The Phenomenon of Consumer's Showrooming behavior and what drives it.

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Affidavit

I hereby affirm that this bachelor's Thesis represents my own written work and that I have used no sources and aids other than those indicated. All passages quoted from publications or paraphrased from these sources are properly cited and attributed.

The thesis was not submitted in the same or in a substantially similar version, not even partially, to another examination board and was not published elsewhere.

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Abstract

This paper examines the factors that impact and drive consumers to showroom, whereby consumers complete their purchases purely on an online platform but takes advantage of the services provided for free by physical retailers. In the case of this specific paper consumer electronics retailers invest a large number of funds to create showrooms where customers can test products before purchasing them; however, retailers do not receive the return on their investments when it involves consumers who partake in showrooming behavior.

A survey was conducted to study how the benefits of searching for information online and offline may lead consumers to showroom. Finally, the factors that seem beneficial for purchasing goods online were examined for the same purposes. 213 respondents were collected through the survey. While analyzing the data, it was not surprising to identify that the cost-saving aspect of shopping online had a significance on the intention of a consumer to showroom. Other price factors included the dispersion of prices on online platforms. Non-price factors were also discovered that also played a critical role, such as the need for tactile information and the quality of service provided by the in-store staff.

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1 Introduction

For the past decade, the retail sector has experienced a vast digital transformation (Hagberg et al. 2017); these transformations have included changes such as the digitalization of businesses (Xu and Koivumaki, 2019), multi-channel platform marketplaces (Hanninen et al., 2019), the ability for consumers to access information on a larger scale, and the ability of shopping on mobile phones (Faulds et al., 2018). All the previously mentioned changes have further enhanced the customer's ability to conduct omnichannel consumeristic behavior (Schneider and Zielke, 2020), which is the consumer's ability to access multiple channels at any time and at any given location (Fairchild, 2014). Furthermore, more than ever, customers are interacting with retailers through multiple channels and touchpoints, be it online or offline; therefore, retailers are focusing more on managing the new and more complex consumer decision making journey from the pre-purchase stage to the post-purchase stage (stein and Raseshan, 2016).

The new and more enhanced consumer omnichannel behavior has sparked into existence the concept of showrooming, which is the consumer’s ability to conduct online and offline information search and later compare the alternatives with one another to reach a final purchasing decision (Mehra A. et al., 2018). According to Chen and Chen (2019), brick-and-mortar retailers have been unable to retain some customers due to the phenomenon of showrooming, given that customers have easier access to alternative offers, be it online or offline. A survey conducted in 2015 showed that 68% of customers tend to showroom (Rejon-Guardia and Luna-Nevarez, 2015). The development of the showrooming behavior is reinforced on the one hand by the increasing transparency of offers and prices for customers, and due to the development of new media such as the increase in alternative selections digital tools from which consumers can freely choose from (Heinemann, 2013, p.32, as cited in Schneider, 2019).

Ever since the current omnichannel era, consumers could gain more control given their access to the internet; they can also obtain a more superior knowledge than sales personnel within retail stores (Jang et al., 2017). Mostly omnichannel behavior takes place when a consumer is bound to make a high-

risk purchase, which tends to drive them into conducting extensive and time-consuming information gathering while at the same time evaluating both alternatives and prices meanwhile reducing the risk of said purchase (Jang et al., 2017). Once the information is collected and the various alternatives compared, consumers, visit a physical retail store to observe the product in its physical form, which reassures the consumer that they have made the right choice, after which they proceed with finalizing the purchase through whichever retailer or E-retailer provides the product at a lesser price (Flavian et al., 2016).

Only a handful of research papers deal with the phenomenon of showrooming, and even fewer papers exist on the possible strategies or solutions against showrooming. Most studies have focused on how or if price matching would assist brick and mortar stores in preventing showrooming, such as Smith and Anderson (2016), in which the researchers emphasize how price plays a more critical role than location when it concerns a customer's purchasing decision. However, other researchers propose that price is not the only factor as vital as it may be. Other factors include perceived dispersion of online prices, perceived gains in the quality of the product purchased while showrooming, and the waiting time for service within brick-and-mortar stores (Gensler et al.,2017). Romissa (2017) points out that price matching is financially counterproductive, given that physical retail stores have a higher fixed cost such as employees, rent, and services. However, brick-and-mortar retailers can retain customers who are indecisive and uncertain about the product they are willing to purchase by having sales personnel assisting or consulting customers about a product face-to-face and assisting the customer make a purchasing decision (Kollmann et al., 2012).

1.1 Relevance of the Topic

This paper aims to further enhance the managerial knowledge of the showrooming phenomenon, regarding the characteristics that influence customers to showroom, particularly customers who shop for high involvement product, specifically technological and electronic products. According to Flavian et al. (2016) and Rejon-Guardia and Luna-Nevarez (2015), the tech sector was selected because it is one of the leading industries that was extensively showroomed, specifically consumer electronics retailers. Research conducted by Daunt and Harris (2017) found that nearly 40% of shopper have taken part

in showrooming behavior while shopping for consumer electronics; others, such as Zaubitzer (2014) found that 63% of consumers admitted to showroom while shopping for electronic goods.

This topic is more relevant now than ever, due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. According to a survey conducted in 2020 consisting of adults within the United States of America, 37% of them have responded that they are considering shifting to online shopping methods after the end of the pandemic (Morning consult, 2020). In addition, the survey also identified that out of the participants surveyed, 12% are Generation X, 5% are Boomers, 11% are Generation z have replied that they have for the first time ever purchased products using online platforms due to the Pandemic (Morning consult, 2020).

Furthermore, the pandemic, which was followed by sporadic lockdowns, has caused substantial transformation within the consumer's consumption behaviors. Online consumption of goods and services through E-retailers have increased (Watanabe and Omori, 2020). The research conducted by Watanabe and Omori (2020) also identified that online purchases on behalf of people who were familiar with online shopping increased; additionally, the consumers who have never experienced online shopping before increased likewise.

To sum up, it can be possible that after the pandemic, showrooming behavior may increase amongst consumers. Mainly, the increase may be because, as mentioned by Watanabe and Omori (2020) and the survey conducted by Morning consult (2020), the number of consumers shifting towards Online shopping has increased drastically. Moreover, as Watanabe and Omori (2020) predicted, this new behavior for some consumers may also transition into the post-pandemic era.

