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E-service quality, E-trust, and continuance intention in Thai digital marketplaces: The null role of product quality

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ABSTRACT

Thailand's digital marketplace sector has grown rapidly, with platforms such as Shopee and Lazada operating across a mobile-first, multi-seller environment where service quality is central to user retention. Drawing on Expectation–Confirmation Theory (ECT), this study examines how five e-service quality dimensions shape e-trust, and how e-trust and e-satisfaction drive continuance usage intention. PLS-SEM was applied to data from 423 Thai marketplace users. Shipping reliability, delivery time, customer service quality, and website quality positively influence e-trust, whereas product quality does not show an independent effect after other service-quality dimensions are controlled. E-trust strongly predicts e-satisfaction, and mediation analysis confirms that e-satisfaction significantly transmits the effect of e-trust to continuance usage intention. The findings extend ECT within the Thai multi-seller marketplace context by showing that fulfilment reliability and support responsiveness are especially salient for platform-level trust formation in this setting. Practically, the results offer prioritised guidance for platform operators, logistics providers, customer service teams, and UX designers strengthening user trust and retention.

1. Introduction

Digital marketplace applications act as fundamental retail infrastructure by bringing together many retailers, reducing the expenses of searching and completing transactions, and allowing people to shop on mobile phones continuously. On these platforms, the experience of users is shaped not by a specific retailer but rather by how the app organises logistics, information, and support. Delivery times, delivery updates, and customer-service correspondence are not simply activities that transpire in the course of operation — they are recurrent messages between the platform and customers that influence how users view the platform as credible and trustworthy. In multi-seller markets, where some product outcomes are outsourced to third-party sellers, users develop trust judgements based on the degree to which the platform informs and fulfils its promises through fulfilment and support.

Although digital marketplaces are often discussed under the broad label of e-commerce, multi-seller marketplace platforms are theoretically distinct because they operate as intermediary systems that match buyers and sellers while coordinating transactions across multiple

independent actors (Suuronen et al., 2024). In a conventional single-seller online store, the same firm usually exercises more direct control over the website, product assortment, fulfilment process, customer service, and post-purchase recovery. By contrast, multi-seller marketplaces such as Shopee and Lazada coordinate interactions among buyers, independent sellers, logistics providers, payment systems, and platform-based support functions, making service evaluation more complex. Users do not assess only a retailer's product performance; they also assess the platform's ability to organise information, monitor seller conduct, support fulfilment reliability, and resolve problems when failures occur (Do et al., 2023). As a result, trust formation in marketplace settings is shaped by platform-mediated signals of coordination and governance. Delivery updates, return policies, seller ratings, dispute handling, and customer-service responsiveness become theoretically important because they indicate whether the platform can reduce uncertainty across multiple actors (Chan et al., 2022). Therefore, the present study treats Thai digital marketplaces not simply as a national e-commerce context, but as a multi-party platform setting in which e-trust depends on how effectively the platform confirms its role as a

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reliable intermediary.

There is an extremely rapid development of the e-commerce market in Thailand in which Shopee and Lazada take the forefront in online retailing (IMARC Group, 2025; HKTC, 2025). To keep users in this competitive climate, quality delivery, responsiveness to issues, and security of payments are major considerations since satisfaction and loyalty are driven by the quality of services and trust (Iffan et al., 2024; Kim & Peterson, 2017; Kim & Yum, 2024). ECT postulates that users then form expectations, evaluate them against performance, and form satisfaction judgements that underlie continuance usage intention (Bhattacharjee, 2001; Oliver, 1980), and it is confirmed that service quality leads to trust and repeated use (Foroughi et al., 2025).

Prior e-service quality research has established the importance of fulfilment, website quality, and customer service in online shopping environments (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2003; Zeithaml et al., 2002). However, much of this evidence is rooted in general e-commerce or single-provider online retail contexts, where product quality, service quality, and retailer trust are usually attributed to the same firm. This assumption is less appropriate for multi-seller marketplaces because the platform does not directly produce or sell most products; instead, it coordinates seller participation, logistics visibility, payment security, review systems, and post-purchase recovery across multiple independent actors ((Sen et al., 2023; Suuronen et al., 2024). This creates attributional ambiguity: when a product arrives late, differs from its description, or requires a refund, users may not clearly separate seller failure, logistics failure, and platform responsibility.

Existing marketplace-based ECT/EDT studies remain limited because they often explain continuance through expectation confirmation, satisfaction, perceived usefulness, or aggregate service quality, without specifying how e-trust is formed in platform ecosystems (Kim & Yum, 2024; Tedjakusuma et al., 2025). This limitation is theoretically important because trust in multi-seller marketplaces is inferred from platform-mediated cues, including seller coordination, delivery information, seller monitoring, secure transactions, and post-purchase problem resolution. This view is reinforced by recent research on digital governance ecosystems, which shows that user trust in complex digital service systems depends not only on technical service quality but also on a platform's capacity to coordinate multiple actors and remain institutionally responsive under demanding conditions (Gustafsson et al., 2025). In the marketplace context specifically, therefore, the key gap is not simply whether e-service quality affects satisfaction or continuance, but which service-quality cues operate as platform-level confirmation signals and become most diagnostic of e-trust. It also remains unclear whether product quality still functions as an independent trust-building cue in mature multi-seller marketplaces, or whether its role is absorbed by governance mechanisms such as seller ratings, logistics reliability, review systems, and post-purchase recovery (Chan et al., 2022; Do et al., 2023; Sen et al., 2023).

This study addresses these gaps by sharpening the boundary conditions of ECT in multi-seller marketplace settings. Rather than treating Thai digital marketplaces as a generic e-commerce context, the study conceptualises them as platform-mediated service systems in which trust is formed through repeated confirmation of the platform's coordinating role. Specifically, the study examines how five e-service quality dimensions—shipping reliability, delivery time, product quality, website quality, and customer service quality—shape e-trust, and how e-trust subsequently influences e-satisfaction and continuance usage intention. A key strength of this design is that the five e-service quality dimensions are modelled simultaneously rather than examined in isolation, allowing the study to compare their relative trust-building roles within the same structural model. The Thai multi-seller marketplace context is theoretically meaningful because users evaluate the platform's ability to coordinate third-party sellers, logistics providers, payment systems, delivery information, and post-purchase recovery. This context allows the study to show how fulfilment reliability, delivery

time, customer service, and website quality operate as platform-mediated trust cues in an emerging-market marketplace environment. In doing so, the study contributes to ECT-based e-commerce research by showing whether trust is driven primarily by product-related evaluations or by process-based signals of platform reliability, accountability, and service recovery.

To clarify the scope of the model, this study does not assume that e-trust and e-satisfaction are the only factors influencing continuance usage intention. Other factors, such as habit, perceived value, switching costs, promotional incentives, and social influence, may also affect users' continued platform use. However, consistent with the adapted ECT framing, the present study focuses specifically on the trust–satisfaction pathway to examine how platform-mediated service-quality cues are translated into continuance usage intention. The central research questions are therefore: (RQ1) which e-service quality dimensions function as trust-building cues in Thai multi-seller marketplace applications?; (RQ2) how does e-trust influence e-satisfaction?; and (RQ3) does e-satisfaction mediate the relationship between e-trust and continuance usage intention?

2. Literature review

2.1. The expectation-confirmation theory

Expectation–Confirmation Theory (ECT) is a cognitive framework explaining post-usage behaviour by proposing that continued engagement depends on the extent to which initial expectations are confirmed during actual use (Oliver, 1980). Users form expectations before use and compare perceived performance against those expectations; when performance meets or exceeds expectations, confirmation occurs and satisfaction increases, whereas negative disconfirmation leads to dissatisfaction. Satisfaction then becomes a primary driver of continuance usage intention (Bhattacharjee, 2001).

