Hedonic Motivation, Life Satisfaction increased by 0.60 units. Hedonic Motivation accounted for 46% of the variance in Life Satisfaction. This confirms H1: hedonic

motivation while using e-commerce platforms is a significant positive predictor of life satisfaction among working Millennials in the UAE. The results are displayed in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6. Simple Regression: Effect of Hedonic Motivation on Life Satisfaction (Step 2 — H1)

Predictor	B	SE	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.47	0.20	7.22	.000
Hedonic Motivation (HM)	0.60	0.05	11.27	.000***

Note. Dependent variable: Life Satisfaction (LS_mean). $R^2 = .46$, $F(1, 149) = 127.02$, $p < .001$. H1 supported. *** $p < .001$.

4.6.3 H2 and H3: Direct Effects and Mediation Model (Steps 3 and 4) The Baron and Kenny (1986) steps 3 and 4 were executed by conducting Purchase Intention regressions for both Hedonic Motivation and Life Satisfaction. The results are depicted in Table 4.7. Life Satisfaction significantly increased Purchase Intention in the presence of Hedonic Motivation ($B = 0.27$, $SE = 0.08$, $t = 3.29$, $p = .001$). Hypothesis 2 was demonstrated. Life Satisfaction predicted Purchase Intention with Hedonic Motivation being constant. Hedonic Motivation also positively affected Purchase Intention in the presence of Life Satisfaction ($B = 0.60$, $SE = 0.07$, $t = 8.35$, $p < .001$). Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was also substantiated. The addition of Life Satisfaction to the model offered an increase of the R^2 value of .03, (from .57 in the Step 1 model) which indicates the total model explained 60% of the Purchase Intention variance. The calculation of the total effect in Step 1 ($B = 0.76$) versus the calculation of the direct effect in Step 4 ($B = 0.60$) reflects the extenuating decrease in Hedonic Motivation in the presence of the mediator, which indicates the existence of mediation is present.

Table 4.7. Multiple Regression: Direct Effects and Mediation Test (Steps 3 and 4 — H2, H3)

Predictor	B	SE	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.58	0.23	2.52	.013*
Hedonic Motivation (HM)	0.60	0.07	8.35	.000***
Life Satisfaction (LS)	0.27	0.08	3.29	.001**

Note. Dependent variable: Purchase Intention (PI_mean). $R^2 = .60$, $F(2, 148) = 111.74$, $p < .001$. H2 and H3 supported. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

4.7 Mediation Analysis

The application of the Sobel test (Sobel, 1982) provides a formal means of determining the impact of Hedonic Motivation on Purchase Intention via Life Satisfaction. The indirect effect, calculated as the product of the a path ($B = 0.60$) and the b path ($B = 0.27$), yielded a value of 0.16. The Sobel test determined this value of indirect effect to be statistically significant ($z = 3.16$, $p = .002$) indicating that the condition of upper path from Hedonic Motivation, Life Satisfaction to Purchase Intention is not in the domain of the sampling error. As noted in Section 4.6.3, the direct effect of Hedonic Motivation on Purchase Intention remained statistically significant after the mediator was controlled ($B = 0.60$, $p < .001$), and the Hedonic Motivation coefficient was reduced but not eliminated relative to the total effect ($B = 0.76$ vs $B = 0.60$). These conditions satisfy the criteria for partial mediation as defined by Baron and Kenny (1986). Life Satisfaction therefore partially mediates the relationship between Hedonic Motivation and Purchase Intention: both a significant indirect pathway through the mediator and a significant residual direct pathway from Hedonic Motivation to Purchase Intention operate simultaneously.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion of Findings

5.1.1 H1: Hedonic Motivation and Life Satisfaction

The first hypothesis suggested that the working Millennials of the UAE would experience an increase in life satisfaction from hedonic motivation found in e-commerce platforms. This hypothesis was supported, showing that hedonic motivation was a significant positive predictor of life satisfaction ($B = 0.60$, $p < .001$), accounting for 46% of the variance in life satisfaction ($R^2 = .46$). This result is in agreement with the theory constructed in Chapter 2, which mentioned Lyubomirsky, King, and Diener (2005), and explained that positive affect, which is the emotional aspect of hedonic experience, serves as a predictor for life satisfaction assessments with a mean effect size of $r = 0.44$ from 225 different studies. Therefore, the current result not only replicates but also enriches the positive psychology evidence in the emerging field of digital retail platform business.

