CHAPTER 27

Making "Mine" Without Owning: Psychological Ownership and PaaS Adoption in B2C Markets

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ABSTRACT

Moving from linear production models to circular economic systems is one of the central challenges facing businesses in both developed and transitioning economies. The Product-as-a-Service (PaaS) model sits at the centre of this shift: providers keep legal ownership of assets and instead deliver value through access, performance, and functionality (Mont, 2002; Tukker, 2004). From a sustainability standpoint, PaaS can drive more efficient resource use, extend product lifecycles, and support closed-loop material flows that cut waste across the value chain (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017; Stahel, 2016). In practice, however, PaaS has faced stubborn difficulties in Business-to-Consumer (B2C) markets. Consumers who do not legally own a product tend to treat it with less care, form weaker emotional bonds with it, and show less willingness to engage in maintenance or return behaviours on which circular models depend (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012) .This "ownership deficit," as it has been termed in the literature, is arguably the most serious demand-side barrier to scaling PaaS in sectors like fashion and consumer electronics. This systematic literature review pulls together and critically examines what is currently known about the psychological, strategic, and operational dimensions of PaaS adoption. It draws on 24 peer-reviewed sources published between 2002 and 2025, identified through a structured search across Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. The analysis is organised around three established theoretical lenses: Service-Dominant Logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004)which treats value as something co-created through use rather than embedded in goods; Psychological Ownership Theory (Pierce et al., 2003) which explains how people come to feel that something is "theirs" even without legal title; and the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) which foregrounds perceived usefulness and ease of use as preconditions for adoption. Based on this synthesis, the review puts forward an integrative framework in which Customisation, Value Co-creation, and Service Transparency serve as independent variables influencing Psychological Ownership, with consumer Trust acting as a mediating mechanism.

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A key finding is that supply-side enablers — modularity, remanufacturing infrastructure, digital product passports — have received growing attention, but the psychological processes that shape whether consumers will look after products they access but do not own have been given far less scrutiny. Several scholars have pointed to the need for empirical work that addresses this imbalance, particularly research grounded in consumer behaviour theory rather than supply chain or engineering perspectives alone (Mugge et al., 2009; Pratiwi et al., 2024) .The study therefore outlines a mixed-methods research agenda combining survey-based quantitative measurement of the proposed constructs with qualitative exploration of consumer experiences in PaaS settings across fashion and electronics. In doing so, the review offers a multi-theoretical framework linking operational strategies to psychological outcomes — a foundation for future empirical testing, especially in transitioning economies where circular business models remain at an early stage.

Keywords: Product as a Service; Circular business models; Psychological ownership; Trust; Consumer behaviour; Servitization; Value co-creation.

1.0 Introduction

The global economy is transitioning from the traditional "take-make-dispose" model to circular frameworks (Anyanwu et al., 2025). Central to this transformation is the Product-as-a-Service (PaaS) business model, in which providers retain ownership and deliver value through access, performance, and functionality (Octoberry & Wittendorp, 2023) .This shift represents a significant strategic change that challenges established paradigms in accounting, governance, and corporate-consumer relationships

PaaS provides distinct operational and environmental advantages, including improved resource efficiency, extended product lifespans, and the development of closed-loop supply chains (Golinska-Dawson et al., 2024) .Nevertheless, its influence on consumer behaviour remains multifaceted. A primary concern in the literature is the "ownership deficit." Transitioning to access-based models may result in the loss of customers who value the security, identity, and control associated with product ownership. Additional challenges for PaaS include limited consumer acceptance, regulatory barriers, and financial constraints arising from upfront costs and delayed revenue streams (Neramballi et al., 2024)

Research on access-based consumption indicates that, in the absence of legal ownership, consumers tend to be less careful with products and develop weaker emotional attachments (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012) .This trend is observed across diverse product categories, including car-sharing services and fashion rental platforms (Gefen et al., 2003). In business-to-consumer markets, PaaS is therefore essential to foster Psychological

Ownership, defined by (Pierce et al., 2003) as the state in which individuals perceive a target as "theirs" despite lacking formal legal rights. According to this framework, Psychological Ownership arises through three mechanisms: exercising control over the target, acquiring intimate knowledge of it, and investing personal resources. This review examines the antecedents of Psychological Ownership and posits that Customisation, Value Co-creation, and Service Transparency are critical factors in building the trust necessary to facilitate consumer adoption.

