DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING AND RETAIL MANAGEMENT RESEARCH FOCUS AREAS 2027

Department	**Department of Marketing and Retail Management (DMRM)**
Discipline	Marketing and Retail Management
RESEARCH FOCUS AREA 1: **CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR**	In the contemporary global marketplace, the consumer is the primary catalyst for business sustainability and innovation. The Department encourages advanced research that re-evaluates traditional consumer behaviour models and develops new, transdisciplinary frameworks suited for contemporary digital and socio-economic realities. Research should investigate the psychological, sociological, and neurological drivers of the consumer journey, with a specific focus on agentic AI, in which consumers delegate decision-making to autonomous agents. Priority is given to studies contextually grounded in the African consumer experience, exploring township and informal economies, the youth, and consumer resilience under economic volatility. Key areas of investigation include neuromarketing and consumer neuroscience, as well as the role of predictive analytics, forecasting, emotion, and sentiment analysis in consumer decision-making. Research is also encouraged within the services contexts and across the omnichannel customer experience, as well as the Bosadi or womanist approach to household decision-making and the intersection of cultural identity with technological advancement.
RESEARCH FOCUS AREA 2: **DIGITAL MARKETING, INNOVATION AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES**	This focus area identifies the criteria for success and barriers to adoption in leveraging digital marketing and Fifth Industrial Revolution (5IR) technologies. Providing the technological foundation for modern marketing, this RFA focuses on the adoption and optimisation of various digital marketing tools/channels, social media platforms and mobile and mobile app marketing platforms/tools, alongside infrastructure such as 6G, edge computing, and blockchain for data sovereignty. In line with UNISA's catalytic niche areas, research should emphasise the African business environment and the application of technology for socio-economic development. Central to this RFA is the exploration of automation, data-driven marketing, and immersive technologies, including virtual reality, augmented reality, and metaverse marketing. Emerging technology trends are of particular interest, including generative AI and machine learning in marketing, programmatic advertising, voice search optimisation, blockchain applications, neuroscience, the Internet of Things (IoT), and the impact of 6G on mobile marketing. The application of these digital technologies is encouraged across diverse sectors, including services marketing, B2B marketing, tourism and destination marketing, sports and entertainment marketing, space-driven hyper-local marketing, and marketing education through open education resources (OERs).

RESEARCH FOCUS AREA 3: **MARKETING STRATEGY**	Marketing strategy provides scope for research into the high-level planning and direction of the firm, with a critical emphasis on the decolonisation of marketing thought. Research should aim to move beyond Western frameworks to create African-centric strategic models that prioritise agility and socio-economic development. In this regard, the role of Africanisation and its impact on marketing and branding are relevant topics. Key areas of investigation include algorithmic brand management, de-influencing as a defensive brand strategy, and the integration of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles into core corporate strategy. Additional areas of interest include international and/or export marketing, influencer marketing, and marketing analytics. Furthermore, the Department welcomes studies on brand activism, the strategic positioning of African travel and trade gateways, and the role of Open Distance and e-Learning (ODeL) in shaping future marketing leadership in dynamic, emerging markets.
RESEARCH FOCUS AREA 4: **RETAIL MARKETING**	The Department promotes research in retailing, recognising that the retail landscape is rapidly evolving, driven by technological innovation, changing consumer expectations, and socio-economic imperatives. In line with UNISA's catalytic niche areas, research should be contextually grounded with a strong emphasis on the African retail environment. This area encompasses traditional research interests such as store layout, merchandising, store atmospherics, and visual merchandising, while investigating how these elements adapt across various retail formats. A major focus is the digital retail space, including e-tailing, omnichannel retailing, click-and-collect services, and drop shipping. Research should explore the seamless integration of physical and digital touchpoints to enhance the total customer journey. Emerging areas of interest include experiential retailing that prioritises immersive and memorable customer experiences, sustainable retailing practices, and AI-driven retail analytics. Furthermore, the Department encourages studies on retail technology adoption, including smart shelves, cashier-less stores, robotics in logistics, on-demand services, the application of the Internet of Things (IoT) and the metaverse to shape the future of supply chain visibility and retail engagement. Retail opportunities within the automotive sector and the marine-based blue economy are also highlighted as niche areas for exploration.
RESEARCH FOCUS AREA 5: **SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING**	The Department encourages research into topics that enable small businesses to succeed within South African and African settings. A central theme is glocalisation, exploring how SMEs balance global marketing trends and digital standards with the unique cultural and socio-economic requirements of local markets. Research should range from selection criteria for market segmentation and positioning strategies to the role of entrepreneurship and frugal innovation in resource-constrained environments. Specific interests include digital marketing adoption, the impact of social media and influencer marketing on small business growth, and the use of AI-driven solutions tailored to informal sector enterprises and rural settings. Additionally, the Department prioritises research into "Kasinomics" (township economics), female-owned and youth-

