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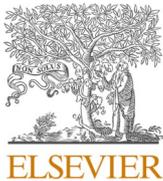
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Analysis of consumer response to online same-day grocery delivery service: The case of South Korea

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study is to examine what affects consumers' decision-making processes for adopting same-day online grocery delivery services in South Korea.

Design/methodology/approach: It analyzes the cognitive (vendor, product, price quality, and perceived risk), affective (trust and relationship commitment), and conative (word-of-mouth and service adoption intention) dimensions within an integrated framework of customer value theory, commitment-trust theory, and the cognitive-affective-conative model.

Findings: The findings reveal that product quality, price, and decreased perceived risk significantly impact consumer trust, but vendor quality does not. Trust positively influences relationship commitment and consumer willingness to share positive word-of-mouth and adopt the service consequently. The results reveal the importance of trust and commitment in the consumer decision-making process when adopting new services.

Originality/value: It recommends that service providers focus on service differentiation, customer experience, and service adoption incentives. Personalized marketing communication and continuous customer engagement are also recommended to enhance positive word-of-mouth and actual service adoption.

1. Introduction

In recent years, e-commerce has become an indispensable part of global commerce. In 2024, global retail e-commerce sales are estimated to exceed \$6.3 trillion, and this figure is expected to reach new heights in the coming years (Lin, 2024). Food and beverages have been among the most purchased products in online shopping. According to a 2022 survey on food consumption in South Korea, about 20 % of all responding households said that they buy groceries online once every two weeks and about 17 % once a week (Jobst, 2024). In Europe, grocery purchases online in Italy more than doubled in April 2020 (Larsen, 2022).

In other words, the most noticeable aspect of the growth in online shopping transactions is that consumers have even begun to purchase groceries, including perishable items (e.g., fresh produce, meats, and seafood) with popular services such as Amazon Fresh and Instacart in the United States and Rocket Delivery in South Korea. These companies

began to build fast delivery systems—online same-day delivery service suitable for grocery products in line with this demand (George & Tomer, 2022). In 2024, the projected revenue in the grocery delivery market in South Korea is estimated to be \$14.66 billion, and it is expected that the revenue will experience an annual growth rate of 10.25 % from 2024 to 2028, resulting in a projected market volume of \$21.66 billion by 2028 (Statista, 2025).

An illustrative example of the abovementioned online delivery service is Rocket Delivery Service, operated by Coupang in South Korea (Kim, 2021). Coupang commands a dominant position in the online retail space as a key player in the country's rapidly growing dawn delivery (a.k.a., early-morning grocery) market. The annual growth of South Korea's online retail market averaged 22.5 % for the past 10 years (2012–2021). It is expected to attain a 16.8 % share of total retail sales by 2026 (Oosga, 2023). At current, Coupang's share in South Korea's online grocery delivery market is estimated to exceed 35 %, ahead of

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competitors such as Market Kurly, SSG.com (Shinsegae), and Homeplus (Kim, 2025). While several companies now offer similar options, Coupang's Rocket Delivery Service is distinct in its operational model. Distinguishing itself from conventional seller-consumer mediation, Rocket Delivery Service directly procures diverse products from sellers, establishes inventory, and expedites deliveries to consumers ensuring product freshness and timely delivery within the same (or no later than the following) day. Coupang further extends its service repertoire with the "Rocket Fresh" feature, which offers an enhanced selection of food items ranging from frozen foods to fresh produce (KoreaLocalPages, 2021). By utilizing Rocket Fresh, customers can expect all their groceries to be delivered directly to their homes the following morning. If orders are placed before 10 a.m., the service assures their arrival before 6 p.m. on the same day, thereby offering expedited delivery for early submissions. Conversely, orders made between 10 a.m. and midnight will be scheduled for delivery at approximately 7 a.m. on the following morning, providing customers with a convenient and reliable delivery window for orders placed during this timeframe. The service's emphasis on temperature-controlled packaging, early-morning fulfillment, and wide regional coverage makes it an ideal case to examine consumers' expectations and satisfaction in fast online grocery contexts.

Within the retail market, remarkable and swift transformations are providing marketing practitioners with substantial opportunities to improve their strategies and generate greater value for consumers in return. In the realm of grocery shopping, there exists a prevalent inclination among consumers to physically examine and interact with food items, particularly fresh produce, meat, and seafood, as a means of assessing their freshness or flawlessness. Nonetheless, in the context of online grocery shopping platforms, it has become imperative for consumers to relinquish this customer behavioral tendency. Consequently, it falls upon platform providers to ensure the provision of sufficiently fresh grocery items. In doing so, service providers can effectively alleviate consumers' concerns arising from their inability to personally inspect the quality of food items prior to purchase. This behavioral tendency and changes generated in online grocery shopping platforms introduce numerous new phenomena and challenges that have not yet been fully explored or understood by researchers in academia.

Therefore, this study formulates the following research questions: 1) What factors affect consumers' decision-making process when adopting online same-day grocery delivery service? 2) Does fast online same-day grocery delivery service satisfy consumers while ensuring proper quality in the case of fresh produce, meat, and seafood? To address these questions, the current study employs a behavioral approach by utilizing online panels in South Korea, where consumers are early adopters of online grocery delivery service, and related industries have changed ahead of other countries accordingly (Kang et al., 2023). Also, South Korea's advanced technology and infrastructure (particularly in its urban areas) can provide valuable implications for countries seeking to improve their own infrastructure to support similar services. This study examines consumer perceptions toward Rocket Fresh by Coupang because not only by its market leadership and technological capability but also because it exemplifies the operational complexities and behavioral shifts involved in online same-day grocery delivery. Understanding South Korean consumer perception and market dynamics can be applicable to similar emerging markets. Therefore, this study seeks to understand how consumers perceive and approach novel service offerings by drawing upon an integrated framework that combines customer value theory, commitment-trust theory, and the cognitive-affective-conative model. Moreover, this study provides valuable insights for devising effective online grocery shopping marketing strategies aimed at distinct consumer groups.