2.0 Objectives, Research Questions, and Motivation

2.1 Research motivation

Despite an expanding body of research on circular business models, a significant gap persists in understanding the psychological processes underlying consumer adoption. Existing studies predominantly address supply-side concerns, including reverse logistics (Golinska-Dawson et al., 2024), stewardship asset accounting (Zandee et al., 2025), and digital technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT) (Ryu et al., 2018). Conversely, psychological factors influencing demand remain underexplored. Notably, limited empirical evidence exists regarding strategies to motivate consumers in high-involvement sectors, such as fashion and electronics, to care for rented products to the same extent as owned items (Pratiwi et al., 2024). This study seeks to address the "intention-action gap," in which individuals express support for sustainability but refrain from adopting circular models due to trust concerns and perceived lack of ownership.

2.2 Research objectives

- To investigate the impact of customisation, personalisation, and value co-creation on psychological ownership and consumer engagement in Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) models.
- To examine the influence of service transparency and trust on customer adoption and satisfaction within Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) models.
- To analyse the effects of perceived usefulness and ease of use on trust and customer adoption, considering trust as a moderating variable within the Technology Acceptance Model.

2.3 Research Questions (RQs)

Considering the identified research gaps and objectives, the following research questions are formulated:

- RQ1: How do customisation and personalisation influence psychological ownership in PaaS models?

- RQ2: What role does value co-creation play in enhancing consumer engagement?
- RQ3: How does service transparency mediate the relationship between service attributes and consumer trust?
- RQ4: How does trust moderate the relationship between perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and adoption?

3.0 Methodology

This literature review used a systematic approach to select and examine key academic sources on the relationship between the Circular Economy (CE), Product-Service Systems (PSS), and Consumer Behaviour.

3.1 Source selection criteria

The selection process prioritized sources offering empirical or theoretical insights into Product as a Service (PaaS), emphasising publications from 2018 to 2025 to capture recent developments in digital servitization. The methodology adheres to established systematic review procedures as outlined in the source material (Kuik et al., 2023).

- Keywords used in the search included: "Product as a Service," "Circular Business Models," "Psychological Ownership," "Trust," "Consumer Behavior," "Servitization," and "Value Co-creation."
- The inclusion criteria: covered peer-reviewed journal articles and conference proceedings that examine SDL, POT, TAM, or Institutional Theory in relation to PaaS.
- Exclusion Criteria: Studies were excluded if they focused only on B2B industrial servitization without a consumer-facing aspect, addressed only engineering lifecycle assessment or technical product design without considering consumer behaviour or adoption, were not published in English, appeared only as editorials, book reviews, or opinion pieces without empirical or theoretical contribution, examined sharing-economy platforms such as peer-to-peer rentals where products are not managed by a single service provider, or were published before 2018 and did not introduce a foundational construct directly used in this review's analytical framework.

The table shows the keywords used to search Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. The keywords were applied both individually and in different Boolean combinations using AND, OR to cover a wide range of relevant literature.

The initial database search with these keywords found about 320 records across three databases. After removing duplicates, 214 unique records remained. In the first screening, studies that focused only on B2B industrial servitization, engineering lifecycle analysis, or unrelated service-economy topics were excluded, leaving 58 articles for full-

text review. During the full-text review, articles were excluded if they did not address at least one of the four theoretical lenses (SDL, POT, TAM, or Institutional Theory) or if their empirical context was not relevant to consumer-facing PaaS. Some key foundational works published before 2018 were kept because they introduced important concepts used in the review (e.g., Pierce et al., 2003 on psychological ownership; Vargo & Lusch, 2004 on SDL; Davis, 1989 on TAM). This process resulted in a final set of 25 articles that serve as the basis for this review.

Table 1: Search Keywords

S. No.	Keyword
1	Product as a Service
2	Circular Business Models
3	Psychological Ownership
4	Trust
5	Consumer Behaviour
6	Servitization
7	Value Co-creation

Table 2 shows how the 25 selected articles are distributed by publication year.

