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Effects of e-servicescape dimensions on online food delivery services' purchase intention

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ABSTRACT

E-servicescape is the characteristic of the physical environment in a virtual space such as a website or smartphone application. This study aims to examine how the e-servicescape dimensions (aesthetic appeals, layout and functionality, financial security) affect purchase intention mediated by trust and perceived value in the Online Food Delivery Service (OFDS) platforms. A total of 180 OFDS users participated in this study. The data was analyzed using Structured Equation Modeling. The findings revealed that all the e-servicescape dimensions affect trust and perceived value, with the financial security dimension having the strongest effect size on both trust and perceived value. Furthermore, trust and perceived value exhibit a significant relationship with purchase intention. This study contributes to the existing literature on OFDS and e-servicescape. Relevant managerial implications for OFDS platforms and restaurants using OFDS were discussed in this study.

KEYWORDS

e-servicescape; online food delivery services; perceived value; purchase intention

Introduction

The retail distribution channels that were previously only possible through stores and physical interactions have been facing a fundamental shift (Akter et al., 2019). This shift is not exclusive to a particular industry. Instead, its effects are spread across many industries, such as entertainment, publishing, and hospitality. For industries such as entertainment and publishing, the shift in the distribution channel enabled by technologies is followed by the redefinitions of the industry value propositions (Wirtz, 2020). Netflix, for example, was also exposed to this shift and has redefined its value proposition in response. From a company known initially for providing DVDs for sale and rental services, Netflix is currently the largest streaming service provider in the world (Saric & Mikolasik, 2021). The value proposition redefinition is also true for Amazon, initially started as an online book delivery company, Amazon has turned into the largest online shopping site. However, Amazon did not only expand its product selection but also created new values from its original product: the emergence of e-books and audiobooks signals the shift in

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Amazon's main product's value proposition (Pettersen & Colbjørnsen, 2019). These transformations exemplified by Netflix and Amazon show that companies shift their primary product's value proposition due to the digitalization of distribution channels.

However, the shift of value proposition is not possible for every industry. In industries such as hospitality, companies have shifted to more digitalized distribution channels without redefining their primary product's value proposition; the hospitality industry still requires physical interaction to deliver their products and services. The hospitality industry itself covers a broad range of business fields. Food service, lodging, theme parks and attractions, or events and conventions are all considered part of the hospitality industry (Pizam & Shani, 2009). This particular industry has undergone enormous changes in reaching its target customers through technology-enhanced distribution channels. In the hotel industry, a part of the greater hospitality sector, online booking platforms are becoming one of today's most important distribution channels. It was found by previous research that hotel customers can be more loyal to online booking platforms such as Booking.com than to the hotel itself (Cazaubiel et al., 2020). Another part of the hospitality sector, the food industry, is also experiencing the impact and benefits of the modern distribution channels enabled by online food delivery services (OFDS) (Gunden et al., 2020). OFDS is becoming more important today. In 2020, it was reported that the OFDS market size reached the value of $111.32bn, and it is expected to grow further in the future (Koay et al., 2022). In a country that is newly exposed to OFDS, such as Indonesia, OFDS shows substantial growth from $0.98bn in 2017 to $10.81bn in 2023 (Statista, 2023). This shows that today's platform-based OFDS is a unique phenomenon. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic shows that the OFDS sector is becoming an essential sector (S.-H. Lee et al., 2020; Mehrolia et al., 2021). Therefore, OFDS and its electronic distribution channels became the main focus of this study.

While Netflix and Amazon were able to transform the value of their products into electronic forms, the nature of food and beverage products makes the same transformation impossible. Food and beverage providers should focus their attention on improving the distribution channels they have already established. There are various vital aspects of how electronic distribution channels can be improved, especially related to websites and applications, the two main electronic channels to reach end customers (Colombo & Baggio, 2017). Features, personalities, risk and privacy, satisfaction, and trust are some aspects that are often researched in the literature that discusses electronic distribution channels, including in the OFDS literature (Ali et al., 2021; Gupta & Duggal, 2020; Suhartanto et al., 2019).