	owned businesses, and the role of cooperative and community-based enterprises. The integration of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles and the transition to renewable energy are also highlighted as drivers of sustainable growth for the small business sector.
RESEARCH FOCUS AREA 6: **GREEN AND SUSTAINABLE MARKETING**	Sustainability, climate change and eco-efficiency have moved to the forefront of the global business agenda, reshaping the relationship between commerce and society. This research area explores the strategic frameworks that enable sustainable marketing, prioritising the integration of environmental and social values into core business operations. In alignment with UNISA's catalytic niche areas, research must be contextually grounded within the African continent. This requires addressing the critical intersections of environmental justice, socio-economic development, and the unique structural challenges facing emerging markets during the transition to a green economy. The primary marketing and business focus encompasses promoting green products, measuring customer eco-consciousness, and generating behavioural insights into green consumerism. Central to this discourse is the development of the circular economy, the refinement of green messaging, and the strategic management of brand integrity to combat greenwashing. Furthermore, this area investigates the role of marketing in driving sustainable supply chains, ethical consumerism, and carbon footprint reduction. Research is encouraged into the impact of government regulations on product strategy and the formal integration of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles into long-term brand equity. Emerging areas of interest highlight the pivotal role of digital technology in enabling sustainable marketing outcomes. This includes applying blockchain for supply chain transparency, AI-driven sustainability reporting, and the Internet of Things (IoT) for tracking environmental footprints in real time. The Department further welcomes interdisciplinary research into sustainable entrepreneurship, the contribution of marketing functions to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the profound influence of cultural values and indigenous knowledge systems on sustainable consumption patterns within diverse African contexts.
Total Department capacity across all RFAs	Approximately 20 master's students as part of the Department's master's cohort programme, and up to 10 doctoral students can be accommodated per year across all six research focus areas.
Contact	For further queries regarding your M&D studies, please contact the M&D Coordinators, Dr Claudette Rabie at vniekc@unisa.ac.za or Dr Eva Mahlangu at emahlaen@unisa.ac.za

THE DMRM'S MASTER'S COHORT PROGRAMME

The Department of Marketing and Retail Management (DMRM) is proud to continue its three-year Master's Research Cohort Programme. Launched in 2022, this initiative has grown in stature and will continue through 2027. The programme is strategically designed to align with Unisa's catalytic niche areas and overarching strategic goals, ensuring that postgraduate research contributes meaningfully to the transformation of the African continent and the global knowledge economy.

By bridging the gap between academic theory and industry needs, the programme draws on rigorous research to address complex challenges within the South African and broader African marketing landscape. Students work within a collaborative cohort, receiving "just-in-time" training and intensive supervisory support to navigate the research proposal and dissertation phases effectively. This high-level skill development ensures that graduates are not only academically proficient but also highly marketable professionals capable of solving real-world business problems thought a scientific lens.

The cohort programme is a competitive, excellence-driven initiative designed to:

- Advance academic knowledge: Ensuring every student contributes original insights and theoretical depth to the field of marketing.
- Improve completion rates: Through regular, intensive interactions and a structured support framework.
- Accelerate degree completion: Enabling dedicated students to finalise their research in under three years.
- Address Cutting-edge challenges: Involving students in research that impacts the economy, emerging technologies, and social development.

Admission into the cohort is highly selective. Students are evaluated based on their undergraduate academic performance, Unisa's general admission criteria, and the logic, argumentation, and writing skills demonstrated in their submitted research outline.

Proposed research topics must satisfy the following:

- Alignment: Research must fit within the Department's established Research Focus Areas (RFAs) and support Unisa's strategic niche areas.
- Knowledge contribution: The proposal must demonstrate potential for scholarly impact and a clear contribution to marketing theory or practice
- Relevance: Topics should address contemporary, cutting-edge challenges facing the African continent or the global economy.
- Supervisory fit: Ideally, the research should align with the specific expertise of the DMRM supervisory staff. We encourage applicants to visit our website to review the specialised research interests of our academic team.