Table 2: Distribution of Selected Articles by Publication Year

Publication Year	Number of Articles
2025	4
2024	4
2023	2
2022	1
2020	1
2018	1
2017	2
2016	1
2015	1
2012	1
2009	1
2004	2
2003	2
2002	1
1989	1
Total	**25**

3.2 Analytical approach

The study utilised a content analysis methodology, which involved a structured three-step coding process:

- Open Coding: Key concepts were identified, such as "Stewardship," "Privacy Trust," and "Modularity" (Zandee et al., 2025).
- Axial Coding: These concepts were grouped according to the variables established in the research framework, including Customisation, Transparency, Co-creation, and Trust.
- Synthesis: The findings were integrated to construct the overarching theoretical narrative.

4.0 Results

A review of the selected literature identifies several key findings concerning the strategic implementation of Platform as a Service (PaaS).

The Shift to Result-Oriented Models

Product-service systems (PSS) are typically classified into three categories (Tukker, 2004):

- Product-oriented,
- Use-oriented,
- Result oriented.

Empirical studies indicate that result-oriented PSS, also known as pure Product-as-a-Service (PaaS), offers the greatest potential for circularity because the provider retains ownership and assumes responsibility for inefficiencies (Szwejczewski et al., 2015).In this model, value is derived from maintenance and reuse, described as the "power of the inner circle," as well as from extending product lifespans, referred to as "circling longer" (Szwejczewski et al., 2015).However, this approach necessitates a high degree of consumer trust, as customers relinquish control over the asset.

4.1 Barriers to adoption

Several significant barriers to the adoption of Product-as-a-Service (PaaS) have been identified:

- Trust Deficit: In the business-to-consumer (B2C) electronics sector, consumers often cannot differentiate between high-quality remanufactured products and lower-quality used goods because of insufficient quality standards (Golinska-Dawson et al., 2024).
- Privacy Costs: In data-centric PaaS models, the collection of user data introduces a privacy cost. When firms lack transparency, these privacy concerns can outweigh perceived utility benefits, resulting in consumer rejection (Ryu et al., 2018).

- Accounting Mismatch: Conventional accounting frameworks do not adequately reflect the long-term value of stewardship assets within PaaS models, which complicates assessments of financial viability (Zandee et al., 2025).

4.2 Enablers of engagement

- Modularity refers to designing products with components that can be customised. Such physical customisation can foster a sense of ownership among users (Li et al., 2025).
- Digital traceability employs tools such as Digital Product Passports (DPP) to ensure transparency and clarity of information. This approach reduces confusion and enhances trust (Neramballi et al., 2024).

A substantial body of research identifies emotional attachment as a distinct enabler. (Mugge et al., 2009) demonstrated that user personalisation of products, even at a cosmetic level, fosters stronger emotional bonds, which subsequently result in prolonged product retention and improved care behaviours. In the context of Product-as-a-Service (PaaS), enabling users to modify the appearance or functionality of leased items may enhance both retention rates and the condition of products upon return. (Mont, 2002) provided an early and influential argument that the success of product-service systems relies not only on technical infrastructure but also on changes in consumer culture and institutional arrangements that legitimise access as an alternative to ownership. (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017)reinforce this perspective, observing that circular economy models require systemic transformation involving collaboration among producers, consumers, and regulators. This body of literature indicates that PaaS enablers operate across multiple dimensions, including product design (modularity), information systems (traceability), individual psychology (personalisation, emotional bonding), and institutional context (regulation, cultural norms).

5.0 Discussion: Theoretical Alignment with Research Questions

In this section, the findings are compared with the proposed theoretical framework (SDL, POT, TAM) to address the research questions.

5.1 Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) and Value Co-Creation (RQ2)

RQ2: What role does value co-creation play in enhancing consumer engagement?

Service-Dominant Logic, as originally formulated by (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), posits that value is created during use rather than solely during manufacturing (Zhang et al., 2020). Within the Product-as-a-Service (PaaS) model, consumers transition from passive buyers to active resource integrators (Pratiwi et al., 2024).

Mechanism: Research indicates that consumer participation in activities such as software updates, repair loops, or sharing usage data helps create a feedback loop. (Zhang et

al., 2022) demonstrate a data network effect in which consumer engagement enhances service quality for all users.