However, many other aspects need to be investigated further. One particular aspect in which researchers are interested is e-servicescape. In the hospitality industry, especially in the food and beverage sector (*restaurants*),

it has been found that encounters between customers and employees are significantly and systematically affected by the restaurant's servicescape (Kaminakis et al., 2019). Servicescape refers to the physical space where customers and companies interact and deliver services (Huang et al., 2017). This concept is then further adopted in the virtual realm into the e-servicescape, where the layout, design, and other dimensions of a website or application can also be managed to stimulate the desired customer response (Tankovic & Benazic, 2018). E-servicescape has a unique importance in OFDS since customers can interact with a culinary service although they are never physically visited the restaurant. The "ghost kitchen" phenomenon exemplifies this, a new kind of restaurant with no physical environment, and customers may have little to no information about the restaurants (Li et al., 2020).

The present research is focused on the dimensions of e-servicescape and how it can be used to understand the OFDS customer better. Crucial factors such as aesthetics, layout and functionality, financial security, and other relevant factors are the main focus of this research. OFDS key decision-makers can use the findings in this study to optimize their OFDS platform, leading to increased purchase intention. The present research findings are thus important since purchase intention is essential in driving a person's actual consumption behavior, in addition to the limited literature discussing e-servicescape in the OFDS context (J.-H. Lee, 2021).

Literature review

Online food delivery services

Food delivery services have been around for a long time. However, OFDS in the 1990s to 2000s which emphasized direct interaction between customers and restaurants (restaurant-to-customer), is very different from today's OFDS which is mainly facilitated by third parties or platforms (platform-to-customer) (Li et al., 2020). OFDS itself, especially the one using the platform-to-customer distribution mode, can be defined as any food delivery transaction with value for money enabled by portable devices such as smartphones or tablet computers (V. C. S. Yeo et al., 2017). Today, although the restaurant-to-customer mode still exists, the platform-to-customer mode has become the "standard" OFDS. When customers think of food delivery, they tend to think about applications such as Uber Eats, DoorDash, Deliveroo, or Zomato. In certain regions, some OFDS platforms are more popular than others. For example, Grabfood are more dominant in the Southeast Asia region and Baedal Minjok (Baemin) operates in South Korea and Vietnam.

E-servicescape

Servicescape is a concept that describes the built environment in a company that offers services. The emphasis on "built environment" in the definition of *servicescape* is to distinguish servicescape from other concepts that are more difficult for organizations to control, such as the social environment and the natural environment (Bitner, 1992). A servicescape can include various aspects such as exterior and interior design, ambience conditions that include room temperature and noise, and communication tools such as brochures used to interact with customers (Reimer & Kuehn, 2005). In relation to the interaction of service providers with customers, servicescape is considered very important because it can provide signals and form certain perceptions in the customer's mind. This is important because customers in the service sector tend to form an impression or perceptual image of a service provider based on its servicescape (Lin, 2004).

Currently, the research interest in servicescape has increased and even expanded in various directions following the changing business trends and technological advancement. According to a literature review conducted by Mari and Poggesi (2013), several new areas were identified in the academic literature that discussed servicescape. The areas in question include integrating theoretical models from Bitner (1992), the development of the S-O-R model to understand the servicescape deeper, and the virtual servicescape. The most popular emerging area to study is the virtual servicescape, with a total of 14.36% of research found from the entire servicescape research (Mari & Poggesi, 2013).

Virtual servicescape is an alternative term used to describe e-servicescape. Other terms include cyberscape, e-scape, and online servicescape (Dutta, 2020; Jeon & Jeong, 2009). Although there are various terms used to refer to the concept of e-servicescape, they all have the same meaning. E-servicescape itself can be defined as the characteristic of the physical environment in a virtual space such as a website or smartphone application (Wu et al., 2017). Similar to the physical environment of a store or waiting room of a service provider, the layout and design of the user interface on a website or smartphone application can be designed by prioritizing important aspects of consumer behavior such as attractiveness, ease of browsing, and quick access to certain pages or functions (Dutta, 2020).

Hypotheses development

The present research built upon the study done by Harris and Goode (2010) which provided a theoretical foundation for understanding e-servicescape dimensions. Their study continues the work of Bitner (1992) that coined the term "servicescape." Using Harris and Goode (2010) theoretical framework,

this study tries to explore possible relationship between established e-servicescape dimensions and other constructs.

E-servicescape dimensions

There are three main dimensions within both the servicescape and the e-servicescape. In servicescape, these three dimensions are ambient conditions, spatial layout and functionality, and signs, symbols, and artifacts. In e-servicescape, the three dimensions of servicescape were reinvented by Harris and Goode (2010) into aesthetic appeal, layout and functionality, and financial security. Both aesthetic appeal and layout and functionality dimensions were adopted directly from the original servicescape dimensions. However, the signs, symbols, and artifacts dimension have more physical or offline emphasis; thus, Harris and Goode (2010) decided to adopt financial security, which is considered very important in online transactions, as the third dimension.