1.2 Purpose and Research question

This research aims to pinpoint the significant factors that cause or are associated with the consumer's intention to showroom within the consumer electronics industry. Moreover, the study will also describe the stages that a consumer goes through when purchasing a product, which will further help determine which stage showrooming behaviors occur. Afterwards, consumer's intentions to search online and offline will be evaluated, and finally, the

intentions to purchase online will be assessed. These problems, as mentioned above, have led to the following research questions:

1. What factors drive consumers to display showrooming behavior?

2. What is the most critical factor that can be used to reduce showrooming in retail stores?

The thesis will be divided into six chapters, the first being the introduction, where a brief general knowledge of the phenomenon will be provided, and its relevance to the retail industry will be clarified as well as the importance of the topic to the managerial literature. The second chapter of the thesis will review the literature, mainly describing variables that have shown to have a high level of importance to the phenomenon of showrooming. Variables such as the level of involvement a consumer has for a product, offline and online search benefits, online purchase benefits, tech, and internet savviness of the consumer, and finally, the level of enjoyment a consumer receives whilst shopping will be further described.

The third chapter of the paper will consist of the methodology used for conducting the research. The fourth chapter will describe and analyze the data collected from the survey where the main driving factors for consumers to partake in showrooming behavior will be brought to light.

Finally, in the fourth and last chapter of the thesis, the research findings, managerial implication, and theoretical implication will be discussed.

2 Literature Review

It is crucial to understand the significant factors that play a role in showrooming behavior and specific factors that may affect consumers to partake in showrooming activities. The literature review is structured in four-part. The first part will regard the general factors that may play a role in showrooming. The second and third parts concentrate on the consumer's pre-purchase behavior in online and offline channels, given that consumers begin the showrooming behavior by first analyzing information and comparing alternatives on all platforms. Finally, the last part of the literature review will revolve around the consumer's purchasing behavior online since consumers who showroom will finalize their purchases only online.

2.1 E-commerce during and post Covid-19 pandemic

Ever since the beginning of the pandemic, consumer behavior has changed. There were unexpected restrictions, mandatory quarantine, and imposed social distancing; therefore, consumers had to look for alternative methods and distribution channels to satisfy their consumeristic needs and wants (Eger et al., 2021). It has also been argued that some consumers are restructuring their shopping habits because they have only now begun to discover the benefits of online purchasing, such as home delivery, click and collect, and cashless payments (Pantano et al., 2020). It is also possible for consumers to further utilize and experience the new shopping behaviors they have gained during the pandemic in the long run; the UN General Assembly President also predicted this according to the United Nations conference on trade and development (2021). The previous prediction also was backed through the claims of Sheth (2020); the researcher explains that there are four main reasons why consumers may change or disrupt their shopping behavior well beyond the Covid-19 pandemic, such as social factors, implementation of new technologies, the impact of consumer behavior due to new rules, and unpredictability.

E-commerce activities have been in high demand ever since the pandemic. The online supermarket Alibaba reported that orders were up by 220% year over year. As for the USA, a delivery company Instacart, a subscription-based

platform, experienced an increase in subscription by 20 times (Accenture, 2020).

According to UNCTAD (2021), the Latin American online marketplace sold twice as many products per day within the second quarter of 2020 compared to the previous year. Also, in the other parts of the world, such as Africa, the E-commerce platform reported a 50% increase in sales within the first two quarters of 2020 (UNCTAD, 2021).

2.2 Decision making process

Given that showrooming is a consumer behavior, it is imperative to understand the elemental consumer journey regarding the consumer's buying process or decision-making process. Showrooming can be observed within the Engel-Kollat-Blackwell model of the consumer decision-making process, a cognitive schematic of the customer's journey applied mostly to high-involvement products. The consumer decision-making process begins by recognizing a problem or a need, followed by searching for information, evaluating alternatives, finalizing a purchase, and finally, the post-purchase phase of the decision (Engel et al., 1978).

The process, as mentioned before, is defined using five phases that the customer goes through. The first phase that the consumer goes through is the problem or need recognition, and it emerges from the basic human needs, such as recognizing the need for a new mobile phone (Kotler, 2000 P. 98). The second phase is the search for information in order for the customer to fulfil the emergence of said problem that was recognized; a typical consumer in this phase begins the collection of information from various sources such as searching online, word of mouth, or by visiting physical stores. Once the consumer has collected the relevant information needed, they begin to create a mental list of competing brands and start filtering down to the brands that offer the product, satisfying the consumer's problem recognition (Kotler, 2000 P. 98-99). The third phase is where the alternative brands of the same products are compared and evaluated to conclude a final purchasing decision. In the fourth phase, the consumers decide to finalize a purchase which, in the case of showroomers, the purchase is finalized online from the preferred brand and preferred online marketplace (Kotler, 2000 P. 100). In the final stage, the post-

purchase phase, the consumer evaluated the satisfaction or dissatisfaction they receive from their purchase. However, this phase does not play a role in the showrooming phenomenon (Kotler, 2000 P. 101).

The model also explains that it is a step-by-step process valid for most products, however as this research paper considers only high involvement products, specifically consumer electronics products, consumers cannot skip any of the phases (Kotler et al., 2017, p.155). More modern consumer decision-making models have added other factors such as social media, the internet, and new technologies (Vazquez et al., 2014; Ewerhard et al., 2019). Including the previously mentioned factors are crucial since it positively impacts consumers ability to conduct their research and may also travel ahead and back between various stages of the decision journey (Vazquez et al., 2014; Ewerhard et al., 2019).

As for the consumer's decision-making process regarding high involvement products, the consumers will tend to spend longer than usual time gathering information, unlike with low involvement products which the information search is instantaneous and quick (Shirin and Kambiz, 2011). Likewise, the evaluation step of the consumer's decision-making process is prolonged when the product is of high involvement nature (Bowen and Chafee, 1974). The purchasing decision for high involvement products or, as described in academic terms, is called an Extensive purchasing decision. The extensive purchasing decision is characterized by the high degree of cognitive involvement on behalf of the consumer, and this decision-making process is characterized by the crucial need for information and its association with long decision-making time (Forscht and Swododa 2017, p.170). The lengthened process to arrive at a decision is primarily due to the consumers high perceived risk and cost, consequently making them hesitant to arrive at a final decision, mainly because consumers are faced with high demand when purchasing a high involvement product and low time budget (Schneider, 2019 p.30). the extensive decision-making process can be simplified by reducing the allocated alternatives or finalizing the decision according to the predefined preferences (Schneider, 2019, p.30). Schneider (2019) further elaborates that the extensive decision-making process is mainly found when consumers are willing to purchase unique products such as automobiles, televisions, or laptops.