2. Literature review

Integrating customer value theory, commitment-trust theory, and the cognitive-affective-conative model provides a more thorough

perspective to understand the consumer decision-making process (Hsiao & Chen, 2017; Kim et al., 2011; Su et al., 2019). Integrated framework captures how rational evaluations (the cognitive dimension), emotional responses (the affective dimension), and behavioral intentions (the conative dimension) interact (Bagozzi, 1992; Oliver, 2010) and collectively shape consumers' adoption of online same-day grocery delivery services (Hansen, 2008; Magnan et al., 2021; Mortimer et al., 2016). Thus, the logical justification for integrating these three theories should be addressed with the specified constructs in each dimension.

2.1. Cognitive dimension: Customer value theory

Customer value theory encompasses customers' rational assessment regarding a service's effectiveness, utility, and perceived costs, forming their overall perceived value (Zeithaml, 1988) and the fulfillment of their needs (Yeh et al., 2016). Such evaluations have been identified as critical determinants of consumer purchasing decisions in prior research (Chiu et al., 2012; Hsu et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2011; Su et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2013). Consumers judge the practical benefit (or functional value) of a product or service for its effectiveness and utility in performing its intended tasks by comparing the costs invested (Su et al., 2019). The trade-off dynamics between the cost and benefit (e.g., the service quality and the level of satisfaction with the service) can be defined as consumer value. The perceived usefulness and costs are critical in shaping the perceived value (e.g., satisfaction) of paid content (Hsiao & Chen, 2017; Wang et al., 2013). Hansen (2008) and Stenius and Eriksson (2023) found that consumers connect their personal values to attitudes when shopping for groceries online. Based on the arguments of Hansen (2008) and Stenius and Eriksson (2023), consumers purchase grocery products via platforms that show different strategies by offering new value services, compared to traditional offline businesses. This new business promotes consumer value, thereby increasing competitive advantage. Thus, this study adopts the consumer value theory to examine the effect of consumers' overall evaluation regarding the value (e.g., effectiveness) of online same-day delivery service for fresh products.

With this in mind, online vendor quality (e.g., a vendor's reputation or service quality—i.e., packaging and delivery speed), product quality (e.g., a product's freshness and cleanness), and price quality (e.g., consumers' perceived level of price for products and price fairness) are critical dimensions consistently identified in consumer behavior literature as representing key aspects of the functional value consumers seek in online transactions and influencing their perceived risk (Su et al., 2019; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). The decision to adopt these specific variables is grounded in established theoretical frameworks that posit that consumers evaluate online offerings based on tangible and performance-related attributes. Functional value, encompassing these quality dimensions, directly addresses the utilitarian benefits consumers expect, while simultaneously mitigating perceived risks associated with the online environment, such as uncertainty about product performance or vendor reliability (Oh et al., 2015).

Previous research found that these cognitive assessments of vendor, product, and price quality play a significant role in shaping affective responses, such as consumer trust and commitment (Berryessa & Caplan, 2020; Magnan et al., 2021; Oh et al., 2015; Su et al., 2019; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). Specifically, high perceived vendor quality builds confidence in the online platform's credibility and service delivery, directly addressing the risk inherent in transactions where physical inspection is not possible (Zheng et al., 2020). Zheng et al. (2020) underscore online vendor quality as one of the most important attributes influencing consumer purchase decisions, measurable through factors like a firm's credibility and consumer reviews. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1a. Vendor quality in the same-day delivery service is positively related to consumer trust.

Similarly, perceived product quality assures consumers that the goods will meet their expectations, reducing the risk of dissatisfaction and returns. Hsiao and Chen (2017) explicitly suggest that cognitively assessed product and price quality are two vital components of functional value that significantly affect consumer trust in online platforms. Also, Sung et al. (2023)'s study show that tangible product quality signals enhance consumers' trust in online platforms. For example, perceived product quality via product ratings, reviews, and inspection cues help reduce uncertainty, and thereby increase consumer trust. Supporting this view, an evidence in meta-analysis of e-commerce behavior study by Handoyo (2024) also highlights product quality signals as pivotal determinants of consumer trust in e-commerce contexts. Therefore, this study posits:

H1b. Product quality in the same-day delivery service is positively related to consumer trust.

Finally, perceived price quality, beyond just the numerical price, reflects the value proposition perceived by the consumer, influencing their assessment of fairness and ultimately impacting trust and the likelihood of repeat purchase intentions in online contexts. When consumers perceive prices as fair, it signals ethical treatment, transparency, and genuine intentions from the seller, significantly reducing feelings of exploitation and uncertainty, thus enhancing consumer confidence and trust (Chubaka Mushagalusa et al., 2022). Empirical studies across industries show that multidimensional price fairness significantly influences consumer trust (Hride et al., 2022). For instance, Chubaka Mushagalusa et al. (2022) found that fair pricing strengthens trust and reducing switching intention. Therefore, examining price quality as key variables is theoretically supported by their foundational roles in shaping consumer perceptions of functional value, which are well-established antecedents of trust and commitment in online contexts. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1c. Price quality in the same-day delivery service is positively related to consumer trust.