In Harris and Goode (2010) paper, trust was proposed as the primary mediating variable of the relationship between e-servicescape dimensions and purchasing intentions. Harris and Goode's (2010) study respondents were online shoppers in various sectors. This was aimed at getting a more general picture of e-servicescape's influence on purchase intentions. Based on this study, other researchers who are interested in the influence of the e-servicescape dimension on a different sector, demographics, or technologies have also adopted the Harris and Goode (2010) theoretical framework (Kühn et al., 2015; Tran & Strutton, 2020; Tran et al., 2012; Wu et al., 2017). The present study is interested in enriching what previous studies have found regarding the relationship between e-servicescape dimensions and trust. The effect of e-servicescape on trusts can also be very important in the context of OFDS. This is due to how there are many findings that show the importance of trusts on OFDS (S. F. A. C. M. Yeo et al., 2021; Zhao & Bacao, 2020).

Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1a: *Aesthetic appeal* has a positive and significant effect on the *OFDS platform Trust*.

H1b: *Layout and functionality* have a positive and significant effect on the OFDS trust platform.

H1c: *Financial security* has a positive and significant effect on the OFDS platform *Trust*

Although the theoretical framework developed by Harris and Goode (2010) can provide an adequate understanding of the relationship between servicescape dimensions and other variables, there are still limitations and

opportunities for theoretical novelty. Harris and Goode (2010) stated in their research that additional mediation variables, such as perceived value, could be useful for future research.

Therefore, the subsequent hypotheses are proposed as follows:

H2a: Aesthetic appeal has a positive and significant effect on consumer perceived value of OFDS platforms

H2b: Layout and functionality have a positive and significant effect on consumer perceived value of OFDS platforms

H2c: Financial security has a positive and significant effect on consumers' perceived value of OFDS platforms

Trust

Trust is a person's assessment of the possibility of cooperation with another in the future. The lower a person's confidence level, the more likely they will be to avoid risk and demand a higher guarantee of protection (Ratnasingham, 1998). Trust itself can be applied to a variety of contexts or objects. For example, brand and retailer trusts focus on trust in a brand or store (Zboja & Voorhees, 2006). Trust between individuals or interpersonal trusts is also the focus of research in the field of psychological science (Rempel et al., 1985). In addition to variations in context or object, trusts also have various facets. In previous studies, competence, integrity, and generosity are considered to be the main characteristics of trust (Mayer et al., 1995; Xie & Peng, 2009).

Trust is a fundamental concept, especially in the context of online shopping, where there is uncertainty about information, delivery, and service fulfillment (Komiak & Benbasat, 2004). In addition, trust can also help consumers when they are experiencing choice overload or when there are too many alternatives. This is because trust can reduce the complexity of transactions; a person who believes in a brand or platform does not need to think about uncertain factors (S.-H. Lee et al., 2016). These characteristics of trust prompted previous researchers to investigate the relationship between trusts and purchasing intentions. For example, Ling et al. (2010) have found that trust has a positive and significant effect on purchasing intentions. The same relationship has been found in the context of food delivery (Munikrishnan et al., 2021). Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: Consumer trust in an OFDS platform has a positive effect on their purchasing intentions.

Perceived value

The concept of customer perceived value or perceived value has been an interesting topic to research for a long time. This concept is important because it relates to a business's existence and success (Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007). Perceived value can be understood as a construct consisting of a customer's perception of the benefits received and the sacrifices made during their interaction with a product or service (Sanchez et al., 2006). Perceived value is relevant to wide-ranging contexts, and this construct is often researched in various cases ranging from banking to OFDS (Alves, 2011; Azizul et al., 2019; Roig et al., 2006).

In this study, the perceived value was seen using two perspectives: as a consequence of the e-servicescape dimension and as an antecedent of purchase intentions. Section 2.3.1 described the role of perceived value as a consequent variable. In a previous study, a positive relationship between perceived value and purchasing intentions was found. This is due to how customers have the natural tendency to want to maximize the value they get from a transaction (Ponte et al., 2015). This relationship has also been studied in various cases with consistent findings, namely the positive influence of perceived value on purchasing intentions (Gan & Wang, 2017; Salehzadeh & Pool, 2017; Yuan et al., 2020). In the case of OFDS, the same relationship can also occur; therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Consumer perceived value toward an OFDS platform has a positive effect on their purchasing intentions.