However, the previously mentioned original model will help determine the factors that may drive consumers to showroom since the basic consumer needs have not been shifted, but rather the technology used to travel through the phases have. Many researchers agree that since the consumer decision model is not being modernized, the consumer decision is becoming more complex, and as a result, behaviors such as showrooming are developing without control or anticipation of managers (Christensson et al., 2020).

2.3 Showrooming

Showrooming is a practice that is lately becoming more common for consumers with omnichannel behavior and an ever-growing problem for brick-and-mortar retail stores, specifically for retailers with high involvement products (Viejo-Fernandez et al., 2020). Most academic papers define showrooming as a free-riding behavior, in other words, a behavior that takes advantage of the physical retailer's services such as touching products, testing products, and asking sales personnel about further information without finalizing the purchase in-store while the brick-and-mortar retailer obtains no profit out of the service that was provided (Viejo-Fernandez et al., 2020). The need to physically observe and test a product is derived because of the importance or the riskiness of a product. Given that a need has emerged, information search follows as discussed in the previous chapter; therefore, it motivates customers to conduct extensive information searches, which slightly reduces the consumer's perceived risk (Flavian et al., 2016). However, only after physically visiting a brick-and-mortar retail store and testing the products can the customer be reassured about their choice (Flavian et al., 2016; Singh et al., 2014). Showrooming occurs within the purchase phase, which is purely online. The pre-purchase phase, specifically the information search and alternative evaluation phases, is conducted both online and offline (Verhoef et al., 2015). The critical information to take away from the decision process model is the customer's channel selection behavior, where they tend to switch channels multiple times between the phases of information search and purchase. Therefore, to test the factors influencing consumers to conduct showrooming activities, the paper will explore various variables within the previously mentioned phases.

2.4 Multi and Omni-channel retailing

Neslin et al. (2006) coined the term multi-channel retailing as a seamless experience managed by the consumer that allows them to get across multiple channels and bring them to their final purchasing decision. The extensive channel switching is mainly because the modern-day consumer is highly price-sensitive, innovative, and tends to enjoy shopping using multiple channels (Neslin et al., 2006); therefore, they travel across various channels to take advantage of the best available value that they can receive. Multi-channel consumers typically use three or more touchpoint and channels, going from offline stores, journals, online channels to direct marketing (Kolehmainen, 2018). The multi-channel process channels are considered touchpoints where the retailer and the consumer interact with one another. As for omni-channel channels, the touchpoints from one channel to the next are not as precise; therefore, difficult to pinpoint, maintain direct communication, and determine which stage of the consumer's decision-making process is located at a given time (Verhoef et al., 2015). Ergo a multi-channel retailer can only offer a handful of channel options to interact with, but the channels do not interconnect with one another (Verhoef et al., 2015).

The term Omni-channel behavior is relatively recent and has multiple meaning. Fairchild (2014) defines Omni-channel retailing as a service that is made for consumers to meet their need whenever and wherever needed, or as Herhausen et al. (2015), Rigby (2011), Verhoef et al. (2015), and Neslin et al. (2006) have pointed out that a customer can perceive all sales and marketing touchpoints as one through a seamless experience. The most common theme that most researchers agree about regarding omni-channel retailing is the term seamlessness and the interconnectivity of the channels.

Omni-channel consumer's purchasing behavior comprises more channels than multi-channel behavior. Omnichannel includes an interconnected and intergraded sales experience that synergizes the advantages of a physical retail store and that of an online retailer with its wide variety of information gathering tools (Rigby, 2011).

The main differences between Omni-channel and multi-channel behaviors are that while the consumer cannot switch between channels within the Multi-

channel behavior context, however, they can seamlessly travel through different channels and touchpoints in the context of omnichannels, be it physical or online. Furthermore, regarding multi-channel strategies, the channels are divided in contrast to omni-channel behavior, where all the channels are integrated at a broader scale. Additionally, consumers can only use parallel channels within multi-channel strategies, and within omni-channel strategies, the channels are utilized simultaneously (Verhoef et al., 2015); (Beck and Rygl, 2015); (Rigby 2011).

Hence "Showroomers" can be perceived as the primary type of consumers that subscribe to the omnichannel retailing phenomenon by taking advantage of tools provided from several channels available for each phase of the consumer's decision-making process. Given the prior knowledge gained from the literature reviewed, it can be noted that all showroomers are omni-channel consumers, but not all omni-channel consumers are showroomers, which is also agreed by several researchers such as Flavian et al. (2020), Verhoef et al. (2015), Neslin et al. (2006), and Gensler et al. (2017).

2.5 Level of product involvement

Products with high involvement, such as electronic products, Automobiles, and real estate, are classified as such when factors as high price, high level of risk, and durability are found in a particular product. These previously mentioned factors, in return, make the consumer more aware of the product’s or service’s brand and its significance against other brands of the same product or service (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008, as cited in Ahmad and Umar, 2009). Furthermore, consumers are highly involved in buying electronic products; they will spend longer time for additional information and processing the information (Sanjay and Sanjay, 2013). A large amount of time invested by the consumers help argue that high involvement product tends to be showroomed far more often than others, as Van Baal and Dach (2005) have mentioned that purchases conducted online were typical of low-frequency nature. Moreover, Arora et al. (2017) have also agreed that showrooming behavior occurs more within categories of products with a high level of involvement. Showrooming behavior occurs since customers are willing to lengthen their search efforts through online sources while reducing their risks and reassuring themselves that they

are making the right choices through offline sources by testing the products through touch and feel (Arora et al., 2017).

Arora et al. (2017) reiterated that product involvement within the context of showrooming is not mentioned often; therefore, included in this research is the question of whether high-involving products, specifically electronic products, can be a factor that drives consumers to showroom.

H1: *There is a significant relationship between product involvement and intention to showroom.*

2.6 Internet savviness

Internet savviness is described by Bart et al. (2005) as the consumer's ability and expertise to use the internet. Customers like to think that they are savvy shoppers, which is one of the other main reasons showrooming occurs. Therefore, the essential tool customer use makes them perceive themselves as intelligent shoppers is the internet and overall technology used when going through the phases of the consumer decisions such as smartphones (Macdonald and Uncles, 2007). Smartphones play a crucial role in showrooming behavior; smartphones encourage consumers to conduct information searches and compare alternatives while being present within a brick-and-mortar retailer (Quint, Rogers, and Ferguson, 2013). This behavior which can be categorized within the information search phase gives the consumer the ability to search online for information while at the same time allowing them to test the product physically through their haptic sensors by touching and feeling the product in order not to make a purchase that they may regret in the future (Quint, Rogers, and Ferguson, 2013; Peck and Childers, 2003).