Within this logic, e-trust is not treated as a peripheral extension of ECT, but as the cognitive mechanism through which service confirmation becomes meaningful in a multi-seller marketplace. In conventional continuance models, confirmation often affects satisfaction directly because users evaluate whether a service provider's performance meets prior expectations (Bhattacharjee, 2001; Oliver, 1980). In marketplace ecosystems, however, users evaluate a platform that coordinates multiple actors rather than producing the entire service itself (Sen et al., 2023; Suuronen et al., 2024). Reliable delivery information, responsive customer support, clear policies, secure transaction processes, seller ratings, and review systems therefore operate as confirmation signals that the platform can reduce uncertainty and fulfil its intermediary responsibilities (Chan et al., 2022; Do et al., 2023; Kim & Yum, 2024). When these signals are repeatedly confirmed, users are more likely to perceive the platform as dependable and trustworthy; this trust then provides the psychological basis for satisfaction and continued use (Gefen et al., 2003; Kim & Peterson, 2017; Pavlou, 2003).

Accordingly, this study adopts an adapted ECT perspective rather than testing the full original ECT model. The purpose is not to measure expectation and confirmation as separate latent constructs, as in the original ECT formulation, or to model perceived usefulness as in IS-continuance ECM (Bhattacharjee, 2001; Oliver, 1980), but to use ECT as a theoretical lens for explaining how users interpret marketplace service performance after repeated use. In this adapted framing, the five e-service quality dimensions examined in this study—shipping reliability, delivery time, product quality, website quality, and customer service quality—are conceptualised as post-use platform-mediated confirmation cues that indicate whether the marketplace fulfils user expectations regarding reliability, responsiveness, information clarity, and transaction support (Kim & Yum, 2024; Parasuraman et al., 2005; Tedjakusuma et al., 2025; Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2003; Zeithaml et al., 2002). E-trust is then positioned as the cognitive mechanism through which these confirmation cues are translated into e-satisfaction and

continuance usage intention (Gefen et al., 2003; Kim & Peterson, 2017; Kim & Yum, 2024; Pavlou, 2003). This adapted use of ECT is appropriate because marketplace users evaluate not only product outcomes, but also the platform's ability to reduce uncertainty throughout the transaction process (Sen et al., 2023; Suuronen et al., 2024).

Taken together, ECT provides the structural logic of the present model. The five e-service quality dimensions are treated as post-use confirmation cues through which users evaluate whether the marketplace fulfils expectations regarding fulfilment reliability, responsiveness, information clarity, transaction support, and product-related performance. These cues are expected to shape e-trust because trust captures users' cognitive judgement that the platform can reliably coordinate sellers, logistics providers, payment systems, and post-purchase recovery. E-trust then informs e-satisfaction as the evaluative outcome of confirmed platform reliability, and e-satisfaction subsequently predicts continuance usage intention. Thus, the model follows an adapted ECT sequence: platform-mediated confirmation cues → e-trust → e-satisfaction → continuance usage intention.

Although this study uses an adapted ECT perspective to explain post-use trust formation, it does not assume that all users process service-quality cues uniformly. Recent consumer behaviour research suggests that pre-purchase engagement, contextual pressure cues, and cognitive states can shape how users evaluate online shopping experiences and make downstream decisions, including whether they proceed with, delay, or abandon transactions (Kalla & Rajput, 2025; Kukar-Kinney et al., 2016). Engagement and decision fatigue are therefore relevant to this adapted ECT framing. Users who are more actively engaged during the shopping journey may process platform cues more deliberately, compare seller information more carefully, and interpret delivery, support, and policy signals with greater confidence. By contrast, users with lower engagement, stronger time pressure, or higher decision fatigue may rely more heavily on immediately visible and easily processed cues, such as delivery updates, return options, seller ratings, popularity indicators, and customer-service responsiveness. Applied to marketplace trust formation, this suggests that service-quality confirmation may not be processed uniformly across users; rather, the diagnostic weight of each cue may depend on users' engagement level, cognitive burden, and exposure to contextual decision cues during the shopping journey.

2.2. E-service quality

E-service quality refers to the extent to which an online platform enables efficient transactions and effective service delivery (Parasuraman et al., 2005). It captures how well a digital service supports users before, during, and after the transaction, including sales processes, service fulfilment, and the extent to which the delivered service meets user needs (Çelik & Başaran, 2008). In multi-seller marketplace settings, e-service quality is especially important because platform-mediated touchpoints, such as delivery status information, policy clarity, and support interactions, function as cues through which users evaluate platform reliability and trustworthiness. Given its importance for online business performance (Rust & Oliver, 1993), e-service quality has been operationalised through several models, as summarised in Table 1.

Because RQ1 asks which e-service quality dimensions function as trust-building cues in Thai multi-seller marketplace applications, the following hypotheses are retained as directional analytical expectations rather than as independent claims of novelty. Their purpose is to test whether each service-quality dimension contributes to e-trust when modelled alongside the other dimensions. This is important because, in multi-seller marketplace settings, fulfilment, product, interface, and support cues may not carry equal diagnostic weight for platform-level trust. The five e-service quality dimensions examined in this study are discussed below.

Table 1
The Evolution of E-Service Quality Models and their Dimensions.

Authors	Model Name	Dimensions
Yoo and Donthu (2001)	Site-qual	Aesthetic Design, Ease of Use, Processing Speed, and Security
Loiacono et al. (2002)	WebQual	Business Process, Design Appeal, Fit to Task, Flow, Innovativeness, Integrated Communication, Interactivity, Intuitiveness, Response Time, Substitutability, Trust, and Visual Appeal
Barnes and Vidgen (2002)	WebQual 4.0	Design, Empathy, Information Quality, Trust, and Usability
Zeithaml et al. (2002)	eSQ	Access, Aesthetics, Assurance/Trust, Customisation/Personalisation, Ease of Navigation, Efficiency, Flexibility, Price Knowledge, Reliability, Responsibility, and Security
Wolfinbarger and Gilly (2003)	eTailQ	Customer Service, Design, Privacy/Security, and Reliability/Fulfilment
Parasuraman et al. (2005)	E-S-Qual	Efficiency, Fulfilment, Privacy, and System Availability

2.2.1. Shipping reliability

Shipping reliability refers to the marketplace's ability to deliver orders accurately, in the expected condition, and in accordance with promised delivery commitments (Blut et al., 2015; Jain et al., 2021). In multi-seller marketplace apps, shipping reliability is especially important because users often evaluate the platform through fulfilment outcomes that involve both sellers and logistics partners. Accurate delivery, transparent tracking updates, and clear handling of delivery disruptions signal that the platform can coordinate the post-purchase process responsibly (Do et al., 2023; Kim & Yum, 2024). Conversely, delivery errors or fulfilment failures can undermine perceived platform reliability because shipping is one of the most visible components of the mobile shopping experience (Jain et al., 2021; Rashid & Rasheed, 2024; Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2003). Therefore, reliable fulfilment should strengthen users' belief that the marketplace is dependable and trustworthy.

H1. Shipping Reliability has a positive effect on e-trust in digital marketplace.

2.2.2. Delivery time

Delivery time refers to users' perceptions of how quickly an online order is processed and completed (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Vasić et al., 2019). Because time is an important resource in online shopping, efficient order processing and timely delivery reduce purchase friction and support favourable service evaluations (Melović et al., 2021). In multi-seller marketplaces, delivery time also functions as an expectation-management cue: when the platform provides fast, predictable, and clearly communicated delivery, users are more likely to perceive it as capable and reliable (Kim & Yum, 2024; Nguyen & Ha, 2021). By contrast, delays, unclear delivery timelines, and inefficient fulfilment processes can increase uncertainty and weaken trust (Do et al., 2023; Kalia & Paul, 2021; Kurniawan et al., 2024). Therefore, shorter and more reliable delivery time is expected to strengthen e-trust.

H2. Delivery Time has a positive effect on e-trust in digital marketplace.

2.2.3. Product quality

Product quality refers to users' overall judgement of the excellence and value of the product received, including whether the delivered product meets expectations and communicated claims (Vasić et al., 2019). In digital marketplaces, users cannot physically inspect products before purchase, so they rely on product descriptions, images, reviews, seller ratings, and delivery outcomes to infer product quality. When products are accurate, defect-free, and consistent with their

descriptions, users are more likely to feel confident in future transactions (Hanaysha et al., 2025; Miao et al., 2022). Product quality is also relevant to trust because consistent quality signals that sellers honour their promises and that the platform can support credible marketplace transactions (Gefen, 2000). Recent marketplace and mobile-commerce research similarly suggests that product quality contributes to users' trust-related evaluations (Ashiq & Hussain, 2024; Rashid & Rasheed, 2024). Therefore, higher perceived product quality is expected to increase e-trust.