2.2. Linking cognitive to affective dimension: A decreased perceived risk and trust

Understanding factors that influence trust, particularly perceived risk, is crucial, especially in the context of adopting new services like same-day delivery. Consumers' rational evaluation of perceived risk (i.e., a cognitive factor) (Berryessa & Caplan, 2020; Magnan et al., 2021; Oh et al., 2015) is theoretically understood to negatively affect their trust and belief in online platforms. It is because perceived risk is defined as a consumers' subjective expectation of potential loss or uncertainty associated with a transaction (Bauer, 1960; Mitchell, 1999). It is inherently cognitive, reflecting a consumers' rational evaluation of the likelihood of negative consequences, such as receiving poor-quality products, delayed service, privacy breaches, or financial loss (Oh et al., 2015; Su et al., 2019). On the other hand, trust is a psychological state involving a positive expectation about the intentions or behavior of another party in situations of vulnerability and requires a sense of confidence, reliability, and reduced uncertainty (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), but perceived risk heightens uncertainty. The two –i.e., trust and perceived risk are conceptual opposites (Berryessa & Caplan, 2020; Wakefield, 2013) and this inverse relationship eventually influences consumer behaviors (Spielberger, 1966; Zolkepli & Kamarulzaman, 2015).

The dynamic interplay between trust and perceived risk is particularly relevant when consumers consider adopting new technologies or services. Kenesei et al. (2022) and Lee et al. (2019) examined the dynamics between trust and perceived risk that might affect individuals' willingness to adopt a new technology. Applying this to the context of an unfamiliar service like online same-day delivery, it is posited that as consumers' perceived risk decreases, perhaps due to successful initial

experiences or positive information, their anxiety concerning such a service diminishes, leading to an increased level of trust. This aligns with theoretical perspectives suggesting that effectively managing or reducing uncertainty or perceived risk alleviates anxiety, enhance psychological comfort, and fosters a sense of security and trust (Ross, 1975). Su et al. (2019) and Mortimer et al. (2016) also suggested that relieving anxiety increases consumer trust in the new service. In light of the interplay between perceived risk and trust dynamics, a higher level of trust is anticipated when perceived risk is decreased. Thus, perceived risk is included as a key variable because it represents a primary barrier to trust formation in online and novel service contexts, and the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1d. A decreased perceived risk is positively related to consumer trust.

2.3. Affective dimension: Trust and relationship commitment

Consumers who establish a positive connection with a service provider often perceive higher switching costs (Wang, Wang, & Liu, 2016). This potentially fosters loyalty and commitment to that provider (Amblee & Bui, 2011; Cheng & Huang, 2013; Thatcher & George, 2004). According to commitment-trust theory, which is based on relationship marketing, there are two critical factors needed to be successful: trust and commitment. Park et al. (2012) elaborated that the level of an individual's involvement in exchange relationships substantially influences the degree of his or her relationship commitment, a determining factor in the sustenance of long-term relational bonds. Moreover, the degree of commitment is also influenced by the foundation of trust, as both parties demonstrate full commitment to the relationship, as expounded by Morgan and Hunt (1994). Therefore, this theory is effective in identifying and measuring the role of commitment and trust in consumer shopping behaviors.

Previous studies have extensively examined how consumers navigate the complexity of online shopping, consistently identifying trust as a cornerstone of successful online commerce. The decision to focus on consumer trust in this study is driven by its well-established critical role in fostering enduring online business relationships. Aslam et al. (2018) argued that consumer trust is one of the crucial factors in establishing a successful online business trade; ultimately, trust leads to long-term customer relationships (Hahn & Kim, 2009). In online grocery shopping, when customers purchase their necessary items, trust positively affects their purchase intentions (Kedah et al., 2015; Kour, 2022). These highlight trust not just as a relationship outcome, but also as a significant driver of consumer behavior in e-commerce.

Thus, this study examines the influence of trust on consumers' willingness to engage in a long-term relationship with the service, conceptualized as relationship commitment, in online service contexts. Consumers' trust in a service is a positive determinant of consumers' intention to maintain a long-term relationship with the service (i.e., relationship commitment—a dimension of attitude concerning a product or service) (Singh & Kunja, 2023; Walsh & Elsner, 2012; Wang, Wang, & Liu, 2016; Wang, Yeh, et al., 2016). The theoretical underpinning for this relationship lies in the risk-reducing function of trust. This is because consumer trust in a service provider tends to reduce the uncertainty and vulnerability felt by consumers when interacting with the service, particularly in environments where tangible assurances are limited. When consumers trust a service, they feel more secure and confident in its reliability and intentions, which fosters a willingness to invest in and maintain the relationship.

Eventually, felt trust and relationship commitment, as components of the affective dimension, become critical factors in shaping consumer behavioral intentions (such as purchase intention by using the service) and the intention to spread positive word-of-mouth in the conative dimension (Kollock, 1994; Yamagishi et al., 1998). Therefore, establishing and maintaining consumer trust is essential for cultivating strong

relationship commitment, which in turn drives favorable consumer behaviors crucial for the success of a service, especially a new one seeking to build a loyal customer base. This justifies the inclusion of relationship commitment as a key outcome variable influenced by consumer trust. Therefore, this study posits:

H2. Consumer trust is positively related to the relationship commitment toward the online service.

2.4. Conative dimension: From commitment to behavioral intentions

The cognitive-affective-conative model can measure consumers' purchasing process based on three stages: thinking, feeling, and doing when purchasing products or services. In grocery shopping, [Omar and Sawmong \(2007\)](#) addressed the effectiveness of the cognitive-affective-conative model by measuring consumer loyalty. Theoretically, consumers first obtain information based on prior knowledge or recent experiences ([Oliver et al., 1997](#)). Then, consumers form attitudes based on these experiences, and this leads to behavioral intentions reflected in repurchasing products or services, based on the degree of their commitment through the affective level. Through the cognitive-affective-conative model, consumer loyalty levels can be measured by word-of-mouth behavior for online grocery shopping with same-day delivery service. According to [Purnasari and Yuliando \(2015\)](#), committed consumers motivated by strong emotional bonds to a service naturally acts as advocates. Thus, committed relationships can predict the intention to spread positive word-of-mouth (WOM) ([Bakhshi & Dubey, 2020](#); [Purnasari & Yuliando, 2015](#)).