Figure 1 Illustrate the proposed conceptual model used in this study.

Methodology

The study used a *confirmatory factor analysis* (CFA) approach. Existing models were used to confirm what factors could affect the purchasing intentions of OFDS platform users. The study used questionnaires as a research instrument to gather the required data. The questionnaire in this study consisted of two parts. The first part asked about the demographic and behavioral characteristics of the respondents and the second part asked about the six measurable variables with a total of 32 indicators adapted from previous literature (Harris & Goode, 2010; Huang et al., 2017; Tankovic & Benazic, 2018). Variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "I strongly disagree" to "I strongly agree." Sampling was carried out using non-probability sampling with a convenience sampling technique. Respondents needed to be at least 17 years old and have used OFDS platforms. The questionnaire in this study was distributed using online using Google Forms. The *online* form was be

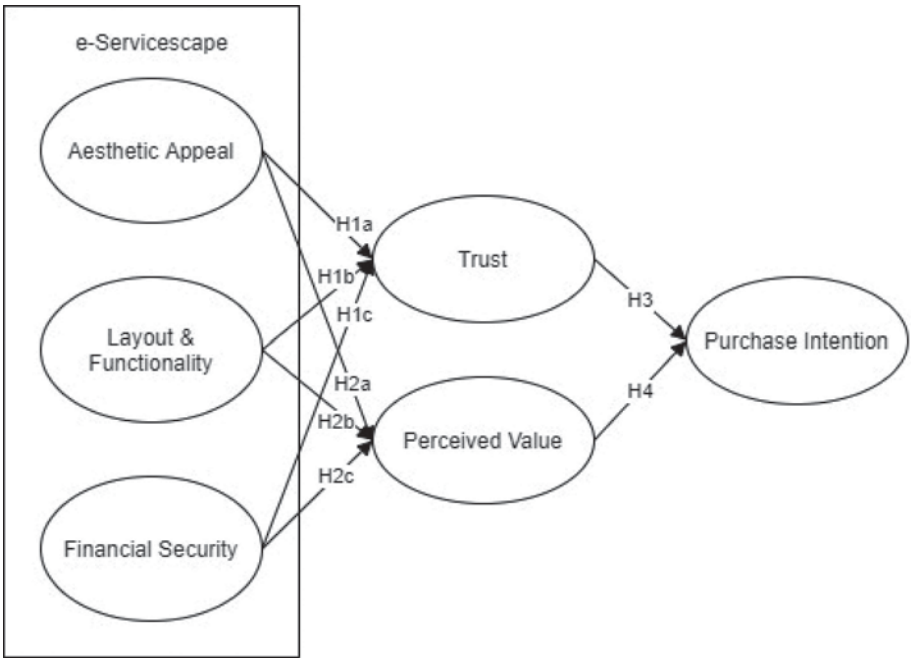

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework.

distributed in March 2022. The collected data was analyzed with *Structural Equation Modelling* (SEM). SEM in this study was conducted with the help of the SPSS AMOS. Eight hypotheses were evaluated. Several tests will be performed to validate the analysis. The first is the data test, in which reliability and convergent validity are tested using measures such as *Cronbach alpha*, composite reliability, and *Average Variance Extracted* (AVE). The rule of thumb for the minimum values of these measures are 0.7, 0.7, and 0.5 in, respectively, for each measurement. The second test is a model test. Several indices, such as *Goodness of Fit (GFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI)*, and *Tucker Lewis Index (TLI)*, are used. The minimum required limit for each parameter are 0.8.

Results & discussion

Respondents' profile and OFDS usage

The distributed questionnaire was filled out by 180 respondents. The distribution of respondents' gender is relatively proportional, with 55.6% female respondents, 42.8% male respondents, and 1.6% prefer not to answer. Respondent's ages are in the range of 16 years old to 36 years old, with an average of 22 years old and a median age of 21 years old. Respondents are spread in terms of geographic location but primarily reside on the island of Java, the most populated island in Indonesia. The highest education level of

the respondents is dominated by a bachelor's degree (65.6% of respondents), followed by a high school degree (21.7% of respondents), and a vocational college degree (11.1% of respondents). The majority of the sample in this study is currently studying (63.9% of respondents), and the rest are employed (16.7%) or an entrepreneur (8.9%).