H3. Product Quality has a positive effect on e-trust in digital marketplace.

2.2.4. Website quality

Website quality refers to users' perceptions of the technical, informational, and interface-related quality of an online platform, including usability, visual design, content relevance, navigation, and responsiveness (Hanaysha et al., 2025; Saw & Inthiran, 2022; Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2003). In multi-seller marketplace apps, website quality matters because the interface is the main channel through which users access seller information, delivery updates, security cues, return policies, and dispute procedures. A clear, responsive, and informative interface reduces ambiguity and helps users evaluate the platform as professional, transparent, and customer-oriented (Alnaim et al., 2022; Saw & Inthiran, 2022). Conversely, poor interface design, unclear information, or difficult navigation can create uncertainty and reduce confidence in the platform. Therefore, higher website quality is expected to strengthen e-trust.

H4. Website Quality has a positive effect on e-trust in digital marketplace.

2.2.5. Customer service quality

Customer service quality refers to the quality of support provided by the marketplace, including responsiveness, clarity of communication, and the handling of post-purchase issues (Al-Dweeri et al., 2019; Parasuraman et al., 2005). In multi-seller marketplace settings, customer service is particularly important because users may face uncertainty about whether problems should be resolved by the seller, logistics provider, or platform. Clear, responsive, and understandable support communication helps users feel that the platform is accountable and willing to protect them when problems occur (Ginting et al., 2023). Effective customer service also signals care, reliability, and problem-resolution capacity, all of which are central to trust formation in online marketplaces. Prior studies confirm that customer service quality positively influences e-trust in online shopping contexts (Al-Dweeri et al., 2017; Miao et al., 2022). Therefore, higher customer service quality is expected to increase e-trust.

H5. Customer Service Quality has a positive effect on e-trust in digital marketplace.

2.3. E-trust

E-trust refers to users' belief that an online platform is reliable, honest, and capable of fulfilling its service promises despite the uncertainty of digital transactions (Gefen, 2000; Pavlou, 2003). In digital commerce, trust is especially important because users cannot physically inspect products before purchase and must rely on platform-mediated information, payment protection, delivery coordination, and post-purchase support (Gefen et al., 2003; Kim & Peterson, 2017). In multi-seller marketplaces, e-trust becomes even more central because the platform is not only a selling interface but also an intermediary that coordinates independent sellers, logistics providers, payment systems, review mechanisms, and dispute-resolution processes (Sen et al., 2023; Suuronen et al., 2024). Users therefore form trust judgements by observing whether the platform consistently communicates accurate

information, manages delivery expectations, protects transactions, and responds effectively when problems occur (Do et al., 2023; Kim & Yum, 2024).

For this reason, e-trust is theorised as the central mediating mechanism between e-service quality and e-satisfaction in the present study. Service-quality dimensions such as shipping reliability, delivery time, website quality, product quality, and customer service quality represent the performance cues through which users confirm or disconfirm their expectations of the marketplace (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2003; Zeithaml et al., 2002). However, these cues do not automatically translate into satisfaction; they first shape whether users believe the platform is dependable enough to continue relying on. Recent studies also position e-trust as a key mechanism in models linking e-service quality with satisfaction and downstream behavioural outcomes, including e-loyalty, repurchase intention, and continuance usage intention in digital service and e-commerce contexts (Elfakak et al., 2026; Florence & Aprillia, 2025; Arizal et al., 2025; Suarantalla et al., 2025). Accordingly, e-trust is positioned as the conceptual bridge linking platform-mediated service confirmation to satisfaction in the ECT framework.

H6. E-trust has a positive effect on e-satisfaction in digital marketplace.

2.4. E-satisfaction and continuance usage intention

Customer satisfaction measures the overall experience of a customer of a product or service that they purchase from a company (Ilieva et al., 2022). However, in a digital marketplace, it is not only outcomes that determine whether customer satisfaction is high or low — but also the quality of interactions mediated by the marketplace itself: whether information is comprehensible, support is responsive, and service processes feel transparent and reassuring (Bhattacharjee, 2001; Kurniawan et al., 2024). Continuance usage intention is a user's intention to use a service or an application over time (Koohang et al., 2022; Megawati et al., 2024). Satisfaction is an important predictor of this behaviour; as users become satisfied, they feel more secure, perceive greater value, and develop an emotional connection that drives repeated engagement (Wang & Lin, 2021). Consistent with Bhattacharjee's (2001) ECT, satisfaction is the strongest driver of IT continuance, a finding echoed in mobile commerce contexts where functionally and emotionally satisfied users are more likely to develop long-term usage intentions (Zhou, 2013).

H7. E-satisfaction has a positive effect on continuance usage intention in digital marketplace.

2.5. Mediating analysis

In addition to its direct effect on e-satisfaction, e-trust may also contribute indirectly to continuance usage intention through e-satisfaction. Prior IS-continuance research identifies satisfaction as a central post-use evaluation that drives continuance usage intention (Bhattacharjee, 2001; Zhou, 2013). In digital commerce, trust is particularly important because it reduces uncertainty and strengthens users' confidence in online transactions, especially when users cannot fully inspect products or service processes before purchase (Gefen et al., 2003; Kim & Peterson, 2017; Pavlou, 2003). When users trust a marketplace platform, they are therefore more likely to evaluate the overall service experience positively because trust reinforces confidence in the platform's ability to fulfil its promises (Kim & Yum, 2024). This positive evaluation then increases users' willingness to continue using the application. Therefore, in the adapted ECT framework, e-trust is expected to influence continuance usage intention indirectly through e-satisfaction.

H8. E-satisfaction mediates the relationship between e-trust and

continuance usage intention in digital marketplaces.

All hypotheses are depicted in Fig. 1.

3. Methodology

3.1. Operationalization and measurement items

The constructs in this study were measured using items adapted from prior validated scales and refined to suit the present research context. All indicators were assessed on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 7 (“strongly agree”). The research model comprises five antecedent variables, namely shipping reliability, delivery time, product quality, website quality, and customer service quality, together with e-trust, e-satisfaction, and continuance usage intention. Consistent with the communication framing of the study, the five e-service quality dimensions are treated as platform-mediated service cues through which the marketplace communicates reliability, accountability, and responsiveness during the post-purchase journey.

All constructs were specified as reflective measurement models. This specification is appropriate because the indicators are treated as manifestations of their underlying latent constructs, are expected to covary, and share a common conceptual domain. For example, indicators of e-trust reflect users' broader trust judgement toward the marketplace platform, while indicators of e-satisfaction reflect users' overall positive evaluation of the platform experience. The five e-service quality dimensions were also modelled as separate reflective first-order constructs rather than as formative indicators of a higher-order construct, because the study aims to estimate the distinct effect of each quality dimension on e-trust. The detailed operationalization of each construct and its corresponding items is provided in Appendix A.

3.2. Sampling technique and data collection

A purposive (criterion-based) non-probability sampling technique was used to recruit respondents who were suitable for the study objectives. Inclusion was limited to individuals aged 18 years or older, of any gender, who had at least completed high school and had prior purchasing experience on Thai digital marketplace applications. These requirements helped ensure that participants were sufficiently familiar with marketplace-app service processes and able to evaluate the post-purchase service cues captured in the questionnaire.

Prior marketplace usage was verified through a mandatory screening question at the beginning of the Google Forms questionnaire. Respondents were asked whether they had previously purchased products through Thai digital marketplace applications such as Shopee, Lazada, or similar platforms. Only respondents who answered “Yes” were allowed to proceed to the main questionnaire, while those who

answered “No” were instructed to stop the survey. To further confirm marketplace experience, respondents were also asked to report their purchase frequency in digital marketplaces during the preceding six months.