Extending the discussion on the outcomes of strong consumer relationships, this study examines how relationship commitment translates into positive WOM intentions, a vital form of consumer advocacy in the digital age. Recent research by [Maduku et al. \(2023\)](#) and [Goraya et al. \(2019\)](#) show that consumer commitment to a digital platform can be linked with their intention to engage in WOM communication. This finding aligns with a study conducted by [Ryu and Park \(2020\)](#), which demonstrated that committed consumers are more likely to share positive information about a firm's products and services with others. Additionally, [Mittal et al. \(2022\)](#) investigated the relationship between commitment and positive WOM; they found that consumer commitment serves as a positive predictor of WOM behavior. Building upon these consistent previous research findings, which highlight commitment as a key driver of favorable external communication, this study formulates the following hypothesis:

H3a. Consumers' relationship commitment toward the online service is positively related to positive word-of-mouth intention.

Grounded in the notion that relationship commitment as a driver of favorable outcomes, this section focuses on its direct impact on consumers' intent to purchase the service. As posited by [Raju et al. \(2009\)](#), commitment fosters a propensity for favorable behavior toward a specific brand, product, or service. [Beukeboom et al. \(2015\)](#), for instance, found that consumers who hold significantly positive evaluations of a product or service are more inclined to develop a commitment toward it. This finding suggests a feedback loop where positive attitudes (often stemming from trust, as discussed earlier) contribute to commitment, which in turn influences behavior.

Indeed, the link between commitment and purchase intention is a recurring theme in marketing literature. [Dijkmans et al. \(2015\)](#) and [Singh and Kunja \(2023\)](#) highlighted the significance of consumer commitment as a critical factor in shaping consumers' intention to purchase the brand's products or services. Committed consumers demonstrate a favorable willingness to purchase the brand to which they are committed ([Dijkmans et al., 2015](#)). Additionally, [Bouhleh et al. \(2011\)](#) found that committed consumers exhibit a preference for a brand, evident in their purchase behavior; moreover, [Wu \(2017\)](#) found that product or service commitment emerges as a plausible positive

antecedent of purchase intention.

The robust and consistent findings across these studies provide strong empirical justification for examining the relationship between relationship commitment and purchase intention. Theoretically, commitment implies a desire to maintain the relationship with the service, and the most direct manifestation of this desire in a transactional context is the intention to continue purchasing from the service. This intention is a key indicator of future behavior and is vital for the sustained success of any service. Based on these well-established theoretical foundations and empirical evidence, this study posits the following hypothesis:

H3b. Consumers' relationship commitment toward the online service is positively related to purchase intention from the service.

Positive word-of-mouth has been widely acknowledged for its influence on others' behaviors ([Aravindan et al., 2023](#)). Previous research has consistently underscored the critical role of positive word-of-mouth as a predictor variable capable of instigating various favorable behavioral outcomes, such as shaping perceptions and driving adoption among potential new customers ([Matzler et al., 2019](#); [Shankar et al., 2020](#); [Wang et al., 2020](#)). For instance, consumers who have developed positive sentiments toward a service can influence others to develop the intention to adopt the said product or service ([Li & Jaharuddin, 2021](#)).

This willingness to advocate and the intention to purchase the service are often parallel outcomes stemming from a favorable consumer-service relationship driven by trust and commitment (as discussed previously). Therefore, a consumer intending positive word-of-mouth is likely to also have a strong intention to purchase the service themselves. Based on this understanding that the intention to recommend reflects a strong internal disposition also driving personal purchase likelihood, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4. Consumers' positive word-of-mouth intention is positively related to their purchase intention to use the online service.

Therefore, based on the above-mentioned theoretical backgrounds and hypothetical relationships based on the integrative framework, the following research model is proposed (See [Fig. 1](#)):

3. Methodology

This study adopted an online panel survey service in South Korea to collect data and examine consumers' distinctive cognitive and affective responses toward online same-day grocery delivery service. Furthermore, this study assessed the participants' conative behaviors in terms of spreading WOM about the service and adopting the service to order and purchase fresh groceries online. Structural equation modeling was used to analyze the collected data.

3.1. Sample characteristics

A total of three hundred participants from the eight most urban regions in South Korea (e.g., Seoul, Busan, Daegu, Incheon, Gwangju, Daejeon, Ulsan, and Gyeonggi-do), known for frequent usage of online same-day grocery delivery service, were recruited by Embrain the South Korean panel data provider. Among them, 296 valid responses were collected and eventually analyzed in this study. According to [Soper \(2022\)](#)'s a-priori sample size calculation, this study's minimum suggested sample size is 116; therefore, this study's final sample size to analyze the proposed hypotheses satisfies the minimum requirement and ensures adequate statistical power. In the final sample, the number of males is 94 (31.8 %), and that of females is 202 (68.2 %). To better reflect the social and cultural distinctiveness that shapes consumer behavior, participants were grouped into a generational cohort based on [Bresford. \(2023\)](#), rather than being grouped into traditional age groups. This approach offers the following benefits: it ensures common historical moments, cultural shifts, and technological changes, which shape the