The majority of respondents have used OFDS for more than one year (65.6%), followed by 17.8% of new users (less than six months of usage) and 6–12 months users (16.7%). The three most used OFDS platforms are GoFood (42.2%), Grabfood (31.7%), and ShopeeFood (25.6%). Our respondents are dominated by casual users, with 84.4% of respondents using OFDS 1–5 times a week. Finally, the most common reason for OFDS usage are discount (80% of respondents), efficiency (74.4% of respondents), avoiding dine-in (55.5% of respondents), ease of payment (46.1%), and the availability of various food products (23.9% of respondents).

Data analysis

Before testing the hypotheses, a set of tests was carried out to ensure the validity and reliability of the data. Table 1 shows the result of these tests. Several measures were used to evaluate the different aspects of reliability and validity. These measures include Factor Loading, Cronbach's α, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Composite Reliability (CR). Factor loadings reflect the strength of linear correlation between indicators or measurement items and the variable. An acceptable threshold for factor loading is 0.5 (Chen, 2008). All indicators used to measure the variables in the present study's model have factor loading that is higher than 0.5, thus exhibiting convergent validity (Khalifa et al., 2020). Cronbach's α measures the reliability of a variable; the acceptable threshold of this measure is between 0.7–0.95 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Every variable used in the present study can be considered reliable since it falls between the recommended Cronbach's α range. AVE and CR measure internal consistency. Both AVE and CR for every variable in this study fulfill the recommended levels, with 0.5 as the minimum threshold for AVE and 0.7 for CR (Martensen et al., 2007). Following tests of reliability and validity, a test of model fit was conducted. Several model fit indices demonstrated that the measurement fit the data relatively well (x^2/d.f = 2.329, RMSEA = 0.091, IFI = 0.810, CFI = 0.808) (W. S. Lee et al., 2021; Rajesh, 2021).

After evaluating reliability, validity, and model fit, tests of hypotheses can be conducted. Figure 2 shows the final result of the hypothesis testing. From the figure, all proposed hypotheses were supported. The e-servicescape dimensions positively affects trust (AA→TR: β = 0.527, $p < .001$; LF→TR: β = 0.276, $p < .001$; FS→TR: β = 0.759, $p < .001$) and perceived value (AA→PV: β = 0.137, $p < .05$; LF→PV: β = 0.175, $p < .01$; FS→PV: β = 0.730, $p < .001$). Furthermore, both trust and perceived value mediate the effect of e-servicescape dimensions

Table 1. Reliability and Validity.

Variable	Item	Factor Loading	Cronbach's α	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Composite Reliability (CR)
Aesthetic Appeal (AA)	AA1	0.59	0.859	0.549	0.853
	AA2	0.50			
	AA3	0.87			
	AA4	0.90			
	AA5	0.77			
Layout & Functionality (LF)	LF1	0.71	0.853	0.555	0.861
	LF2	0.77			
	LF3	0.82			
	LF4	0.63			
	LF5	0.78			
Financial Security (FS)	FS1	0.51	0.772	0.428	0.787
	FS2	0.70			
	FS3	0.74			
	FS4	0.61			
	FS5	0.69			
Trust (TR)	TR1	0.72	0.875	0.441	0.825
	TR2	0.63			
	TR3	0.69			
	TR4	0.63			
	TR5	0.59			
	TR6	0.72			
Perceived Value (PV)	PV1	0.58	0.848	0.476	0.818
	PV2	0.70			
	PV3	0.73			
	PV4	0.73			
	PV5	0.70			
Purchase Intention (PI)	PI1	0.71	0.859	0.493	0.831
	PI2	0.66			
	PI3	0.76			
	PI4	0.74			
	PI5	0.65			

on purchase intention (TR→PI: $\beta = 0.363$, $p < .01$; PV→PI: $\beta = 0.648$, $p < .001$). The R^2 of trust, perceived value, and purchase intention are 0.646, 0.713, and 0.582, respectively. The value of R^2 can be interpreted as the amount of variance explained by the independent variables; the result shows that the model used in this study exhibits a moderate variance explanation power for the dependent variables.