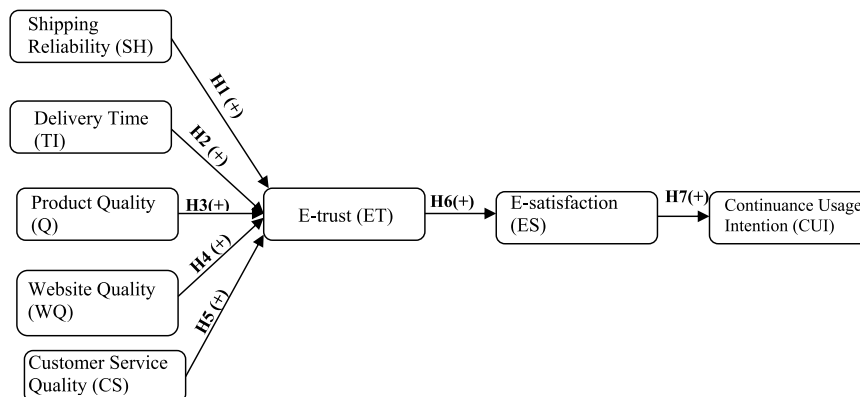
The self-administered online questionnaire was distributed through Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram to reach active Thai digital marketplace app users. The questionnaire included the screening question, demographic questions, and construct-specific measurement items assessed using a seven-point Likert scale. Data collection was conducted between January and May 2025. Responses from individuals who did not meet the screening criterion or provided incomplete answers were excluded, resulting in 423 useable responses for subsequent analysis.

Because the same anonymous Google Forms link was shared across Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram without platform-specific tracking parameters, the exact proportion of useable responses obtained from each distribution channel was not retained. To avoid overstating the precision of the recruitment records, the present study reports the distribution channels used but does not report channel-specific response proportions. Future studies may use separate survey links or embedded tracking parameters to record the exact contribution of each recruitment channel.

A formal response rate could not be calculated because the total number of individuals who viewed or received the survey invitation was unknown. To reduce self-selection bias, the recruitment message was framed neutrally and invited eligible Thai digital marketplace users in general, rather than targeting users with particularly positive or negative marketplace experiences. Distribution across multiple channels, together with eligibility screening and the purchase-frequency question, helped broaden respondent reach and ensure that participants had relevant marketplace experience. Nevertheless, because the study used purposive online recruitment, residual self-selection bias cannot be fully eliminated.

3.3. Analysis technique

Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was applied as the main analytical approach using SmartPLS 4.1.1.2. This technique was selected for its suitability with models containing multiple latent constructs and complex causal paths, and its alignment with the study's predictive orientation. Because all constructs were measured using a single self-administered questionnaire, common method bias (CMB) was assessed using both procedural and statistical remedies (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Procedurally, respondent anonymity was assured, participation was voluntary, and predictor and criterion items were separated by instructional text to reduce evaluation apprehension and common response tendencies. Statistically, Harman's single-factor test was used only as an initial diagnostic, while full collinearity VIF



H8. E-satisfaction mediates the relationship between e-trust and continuance usage intention in digital marketplaces.

Fig. 1. Research framework.

assessment was applied as a more rigorous PLS-SEM-based check for common method bias (Kock, 2015). The use of full collinearity assessment is appropriate in PLS-SEM because inflated VIF values can indicate potential common method contamination across the model.

Model evaluation followed the standard two-step procedure (Hair et al., 2017). The measurement model was assessed first. Internal consistency was examined via Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, convergent validity via average variance extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity via the Fornell–Larcker criterion, cross-loading inspection, and the HTMT ratio (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Henseler et al., 2015).

Once the measurement model demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity, the structural model was evaluated. Explanatory power was assessed using R^2 values for each endogenous construct. Global fit was appraised using the SRMR, d_ULS, d_G, and NFI indices (Falk & Miller, 1992; Hair et al., 2017). Path coefficient significance was determined through bootstrapping, with two-tailed 95% confidence intervals based on the 2.5% and 97.5% percentile limits used to assess whether each interval excluded zero. In addition to direct effects, mediation was examined using bootstrapped specific indirect effects. This procedure was used to assess whether e-satisfaction transmits the effect of e-trust to continuance usage intention. Indirect effects were considered significant when the 95% bootstrap confidence interval did not include zero. In addition to path significance, effect size was assessed using f^2 values to determine the practical contribution of each exogenous construct to its corresponding endogenous construct. Following common PLS-SEM guidelines, f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 were interpreted as small, medium, and large effects, respectively, while values below 0.02 were treated as negligible effects (Hair et al., 2017).

Predictive relevance was assessed using PLSpredict in SmartPLS 4.1.1.2. In line with current SmartPLS 4 predictive-assessment procedures, Q^2_{predict} values were used to evaluate whether the model demonstrates predictive relevance for the endogenous constructs. The PLSpredict procedure was conducted using 10 folds and 10 repetitions. Q^2_{predict} values greater than zero indicate predictive relevance because the model's prediction error is lower than that of the naïve benchmark.

4. Results

4.1. Common method bias

Common method bias was assessed using both Harman's single-factor test and full collinearity VIF assessment. Harman's single-factor test showed that the largest unrotated factor accounted for less than 50% of the total variance, suggesting that a single factor did not dominate the measurement structure. However, because Harman's test is only a preliminary diagnostic, full collinearity VIF values were also examined following Kock (2015). All construct-level VIF values ranged from 1.926 to 2.662, below the recommended threshold of 3.3. These results indicate that common method bias is unlikely to substantially distort the path estimates.

4.2. Sample demographics

Among the 423 valid respondents, the majority of the respondents were male (57.21%), indicating a broadly balanced sample with a slight male predominance among Thai digital marketplace users. The sample is strongly skewed toward younger adults: individuals aged 20–29 years constitute the largest age group (38.53%), followed by those aged 30–39 years (33.57%), indicating that the services are most intensively used by people in the early and middle stages of their careers. Respondents generally reported high levels of formal education. The largest share held a bachelor's degree (43.03%), and a further 25.77% had completed a master's degree, suggesting that the typical user is relatively well educated. On employment, private-sector workers form the biggest

occupational segment (36.17%), closely trailed by civil servants (30.97%), highlighting that the majority of participants are economically active professionals. Platform engagement is also strong: 53.43% reported making 6–10 purchases via Thai digital marketplace apps in the preceding six months, while another 31.68% reported 2–5 transactions over the same period. Overall, the sample reflects frequent, well-educated users who regularly rely on digital marketplaces for their shopping activities. The sample demographics are summarised in Table 2.

4.3. Validity and reliability assessment

In order to test whether the model of measurements was functioning correctly, we used standard PLS-SEM subsequent steps. All the indicator loadings passed the 0.70 threshold (Hair et al., 2017), i.e. each item reliably measured the construct it had been created to measure. All the constructs, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) have values over 0.5, and this indicates that its latent variables absorb more of its indicators than its measurement errors. Both Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha (CA) were over 0.70 throughout the board, as these assured good internal reliability (Hair et al., 2017). These results are in Table 3.

For discriminant validity, we ran three checks. The Fornell–Larcker criterion verified that each construct shares greater variance with its own indicators than with other constructs (Table 4). HTMT ratios remained within the 0.85 threshold (Henseler et al., 2015); where values approached the cut-off, the pattern of evidence across HTMT, Fornell–Larcker, and cross-loadings remained consistent with adequate construct distinctiveness (Table 5). Cross-loading analysis confirmed that all indicators loaded most strongly on their intended construct (Table 6). To improve transparency, the construct correlation matrix is also provided in Appendix C, showing the bivariate correlations among all latent constructs. Overall, the measurement model performs well on all fronts.

4.4. Model robustness testing

The structural model was tested using SmartPLS 4.1.1.2. Explanatory power was first assessed through R^2 values. The R^2 values were 0.598 for e-trust, 0.432 for e-satisfaction, and 0.423 for continuance usage intention, all exceeding Falk and Miller's (1992) minimum threshold of 0.10. These results indicate that the model explains a meaningful proportion of variance in each endogenous construct.

Model fit was then assessed using several fit indices. The SRMR value was 0.059, which is below the recommended 0.08 threshold. The

Table 2
Sample demographics.

