

# Consumer Switching Behavior in Omnichannel Retailing Context: An Abstract



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**Abstract** Different from traditional shopping journey, omnichannel customers can move freely between channels in an omnichannel journey. They can start their customer journey in one channel and close deal at another channel and as there is no barrier between channels, the customers enjoy complete and seamless shopping experience. This behavior is also regarded as channel switching behavior, which is closely related to the "free-riding behavior". Since 2014, researchers observed two typical switching behaviors, namely, showrooming and webrooming. Showrooming is the behavior when the customers search for information about the product offline but purchase online (Basak et al. 2017; Bell et al. 2014; Rapp et al. 2015; Verhoef et al. 2015). Whereas, webrooming is the practice of researching a product online or on a mobile device but purchasing it offline (Kramer 2014).

In recent years, there has been growing research interest in customer showrooming and webrooming behavior in the omnichannel retailing context. Most of the research focused on how firms deploy strategies to retain customers during the whole shopping journey (Verhoef et al. 2015). In previous studies of the reasons behind channel switching, Verhoef, Neslin and Vroomen (2007) employed the theory of reasoned action to explain three reasons for channel switching in multichannel context which are low channel lock-in, cross-channel synergy, and channel attributes. Evidence for the attributes reasons have been mixed. Furthermore, there has been no detailed investigation of the determinants for the behavior in omnichannel context. The paper looks at these reasons from an interpretive perspective to propose a framework for omnichannel switching behaviors. Qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted with eighteen omnichannel customers of electronic goods retailers in Vietnam. The findings reinforced the three reasons for channel switching in the research shopper model by Verhoef, Neslin and Vroomen (2007). The synthesized qualitative result strengthened the previous argument on the influence of perceived channel attributes on switching behavior. Two other reasons for channel

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switching were observed from respondents which are social influence, customer self-confidence in the behavior.

This study contributes a deeper understanding of the customer switching behavior to both academics and practitioners. It is the first study to undertake a qualitative study on the determinants of omnichannel switching behavior. However, it is beyond the scope of this study to examine the journey of customers during switching. The research is also unable to encompass the entire populations of customers as different groups of customers might have different switching preferences. This raises interest for future research in customer segmentation, channel choice and usage, and customer experience during channel switching in the omnichannel context.

**Keywords** Switching behavior · Omnichannel · Customer behavior · In-depth interviews