Engagement: (Pratiwi et al., 2024)found that consumer participation in the product lifecycle, such as through repair or return programs, fosters a stronger sense of connection. This finding supports the proposition that value co-creation facilitates the development of the intimate knowledge required for psychological ownership, as outlined in Psychological Ownership Theory (POT) and in relation to customisation (RQ1).

5.2 Customisation and Personalisation influence psychological ownership (RQ1)

RQ1: How do customisation and personalisation influence psychological ownership?

Psychological Ownership Theory (POT) posits that individuals experience ownership when they possess control, deep understanding, and personal investment. Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) models eliminate legal control, potentially creating a perceived gap in ownership.

Control achieved through customisation is a significant factor. (Ryu et al., 2018) describe "Proposing New UX Solutions" as a distinctive service strategy. Allowing users to configure services, such as selecting phone modules or items for a fashion subscription, enables companies to restore users' sense of control.

Personal investment is also a critical component. (Li et al., 2025) identify "customizable modules" as a circular design strategy. When individuals physically modify a device by exchanging components, they invest personal effort, thereby enhancing their sense of ownership. Existing research indicates that customisation serves as a significant substitute for legal ownership in access-based models.

5.3 Service Transparency and Trust (RQ3)

RQ3: How does service transparency mediate the relationship between service attributes and consumer trust?

- Trust is a fundamental component in Platform as a Service (PaaS) environment. Researchers identify two primary forms of trust: Quality Trust, which pertains to the effectiveness and reliability of the product, and Privacy Trust, which addresses the management and protection of user data.
- (Golinska-Dawson et al., 2024) identify "uncertainty of quality" as a significant barrier to adoption. Enhancing service transparency through robust traceability and comprehensive history tracking can mitigate this risk.
- (Zhang et al., 2022) examine the "privacy cost" associated with data-centric services. Their findings indicate that explicit communication regarding data usage is essential for establishing trust. In the absence of transparency, even beneficial services such as predictive maintenance may be perceived as intrusive rather than supportive.

These results underscore the critical role of transparency.

5.4 TAM and the Moderating Role of Trust (RQ4)

RQ4: How does trust moderate the relationship between perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and adoption?

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), first proposed by (Davis, 1989)posits that individuals adopt technology primarily due to its perceived usefulness and ease of use. In the context of Platform as a Service (PaaS), both perceptions are particularly significant, as PaaS platforms often involve consumption patterns that are unfamiliar to most users.

(Kuik et al., 2023)observe that circular models are frequently complex, which increases their difficulty of use.

The analysis indicates that trust is a critical factor. When users lack trust in a PaaS system due to privacy or quality concerns, they may refrain from using it, regardless of its perceived usefulness (Zhang et al., 2022). Conversely, strong institutional trust can increase users' willingness to accept more complex services, thereby influencing the relationship between ease of use and adoption. This finding aligns with broader research in technology trust, which demonstrates that trust can amplify or diminish the impact of TAM constructs on actual usage (Gefen et al., 2003).

5.5 Framework analysis

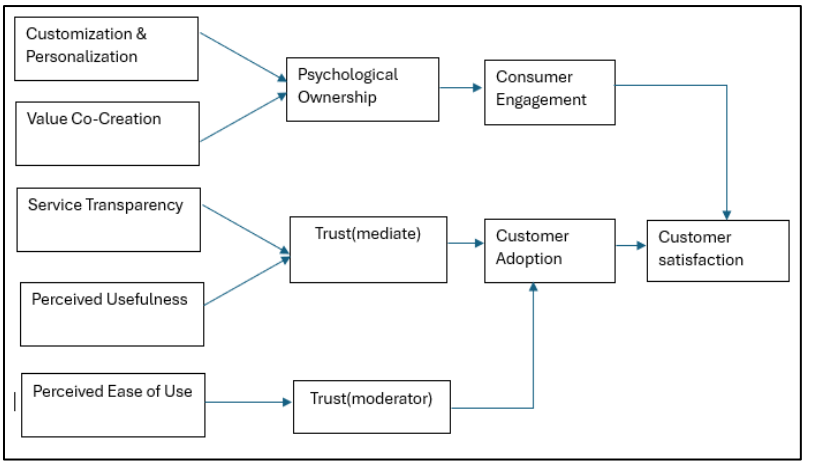
The proposed research framework integrates the practical aspects of Platform as a Service (PaaS) and consumer psychology. The subsequent analysis links relevant literature to the variables within this framework.