Measure	Items	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	181	42.79%
	Male	242	57.21%
	≥18-20	54	12.77%
Age Group	20-29	163	38.53%
	30-39	142	33.57%
	>40	64	15.13%
	Vocational/High School	98	23.17%
Educational Background	Bachelor's degree	182	43.03%
	Master's degree	109	25.77%
	Doctoral degree	34	8.04%
	Civil Servants	131	30.97%
Occupation	Entrepreneurs	65	15.37%
	Private workers	153	36.17%
	Students	50	11.82%
	Others	24	5.67%
Frequency of buying in digital marketplaces in the preceding 6 months	1 time	12	2.84%
	2-5 times	134	31.68%
	6-10 times	226	53.43%
	>10 times	51	12.06%

Table 3
Convergent validity and reliability.

Constructs	Items	FL	CA	CR	AVE
Shipping Reliability (SH)	SH1	0.834	0.905	0.926	0.677
	SH2	0.847			
	SH3	0.839			
	SH4	0.810			
	SH5	0.826			
	SH6	0.779			
Delivery Time (TI)	TI1	0.832	0.851	0.908	0.768
	TI2	0.909			
	TI3	0.886			
	Q1	0.834			
Product Quality (Q)	Q2	0.811	0.886	0.913	0.637
	Q3	0.827			
	Q4	0.754			
	Q5	0.830			
	Q6	0.726			
	WQ1	0.808			
Website Quality (WQ)	WQ2	0.801	0.868	0.901	0.603
	WQ3	0.795			
	WQ4	0.741			
	WQ5	0.764			
	WQ6	0.746			
	CS1	0.766			
Customer Service Quality (CS)	CS2	0.888	0.895	0.923	0.707
	CS3	0.874			
	CS4	0.839			
	CS5	0.831			
	ET1	0.906			
E-trust (ET)	ET2	0.944	0.908	0.942	0.844
	ET3	0.905			
	ES1	0.840			
E-satisfaction (ES)	ES2	0.858	0.867	0.909	0.714
	ES3	0.827			
	ES4	0.855			
	CUI1	0.844			
Continuance Usage Intention (CUI)	CUI2	0.808	0.826	0.884	0.657
	CUI3	0.815			

Note: FL=Factor Loading ≥ 0.7 , CA=Cronbach's Alpha ≥ 0.7 , CR= Composite Reliability ≥ 0.7 , AVE = Average Variance Extracted ≥ 0.5 .

supporting indices, including d_ULS (2.456), d_G (1.075), and NFI (0.935), also indicated acceptable model fit (Hair et al., 2017). In

Table 4
Formell-Larcker criterion.

Constructs	SH	TI	Q	WQ	CS	ET	ES	CUI
Shipping Reliability (SH)	0.823							
Delivery Time (TI)	0.625	0.876						
Product Quality (Q)	0.798	0.603	0.798					
Website Quality (WQ)	0.697	0.567	0.820	0.776				
Customer Service Quality (CS)	0.796	0.582	0.809	0.675	0.841			
E-trust (ET)	0.728	0.640	0.637	0.604	0.654	0.919		
E-satisfaction (ES)	0.776	0.584	0.837	0.731	0.797	0.657	0.845	
Continuance Usage Intention (CUI)	0.560	0.504	0.666	0.806	0.547	0.447	0.651	0.811

Notes: The diagonal and bold values are the square roots of AVE.

Table 5
HTMT.

Constructs	SH	TI	Q	WQ	CS	ET	ES	CUI
SH	–							
TI	0.691	–						
Q	0.830	0.678	–					
WQ	0.788	0.650	0.834	–				
CS	0.818	0.657	0.800	0.763	–			
ET	0.794	0.714	0.701	0.674	0.722	–		
ES	0.837	0.669	0.825	0.819	0.802	0.738	–	
CUI	0.651	0.601	0.788	0.811	0.634	0.514	0.768	–

Note: HTMT values < 0.85 indicate strong discriminant validity. < 0.90 moderate; < 0.95 weak.

addition, the Goodness-of-Fit (GoF) index was calculated to provide a supplementary assessment of overall model performance. With a mean AVE of 0.701 and a mean R^2 of 0.484, the GoF value was 0.405, exceeding the 0.36 cut-off for strong fit proposed by Tenenhaus et al. (2005) and Wetzels et al. (2009).

Predictive relevance was further assessed using PLSpredict. The construct-level results showed positive Q^2_{predict} values for all endogenous constructs: e-trust ($Q^2_{\text{predict}} = 0.582$), e-satisfaction ($Q^2_{\text{predict}} = 0.556$), and continuance usage intention ($Q^2_{\text{predict}} = 0.296$). Since all Q^2_{predict} values exceeded zero, the model demonstrates predictive relevance for the key endogenous constructs. These results strengthen the model's predictive claims by showing that the structural model has predictive capability beyond explanatory power alone.

4.5. Hypothesis testing results

Table 7 reports the direct hypothesis testing results, including path coefficients, t-values, confidence intervals, f^2 effect sizes, and hypothesis decisions. H1 was supported, as shipping reliability positively affected e-trust ($\beta = 0.426$, $t = 6.033$, 95% CI: 0.284 to 0.558, $f^2 = 0.126$). H2 was also supported, with delivery time positively affecting e-trust ($\beta = 0.270$, $t = 5.035$, 95% CI: 0.168 to 0.377, $f^2 = 0.102$). H3 was not supported, as product quality did not significantly influence e-trust ($\beta = -0.087$, $t = 0.931$, 95% CI: -0.271 to 0.090 , $f^2 = 0.004$). H4 was supported, as website quality had a positive effect on e-trust ($\beta = 0.131$, $t = 1.953$, 95% CI: 0.008 to 0.266, $f^2 = 0.014$). H5 was also supported, as customer service quality positively affected e-trust ($\beta = 0.140$, $t = 2.121$, 95% CI: 0.016 to 0.274, $f^2 = 0.014$). Downstream, H6 and H7 were strongly supported: e-trust increased e-satisfaction ($\beta = 0.657$, $t = 18.310$, 95% CI: 0.583 to 0.724, $f^2 = 0.760$), and e-satisfaction predicted continuance usage intention ($\beta = 0.651$, $t = 19.821$, 95% CI: 0.584 to 0.711, $f^2 = 0.734$).

The mediation analysis further supported the proposed trust–satisfaction–continuance pathway. The specific indirect effect of e-trust on continuance usage intention through e-satisfaction was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.428$, $t = 12.987$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI: 0.364 to 0.493). Because the confidence interval did not include zero, e-satisfaction significantly transmitted the effect of e-trust to continuance usage

Table 6
Cross loadings.

	SH	TI	Q	WQ	CS	ET	ES	CUI
SH1	0.834	0.532	0.608	0.527	0.621	0.704	0.606	0.405
SH2	0.847	0.575	0.678	0.591	0.655	0.634	0.662	0.489
SH3	0.839	0.479	0.646	0.566	0.621	0.587	0.602	0.449
SH4	0.810	0.473	0.643	0.570	0.670	0.536	0.632	0.484
SH5	0.826	0.541	0.703	0.620	0.685	0.588	0.681	0.502
SH6	0.779	0.473	0.679	0.578	0.696	0.510	0.664	0.449
TI1	0.395	0.832	0.414	0.436	0.429	0.452	0.418	0.413
TI2	0.548	0.909	0.557	0.515	0.526	0.552	0.536	0.474
TI3	0.658	0.886	0.588	0.527	0.557	0.647	0.562	0.439
Q1	0.714	0.540	0.834	0.611	0.746	0.592	0.705	0.461
Q2	0.654	0.452	0.811	0.579	0.659	0.478	0.688	0.476
Q3	0.666	0.510	0.827	0.592	0.672	0.550	0.733	0.468
Q4	0.581	0.408	0.754	0.719	0.590	0.464	0.615	0.604
Q5	0.645	0.526	0.830	0.767	0.650	0.525	0.667	0.631
Q6	0.538	0.432	0.726	0.696	0.523	0.409	0.585	0.588
WQ1	0.534	0.455	0.654	0.808	0.526	0.502	0.591	0.629
WQ2	0.560	0.390	0.627	0.801	0.539	0.487	0.558	0.623
WQ3	0.593	0.489	0.704	0.795	0.534	0.472	0.579	0.591
WQ4	0.501	0.360	0.605	0.741	0.486	0.370	0.515	0.588
WQ5	0.513	0.474	0.588	0.764	0.529	0.483	0.547	0.703
WQ6	0.540	0.458	0.642	0.746	0.525	0.481	0.606	0.617
CS1	0.677	0.421	0.625	0.546	0.766	0.498	0.653	0.474
CS2	0.727	0.522	0.724	0.632	0.888	0.619	0.736	0.546
CS3	0.674	0.519	0.693	0.578	0.874	0.545	0.673	0.463
CS4	0.592	0.494	0.667	0.530	0.839	0.520	0.625	0.397
CS5	0.668	0.483	0.684	0.543	0.831	0.557	0.655	0.410
TR1	0.640	0.602	0.545	0.532	0.558	0.906	0.566	0.387
TR2	0.655	0.562	0.573	0.543	0.595	0.944	0.602	0.396
TR3	0.708	0.597	0.632	0.587	0.646	0.905	0.640	0.445
ES1	0.666	0.468	0.711	0.600	0.701	0.592	0.840	0.528
ES2	0.702	0.550	0.765	0.669	0.691	0.570	0.858	0.604
ES3	0.616	0.502	0.656	0.578	0.624	0.513	0.827	0.535
ES4	0.636	0.452	0.692	0.619	0.673	0.544	0.855	0.528
CUI1	0.449	0.410	0.523	0.674	0.440	0.397	0.538	0.844
CUI2	0.499	0.439	0.590	0.682	0.498	0.375	0.544	0.808
CUI3	0.408	0.390	0.517	0.653	0.411	0.294	0.521	0.815