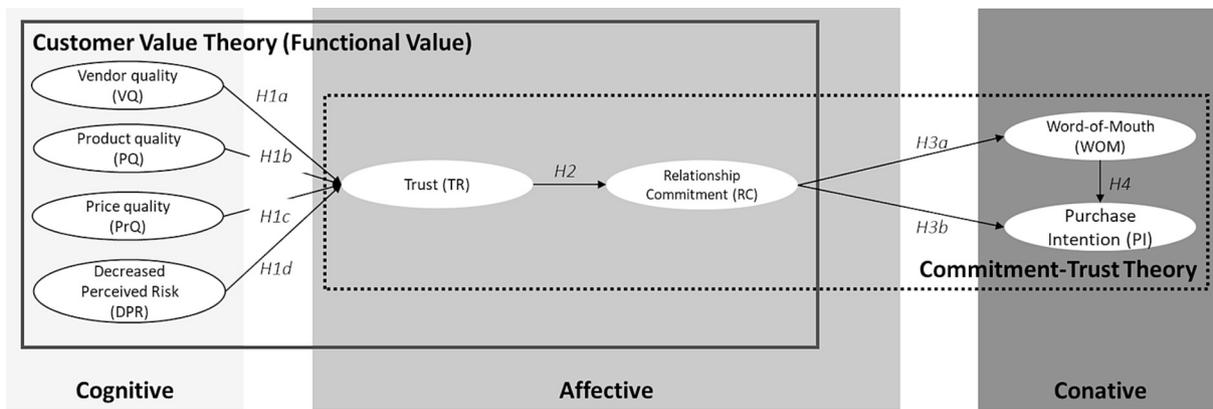


Fig. 1. Proposed research model (Source: Authors own work).

value and attitudes of individuals within each generational group (Twenge, 2017; Twenge et al., 2010). Also, it provides more meaningful interpretation of consumers' behavioral patterns, makes research findings easier to communicate to diverse audiences, and allows a consistent framework that keeps relevance over time (Dimock, 2019; Rudolph & Zacher, 2016). Thus, the number of participants is distributed over three generations—e.g., Generation Z (18–26 years old in 2023; 31.8 %), Millennials (a.k.a. Generation Y; 27–42 years old in 2023; 33.4 %), and Generation X (43–58 years old in 2023; 34.8 %) (see Table 1 for a detailed description of the subjects). The survey questions were adapted from previous studies using customer value theory, commitment-trust, and the cognitive-affective-conative model (see Table 2 for questions in the survey and sources of the questions).

3.2. Common method variance (CMV)

According to Harman's one-factor analysis, as suggested by Podsakoff et al. (2003) and Sakrabani and Teoh (2021), the total variance extracted should be less than 50 % for the data to have a lower probability of CMV issues in the self-report online survey. From the South Korean sample, 39.81 % of the total variance was extracted. Specifically, this finding validates the lower probability of CMV issues.

3.3. Exploratory factor analysis

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) with varimax rotation was adopted to examine the validation of the constructs proposed in this study using SPSS 28. The analysis extracted 30 items; the lowest factor loading was 0.50 and the highest was 0.87 across eight constructs, with an eigenvalue exceeding 1. By following Nunnally (1978), all constructs with a Cronbach's alpha of over 0.70 in the proposed model show internal consistency and validity (see Table 2).

3.4. Confirmatory factor analysis

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to examine the measurement model's validity and reliability. By following Hair et al.

Table 1
Subjects' age ranges in 2023.

	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Generation Z (18–26 years old)	25	69	94 (31.8 %)
Millennials (27–42 years old)	27	72	99 (33.4 %)
Generation X (43–58 years old)	42	61	103 (34.8 %)
Total	94 (31.8 %)	202 (68.2 %)	296 (100 %)

Note: Generational category adapted from Bresford. (2023).

(2018), indices such as χ^2 , the Tucker Lewis index (TLI), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) were adopted to measure the model fitness. The CFA obtained an acceptable model fit with $\chi^2 = 965.32$, $df = 367$, p -value < .000, TLI = 0.972, CFI = 0.977, and RMSEA = 0.051 (90 % confidence interval: 0.047–0.055). Also, the construct validity was assessed by calculating the construct reliabilities, average variance extracted (AVE) percentages, and inter-construct correlations.

All standardized factor loading estimates (λ) were significant ($p < .000$). The lowest factor loading estimate (λ) was 0.68, and the highest was 0.96. The average variance extracted estimates (AVE) were 0.84, 0.90, 0.85, 0.60, 0.88, 0.69, 0.77, and 0.87 for VQ, PQ, PrQ, DPR, TR, RC, WOM, and PI, respectively. Further, the construct reliability estimates were all acceptable, with the lowest being 0.82 and the highest being 0.98 (see Table 3). Discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the square root of the average variance extracted (\sqrt{AVE}) percentage for any two constructs with the correlation estimate between these two constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Both the convergent validity and discriminant validity of the model were supported, and good reliability was also established. Thus, the CFA was satisfactory.

4. Hypothesis testing results

First, an overall structural model fit was estimated. The one-group Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) provided a satisfactory fit of the data with $\chi^2 = 1186.67$, $df = 381$, $p < .000$; CFI = 0.968; TLI = 0.964; RMSEA = 0.058 (90 % of confidence interval: 0.055–0.062). The SEM structural paths show that not every construct was positively related. The relationships between Vendor Quality (VQ) and Trust were not significant ($\beta = 0.026$, $p > .10$). A significant relationship between Product Quality (PQ) and Trust was detected ($\beta = 0.48$, $p < .001$). Price Quality (PrQ) was found to have a significantly positive impact on Trust ($\beta = 0.39$, $p < .001$). A statistically significant association was observed between Decreased Perceived Risk (DPR) and Trust ($\beta = 0.107$, $p < .05$). As expected, Trust was positively related to Relationship Commitment (RC) ($\beta = 0.798$, $p < .001$). Similarly, Relationship Commitment (RC) was positively related to word-of-mouth intention (WOM) ($\beta = 0.543$, $p < .001$) and purchase intention by using the service (PI) ($\beta = 0.937$, $p < .001$). The relationship between WOM and PI is found to have a negative impact on PI but not significantly ($\beta = -0.002$, $P > .10$) (see Table 4 and Fig. 2).