Table 3: Alignment of Research Framework with Literature

Variable Type	Variable Name	Description	Supporting Literature	Theoretical Anchor
Independent (IV)	Customization	How much users can customize the service or product.	(Ryu et al., 2018)identify "New UX Solutions" as a key pattern(Li et al., 2025). link modularity to customization.	POT (Control)
Independent (IV)	Value Co-creation	Active consumer participation in value generation.	(Zhang et al., 2020)describe data-driven co-creation. define consumers as "resource integrators."	SDL
Independent (IV)	Service Transparency	Openness regarding product history, pricing, and data.	(Neramballi et al., 2024)argue for "radical traceability(Golinska-Dawson et al., 2024)link standards to trust.	Institutional Theory
Mediator	Trust	Confidence in the provider's integrity and ability.	(Zandee et al., 2025)define "stewardship" as institutional trust. (Zhang et al., 2022)model "privacy trust."	Trust Theory

Dependent (DV)	Psychological Ownership	The feeling that the service is "mine."	(Ryu et al., 2018)uses storage services to maintain ownership feeling.	POT
Moderator	Perceived Usefulness	The functional benefit of the PaaS model.	(Szwejczewski et al., 2015)discuss "advanced services" improving efficiency.	TAM

Figure 1: Framework



5.6 Industry specific context

The strategic implications of Platform as a Service (PaaS) vary significantly across industries, depending on product characteristics.

Consumer Electronics (EEE)

- Context: This sector experiences rapid product obsolescence and generates substantial electronic waste.
- Strategic Driver: Key drivers include extending product life cycles and adopting remanufacturing processes.
- Key Challenge: The main challenge is uncertainty regarding the quality of used electronics (Golinska-Dawson et al., 2024).
- Strategic Implication: Service transparency is critical in this sector. Firms can utilise digital twins or product passports to verify device condition. Customisation through modular hardware upgrades, as demonstrated by Fairphone, enables users to invest in their devices physically, thereby increasing psychological ownership and retention.

Fashion

- Context: The fashion industry is marked by high aesthetic volatility and considerable waste due to fast fashion practices.

- Strategic Driver: Variety and sufficiency serve as primary motivators for consumer engagement in this sector.
- Key Challenge: The sector must address hygiene concerns and the dominant cultural preference for newness (Teberges Dantas Queiroga et al., 2025).
- Strategic Implication: Psychological ownership in fashion is largely shaped by emotional connection. (Teberges Dantas Queiroga et al., 2025) highlight the significance of ludic learning and storytelling. Managers should adopt value co-creation strategies, including curation and styling, to help consumers integrate rented garments into their identity, thereby mitigating the absence of legal ownership.

Table 4: Cross-Industry Strategic Comparison

Feature	**Consumer Electronics (EEE)**	**Fashion**
Primary Driver	Functionality, Technology Access	Identity, Variety, Trends
Key Barrier	Data Privacy, Technical Reliability(Zhang et al., 2022)	Hygiene, Desire for Newness(Teberges Dantas Queiroga et al., 2025)
Trust Mechanism	Technical Transparency (Data/Repair Logs)	Emotional/Sanitary Transparency
Co-creation Form	Software updates, Modular repairs(Li et al., 2025)	Styling, Curation, Upcycling(Teberges Dantas Queiroga et al., 2025)
PaaS Type	Result-Oriented (Functionality)	Use-Oriented (Rental/Leasing)

6.0 Conclusion

This literature review demonstrates that the transition to Product-as-a-Service constitutes both a logistical challenge, related to closing supply chain loops, and a psychological challenge, involving the shift in consumer mindsets from ownership to access. While supply-side mechanisms, such as remanufacturing capacity (Golinska-Dawson et al., 2024)and stewardship asset accounting (Zandee et al., 2025), are increasingly well understood, the demand-side drivers of Psychological Ownership in non-ownership contexts remain a significant gap in current research.