Broaden-and-build (Fredrickson, 2001) provides a supportive explanation. Hedonic motivations stimulate positive emotions through pleasurable browsing. Sales and games enhance emotions that help enlarge one's cognitive and emotional skills which can positively boost life satisfaction over time. Evidence here ($B = 0.60$) shows a sizable relationship that is impressive because life satisfaction is a stable, trait-bound construct and difficult to shift, especially when scaled by SWLS (Diener et al, 1985). E-commerce enjoyment and life satisfaction explains a significant and, as the evidence suggests, a more permanent psychological relationship, more than what has been explained in contemporary consumer behavior models. Additionally, it is a more complex way of looking at hedonic platform motivation as it accounts for 46% of the variance in the life satisfaction scale. In the UTAUT2, the only evidence that has probed hedonic motivation, is examining life satisfaction as a potential outcome, rather than behavioral intention. This evidence alone provides a fresh, novel, and inclusive way of looking at the UTAUT2 to reach life satisfaction.

5.1.2 H2: Life Satisfaction and Purchase Intention

The second hypothesis posited a positive association between life satisfaction and intention to purchase, controlling for hedonic motivation. This hypothesis was substantiated. Here, life satisfaction was a statistically significant positive indicator of purchase intention, holding hedonic motivation at a certain level ($B = 0.27$, $p = .001$). This was the first instance to empirically confirm that life satisfaction can be a predictor of intention to purchase in the case of the digital retail experience. This relationship was hypothesized in Chapter 2 but has not empirically tested to this date.

The psychological mechanism of this relationship is in accordance with the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2001) and the research of Lyubomirsky, King, and Diener (2005). This research showed that positive affect and life satisfaction are associated with diminished loss aversion and an increased willingness to expenditure. Regarding consumers, people that have a more positive overall evaluation of their life situation are more inclined to spend purchasing something, in a psychological sense. This is because the anticipated burden of a spend is less than the burden associated with a positive evaluation of life situation. The $B = 0.27$ coefficient, while certainly less than the effect of hedonic motivation, is, none the less, significant. Even after accounting for all variance attributed to enjoyment of the platform, the implication is that life satisfaction influences purchasing behavior, serving as a genuine facilitating mechanism and not just a correlate of hedonic motivation, which demonstrates the wellbeing hypothesis.

5.1.3 H3: The Direct Effect of Hedonic Motivation on Purchase Intention

The third hypothesis stated that hedonic motivation was likely to have a strong direct effect on purchase intention, independent of any indirect effect through life satisfaction. This hypothesis was affirmed. Hedonic motivation had a strong ($B = 0.60$, $p < .001$) direct effect on purchase intention, and that effect was strong even in the presence of the mediator. Important was that the total effect, before the mediator was introduced, was $B = 0.76$ ($R^2 = .57$) signifying that, in this model, hedonic motivation accounted for the high proportion (57%) of the variance in purchase intention. This effect was stronger than effects found in studies of this type.

Overby and Lee (2006) provide a coefficient of $\beta = .31$ for the hedonic value on purchase intention for a United States adult online shopping sample, while, in a Malaysian mobile commerce sample, mobile purchase intention was found to have a hedonic motivation $\beta = .47$ (Hew et al., 2015). The direct effect in the current study is benchmarked against both of these studies (the standardised effect is noted as $\beta = .59$), where the standardised effect is the product of the unstandardised coefficient and the ratio of standard deviation of the predictor and the outcome ($0.60 \times 1.04/1.06$, where predictor is the outcome and vice versa). This substantiates that the measurements remain standardised in both cases.

Chapter 2 theorised this as the contextual amplification effect, due to the Noon Now service (1-hour delivery) creating a perfect empirical closure in the UAE for the lag time of the hedonic purchase intention and the gratification of the purchase, and as a result, feeding the hedonic incentive of the purchase. Western and East Asian sample populations do not exhibit this mechanism (e. g. studies that have been conducted). The study result, therefore, provides empirical support for the contextual amplification argument advanced in Section 2.7, in that the hedonic motivation mechanics of the UAE online shopping markets are, in fact, beyond the existing literature.