H2: *There is a significant relationship between the user's internet savviness and intention to showroom.*

2.7 Offline search benefits

Searching for information is one of the first pre-purchase stages of the consumer decision-making process. Individuals collect the information needed regarding a product. One way to search for information is through physical retail

stores, which is one of the behavioral traits of showroomers. Searching offline comes at a higher perceived cost because of the higher search cost, the higher cost in time, and finally, a higher cost in comparing alternatives (Park et al., 2009).

2.7.1 Perceived quality of the sales staff

Sales staff can be considered one of the benefits of searching information offline, specifically for preventing showroomers. Sales staff have a crucial role, given that they are the first point of contact when a consumer is looking for information within a store; therefore, the quality of sales staff is a factor that can influence the consumer's purchasing decision (Park and Lennon, 2006). However, according to a survey conducted by Rejon-Guardia and Luna-Nevarez (2015), in general, 68% of consumers have taken advantage of physical stores by browsing in-store products and later having finalized their purchase online, which has impacted the sales staff motivation (Heitz-spahn, 2013). other papers which have conducted quantitative research specifically regarding the electronic retail industry identified that from within 220 participants, 24.3% admitted to having showroomed while purchasing electronic products (Eriksson and Fagerstrom, 2019).

While other researchers, such as Baker and Cameron (1996) and Gensler et al. (2017), argued that one of the factors contributing to showrooming behavior was the lack of sales staff which lengthened the consumers waiting time and information collecting time. Gensler et al. (2017) also found that the particular increase of the sales staff quality did not decrease the chances of showrooming. Contrary to Gensler et al. (2017), Cooper (2012) suggests that if the sales staff cannot provide expert knowledge about products and lack satisfactory service qualities, the retailer will fail to reduce showrooming behavior. This factor aims to evaluate the effect of sales staff on showrooming. Ergo the consumers showrooming behavior can be countered through better management of the sales staff.

The in-store service quality is somewhat related to sales personnel, given that one way of testing the quality of a store is through the quality of their sales staff (Gensler et al., 2017). Also, there are other factors determine the store's quality.

Still, for most determinant factor, the research paper will only examine the sales staff's quality concerning the in-store service quality.

The qualities of sales staff are determined according to the extent of knowledge they provide and the amount of trustworthiness they can display towards the customers, as these traits, according to Cronin et al. (2000), are the factors that may result in either losing a customer to showrooming or retaining them. When the latter is managed, then the customers will experience less shopping risk and improve their satisfaction and loyalty toward the retailer (Cronin et al., 2000). Hence preventing consumers from showrooming can be acknowledged if the in-store quality is superb; this may improve the consumers' intentions to purchase in-store and consequently prevent them from showrooming. Contrarily to Cronin et al. (2000), Gensler et al. (2017) argue that even if the quality of sales staff is improved, this may not prevent the consumers from finalizing their purchase online since higher quality means that the consumers can showroom much easier by gathering high-quality information from the sales staff regarding the best possible product that will satisfy their future purchases online. Although other literature such as Hallowell (1996, p. 29), as cited in Cronin et al. (2000), suggest that when the satisfaction of the consumer is met, then it will result in a higher perception of the value obtained where value reflects the perceived service quality received relative to price.

To sum up, this section, according to the scientific literature regarding the relationship between service quality and its effect on showrooming, is not clear and can go either way; therefore, it is crucial to analyze this hypothesis.

***H3a**: There is a significant relationship between the quality of sales staff and intention to showroom.*

2.7.2 Need for tactile information

Generally, consumers build their expectations of a product based on the knowledge they have collected and later substitute the prior positive expectations with doubt after testing the said product physically (Hamilton & Thompson, 2007).

One of the benefits consumers receives while shopping offline is their ability to touch and feel the product and test its quality. Peck and Childers (2003) defined

that the need for touch emerges from collecting information and evaluating alternatives through the haptic system. Peck and Childers (2003) also mention that when using the haptic system, the consumer can create a more detailed image of the product by obtaining information and utilizing it to evaluate later and reach a final purchasing decision. Raj (2011) mentions various attributes that touching and feeling a product offers; firstly, it gives consumers confidence within the product they are willing to purchase. According to Raj (2011), a customer can comprehensively analyze a product by testing its weight, durability, and that these factors provide the consumers with the necessary answers consumer has about the product and consequently reduces the risk when purchasing online. Finally, it plays a significant role in the post-purchase phase, mainly within the consumer's cognitive behavior preventing them from future cognitive dissonance, given that consumers would prefer not to regret a purchase by thinking that they should have spent more extended time and more money to choose the right product after the completion of a purchase (Raj, 2011). Furthermore, a study conducted by Arora and Sahney (2018) found through a survey that 41.86% out of 288 participants have showroomed for mobile phones, the second-highest percentile of a showroomed product was made up of 29% who admitted to having showroomed for digital cameras. This previous study not only concluded that consumer electronic products are most showroomed out of which specifically mobile phones, laptops and digital cameras were the most showroomed.

The need to touch and feel primary takes place within the information phase of the decision-making process, and this helps the consumer by filling in informational gaps about a particular product by eliminating doubt, evaluating the quality, and testing the durability of a product (Peck & Childers, 2003; Grohmann et al. 2007). Therefore, it not uncommon for consumers to experience products at physical retail stores and later finalize a purchase from online sources (Gensler et al., 2017).

H3b: *There is a significant relationship between the user's need to touch and feel and intention to showroom.*

2.7.3 Shopping enjoyment

Shopping enjoyment is derived from the consumer's essential social needs, which signifies their pleasure in shopping activities. Unlike the previous factors, shopping enjoyment has less of a utilitarian, functional factor but rather more hedonic and non-functional factor (Ailawadi et al., 2001). It signifies that a consumer enjoys and experiences excitement when shopping physically regardless of whether they are willing to purchase a product or not, irrespective of the time cost or search cost (Babin et al., 1994). Shopping enjoyment is also the consumer's ability to take value from instore benefits and co-destructing or co-creating the online value. Gensler et al. (2007) have identified that there is a positive effect of enjoyment on the selection of preferred channels. Accordingly, consumers who enjoy shopping may be more destined to shop in a physical store since they are not affected negatively by the extra costs they must bear while shopping offline.

H3c: *There is a significant relationship between shopping enjoyment and intention to showroom.*

2.8 Online search benefits

The Internet has made life simpler, innovative, and rapid as consumers conduct transactions more efficiently and quickly; due to this, every business needs to have their websites either to sell on or showcase their services and products (Bashir, 2013).