Discussions

This study aimed to explain consumers' OFDS purchase intention using e-servicescape dimensions mediated by trust and purchase intention. The result shows that all the hypothesized relationships were found to be significant, confirming the relevance of e-servicescape dimensions in the context of OFDS. As expected, positive relationships were found between e-servicescape dimensions and trust, which are relatively consistent with the findings of previous studies (Harris & Goode, 2010; Wu et al., 2017); however, there are also differences. In the present study, the strongest effect on trust was from the financial security dimension, which is intuitive since in order for an OFDS

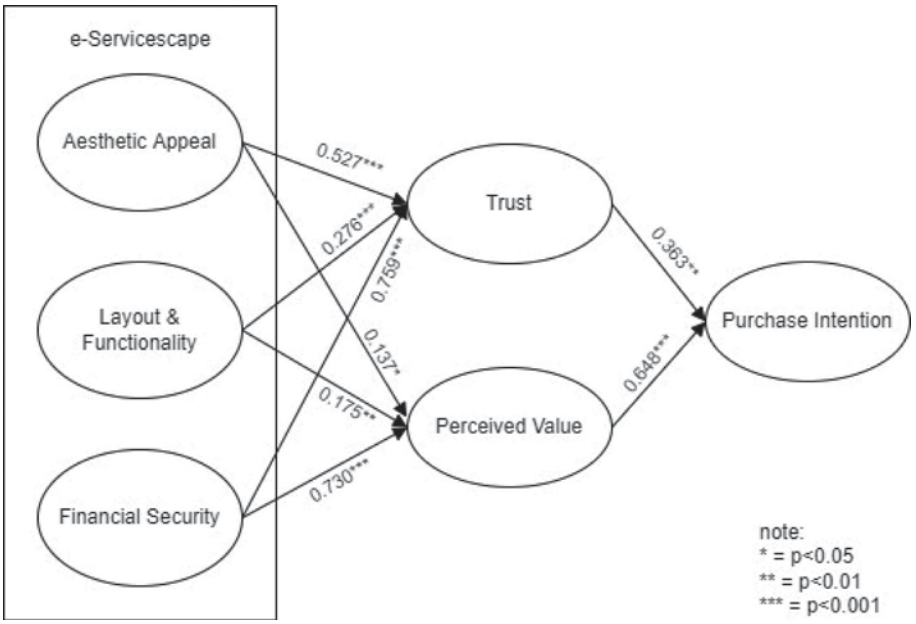

Figure 2. Path Analysis Result.

platform to be trustworthy, the level of security in payment procedures should be adequate. This is different from the findings in (Harris & Goode, 2010; Yadav & Mahara, 2020), which found that the strongest predictor of trust is aesthetic appeal. Since Harris and Goode (2010) and Yadav and Mahara (2020) used a broad range of online shopping sites as the object of their study, this difference in findings can be explained by how the priority on security might vary. A consumer can have a lower priority of financial security when shopping on online groceries site but a higher priority of financial security when shopping for electronics, thus lowering the effect.

Consistent with previous findings, e-servicescape dimensions significantly affect perceived value (A. C. M. Yeo et al., 2021). However, there is also a difference with the finding from research done by Tankovic and Benazic (2018), which found that aesthetic appeal does not have a significant positive effect on perceived value which is distinct from the present study's finding. A possible explanation for this difference also lies in the object studied. Aesthetic appeal can have a more important role in an OFDS context since the products displayed are to be consumed (food and beverage), while on online shopping websites, not all products require a level of aesthetic in their presentation (e.g., medicine and household products); thus, the perceived value can differ. Another difference from previous studies is the difference in the strength of the relationship between the e-servicescape dimensions and perceived value. In (Tankovic & Benazic, 2018) and (A. C. M. Yeo et al., 2021) study, the strongest effect on

perceived value comes from the layout and functionality dimension. However, in our study, financial security has the strongest effect on perceived value. This difference can happen due to various reasons. For example, since our respondents are from a developing country that has lower financial and technological literacy, concerns on the security of digital payments can be higher.

Lastly, from the two mediating variables, perceived value exhibits a stronger impact on purchase intention. This implies that perceived value is an important variable to consider by OFDS platforms and restaurants utilizing OFDS to maximize OFDS consumers' purchase intention.