5.1.4 Partial Mediation: Integrating the Complete Model

From the results of the study, the role of life satisfaction as a mediator in the relationship of hedonic motivation and purchase intention was evident. The direct hedonic influence to motivation on intention was reduced when life satisfaction was introduced as a mediator (from $B = 0.76$ to $B = 0.60$).

The effect of this pathway remained strong both statistically ($p < 0.05$) and practically. The indirect well-being effect of life satisfaction on purchase intention from hedonic motivation was significant at an indirect effect = 0.16, Sobel $z = 3.16$, $p = .002$. Including both direct and indirect pathways as relationships, the final model accounted for 60% of the change in purchase intention ($R^2 = .60$) compared to 57% of the change accounted for by hedonic motivation alone.

Hedonic motivation explains only part of the effect. This also means there are at least two psychological mechanisms of the relationship of hedonic platform engagement to purchasing behavior. The first is a direct affective pathway whereby enjoyment of platforms results in positive affective arousal and an approach tendency to behavior, subsequently increasing purchase intention. This is proposed by Childers et. al. (2001) and operationalized by Venkatesh et. al. (2012) in their model of UTAUT2. The second pathway is a well-being indirect effect. Empirical results show that enjoyment of platforms enhances life satisfaction, reducing consumers' psychological reluctance to purchase and increasing intention to purchase over time. However, both pathways also function simultaneously.

Therefore, the purpose of UTAUT2 and Childers et al. (2001) is to detect the immediate transaction function, life satisfaction, and the hedonic systems functioning of platforms on

consumer purchase behavior. According to Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2019), an R^2 value of 0.60 indicates a strong consumer behavior model. Consequently, the three-construct model can effectively explain the purchase intention for UAE Millennials.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

This study extends UTAUT2 by demonstrating that hedonic motivation is associated not only with purchase intention but also with life satisfaction. By integrating technology acceptance research with positive psychology, it identifies life satisfaction as a psychological mechanism connecting enjoyable platform experiences with consumer behaviour (Diener et al., 1985; Venkatesh, Thong and Xu, 2012).

The study also provides evidence from the UAE, an underexamined but highly digitalised e-commerce context. The findings confirm that hedonic motivation remains relevant within a market characterised by high smartphone penetration, digitally engaged consumers, and advanced delivery infrastructure. Finally, the significant partial mediation supports the broader argument that enjoyable digital experiences may influence purchasing intentions through both direct and wellbeing-related pathways.

5.3 Practical Implications

The findings suggest that e-commerce platforms should invest in gamification, personalised browsing, visually appealing interfaces, and other emotionally engaging features. Such features can directly strengthen purchase intention while also contributing indirectly through improved life satisfaction.

For UAE policymakers, the results support continued investment in consumer-oriented digital infrastructure under the National Strategy for the Digital Economy. The model explained 60% of the variance in purchase intention, indicating that platform experience represents an important component of digital-market growth alongside price, convenience, and delivery efficiency.

5.4 Limitations

The cross-sectional design limits causal and temporal conclusions, particularly because life satisfaction is relatively stable and may be influenced by cumulative rather than immediate platform experiences. Longitudinal research is therefore required to establish the proposed sequence more convincingly.

Purposive sampling also limits generalisability, particularly because respondents were concentrated in Dubai and Sharjah. In addition, all variables were self-reported. Harman's single-factor test showed that one factor explained 64.12% of the variance, meaning common method bias cannot be excluded. Finally, purchase intention was measured instead of actual purchasing behaviour, creating the possibility of an intention-behaviour gap.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies should use longitudinal or experimental designs to examine whether repeated hedonic platform experiences influence life satisfaction and subsequent purchasing behaviour. Actual transaction data should also be considered instead of relying exclusively on purchase intention.

The model could be tested across Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, and other GCC markets to assess regional generalisability. Further research should also examine delivery speed, generational differences, and alternative mediators such as immediate positive affect, browsing enjoyment, and social identity.

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