According to Shim et al. (2001), whenever consumers want to purchase a product, they will first go through the internet to search for information. Not only is the internet used for searching for information but also for comparing the gained knowledge and information about a product (Kim et al., 2004). Other benefits suggested by Jiang, Yang and Jun (2013) are such as the time cost that is reduced when searching for products online which in return provides the consumers convenience given the lack of a large number of consumers in a physical store, the long lines at the cashier, and the waiting time for sales personnel. The previously mentioned factors are also widely accepted by other researchers such as Verhoef et al. (2007), Gensler et al. (2017), and Arora et al. (2017).

2.8.1 Wider variety of alternatives

Wider variety of alternatives refers to the extent to which consumers have a wide range of available products from any E-retailer; this refers to the consumer's ability to perceive viable alternative from competing marketplaces (Jones et al., 2000). Not only does online searching assist consumers with the convenience of saving time and travelling cost, but also provides them with the ability to search and access multiple different brands of the specific product that the consumers wish to purchase, and later be able to evaluate and compare them with one another from the comforts of their home through multiple websites. As To et al. (2007) described, online searching gives consumers the tool to view various alternatives to select from, unlike in physical stores where the other options of a product are limited and not as diverse. Prior studies were conducted where a positive relationship was found between online shopping and the availability of a more comprehensive selection of alternative products, such as Kim and Ammeter (2018) and Adnan (2014). The availability of a broader range of products and alternative brands available online helps consumers better compare and select, which consequently increases online retailers' sales (Kennedy et al., 2010).

H4a: *There is a significant relationship between the perceived large variety of alternatives and intention to showroom.*

2.8.2 Access to wider information

Searching for information is one of the early stages of the decision-making process where a consumer begins to collect information and integrates them from multiple sources before evaluating an alternative (Kotler, 2000 P. 98-99)

Due to the rise of internet information search, researchers have been actively following the development in understanding the relationship amongst consumers who utilize the internet as a source of information and their choice of a channel concerning their option of purchasing from online or offline platforms (Shim et al., 2001). Access to information on online platforms plays a crucial role in the consumer's decision to purchase. Since it plays a role in reducing uncertainty, and the more available information, the more the

consumer will be reassured and confident about their choice of product (Berger and Calabrese 1975 as cited in Arora and Sahney 2018). There are diverse sets of online information that the consumer can utilize for their decision making, such as overall product knowledge, price comparisons amongst other brands, and, finally, user-generated reviews (Westerlund and Westin 2018). When the consumer links the convenience of comparing characteristics of a product, price, and the possibility of finalizing a purchase online, then the consumer feels that purchasing online gives them a more excellent value for the money (Gensler et al., 2017).

H4b: *there is a significant relationship between the access to wider information and intention to showroom.*

2.8.3 Perceived online price dispersion

Price dispersion can be defined as the distribution of prices of a specific product of the same characteristics from different retailers, attracting consumers' attention to research (Pan, Ratchford, and Shankar, 2004).

For consumers, the dispersion of price is acknowledged as the purchasing behavior affected by the dispersion in the characteristics and cost of alternative brands of the same product (Pan, Ratchford, and Shankar, 2004). Also, when a higher amount of price dispersion is found, the consumer will go through more extensive information research (Branco, Sun and Villas-Boas 2012). Consequently, comprehensive information search awakens the consumer's showrooming behavior given that the consumer is doing his or her best not to regret and seek the maximum satisfaction of chosen product (Peck & Childers, 2003). Due to the consumer's intuition, a large dispersion of price and quality entails a higher chance of allocating better and low-price products (Kuksov and Lin 2010).

Not only do consumers have a perception of difference in price within the E-retailer context, but they also have a perception of price dispersion between offline and online prices. To sum up, in theory, perceived price dispersion in the online context may drive the consumer to showroom. Price dispersion within the consumer electronic market is very extensive. A high range for price dispersion was identified through a study conducted by Baye and Morgan

(2001), where 1000 of the best-selling consumer electronics products within Shopper.com, a price comparison site. The authors found a substantial price dispersion on average of 40% between the range of prices; the study also identified that when competition is decreased, or the number of markets is decreased, so will the price dispersion (Chen and Scholten, 2003). Another study concluded that price dispersion in consumer electronics through online sites is neither convergent nor temporary; the authors further mention that if consumers are brand sensitive, the price will vary from one retailer to another (Zhang and Liu, 2020). Furthermore, price dispersion is strongly associated with information available, meaning if the information available were to increase, so would the dispersion of price (Zhang and Liu, 2020); (Pathak, 2012).

***H4c**: There is a positive relationship between the perceived online price dispersion and intention to showroom.*

2.9 Online purchasing intention

This subchapter of the literature will be describing the potential benefits a consumer may receive from shopping online. There is no mention of the benefits of shopping offline; that is mainly because showrooming behavior does not include offline purchases. As mentioned in the showrooming section of the literature review, a typical showroomer will collect needed information from all possible sources, be it online or offline, but yet, the final purchase is conducted through online platforms (Mehra et al., 2018). Shopping online gives the user the most convenient way of shopping, on top of which shopping online also cuts down the consumer's cost in searching, transportation, and time. Since purchasing online is the main factor of showrooming, the research will investigate the most common influential and beneficial factors that may lead consumers to partake in this behavior.

2.9.1 Perceived ease of use

The retailing industry is witnessing a technological transformation; more and more retailers lean towards improving their consumer's shopping experience through intelligent technologies to be more competitive. One of the main reasons behind the consumers' intention to shop online is their perceived ease of doing so, as many researchers also agreed, such as (Guritno and

Siringoringo, 2013), (Arora et al., 2017), and (Ramayah and Ignatius, 2005). consumers are bound to purchase online more often if they have prior first-hand experience regarding online shopping (Weisberg, Te'eni and Arman, 2011; Chaudary et al. (2014); Nwaizugb and Ifeanychukwu, 2016). this behavior is derived mainly because once a consumer has experienced shopping online, it will be embedded within their behavior for a longer time and give them the perception that it is easier to use (Jaafar, Lalp and Mohamed, 2013). Although to have consumers use the technology in the first place, retailers must make sure that the systems they build are easy to use in order for consumers to have the will to learn and eventually use it (Hamid et al., 2016). Not only does what Hamid et al. (2016) found apply to websites but also mobile applications. As Golden and Krauskopf (2016) have disclosed, the application needs to be rapid in terms of response and simple for the users to use and comprehend the navigational systems.