Table 7
Summary of hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis	f^2	β	t-value	p-value	Bootstrapping 95% CI (N = 5000)		Decision
					Min	Max	
H1 Shipping Reliability - > E-trust	0.126	0.426***	6.033	0.000	0.284	0.558	Supported
H2 Delivery Time - > E-trust	0.102	0.270***	5.035	0.000	0.168	0.377	Supported
H3 Product Quality - > E-trust	0.004	-0.087	0.931	0.352	-0.271	0.090	Not Supported
H4 Website Quality - > E-trust	0.014	0.131*	1.953	0.050	0.008	0.266	Supported
H5 Customer Service Quality - > E-trust	0.014	0.140*	2.121	0.034	0.016	0.274	Supported
H6 E-trust - > E-satisfaction	0.760	0.657***	18.310	0.000	0.583	0.724	Supported
H7 E-satisfaction - > Continuance Usage Intention	0.734	0.651***	19.821	0.000	0.584	0.711	Supported
H8 E-trust - > E-satisfaction - > Continuance Usage Intention	Not applicable	0.428***	12.987	0.000	0.364	0.493	Supported

Note: Hypothesis decisions were based on bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals and $p \leq 0.05$. Values below 0.02 indicate negligible f^2 effects.

intention. The effect-size results further indicate that shipping reliability and delivery time make small practical contributions to e-trust, while product quality, website quality, and customer service quality show negligible f^2 effects when all predictors are modelled simultaneously. By contrast, e-trust and e-satisfaction show large practical effects on their respective downstream outcomes. Taken together, the findings suggest that in Thai multi-seller marketplaces, fulfilment-related cues are more practically influential for e-trust than product-related or interface-related cues, while continuance usage intention is strongly channelled through the e-trust $\rightarrow$ e-satisfaction $\rightarrow$ continuance sequence.

Beyond the statistical significance of individual paths, the results provide a clearer answer to the three RQs. For RQ1, shipping reliability and delivery time appear to be the most important service-quality cues through which Thai marketplace users form e-trust. These findings suggest that users judge the platform mainly by whether orders arrive reliably, whether delivery timelines are predictable, and whether the

platform can coordinate the post-purchase process. Customer service quality and website quality also contribute to e-trust, but their smaller effect sizes suggest that they operate more as supporting cues: customer service reassures users when problems occur, while website quality helps users interpret delivery information, seller details, return policies, and service guarantees. Product quality, by contrast, did not contribute independently to platform-level e-trust after the other service-quality dimensions were considered, suggesting that users may treat product outcomes as more closely linked to individual sellers than to the marketplace platform itself.

For RQ2, the strong path from e-trust to e-satisfaction indicates that trust is not merely a background belief but a central part of how users evaluate the marketplace experience. When users believe that the platform is reliable, transparent, and able to manage sellers, logistics, and post-purchase problems, they are more likely to feel satisfied with the overall service experience. This result shows that e-satisfaction is shaped

not only by immediate convenience or interface quality, but also by users' broader confidence in the platform's ability to fulfil its intermediary responsibilities.

For RQ3, the significant mediation result shows that e-trust influences continuance usage intention mainly by strengthening e-satisfaction. In practical terms, users do not continue using a marketplace simply because they trust it in an abstract sense. Trust first improves their satisfaction with the platform experience, and this satisfaction then becomes the more immediate reason for continued use. The results therefore point to a sequential process: reliable fulfilment and support cues build e-trust, e-trust strengthens e-satisfaction, and e-satisfaction encourages continuance usage intention.

5. Discussion: empirical findings and interpretation

The findings indicate that e-trust among Thai digital marketplace users is shaped primarily by fulfilment- and support-related service cues. Among the five antecedents, shipping reliability emerged as the strongest predictor of e-trust (H1), followed by delivery time (H2), customer service quality (H5), and website quality (H4). This pattern suggests that users place greater trust-building weight on cues that demonstrate whether the platform can keep delivery promises, reduce post-purchase uncertainty, and respond effectively when problems occur. Website quality also contributes to e-trust, but its smaller effect suggests that interface clarity functions mainly as a supporting communication channel through which users interpret tracking information, return policies, seller terms, and service guarantees. These results align with prior research showing that fulfilment accuracy, on-time delivery, and service recovery are central to trust and repurchase behaviour in digital commerce (Do et al., 2023; Jain et al., 2021; Kim & Yum, 2024).

The non-significant product-quality path (H3) should be interpreted cautiously rather than as evidence that product quality is unimportant in digital marketplaces. Prior e-commerce studies have shown that product-related evaluations can shape trust, satisfaction, and loyalty outcomes (Hanaysha et al., 2025; Miao et al., 2022; Rombach et al., 2023). In the present study, product quality did not exert an independent effect on platform-level e-trust when shipping reliability, delivery time, website quality, and customer service quality were modelled simultaneously. One possible explanation is attributional: in mature multi-seller platforms such as Shopee and Lazada, users may attribute product-related outcomes more directly to individual sellers, whereas platform-level trust is shaped more strongly by fulfilment reliability, seller governance, return protection, and problem resolution (Chao et al., 2024; Do et al., 2023; Kim & Yum, 2024; Tedjakusuma et al., 2025).

A second explanation concerns user heterogeneity, engagement, and decision fatigue. Marketplace users may not evaluate product quality, fulfilment reliability, interface cues, and customer support in the same way. More experienced, frequent, or highly engaged users may rely more on seller ratings, reviews, prior experience, and detailed product information, whereas less engaged users may depend more heavily on visible platform-level cues such as delivery updates, return policies, guarantees, and customer service responsiveness (Kim & Peterson, 2017; Kim & Yum, 2024; Pavlou, 2003). In cognitively demanding marketplace environments, users process many simultaneous signals, including price, seller reputation, delivery expectations, reviews, discounts, platform guarantees, and return options. This interpretation is also consistent with behavioural research on online shopping decision-making, which shows that contextual cues such as time pressure, social-pressure indicators, and deal-related prompts can shape consumers' responses to online offers (Kukar-Kinney et al., 2016). In marketplace apps, similar cue-rich environments may reduce deep processing of product attributes, especially among less engaged or cognitively overloaded users. Under such conditions, product-quality information may be underprocessed or attributed to individual sellers, while fulfilment and support cues become more immediately diagnostic

of platform-level e-trust (Chao et al., 2024; Do et al., 2023; Tedjakusuma et al., 2025).