5. Implications

5.1. Discussions and theoretical implications

This study makes a significant contribution to the fields of marketing and consumer behavior, particularly concerning the rapidly evolving

Table 2
Survey question items & exploratory factor analysis.

Item	Questions	Source	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
VQ1	The consumer reviews of the one-day delivery service for fresh produce, meat, and seafood is important.	Zheng et al. (2020)	0.815	0.865
VQ2	The product packaging of the one-day delivery service for fresh produce, meat, and seafood is important.		0.736	
VQ3	The speed of the one-day delivery service for fresh produce, meat, and seafood is important.		0.859	
VQ4	The delivery fee of the one-day delivery service for fresh produce, meat, and seafood is important.		0.786	
PQ1	Perceived product quality offered by the one-day delivery service for fresh produce, meat, and seafood is proper.	Hsiao and Chen (2017)	0.744	0.936
PQ2	Perceived freshness of items offered by the one-day delivery service for fresh produce, meat, and seafood is acceptable.		0.779	
PQ3	The items offered by the one-day delivery service for fresh produce, meat, and seafood are clean.		0.739	
PQ4	The items offered by the one-day delivery service for fresh produce, meat, and seafood are safe to consume.		0.745	
PQ5	The items offered by the one-day delivery service for fresh produce, meat, and seafood are fresh.		0.78	
PrQ1	The one-day delivery service for fresh produce, meat, and seafood is appropriate for the price.	Hsiao and Chen (2017), Wang et al. (2013), and Su et al. (2019)	0.805	0.928
PrQ2	The price that I have to pay for the one-day delivery service for fresh produce, meat, and seafood is satisfactory.		0.792	

Table 2 (continued)

Item	Questions	Source	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
PrQ3	I would be pleased with the price for the one-day delivery service for fresh produce, meat, and seafood.		0.851	
PrQ4	Overall, the price of the one-day delivery service for fresh produce, meat, and seafood provides me with good value.		0.825	
DPR1	I do not think there is too much uncertainty associated with using the one-day delivery service for fresh produce, meat, and seafood.	Mortimer et al. (2016)	0.846	0.844
DPR2	Compared with shopping at a physical retail store, I do not think that using the one-day delivery service for fresh produce, meat, and seafood is riskier.		0.829	
DPR3	I don't feel unsafe giving my personal information (e.g., home address, name, credit card number, etc.) to the one-day delivery service for fresh produce, meat, and seafood.		0.784	
TR1	Online fresh produce service is reliable.	Rose et al. (2012)	0.674	0.901
TR2	In general, I can rely on the online fresh produce service to keep the promises that they make.		0.675	
TR3	Using online fresh produce service is a trustworthy experience.		0.699	
TR4	Online fresh produce service has integrity.	Bonsón Ponte et al. (2015)	0.688	
RC1	The relationship that I have with this online fresh produce service is worth my maximum effort to maintain.	Li et al. (2006); Mukherjee and Nath (2007); Vatanasombut et al. (2008); Wang, Wang, and Liu (2016)	0.5	0.841
RC2	I would feel very upset if this online fresh produce service were to disappear in the future.		0.65	
RC3	I feel a sense of belonging to the online fresh produce service.		0.575	
PI1	The probability that I would	Bonsón Ponte et al. (2015)	0.783	0.935

(continued on next page)

Table 2 (continued)

Item	Questions	Source	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
PI2	consider buying fresh products from an online fresh produce service is high. If I were to buy fresh products, I would consider using an online fresh produce service.	An (2018)	0.8	0.898
PI3	The likelihood of my purchasing fresh products from an online fresh produce service is high.		0.82	
PI4	My willingness to purchase fresh products from an online fresh produce service is high.		0.79	
WOM1	I will pass along information about same-day online fresh produce delivery service to my social media friends when I find it useful.		0.87	
WOM2	I will persuade my social media friends to shop at the same-day online fresh produce delivery service.		0.859	
WOM3	I often influence my social media friends' opinions about shopping at the same-day online fresh produce delivery service.		0.834	

Note: VQ: Vendor Quality; PQ: Product Quality; PrQ: Price Quality; DPR: Decreased Perceived Risk; TR: Trust; RC: Relationship Commitment; PI: Purchase Intention; WOM: Word-of-mouth.

landscape of online same-day grocery delivery services. By delineating the theoretical trajectory from cognitive and affective factors to adoption intention, this study provides valuable insights into the psychological processes that consumers undergo when considering this novel service. As online grocery delivery service rapidly expands its customer

Table 3

Correlation matrix (Source: Authors own work).

	M	SD	CR	AVE	VQ	PQ	PrQ	DPR	TR	RC	PI	WOM
VQ	5.77	1.00	0.88	0.59	0.77							
PQ	5.45	0.92	0.93	0.72	0.61	0.85						
PrQ	4.85	1.09	0.93	0.76	0.27	0.53	0.87					
DPR	3.89	1.16	0.85	0.58	0.02	0.1	0.01	0.76				
TR	5.12	0.88	0.89	0.66	0.42	0.67	0.60	0.15	0.81			
RC	4.81	1.12	0.83	0.62	0.31	0.41	0.51	0.03	0.59	0.78		
PI	5.21	1.05	0.92	0.75	0.38	0.51	0.49	0.16	0.69	0.73	0.87	
WOM	4.65	1.20	0.90	0.70	0.21	0.35	0.38	0.07	0.48	0.50	0.57	0.84

M: Mean; SD: Standard Deviation; CR: Composite Reliability; AVE: Average Variance Extracted; The square root of the Average Variance Extracted (\sqrt{AVE}) is indicated in boldface.

base and fosters customer loyalty, exploring the psychological factors influencing consumers' adoption decisions becomes critical for enhancing service provision for existing consumers and mitigating psychological barriers that might hinder potential adopters.