Others such as Koufaris and Hampton-Sosa (2004) defined the online ease of use as the consumer's perceived ease of use according to their subjective perception. Which described in simpler terms is the consumer's effort that is demanded to master or learn the use of online retail websites, price comparison application, or E-mall applications and websites. The fact that perceived ease of use may influence a consumer to finalize their purchase online can be backed by the study conducted by Teo (2001), where the researcher discovered that consumers are more likely to use online purchasing platforms when the technology or the user interface of a website or an app is easy to use and more importantly demands a brief period to learn how to use it.

According to the literature reviewed regarding perceived ease of use, it can be noted that it is an accepted fact that ease of use has a positive relationship with the consumer's intention to purchase online. Therefore, the thesis assumes that there can be a positive relationship found between the perceived ease of use and intention to showroom.

***H5a**: there is a positive relationship between the perceived ease of use and intention to showroom.*

2.9.2 Perceived cost of saving

Typically showrooming occurs mainly because consumers perceive lower prices online than offline channels (Gensler et al., 2017); therefore, the variable perceived cost saving was selected.

Although cost is not necessarily considered only in monetary value, it can also be considered the cost-effectiveness of searching for information, cost of time saved, transportation, and the emotional effort that the consumer has to go through while shopping (Kim, 2008). Nevertheless, past research affirms that cost in terms of monetary value is an influential factor that drives showrooming behaviour, such as Gensler et al. (2017), Pan, Ratchford, and Shankar (2004), Verhoef et al. (2007), and Arora et al. (2017). In these papers, a commonly agreed upon factor is that consumers perceive online prices as lower than physical retail stores, mainly due to the saving factor allowed within an online retail system, such as removing intermediaries and saving on storage cost. Also, online costs are lower, mainly because, unlike physical retailers, there are no costs involved in training sales staff, providing customers with valuable information (Westerlund and Westin, 2018). Consumers also take advantage of price comparing websites which cut down the consumers journey through several physical retailers and can be completed in the comfort of their domicile (Konus, Verhoef, and Neslin, 2008).

Therefore, consumers are more likely to showroom to obtain the lowest price for a product, even more so if the consumer is highly price-conscious, which will motivate them to search for the lowest possible cost. It is also worth mentioning that price-conscious consumers overall lack loyalty towards certain stores or channels, but they are somewhat more determined to find the best prices (Martos-Partal and Gonzalez-Benito, 2013).

H5b: *There is a positive relationship between the perceived cost-saving and intention to showroom.*

2.9.3 Trust towards online shops

Trust is yet another crucial factor that attributes the consumer's intention to purchase online; the foundation of initial consumer trust in online retailers is of utter importance given that consumers will have a positive perception and preference towards the E-retailer (McKnight, Kacmar, and Choudhury, 2002).

Trust is difficult to gain because when purchasing online, there are no physical interactions amongst the consumers and retailers. Also, payments are typically conducted through credit cards, thereby raising the consumer's perception of risk (Ling et al., 2011). There is also the risk of ordering a product and not receiving the intended product (Flavian and Guinaliu, 2006). Although, in the context of this research, risks such as ordering a product is avoidable since showrooming prevents the consumer from buying products that they did not know well about. Therefore, web-based retailers need to establish their trustworthiness and credibility towards the consumers who lack sufficient information about these retailers; a simple way for achieving this is through repetitive interactions and constant communication (Koufaris and Hamption-Sosa, 2004)

A study conducted in 2001 by Lee and Turban (2001) affirms that the lack of trust is a significant factor cited by many regarding consumers' unwillingness to engage in online shopping. However, this research is 20 years old and maybe proven otherwise given that there are new generations of consumers born into the age where online shopping is a regular everyday activity and therefore have higher trustworthiness towards online retailers in contrast to the generation born pre-E-commerce. Consequently, it is crucial to the thesis to study the perceived trust towards online shops.

H5c: *There is a positive relationship between online trust and intention to showroom.*

2.10 Conceptual framework

Based on the hypothesis developed throughout the literature review chapter, Figure 1 was constructed to visualize the relationships between the concepts. The foundation of the conceptual framework is based on the typical steps taken by a consumer when they showroom. As it can be observed, there are five-section, three of which depict the natural step consumers take when showrooming by first looking for information on online and offline platforms and the benefits of both online and offline channels were selected to be tested. Finally, the last step of the consumer's showrooming behavior is the finalization of the purchase purely through online platforms and its respective three beneficial factors that could drive consumers to complete a purchase online. As for the other two constructs, it tests the consumer's or the participant's capabilities to use the internet, which is yet another crucial aspect of showrooming as mentioned in the literature review. Finally, the product involvement and its effect on the consumer to showroom will be tested.

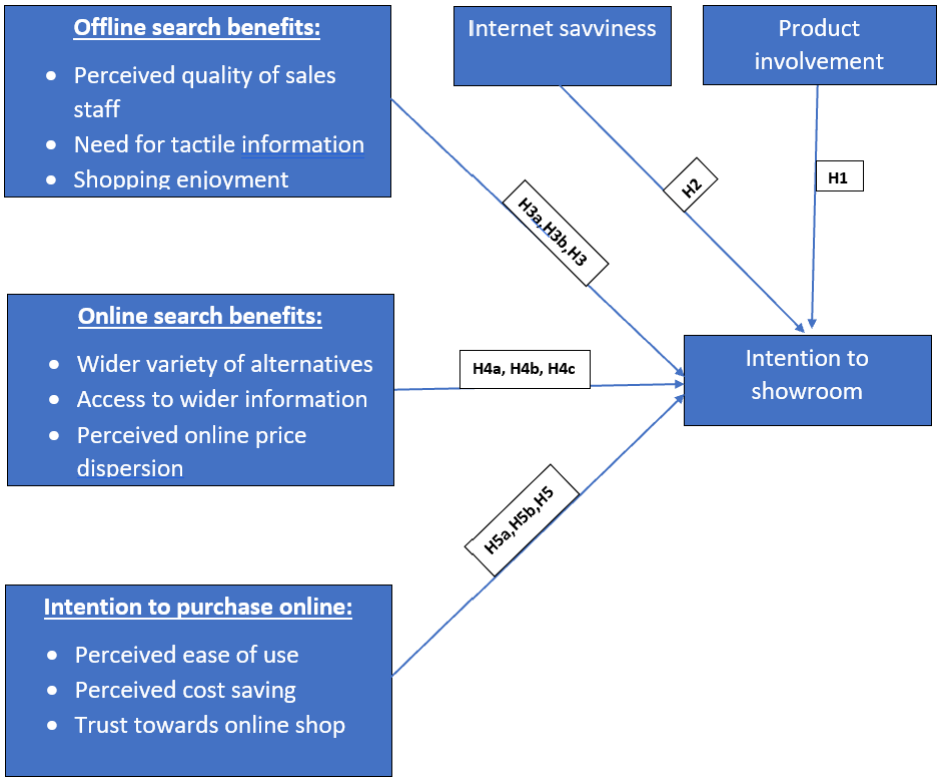


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

3 Methodology

In order to carry on with the testing of the proposed hypotheses, it is necessary to identify the details of how the research will be conducted, such as the sample size, methods and design that will be used. Followed by the process in which the data intends to be collected and analyzed. Throughout this chapter, empirical testing of the conceptual model will be described; also, the selected research method will be introduced.