The literature supports the proposed research framework, indicating that Customization (through modularity or user experience), Value Co-creation (through data or participation), and Service Transparency (through digital passports) serve as strategic antecedents for building trust. Integrating Service-Dominant Logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004),Psychological Ownership Theory (Pierce et al., 2003), and the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989),this research addresses the intention-action gap in circular consumption. The proposed study seeks to provide empirical evidence on fostering a sense of "mine-ness" in the Fashion and Consumer Electronics sectors, thereby offering firms a

strategic pathway toward sustained consumer engagement required by a circular economy. Notably, Product-as-a-Service models cannot be fully understood through a Western or developed-economy perspective alone. Transitioning economies present distinct institutional conditions, including evolving regulatory environments, varying consumer attitudes toward ownership, and uneven digital infrastructure, all of which influence consumer reception of PaaS models (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017; Stahel, 2016) Future research should therefore closely examine these contextual differences when empirically testing the proposed framework to ensure findings are both theoretically robust and practically relevant across diverse economic settings.

6.1 Alignment of research gaps and proposed contributions

The following table demonstrates how the current gaps identified in the provided sources are directly addressed by the proposed research.

Table 5: Summary of the Relevant Research

Source / Author	Identified Research Gap	Relevance to Proposed Research & Contribution
(Zhang et al., 2020)	"The mechanism by which service value is co-created... remains underexplored." Focuses on profit/environment but ignores the psychological mechanism of co-creation.	Relevance: Validates Value Co-creation variable. Contribution: The study tests RQ2, linking Co-creation directly to Psychological Ownership, moving beyond financial outcomes to behavioral engagement.
(Golinska-Dawson et al., 2024)	Identified "uncertainty of quality" and "consumer acceptance" as top barriers. Mentions lack of integrative research on scaling remanufacturing in B2C.	Relevance: Supports focus on Trust and Electronics. Contribution: Addresses RQ3 by proposing Service Transparency as the specific mechanism to mitigate "quality uncertainty" and build the trust required for scaling B2C PaaS.
(Teberges Dantas Queiroga et al., 2025)	"Future research should test insights from a consumer angle to permit a deeper understanding... between CEBMs and consumer behaviours."	Relevance: Validates the consumer-centric approach in Fashion. Contribution: The mixed-methods design responds to this call by quantitatively measuring consumer adoption drivers (RQ1, RQ4) in B2C contexts.
(Ryu et al., 2018)	Lack of understanding of how "servicizing solutions" (like UX solutions) translate into value for firms and consumers.	Relevance: Supports Customization variable. Contribution: Links Ryu's "New UX Solutions" to Psychological Ownership (RQ1), explaining *why* these solutions work psychologically (they create a sense of 'mine-ness').

(Johl et al., 2024)	"There is a lack of a theoretical foundation in both servitization and CE fields... servitization research is based on a narrow range of theories."	Relevance: Highlights need for robust theory. Contribution: Integrates SDL, POT, and TAM, providing the multi-theoretical lens missing in current literature.
(Zandee et al., 2025)	Research on accounting/governance barriers is "empirically thin." Introduces "stewardship" but focuses on the firm level.	Relevance: Validates "stewardship" concept. Contribution: Translates "institutional stewardship" into Consumer Psychological Ownership. Investigates how consumers can feel responsible for assets they don't own (RQ1).
(Pratiwi et al., 2024)	"The role of consumers in fostering circular economy... is under-researched." Focuses on the intention-action gap.	Relevance: Validates Customer Adoption DV. Contribution: Uses Trust as a moderator (RQ4) to explain *why* the intention-action gap exists (i.e., users intend to adopt but lack trust).
(Neramballi et al., 2024)	Systemic factors hinder PaaS; lack of clarity on how policy interactions (like digital passports) support PaaS design.	Relevance: Supports Service Transparency variable. Contribution: Empirically tests the *consumer response* to transparency mechanisms. Moves the debate from "policy design" to "consumer impact" (RQ3).
(Kuik et al., 2023)	Lack of examination on transition plans; highlights "societal influences" (consumer behavior) as a major barrier.	Relevance: Contextualizes Perceived Ease of Use variable. Contribution: Addresses the "societal influence" gap by measuring how Perceived Ease of Use (TAM) interacts with Trust to drive adoption (RQ4).

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