

## **Shopping factors that drive “true” multichannel shopping**

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Today, shoppers may find entire kitchen solutions in consumer electronics stores, shoppers may purchase cosmetics in grocery stores, and shoppers may find fragrances in apparel stores. We argue that this development is driven by retailers that aim to enhance the shopping relevance in their stores by extending their assortments beyond traditional boundaries within their industry. In order to grow, they aim for a higher share of shoppers’ wallets with new business opportunities. New categories and departments are extended to current ones when the retailers try to “sell” their new ideas to consumers.

Hence, a consumer interested in shopping may have several types of stores to choose among. For instance, a shopping trip for apparel may lead a consumer to specialty stores, department stores, discount retailers, and web stores on her path to purchase. And a consumer interested in cosmetics may find these products in grocery stores, pharmacies, fashion retail stores, department stores, specialty stores, and in web stores.

In this paper, we address the idea that consumers may shop for products from the same product categories in many different types of stores. We examine “true” multichannel shopping from a consumer perspective. To pursue our research interest, we use a categorization perspective where different types of stores are placed in distinct categories and we examine, based on this categorization, the prevalence of multichannel shopping. We also investigate shopping-related drivers of multichannel shopping.

To understand how consumers shop when multiple store type options are available, we draw upon literature on across-category consideration that has been developed in previous research in marketing (Ratneshwar et al 1996). Across-category consideration is sensitive to differences between shoppers that primarily shop from one category of stores with a single store from another category (low across-category consideration) and shoppers that consider two or three stores from each category (high across-category consideration).

In addition, we study how we may explain the degree of across-category consideration with relevant shopping factors such as hedonic shopping motivation and impulse purchase tendencies. We believe that some consumers will be more open to shopping across categories of retail stores whereas others will be less inclined to do so. Specifically, we believe that shoppers who are highly motivated to shop and/or enjoy shopping will use more types of stores. Shoppers with high hedonic shopping motivation will be interested in exploring new options in the market because of their inclination for

adventure shopping and value shopping (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003). In addition, we believe that shoppers with strong impulse purchase tendencies will have a higher degree of across-category consideration than those who have weak impulse purchase tendencies as the latter group is likely to have a more established patronage pattern.

An online survey was conducted with more than 400 participants and data was collected for apparel and cosmetics (two product categories where the options for multichannel shopping are high). Data are from the research agency Nepa's online panels. The participants were asked in what types of stores they might consider when purchasing from the two product categories. In each category, the major retailers were listed and the participants marked the ones they "will seriously consider". We also measured hedonic shopping motivation and impulse purchase tendencies.

Our results show that across-category consideration is prevalent in the two retail industries. Moreover, hedonic shopping motivation and impulse purchase tendencies are two factors that are positively associated with across-category consideration. And, the two shopping factors interplay as high hedonic shopping motivation has a direct effect on across-category consideration as well as an indirect effect via impulse purchase tendency (mediates in regression).

In this paper, we contribute to the growing literature on multichannel issues in retailing. Previous research in this field has often focused on the value and challenges of multichannel shoppers from the perspective of the individual retailer that operates in multiple channels (e.g. Web, physical store, catalog). We use instead a consumer-oriented framework and study shopping behavior and store choice at a (across)category level. Moreover, we contribute to the overall field of retailing by showing how shopping-related factors such as hedonic shopping motivation and impulse purchase tendencies are related to multichannel shopping. Discussion of the results and managerial implications will be presented at the conference.

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