3.1 Research method

The researcher has selected quantitative research as the research method, mainly because quantitative research will provide a better environment for describing and identifying the main drivers of showrooming. As Creswell (2014) characterized, quantitative measures are best utilized when the variables are numerated through surveys and best describes the relationship between the independent and dependent variables by examining the hypothesis using statistical tools. The quantitative research method also best fits the research since it helps explain causal relationships or also known as explanatory research, which is the case for this research.

The explanatory design aims to investigate the effect or impact of different factors such as the independent variables selected from the literature review section of the paper towards the intention to showroom and simultaneously maintain control of other influential factors.

Creswell (2014) also suggests that quantitative methods are of post-positivist worldview nature, which helps the researcher guide throughout the research by forming a hypothesis to test from the world and describes the heart of the study, which will later be rejected or supported (Creswell, 2014).

Previous studies with the exact nature or related to this research have also employed quantitative methods to test and comprehend the relationships of the independent variables towards showrooming. Schneider and Zielke (2020) utilized quantitative research methods to conduct surveys in order to create segments of showroomers into five different types of showroomers same is relevant with the study conducted by Gensler et al. (2017), where it was

concluded that price was not the main influential factor that drives consumers to showroom.

3.2 Survey development

As mentioned in the last subchapter, a survey was conducted to identify what factors that drive consumers to demonstrate showrooming behavior. The development of the survey question will be divided into three parts made up of close-ended statements which relate to the consumer's attributes that drive showrooming behavior. The participants will give their opinions by answering a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'neither agree nor disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Within the first part of the questionnaire, participants are asked about their general experience regarding if, before this research, they have displayed showrooming characteristics. The second part of the questionnaire will consist of 11 questions that will regard the variables identified within the literature review chapter of the research. Finally, demographic details were specified, where the survey participants had to provide answers regarding age. As Fowler (2009) suggested, demographic factors may enhance and better understand the scale of the data. As shown in the table below, all the following questions were selected and based on the questionnaires of pre-existing research that conducted similar surveys for showrooming or related topics.

Constructs	Questions/Statements	Source
Intention to showroom	I often search for information in physical stores in order to later buy the product online.	**Schneider and zeilke (2020)**
Product involvement	I attach great importance to the mobile phone that I purchase	**Rodger and Schneider (1993)**
Internet savviness	It is easy for me to successfully use different internet shopping sources in the process of purchasing	**Kolehmainen, (2018)**
Quality of sales staff	In general, the sales staff electronic retail stores provide friendly and responsive service	**Gensler, Neslin and Verhoef (2017)**
Need for tactile information	I feel more comfortable in purchasing a electronic product after physically examining it	**Kolehmainen (2018)**
Shopping enjoyment	Shopping in a physical store is generally fun	**Daunt and Harris (2017)**
Wider variety of alternatives	The shopping websites have wide assortment of products	**Park et al. (2012)**
Access to wider information	Generally, I use my smartphone to get more information about product.	**Gensler, Neslin and Verhoef (2017)**
Online price dispersion	Online channels offer various price ranges to choose from	**Goraya et al. (2020)**
Perceived ease of use	Overall, online shopping is easy for me	**Ramayah and Ignatius (2005)**
Perceived cost saving	Online stores offer me a more competitive price	**Schneider and zeilke (2020).**
Trust towards online shops	Most online stores are trustworthy	**Daunt and Harris (2017)**

Table 1: Survey questions and sources

3.3 Data collection

Participants will be approached to complete the survey through convenience sampling and snowball sampling. The survey was shared and circulated online through Social media channels and social networks. As Bryman (2015) described ‘’Convenience sampling’’ is the way to establish a group of people who are easily accessible to the researcher. Convenience was selected mainly due to the current pandemic, which prevents physical contact, and in addition, all the relative location in which the survey would have otherwise taken place are currently closed, such as consumer electronics retailers within Vienna, Austria. The data collection took place from the end of April until the end of the first week of May. The survey was left open for two weeks, and a total of n=212 surveys were answered, out of which only 35.5% admitted having previously showroomed and are familiar with the concept. Before moving further with the testing of the hypotheses, it was crucial to confirm the validity of the survey used to test the 11 variables of the conceptual framework. Defined by Hair et al. (1998), Validity is the ability for the researchers to accurately measure and test the hypothesis. The paramount importance of validating the collected data is to fix or discard participant’s data who have not fully answered the questions of the survey, therefore after validating the number of participants was decreased to 206.

3.4 Limitations

Given that the survey will be distributed using convenience and snowball sampling, this may raise challenges to reach an accurate real-world result. As Creswell suggested (2014), snowballing may create samples related to one another, and making them similar. An example of this would be a participant passing the survey on to a friend, which may mean they are from a similar social group or nationality, therefore creating a matching sample (Creswell 2014). Another limitation that may develop is that the data collected may not have a realistic representation of all age groups specifically older age groups within the real world. Therefore, the researcher will use statistical consensus and measure the ratios by weighting the elderly towards the younger generation and consequently adjust the number of older adults to the ratio found in the real world. Another limitation that the researcher will face is that web surveys are limited to only internet users, and as Fowler (2009) suggested, older adults do

not tend to use the internet; ergo, it will be challenging to reach the group through surveys. However, if it were not for the pandemic, the surveys would have been conducted within the vicinity of a consumer electronic store where reaching a more equal demographic would have been much more possible.