A third explanation concerns measurement. The product-quality items used in this study were adapted from Febrilia and Warokka (2021) and partly reflect price-quality and value-oriented evaluations rather than pure product conformance, accuracy, durability, or defect-free delivery. This is consistent with the broader view that perceived quality and value judgements are conceptually related but not identical (Zeithaml, 1988). Therefore, the product-quality finding should be understood as a bounded result: product quality, as operationalised in this study, was less distinctive in explaining platform-level e-trust after fulfilment, website, and support-related cues were considered.

Further down the model, the paths from e-trust to e-satisfaction and from e-satisfaction to continuance usage intention were both strongly supported. E-trust had a substantial positive effect on e-satisfaction (H6), and e-satisfaction strongly predicted continuance usage intention (H7). This finding is consistent with prior research on online retail, food delivery, and e-commerce, which shows that trust and satisfaction are central drivers of loyalty-related outcomes (Ashiq & Hussain, 2024; Chao et al., 2024; Iffan et al., 2024). In this context, continued platform use is not only a functional decision but also a relational outcome. Once users perceive a marketplace platform as trustworthy, they are more likely to evaluate the overall experience positively, and this satisfaction strengthens their intention to continue using the platform.

The downstream relationships provide strong support for the proposed trust-satisfaction-continuance mechanism. E-trust had a substantial positive effect on e-satisfaction (H6), and e-satisfaction strongly predicted continuance usage intention (H7). The significant indirect effect further confirms that e-satisfaction transmits the effect of e-trust to continuance usage intention. This means that trust does not only create a general willingness to remain with the platform; rather, trust strengthens users' satisfaction with the marketplace experience, and this satisfaction becomes the more immediate basis for continued use. This pattern is consistent with IS-continuance research, which identifies satisfaction as a central driver of continuance usage intention (Bhattacharjee, 2001; Zhou, 2013), and with e-commerce trust research showing that trust reduces uncertainty and strengthens positive evaluations of online service experiences (Gefen et al., 2003; Kim & Peterson, 2017; Kim & Yum, 2024; Pavlou, 2003).

Taken together, the results answer the three research questions. For RQ1, fulfilment and support quality are the most salient trust-building cues in Thai multi-seller marketplaces, while product quality does not add a significant independent contribution once other service dimensions are considered. For RQ2, e-trust strongly enhances e-satisfaction, indicating that users evaluate the platform more positively when they perceive it as reliable, transparent, and capable of fulfilling its service promises. For RQ3, e-satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between e-trust and continuance usage intention. Thus, continuance usage intention in this context is shaped not only by isolated service-quality cues, but by a sequential mechanism in which platform credibility is translated into satisfaction and then into continuance usage intention.

6. Implications

6.1. Theoretical implications

The pattern of results, rather than the theory, is the primary contribution here: when the five service-quality dimensions are modelled simultaneously, shipping reliability, delivery time, customer service quality, and website quality significantly predict e-trust, while product quality does not. This comparative pattern is only visible because the dimensions compete within the same structural model rather than being tested separately, and it shows that fulfilment- and support-related cues carry substantially more weight than product-related cues in shaping

platform-level e-trust in Thai digital marketplaces. Read through an ECT lens, this pattern suggests that trust formation in this context is driven more by process-based service confirmation than by product-quality evaluation, refining rather than simply reproducing prior ECT-based e-commerce findings.

The non-significant product-quality path is itself a substantive result rather than a gap to be explained away: once fulfilment, support, and interface quality are accounted for, product quality carries no additional weight in shaping platform-level e-trust for this sample. Existing marketplace studies are well established but inconsistent in which dimensions they include and how quality is operationalised (Kim & Yum, 2024; Monoarfa et al., 2024; Nguyen & Ha, 2021), which makes this disaggregated pattern informative in its own right. One plausible explanation, consistent with the broader marketplace-governance literature, is that seller-governance mechanisms, such as ratings, return protections, and buyer guarantees, already absorb much of what product quality would otherwise signal, so users rely on process reliability rather than product outcomes as their primary trust cue (Chao et al., 2024; Do et al., 2023). This distinction, that e-trust here is shaped more by system-level than product-level confirmation, adds nuance to trust-extended ECT formulations (Nguyen & Dao, 2024) rather than simply confirming them.

The data also show a clear sequential pattern: e-trust has a substantial positive effect on e-satisfaction, and e-satisfaction in turn significantly transmits the effect of e-trust to continuance usage intention. This mediation result indicates that platform-level trust shapes continued use primarily by strengthening post-purchase satisfaction rather than by acting on continuance directly, a pathway consistent with, and further specifying, ECT-based continuance models that incorporate trust alongside satisfaction (Al Amin et al., 2023; Ashiq & Hussain, 2024; Yu et al., 2026).

Disaggregating the service-quality dimensions, rather than treating them as an aggregate construct, is what allows these patterns to emerge in the first place. Prior research frequently reports a positive aggregate link between e-service quality and satisfaction or continuance (Iffan et al., 2024; Kurniawan et al., 2024; Tedjakusuma et al., 2025) without identifying which specific dimensions drive that relationship. The present results narrow this down: shipping reliability, delivery time, customer service quality, and website quality shape e-trust, while product quality does not, indicating that core process quality — not product evaluation — is the primary driver, with website quality operating as a secondary, information-processing-related cue.

These patterns are also context-specific and should be read as such rather than generalised. Thai multi-seller marketplaces require users to evaluate a platform that coordinates multiple independent sellers and logistics providers, unlike the single-provider settings examined in much prior work (Al Amin et al., 2023; Yu et al., 2026). The finding that trust is anchored in logistics and process performance in this setting indicates that future studies of comparable multi-seller, emerging-market platforms should examine empirically, rather than assume, which service-quality dimensions carry the strongest confirmation signal, since this is likely to vary with platform structure and market maturity.

Although the five service-quality dimensions are operationalised as delivery-, website-, and support-related indicators, they should not be read as narrow service-quality metrics in isolation. In multi-seller marketplaces, delivery reliability, dispute-resolution responsiveness, and interface transparency are the primary channels through which platform governance is enacted and made visible to users: they are the observable traces of whether the platform is coordinating sellers, logistics providers, and payment systems, monitoring seller behaviour, and holding itself accountable when transactions fail (Cordella & Paletti, 2019; Do et al., 2023). Framed this way, the finding that shipping reliability and customer service quality are the strongest predictors of e-trust, while product quality is not, indicates that users infer platform-level accountability and orchestration capacity from process-based cues rather than from product-level cues that fall outside the platform's direct

control.

This interpretation is consistent with recent digital-governance research showing that user trust in complex digital service ecosystems depends on a platform's capacity to coordinate multiple actors and remain institutionally responsive, rather than on the technical quality of any single service component (Gustafsson et al., 2025). The present findings extend this governance perspective empirically by identifying which specific service-quality cues function as the micro-level, user-facing signals of platform governance and orchestration: they suggest that in multi-seller marketplaces, institutional trust in the platform as an intermediary is built cumulatively through repeated confirmation of these process-level accountability signals, rather than through a single global governance disclosure or brand-level assurance.

6.2. Managerial implications

Practically, the findings are especially relevant for platform governance and logistics system design. Because shipping reliability and delivery time showed the strongest effects on e-trust, marketplace operators should treat fulfilment performance not merely as an operational issue but as a governance signal. In Thai multi-seller marketplaces, users appear to evaluate whether the platform can reliably coordinate sellers, couriers, delivery information, returns, and support systems across the full post-purchase journey. Therefore, platform operators should strengthen seller monitoring, logistics-partner accountability, delivery-status transparency, return-policy enforcement, and dispute-resolution procedures. Clear courier agreements, proactive delay notifications, automatic refunds, re-delivery options, and meaningful penalties for repeated seller or logistics failures are not only service improvements; they signal that the platform takes responsibility for the transaction rather than shifting blame to sellers or couriers.

For logistics providers, this study carries a message that goes beyond standard performance dashboards. What these companies do on the last mile is the single biggest factor shaping whether Thai users trust the marketplace they shop on. First-attempt delivery rates, careful package handling, and real-time tracking data fed accurately back to the platform are not internal efficiency numbers — they are trust signals users feel directly. A courier that delivers on time but whose tracking runs 2 h behind still contributes to user anxiety. Expanding reliable service into smaller cities and rural areas is not just a growth opportunity; it is the structural change that would allow a far larger share of Thai users to build the consistent delivery experiences that actually generate trust.