Prospective Master's students must first apply for registration during the official Unisa application window. Unisa follows a strict "apply-before-you-register" policy. As part of the application, you must submit a comprehensive research outline. While the topic you initially propose may be refined or adjusted upon acceptance, it serves as the primary instrument for shortlisting. A lack of rigour or effort in this outline will directly impact your chances of selection. Once accepted, students will work closely with supervisors to finalise a research problem that is both academically sound and strategically relevant.

THE DMRM'S DOCTORAL PROGRAMME

The Department of Marketing and Retail Management (DMRM) seeks to admit self-directed, research-oriented scholars who possess a relevant NQF Level 9 (Master's) qualification and a profound commitment to advancing the science of marketing. A PhD is not merely an extension of Master's-level study; in accordance with SAQA requirements for an NQF Level 10 qualifications, it demands the production of a substantial, peer-recognised, and original contribution to the body of knowledge.

In line with Unisa's catalytic niche areas and overarching strategic goals, the Department prioritises doctoral research that addresses the unique socio-economic and technological challenges of the African continent. We encourage candidates to explore cutting-edge marketing phenomena that contribute to the transformation of the discipline while supporting the University's mission to be the leading centre of African excellence in higher education.

To ensure the highest standards of academic excellence and scholarly impact, doctoral candidates within the DMRM are required to:

- Produce an original thesis: Demonstrating advanced research competence and the ability to develop new theoretical frameworks or paradigms.
- Publish peer-reviewed research: Candidates must write and submit at least two high-quality articles to accredited journals for publication in addition to the doctoral thesis. This requirement ensures the research undergoes external validation and enters the professional scientific discourse.
- Pass the Viva Voce: Upon completion of the thesis, candidates must defend their findings and methodology in a formal viva voce (oral examination) before a panel of senior academics and subject-matter experts.

The University also offers a "Thesis by Publication" track for candidates whose work is particularly suited to a cumulative series of high-impact journal articles. Interested applicants who meet the criteria for this specialised option are encouraged to inquire with the Department for further details.

SUPERVISOR CAPACITY FOR 2027

Supervision team details:	**Academic profile and research interests** Departmental Institutional Repository: https://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/2797
Prof N Dilotsotlhe ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9065-976X	Prof Dilotsotlhe is the Department's Chair of Department (CoD) and oversees the fair and efficient allocation of supervisory capacity within the Department while also taking on supervision of her own. She is particularly interested in sustainability, green marketing, and marketing in social contexts.
Prof SS Makgopa ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7075-0219	Prof Makgopa is an Associate Professor in Marketing Management. Prof Makgopa holds a PhD in Business Management from the University of Pretoria (UP), MCom (UP), MCom (UNISA), Honours BCom and BCom both from UNISA. He supervises and co-supervises master's and doctoral studies in the department. He published extensively in marketing and business management; he also co-authored business management textbooks and has presented numerous papers at international and national conferences. His research focus areas include branding, consumer behaviour, digital marketing, energy studies, service innovation, service quality, motor vehicle retailing, corporate social responsibility, personal finance, student support and Tourism Marketing.
Prof NE Shezi ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3070-8969	Prof Shezi is an Associate Professor in the Department of Marketing and Retail Management. His areas of interest are sport marketing, branding, strategic marketing, and consumer behaviour.