Practical implication

The findings in this study can be beneficial to OFDS platforms and restaurants utilizing OFDS in terms of managerial decisions. Several strategies can be adopted, referring to the findings in this study. OFDS platforms should place further attention to e-servicescape dimensions such as aesthetic appeal, layout & functionality, and financial security since it would increase trust and perceived value which will directly influence purchase intention. The e-servicescape can be improved by redesigning the platform, improving navigational ease, and optimizing security features, especially related payments (Ali et al., 2021; Kühn et al., 2015; Teng et al., 2018). Since restaurants registered on OFDS platforms are unable to influence the platform's e-servicescape directly, restaurants registered on OFDS platforms can maximize the purchase intention of their consumers by focusing on improving the consumer's trust and perceived value; this could be done by providing consistent quality and ensuring appropriate price value of their products (de Morais Watanabe et al., 2020).

Theoretical implication

The present study broadens the understanding of e-servicescape by developing a conceptual framework that links e-servicescape dimensions to purchase intention mediated by trust and perceived value. This study also contributes to the theoretical development in the field of OFDS, which is still emerging. It is expected in the future that the e-servicescape dimensions in OFDS will spark more interest since many restaurants shifts in their physicality, almost to the point where a physical building is not required. The present study finds that e-servicescape dimensions have greater effects (β) on trust. However, the relationship between perceived value and purchase intention is stronger than that between trust and purchase intention. This study's findings confirm previous research findings and open up the conceptual possibility of e-servicescape as a growing body of research.

Limitations and future research

There are limitations to this study. First, the respondents of this study are dominated by students (65.6%). However, this distribution is relatively consistent with the demographic of Indonesian OFDS users. Generation Z (under the age of 25) and Millennials (25–40 years old) are the dominant users of OFDS (43% and 39%) in a report by Tenggara Strategics (2022). Furthermore, the respondents in this study are relatively diverse in terms of gender, educational background, and geographical location. Secondly, since all of the respondents in this study are from Indonesia, a country with OFDS platforms and technology still newly developing, findings might not be applicable in developed countries' settings. Lastly, though the model in this study is fairly novel, further research could improve the model used in this study by incorporating relevant variables such as those used by studies that have investigated OFDS from various perspectives. Future studies should also consider the technical aspect of e-servicescape, this includes the UI/UX design of OFDS platforms, presentation of products, or different layouts and functionality yet to be explored in the OFDS context.

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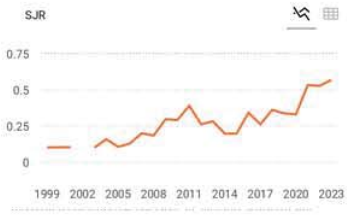

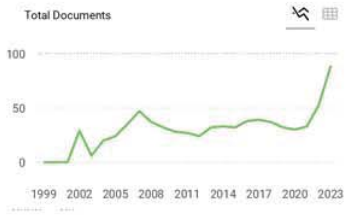

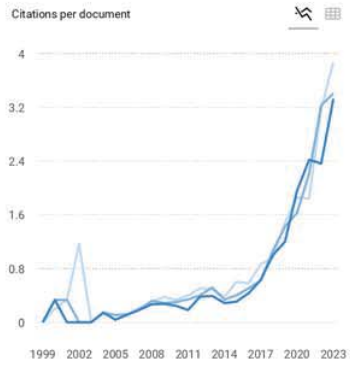

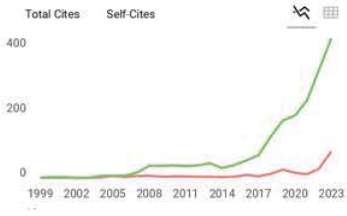

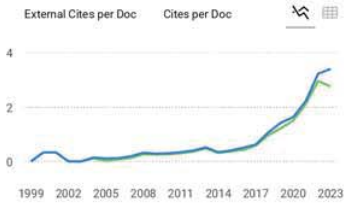

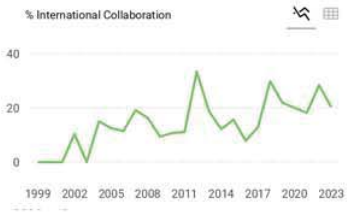

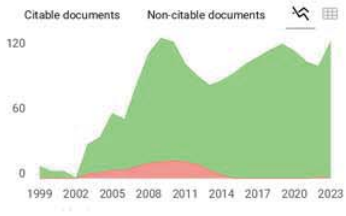

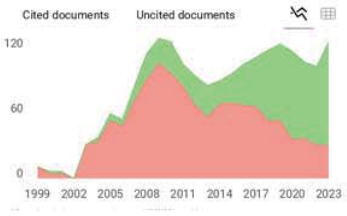

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