Consistent with cognitive-affective-conative framework, the findings provide specific insights into the cognitive factors shaping consumer trust in online same-day grocery delivery in South Korea. Crucially, the product quality of items offered on the platform emerged as a highly significant positive predictor of consumer trust.

Also, price quality (e.g., consumers' perceived level of price for products and price fairness) and decreased perceived risk play pivotal roles in shaping trust among South Korean consumers. This aligns with Benhardy et al. (2020)'s study, which emphasized the critical role of price as a determinant of trust especially in environments characterized by information asymmetry, thereby reinforcing the notion that pricing holds paramount importance in consumers' decision-making processes. In addition, decreased perceived risk further complements this pathway, suggesting that cognitive assurance regarding service reliability that protects consumers are essential for establishing affective trust.

The non-significant impact of vendor quality on trust deserves attention, as well. Despite the intuitive assumption that vendor logistics or operational excellence would strengthen trust, the findings imply that, in the context of online same-day grocery delivery service in South Korea, consumers prioritize product attributes and price fairness over vendor's operational factors. This result is aligned with previous studies that found consumers' trust is more powerfully shaped by the perceived quality of products and transparency of information while consumers expect reliable delivery and smooth logistics controlled by vendor operation (i.e., vendor quality) (Al-Debei et al., 2015). Pappas et al. (2014) also found that product personalization (i.e., product quality) and perceived value (e.g., perceived price fairness – i.e., price quality) outweigh backend operation factors (i.e., vendor quality) in consumers' trust formation. Even though vendor's logistics service quality is still important for customer satisfaction, this suggests that logistics service quality alone may be insufficient for building deep consumer trust unless it is paired with superior product offerings and fair value perceptions.

In the effective stage, the findings of this study strongly support that

Table 4

Hypothesis test results of structural equation modeling (Source: Authors own work).

Hypothetical Path	β	p-value	Result
H1a: VQ → TR	0.026	n.s.	Not supported
H1b: PQ → TR	0.480	p < .001	Supported
H1c: PrQ → TR	0.390	p < .001	Supported
H1d: DPR → TR	0.107	p < .05	Supported
H2: TR → RC	0.789	p < .001	Supported
H3a: RC → WOM	0.548	p < .001	Supported
H3b: RC → PI	0.937	p < .001	Supported
H4: WOM → PI	-0.002	n.s.	Not supported

Note: n.s. indicates not significant. The coefficients (β) are a standardized value.

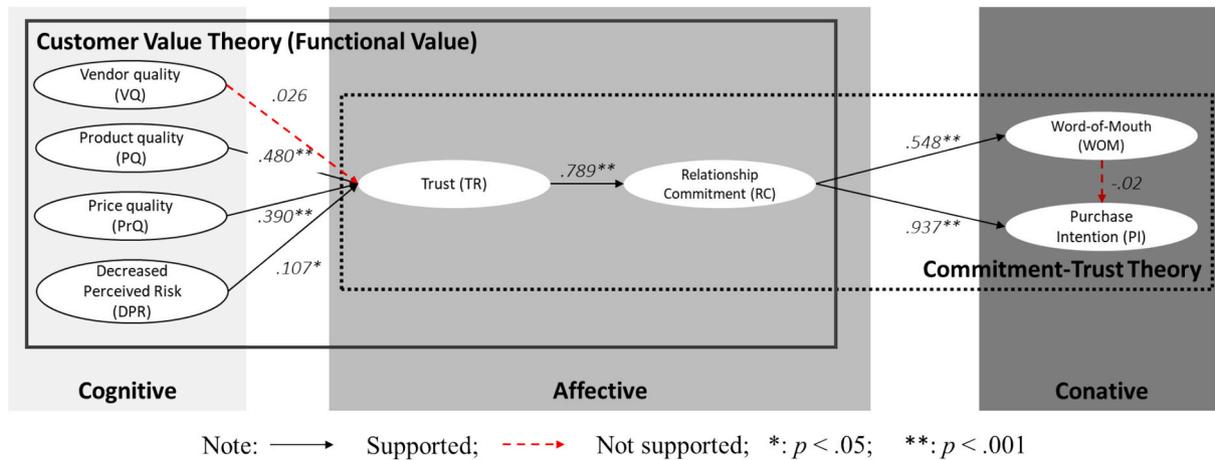


Fig. 2. Hypothesis test results.

Commitment-Trust Theory. As consumer trust builds, it significantly elevates relationship commitment, which shows enduring psychological attachment to the service. This relationship is aligned with the theoretical expectation that trust plays a role of catalyst for the deeper emotional commitment for long-term customer loyalty. Prior study by Park et al. (2023) similarly indicates that trust is a critical antecedent of commitment-based loyalty in the online grocery delivery service.