Prof JA Wiid ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2195-532X	Prof Wiid is a Full Professor in the Department of Marketing and Retail Management. He has published widely and has research interests in marketing practice, marketing research, and marketing strategy.
Dr CH Bothma ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2256-5056	Dr Bothma's research focus areas lie in the fields of international marketing, global trade, exporting, neuromarketing and the role of the product in marketing strategy. Value creation, creativity, innovation, and human factors and usability in creating value, are related interests. He has published on these topics and his doctoral thesis was on developing a framework for a national export portal in South Africa. He is also interested in trade analytics and quantitative measurement of trade performance, as well as on text analysis and natural language processing (NLP) in business contexts.
Mr MN du Toit ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9178-5645	Mr du Toit is a senior lecturer in the DMRM. His research interests lie in consumer behaviour and customer experience. Mr du Toit focuses on research into students and addresses the catalytic niche area of student support and co-curricular activities.
Dr LE Fourie ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2187-3073	Dr Fourie is a Senior Lecturer in the DMRM. Her doctoral research focused on the human-animal relationship and its influence on consumer decision-making. Her research interests focus on consumer behaviour, digital marketing and social marketing, with a focus on well-being and social impact.
Dr M Gopaul ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3517-2377	Dr Gopaul is a Senior Lecturer within the Department of Marketing and Retail Management at the University of South Africa (UNISA). She holds a PhD with specialisation in Marketing. Her key areas of interest include digital marketing and customer satisfaction.
Dr SM Kallier-Tar ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3414-8236	Dr Kallier-Tar is a Senior Lecturer who completed her doctorate at Unisa, focusing on the hyperconnected consumer. Her interests are in the field of digital marketing, technology, and consumer behaviour.
Dr EN Mahlangu ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4678-1204	Dr Mahlangu is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Marketing and Retail Management. She holds a PhD from Unisa, where her doctoral research focused on the continuance intention of mobile loyalty programmes among consumers in South African township markets. Her research interests centre on consumer behaviour in emerging markets, with a particular focus on retail and digital marketing. Dr Mahlangu has experience in mixed-methods research (qualitative and quantitative), with particular expertise in quantitative methodologies.
Dr NH Mkhize ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6484-119X	Dr Mkhize is a Senior Lecturer specialising in marketing, sustainability, and consumer behaviour, with a focus on green consumer behaviour and sustainable marketing in emerging markets. His research uses quantitative methods, particularly survey-based approaches and PLS-SEM, to examine behavioural intentions and environmentally responsible practices. His work contributes to sustainable consumption literature and provides insights for business and policy in developing economies. He is passionate about advancing research that bridges academic knowledge and real-world sustainability impact in Africa.
Dr SSLN Mosupyoe ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3182-1237	Dr Mosupyoe is a Senior Lecturer with a research interest in quantitative and qualitative social research, communication, and media. She has investigated generational differences in South African consumers' brand equity perceptions
Dr ZS Mposi ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2292-9430	Dr Mposi is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Marketing and Retail Management. She holds a PhD in Marketing, and her research interests include digital out-of-home advertising and digital marketing, with a particular focus on social media.
Dr KM Ngobeni ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4519-0947	Dr Ngobeni is a Senior Lecturer with a research interest in digital marketing and political marketing. She has published on clothing shopping intentions of township consumers, student satisfaction and loyalty, and risk and demographic factors in online shopping. Her doctoral thesis was on South African consumers' adoption and purchase intention of high-involvement products on augmented online shopping platforms.

Dr M Nhlabathi ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4747-8565	Dr Nhlabathi is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Marketing and Retail Management. With a PhD in Marketing, his research interests are in Real Estate Marketing, Digital Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Technology Adoption and Consumer Behaviour.
Dr C Rabie ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1250-3070	Dr Rabie is a Senior Lecturer specialising in consumer behaviour, technology adoption, innovation, and behavioural intention, with a particular focus on emerging and evolving digital technologies. She also has a strong interest in research on artificial intelligence and the Fifth Industrial Revolution (5IR), particularly examining their influence on consumer behaviour, technology adoption, and decision-making processes.
Dr EC Wessels ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9646-9011	Dr Wessels is a Senior Lecturer in the DMRM. She completed her PhD at Unisa and has published articles based on her studies for the degree. Her fields of interest include retailing, merchandising, visual merchandising, and marketing research.
Other supervisors able to supervise at master's level include:	Ms M Du Bruyn; Ms M Khumalo; Ms C Lukhwareni; Mr V Makhubela; Mr T Mbedzi; Mrs AA Meyer; Mr M Mmatli; Mr M Moseki; Mrs N Ngcobo; Mr N Nonyane; Ms P Nyalela; Ms L Saule; Ms T Sekhu; Mr BV Soke; Ms P Thusi.
External and additional supervisors	The Department has a network of experienced external supervisors available to assist with supervision, thereby increasing our overall supervisory capacity.

FOR ALL STUDENTS – MASTERS AND DOCTORATES

Model of supervision	Candidates will be allocated to one/two supervisors; however, they will be expected to work independently in accordance with the requirements of higher degree studies. MCom candidates will be required to submit their research proposals for blind peer review. In addition, PhD candidates will be required to present their proposals at a colloquium and undergo a blind peer-review process. Master's and doctoral proposals must be completed and approved within the first year of registration in order for candidates to be permitted to continue with their studies. Doctoral candidates will furthermore be expected to defend their final thesis in a *viva voce* (oral) examination and submit two articles for publication.
Selection criteria: Master's/Doctorate	Refer to the qualification website for selection criteria.