For customer service teams, what happens after a purchase goes wrong matters just as much as everything that went right. Users watch how the platform behaves when they have a problem, and that behaviour shapes trust more than most platforms seem to realise. Agents who bounce users between the merchant and the platform, cannot authorise a refund without escalation, or respond three days later with a template message — these are small credibility failures that accumulate fast. Users need someone with the authority to sort things out in one go. Return and refund processes should feel as smooth as checking out, and users should never have to chase for a case update. Reaching out proactively before a user asks about a delay turns a problem into proof that someone is paying attention — one of the most trust-building moves a platform can make.

For UX and interface teams, the data offer a useful clarification: users are not judging the platform on how good it looks — they are judging it on how easy it is to find what they need to feel confident. Design effort is better spent making delivery timelines clear, putting return policies one tap from the product page, and surfacing seller verification visibly. Dispute flows and complaint screens deserve as much attention as the main shopping journey, because that is precisely when users are most uncertain and most likely to form a lasting impression of the platform.

7. Conclusions

This study examined how five e-service quality dimensions shape e-trust and how e-trust and e-satisfaction explain continuance usage intention in Thai digital marketplace applications. The findings show that e-trust is anchored primarily in process-based service performance rather than product-related evaluation alone. Shipping reliability emerged as the strongest driver of e-trust, followed by delivery time and customer service quality, while website quality contributed a smaller but significant effect. Product quality did not show an independent effect on platform-level e-trust once fulfilment, website, and support-related service factors were modelled simultaneously. This result should not be interpreted as evidence that product quality is unimportant; rather, it suggests that product quality may be less distinctive as a platform-level trust cue in multi-seller marketplaces where users may attribute product outcomes more directly to individual sellers.

The downstream findings further confirm a strong trust–satisfaction–continuance mechanism. E-trust substantially increased e-satisfaction, and e-satisfaction strongly predicted continuance usage intention. The mediation result shows that e-satisfaction significantly transmits the effect of e-trust to continuance usage intention, indicating that trust contributes to continued platform use primarily by improving users' overall satisfaction with the marketplace experience. In this sense, continuance usage intention is not shaped only by isolated service-quality cues, but by a sequential process in which reliable platform performance builds trust, trust strengthens satisfaction, and satisfaction supports continued use.

The study contributes to ECT-based e-commerce research by clarifying how service confirmation operates in a multi-seller marketplace environment. Rather than treating e-service quality as a single aggregate construct, this study compared five service-quality dimensions within the same model and showed that fulfilment and support cues are more diagnostic for platform-level e-trust than product quality or interface quality alone. Practically, the findings suggest that Thai marketplace operators should prioritise logistics reliability, delivery transparency, seller governance, responsive customer support, and clear interface-based communication. These areas are not merely operational concerns; they are trust-building signals through which users judge whether the platform can coordinate sellers, logistics providers, payment systems, and post-purchase recovery effectively.

Although the findings provide useful evidence from Thai digital marketplace users, they should not be generalised uncritically to all marketplace contexts. Different national markets, platform governance systems, logistics infrastructures, consumer segments, and product categories may assign different weights to product quality, fulfilment reliability, website quality, and customer support. The study should therefore be read as a context-specific explanation of how Thai marketplace users translate platform-mediated service cues into e-trust, e-satisfaction, and continuance usage intention.

Several limitations warrant attention. First, the findings should be interpreted as context-specific evidence from Thai multi-seller marketplace users rather than as statistically generalisable evidence for all geographic contexts. The results may be most transferable to marketplace environments with similar characteristics, such as emerging-market platforms with strong mobile commerce adoption, multi-seller structures, platform-mediated logistics, and comparable post-purchase support systems. However, the relative importance of shipping reliability, delivery time, product quality, website quality, and customer service quality may differ in countries with different logistics infrastructures, consumer-protection systems, platform governance models, payment systems, and user expectations. Future studies should therefore replicate the model across different national and regional contexts to examine whether the trust-building role of each service-quality dimension remains stable or varies across marketplace environments.

Second, the convenience-snowball sample was skewed toward

young, educated, and frequent digital marketplace users, which limits the generalisability of the findings to older, less digitally literate, less frequent, or more rural marketplace users. Future studies should use more diverse and stratified samples to examine whether the relative importance of shipping reliability, delivery time, product quality, website quality, and customer service quality differs across user segments.

Third, although the survey collected respondent-level information on age, gender, education, and marketplace usage intensity, these variables were not entered as controls in the structural model. Prior research suggests that user experience, purchase frequency, and digital literacy can independently shape trust in online platforms, so it remains possible that part of the effect attributed to shipping reliability and the other service-quality dimensions reflects individual differences in users' general predisposition to trust digital platforms rather than platform-mediated service confirmation alone. Future studies should enter these demographic and experience-related variables as controls or moderators to isolate the effect of service-quality cues from user-level predispositions toward trust.

Fourth, the study did not directly measure pre-purchase cognitive states such as engagement, attention, uncertainty, or decision fatigue. Although these factors were discussed as possible explanations for how users process marketplace cues, they were not included as measured variables in the structural model. Future research should incorporate these cognitive states as moderators or antecedents to examine whether different levels of engagement or decision fatigue change how users translate service-quality cues into e-trust.

Fifth, the product-quality construct may not fully capture actual product performance in marketplace transactions. Although the items were adapted from prior research, several items partly reflect price–quality and value-oriented evaluations rather than direct product-performance indicators such as product conformance, defect-free condition, durability, or match with product descriptions. This may have affected the construct validity of product quality and may partly explain why product quality did not show an independent effect on platform-level e-trust. Future studies should use more direct product-performance measures and, where possible, distinguish seller-level product quality from platform-level service reliability.

Sixth, the cross-sectional design limits causal inference. Although the hypothesised paths are theoretically grounded in ECT and tested using PLS-SEM, the data were collected at one point in time and therefore cannot establish temporal ordering or definitive causality among e-service quality, e-trust, e-satisfaction, and continuance usage intention.

Seventh, the model focuses specifically on the trust–satisfaction pathway and does not include other possible determinants of continuance usage intention, such as habit, perceived value, switching costs, promotional incentives, or social influence. Future research should incorporate these additional factors to provide a more comprehensive explanation of continued marketplace use.

Finally, although procedural remedies and statistical checks were applied to assess common method bias, the use of a single self-reported questionnaire means that common method bias cannot be fully ruled out. Future studies should strengthen methodological separation by using multi-source data, temporal separation, marker variables, or behavioural platform data such as actual delivery records, complaint histories, and repeat-usage behaviour.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Adi Prasetyo Tedjakusuma: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Methodology, Resources, Software, Validation, Writing – original draft.
Waiphot Kulachai: Conceptualization, Data curation, Investigation, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.
Patipol Homyamyen: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Project administration, Supervision, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Statement for studies in humans/animals

This study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and the Ethical Guidelines for Research on Human Subjects in Thailand (FERCIT, 2007), the nationally recognised framework governing human subjects research across Thai universities and institutions. Under FERCIT Sections 6.4.5–6.4.7, ethics committees may apply expedited review, exempt minimal-risk studies from formal review submission, and waive physical consent form signing under qualifying conditions. As this study used an anonymous questionnaire with non-vulnerable adult participants, formal ethics committee approval was not required.

Informed consent was obtained electronically at the outset of the survey, in accordance with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. Consistent with FERCIT Sections 2.2.1, 3.1, and 6.4.7, consent need not take written form provided all essential information is clearly communicated, and physical signing may be waived in appropriate circumstances. In line with the alternative confidentiality safeguards required under Section 3.3.1(7), a consent statement was presented at the beginning of the Google Form, covering the study's purpose, data confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw at any time. Proceeding past this statement constituted documented electronic consent, in keeping with internationally accepted standards for minimal-risk online research.

Declaration of generative AI use

During the preparation of this work the author(s) used ChatGPT and Grammarly for grammar and language editing. After using this tool, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and took(s) full responsibility for the content of the published article.

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Declaration of competing interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2026.103475>.

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