In the conative stage, commitment to the service has a positive effect on consumers' behavioral intentions, leading them to engage in WOM promotion, and ultimately to adopt the service. This validation of the theoretically hypothesized relationships strengthens the cognitive-affective-conative progression and commitment-trust theory. Committed consumers are more willing to advocate for the service and to consistently repurchase. However, it is noteworthy that the direct effect of WOM on purchase intention was not significant ($\beta = -0.002$, $p > .10$). Given this statistically insignificant coefficient, it suggests no empirical evidence supporting a directional or meaningful association between these two constructs in this context. This finding may reflect the complexity of the online grocery shopping environment, where factors influencing personal adoption decisions (e.g., convenience, pricing, trust) are distinct from those motivating WOM behavior. This also suggests that mere exposure to WOM does not automatically translate into individual purchase behavior without a reinforcement of personal trust or value assessments (Di Virgilio & Antonelli, 2018). Several studies found that the impact of WOM on purchase intention often operates indirectly, mediated by factors such as trust, perceived information usefulness, and brand attitude (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Erkan & Evans, 2016). Ladhari and Michaud (2015) demonstrated that the impact of online WOM on tourists' hotel booking intentions is mediated by trust and attitudes, rather than being direct. Di Virgilio and Antonelli (2018) also found that consumers' WOM intention's impact on purchase is contingent on product involvement, suggesting the importance of mediating variables. Thus, future research should empirically examine potential mediating or moderating factors (such as the depth of personal involvement or service experience intensity) that can optimize the impact of WOM on purchase behavior in the online grocery delivery service sector.

5.2. Managerial implications

Based on the empirical findings and the abovementioned theoretical implications, this study recommends the following managerial strategies to enhance consumers' purchase intentions in the context of online same-day grocery delivery services.

First of all, service providers should prioritize enhancing product quality and price quality (e.g., perceived price fairness). This includes

ensuring product freshness, accuracy in order fulfillment, competitive pricing, and transparent promotional policies.

Additionally, building and maintaining consumer trust should be considered a strategic priority. Transparent service policies, consistent service delivery, and responsive customer support may decrease consumers' perceived risk and foster emotional security, which in turn strengthens commitment in relationships.

Moreover, marketing practitioners should emphasize personalized and segmented communication to highlight how the service can address specific consumer needs or pain points. Tailored marketing communication messages can enhance perceived relevance, thereby increasing the likelihood of developing trust and eventually adopting the service.

Service providers should establish continuous customer engagement through feedback, loyalty programs, and responsive service channels. Continuing engagement helps identify consumer expectations and concerns, ultimately reinforcing trust and increasing retention. Exceptional service experiences should be delivered more systematically – e.g., enhancing perceived ease of use, convenience, and the quality of customer support may improve customer expectations, strengthen their commitment to the service, and encourage positive behavioral intentions (i.e., voluntary word-of-mouth [WOM] and service adoption).

Lastly, while positive WOM remains valuable for establishing service reputation and acquiring customers (Berger, 2014; Park et al., 2022), the current findings reveal an insignificant direct relationship between WOM and purchase intention. Thus, service providers should be cautious about overemphasizing WOM generation as a driver of customer acquisition. Also, it suggests that WOM alone may not directly lead to service adoption behavior. Rather, it can be context-dependent or mediated by factors such as trust, perceived value, or product involvement (Di Virgilio & Antonelli, 2018; Erkan & Evans, 2016; Ladhari & Michaud, 2015). In this regard, incentivized WOM programs (e.g., referral bonuses or reward-based reviews) should be implemented with caution. Although such programs may stimulate WOM, they can also pose ethical risks, damage credibility, distort consumer trust if they lead to inauthentic or misleading reviews (Mayzlin et al., 2014). To mitigate these risks, platforms should clearly label incentivized content, emphasize authenticity, and encourage organic sharing of customer experiences (Cheung & Thadani, 2012).

In sum, practitioners should focus their efforts on enhancing cognitive perceptions (e.g., freshness and transparent product information – i.e., product quality, perceived price fairness – i.e., price quality) building affective trust and commitment, and ensuring reputational and behavioral integrity, not by relying on WOM as a direct behavioral driver. In addition, practitioners recognize that consumers in today's fast-paced e-commerce landscape may perceive operational excellence such as logistics efficiency (i.e., vendor quality) as a fundamental baseline

requirement rather than a source of differentiation (Grewal et al., 2017). Vendor quality may play a role of a hygiene factor (Herzberg, 1966) that its absence may result in dissatisfaction but its presence alone does not necessarily create satisfaction or enhance deeper trust. Instead, consumer trust and consequent loyal relationship that generates purchase is shaped by direct product experience (i.e., product quality) and perceived value (i.e., price quality). By doing so, service providers can more effectively promote consumers' adoption of services and long-term loyalty.

6. Conclusion and future direction

This study focuses on examining the factors influencing the adoption of online same-day delivery service for groceries, specifically fresh produce, meats, and seafood for South Korean consumers. To achieve this, we utilize an integrated framework that combines customer value theory, commitment-trust theory, and the cognitive-affective-conative model. Through this approach, the current study found different psychological patterns of acceptance among South Korean consumers when using online same-day delivery service for groceries.

This study acknowledges its limitations and offers insights into potential directions for future research. One primary limitation addressed is the exploration of a limited location: the South Korean market. Comparisons in multiple markets (e.g., cultural disparities between the United States and South Korea) could deliver more valuable insights on how different cultures influence consumers' cognitive decision-making processes. The outcomes of multi-group investigation could hold more noteworthy implications for devising effective marketing strategies for online grocery shopping that cater to the distinct preferences and requirements of different consumer segments. Thus, a compelling avenue for further inquiry would involve examining consumer behaviors across diverse countries concerning online same-day delivery service for groceries.

Additionally, the study falls short of including individuals who do not partake in online same-day delivery service for groceries. Future research endeavors could center around comparing and contrasting the behaviors of consumers who use online grocery shopping services with those who do not. Notably, certain consumers express hesitancy toward online grocery shopping due to concerns about potential compromises in food quality (Ramus & Asger Nielsen, 2005). Exploring these facets could provide valuable insights for both industry practices and academic discussions in this domain.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Hyun Sang An: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Validation, Software, Methodology, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Arim Park:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Conceptualization. **Ju Myung Song:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Supervision, Software, Conceptualization. **Christina Chung:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Supervision.

Declaration of competing interest

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.

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Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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