Selection Procedure	Students' applications will be reviewed in accordance with the Procedures for Master's and Doctorate Degrees (sections 3.1 to 3.3). Note that the selection panel is not obliged to accept prospective master's or doctoral students who meet the minimum criteria as there are other factors (see below) that will be considered:
	• The prospective student's academic record.
	• The candidate's academic background, which should align with the marketing discipline. A candidate whose research outline falls outside the DMRM's focus areas will be referred to the relevant department for consideration.
	• The relevance and feasibility of the proposed research topic, as well as the quality of the research outline submitted by the applicant and the supporting documentation provided with the application.
	  ○ **Doctorates:** The candidate's proposed topic should ideally fall within one of the DMRM's research focus areas, but the Department will also consider topics in other relevant marketing/retailing areas. It is important, however, that the selected topic be achievable and contribute new knowledge to the field of marketing and retail. It is advised to discuss your topic of interest with a possible supervisor beforehand.
	  ○ **Master's:** The topic proposed by the candidate should fall within one of the research focus areas identified by the DMRM. The Department

	will also consider topics in other relevant marketing and/or retailing areas. • The candidate's language proficiency. • The Department's supervisory capacity and expertise in the proposed area of study. • Any restrictions imposed by enrolment planning. The selection panel will review applications within each research focus area in accordance with the criteria stipulated above. It is important to note that the Department has limited supervisory capacity; therefore, only the most suitable doctoral and master's applicants will be selected, based on merit and the Department's available supervisory capacity.
Reading: **Subject Field**	This is a selection of recent articles published by staff in the DMRM: • Chabata, T. T. & Senooane, B. C. (2025). Consumption of sustainable renewable energy by Generation Z from a utilitarian perspective. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Management Sciences*, 2(1), a01. • Chabata, T.T. & Dilotsotlhe, N. (2025). Participating in Retail Loyalty Programs: Perceptions from Tertiary Students in an Emerging Economy. *Mizoram University Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences*, 10(2), 44-69. • Dilotsotlhe, N. (2025). Sustainable shopping: how environmental beliefs and living habits shape the use of non-plastic reusable shopping bags. *The Retail and Marketing Review,* 29(1):138-151. • Du Plessis, M. & Rabie, C. (2026). Workplace wellness initiatives and service quality in customer-facing industries: A systematic review. *South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences,* 28(1). • Ellis, D. & Mkhize, N. H. (2025). Predictors of an emerging market sub-segment of consumers' green behaviour. *Journal of Contemporary Management,* 22(1). • Kallier, S. M., Wiid, J. A. & Bothma, C. H. (2025). Decision-making process of the hyper-connected consumer: Towards a capricious and ubiquitous decision-making model. *Consumer behaviour review.* 9(1):1-22 • Mahlangu, E. N. (2025). Influence of personalisation on mobile loyalty programme confirmation among retail consumers in South African townships. *Economic Review: Journal of Economics & Business*, *23*(1), 41-56. • Mahlangu, E. N. (2025). The impact of information benefits on confirmation of digital loyalty programmes in a developing economy. *Acta Universitatis Danubius. Œconomica*, *21*(6), 312-326. • Makgopa, S. S. & Muresherwa**,** G**.** (2025). Determining consumers' benefits for attending a carnival event in South Africa. *International Journal of Business Ecosystem & Strategy* (2687-2293), 7(5), 62-73. • Makgopa, S. S. (2025). Exploring the drivers of service innovations in private security organisations. *International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management,* 6(2). • Makgopa, S. S. (2025). Investigating the impact of electricity power outages on grocery food retailers. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Cultural Studies,* 20(2): 1051-1060. • Makgopa, S. S. (2025). The influence of service innovation practices on organisational reputation. *International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management*, 6(1). • Mosupyoe, S. S. L. N. & Makgopa, S. S. (2026). Brand development and brand communication practices in MSMEs in South Africa. *International Journal of Business Ecosystem & Strategy,* 8(1).

	• Muresherwa**,** G. & Makgopa, S. S. (2025). Investigating Consumers' Motives for Attending Major Cultural Events. *Acta Universitatis Danubius. Œconomica,* 21(6), 117–132. • Ngobeni K. M. & Makhitha K. M. (2025). Drivers of online augmented reality shopping adoption for high-involvement products in South Africa. *South African Journal of Information Management*, 27(1):10. • Ngobeni, K. M. (2025). Inhibitors of online augmented reality shopping adoption for high-involvement products. *International Journal of Business Ecosystems & Strategy,* 7(4). • Ngobeni, K. M. (2025). The mediating role of trialability in consumer adoption of augmented reality shopping for high-involvement products in South Africa. *Studies in Media and Communication,* 13(4). • Senooane, B. & Mkhize, N. H. (2025). Spirituality, moral norms and habit as determinants of intention to visit green hotels. *Consumer Behaviour in Tourism and Hospitality,* 20(2): 294-309. • Senooane, B., Wiid, J. A. & Dilotsotlhe, N. (2025). Acculturation to global consumer culture and environmentally ethical behaviour: the mediating role of environmental consciousness. *Cogent Business & Management,* 12(1). • Senooane, B., Wiid, J. A. & Dilotsotlhe, N. (2025). Understanding green buying intention: The interplay of cosmopolitanism, ethnocentrism, materialism and environmental ethics. *The Retail and Marketing Review,* 21(1): 31-47. Further reading beyond these articles is essential.
Reading: Research Methodology	Your first port of call is the Unisa Library - https://libguides.unisa.ac.za/marketing-retail/method In addition, here is a selection of books on methodology. Further reading over and above these is essential: • Wiid, J. A. & Diggines, C. (ed). (2024). *Marketing Research,* 5th edition. Cape Town: Juta & Co. • Aguinis, H. (2025). *Research methodology: best practices for rigorous, credible and impactful research.* Sage Publications Inc. • Babbie, E.R. 2024. *The practice of Social Research*. 16th edition. Cengage Learning. • Bell, E., Bryman, A., Harley, B. & Hirschsohn, P. (2022). *Business research methods. 6th edition.* Oxford University Press • Creswell, J. W. & Creswell, J. D. (2023). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches.* 6th edition. Sage Publications Ltd. • Creswell, J. W. & Guetterman, T.C. (2024). *Educational research: planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research.* 7th edition. Pearson. • Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (eds). (2024). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research. 6th edition.* Sage Publications Inc. • Field, A. 2024. *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics.* 6th edition. Sage Publications Inc. • Flick, U. (2023). *An introduction to qualitative research.* 7th edition. Sage Publications Inc. • Ormrod, J. E. (2024). *Practical Research: planning and design*. 13th edition. Pearson. • Saldana, J. & Omasta, M. (2022). *Qualitative research: analysing life.* 2nd edition. Sage Publications. • Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. (2023). *Research methods for business students.* 9th edition. Pearson Education Ltd.

	• Terrell, S. R. (2023). *Writing a proposal for your dissertation.* 3rd edition. Guilford Press. • Yin, R. K. (2025). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods.* 7th edition. Sage Publications. • Nhlabathi, M. (2024). Technology readiness and consumer intention to use digital platforms: A case of the music industry in South Africa. *The Retail and Marketing Review*, 20(1), 148-163.
Resources: **Scholar community**	• Google scholar - https://scholar.google.co.za (academic search engine) • Unisa library - https://libguides.unisa.ac.za/marketing-retail

Important information regarding the review of research outlines

In addition to the selection criteria outlined above, applicants should note that the selection panel will evaluate each research outline in accordance with the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF). This evaluation aims to determine whether the applicant demonstrates the capability to conduct research at the required NQF level. Accordingly, research outlines will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- The clarity and definition of the topic (e.g., whether sufficient background is provided and key concepts are clearly defined).
- The presence of a clearly articulated research problem supported by credible and relevant sources.
- The feasibility of the proposed study (i.e., whether the research can reasonably be completed within the prescribed timeframe and with available resources).
- Evidence of a sound preliminary review of the academic literature relevant to the proposed topic.
- The potential contribution to new knowledge, particularly in the case of doctoral studies.
- The context of the study, including the proposed case study and/or unit of analysis (i.e., who or what will be investigated).
- The scholarly quality of the research outline, including academic writing skills, proper referencing of factual statements, consistent use of Harvard referencing (both in-text and in the reference list), use of current sources (generally within the past five years, unless foundational or seminal works are required), logical flow and coherence across sections, and the use of appropriate academic resources.

Applicants are encouraged to consult and reference additional academic sources beyond those provided in this document, as this is essential to demonstrate readiness for postgraduate research.