3.5 Research ethics

While conducting the survey, the researcher took all the responsible measures to maintain ethical data collection by following the code of ethics set by the association for consumer research by Sudman (1998), which includes not harming participants. Secondly, the survey questions do not in any way deceive the participants as they were selected from peer-reviewed research papers. Thirdly, the participants were willing and informed about the purpose of the survey, its intentions, and the time it would take to complete it. The data collected will be only used for this research, and anonymity will be maintained throughout the survey. The participants are free to partake or not in the survey.

4 Data analysis

In the following chapter, the survey results will be analyzed to answer the research questions of this paper. The chapter is divided into several subsections. The first part will provide an overview of the sample attributes, followed by the subsection where the variables that influence the consumer to Showroom will be analyzed.

4.1 Sample

A total of 212 participants responded to the survey. The majority of respondents were between the ages of 15-24 and the second highest age group was between 35 and 44. As for the other age groups the number of participants are much lower.

Table 2: Age of the respondents

Age	n	%
15-24	130	61.30%
25-34	50	23.60%
35-44	15	7.10%
45-54	14	6.60%
55-74	3	1.05%

It is evident that the above table sample is not an accurate representation of the natural world, consequently, prevents the research paper from gathering accurate results regarding the real-world population. In order to fix this problem, the researcher identified the accurate representation of the world population strictly within the European Union region. The real-world sample was available through the United Nations population Division from the department of economic and social affairs. Once the needed age samples were identified, it was later used to find multiples that would be weighed against the age samples of the questionnaire for more accurate real-world results and correct any imbalances. After attaching the weighted results to the number of participants age group, the researcher obtained a more realistic sample of the natural world, as shown in the table below, which also gives a better representation of people between the ages of 55 to 74.

Table 3: Weighted age of the respondents

Age	n	%
15-24	29	13.7%
25-34	36	17%
35-44	39	18.8%
45-54	39	18.6%
55-74	36	31.9%

The percentage of participants who have previously showroomed, as shown in table 4, amounted to 40.40% who agreed, and only 3.60% that strongly agreed to have showroomed at least once before. Out of whom, 34.9% were between the ages of 15 and 24, and the majority with 53%, were between the ages of 25 and 34.

Table 4: Frequency of respondents who have showroomed

Answers	n	%
Strongly disagree	19	9%
Disagree	67	31%
Neither agree nor disagree	32	15%
Agree	85	40%
Strongly agree	7	3.6%

According to table 5, the leading key factor that drives consumers to showroom is identified through the data's mean and skewness. Access to broader information online is the highest with regards to the mean, which can also be translated as most people who answered the survey tend to use their mobile phones to access online information while being located within a physical store. Moreover, consumer's level of involvement towards electronic products is the second most important driver of showrooming, followed by the consumers' Internet savviness. The importance of the previously mentioned variables can also be observed through the skewness of each variable where all 4 have high negative skewness making the data skew to the right. It can also be observed that the kurtosis of most variables are negative, indicating lighter tails and flatter distribution than if it were to be normally distributed except for Internet

savviness, product involvement, quality of sales staff, and access to broader information.

Table 5: Ranking of the important variables of showrooming

Variables	Mean	Skewness	Kurtosis
Internet savviness	0.85	-1.273	1.364
Product involvement	0.89	-0.934	1.435
Need for tactile information	0.78	-0.904	-0.234
Quality of sales staff	0.80	-0.891	1.251
Shopping enjoyment	0.65	-0.962	-0.179
Wide variety of alternatives	0.66	-0.165	-0.965
access to wider information	0.95	-0.940	0.982
online price dispersion	0.75	-0.433	-0.648
Perceived ease of use	0.65	-0.820	-0.262
perceived cost saving	0.38	-0.373	-1.079
Online trust	0.20	0.258	-1.292

To further test the normality of the data, the Shapiro-Wilk normality test was run given that the sample has a small size. As a result of the Shapiro-Wilk test, it can be further identified from the table below that all the data sets are not normally distributed; therefore, a non-parametric Spearman test will be conducted to identify the correlations between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

Table 6: Shapiro-Wilk normality test

Variables	Sig.	Statistic
Intention to Showroom	<0.001	0.887
Product involvement	<0.001	0.784
Internet savviness	<0.001	0.828
Quality of sales staff	<0.001	0.873

Need for tactile information	<0.001	0.811
Shopping enjoyment	<0.001	0.844
Wide variety of alternatives	<0.001	0.834
Access to wider information	<0.001	0.775
online price dispersion	<0.001	0.831
Perceived ease of use	<0.001	0.845
perceived cost saving	<0.001	0.869
Online trust	<0.001	0.892

4.1.1 Hypothesis testing

The next step after describing the data is to identify the influence of one variable on the dependent variable, ‘’Intention to showroom’’ and help identify the most vital attributes that would potentially drive consumers to this behavior. There are two sets of variables for each hypothesis, consisting of only ordinal and not normally distributed data. Finally, a monotonic relationship test was conducted using scatter plots. The scatter plot identified that as one variable increased, so will the other and vice versa. All three assumptions for a spearman correlation test have been confirmed as mentioned before; therefore, the Spearman correlation test will be run to identify the relationships and effects independent variables have on the dependent variable. The selected significance level was set for the p-value at 0.05, which will help achieve a ninety-five per cent confidence level.

4.1.2 Hypothesis 1

H1: There is a significant relationship between product involvement and intention to showroom

This specific hypothesis aims to test the effect of a consumer’s intention to showroom regarding the level of involvement towards a product; this will help

better understand if high involvement products are showroomed more than low involvement products.

As it can be seen in the table below, product involvement does influence the intention to showroom. Given that the p-value is 0.029, which is <0.05, the null hypothesis can be rejected. Although, surprisingly, the Correlation Coefficient is negative (-0.152), indicating that as involvement towards a product increases, the intention to showroom will decrease.

Table 7: Spearman correlation test hypothesis 1 n=206

variable	Correlation coefficient	sig. (2-tailed)
Intention to showroom	1	
Product involvement	-0.152	0.029

4.1.3 Hypothesis 2

H2: There is a significant relationship between the user's internet savviness and intention to showroom.

Within this hypothesis, the relationship of the consumer's internet literacy and its effect on consumers to showroom will be tested. The researcher assumes that as a consumer's Internet literacy or savviness regarding internet shopping increases, so will the chances of showrooming. Through the results of the Spearman test, it can be observed that there is a high Correlation Coefficient (0.197), meaning that this model describes the relationship between the two variables perfectly, and as Internet savviness increases, so will the intention to showroom. As for the significance of the relationship (0.005), there is a significant relationship; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 8: Spearman correlation test hypothesis 2 n=206

variable	Correlation coefficient	sig. (2-tailed)
Intention to showroom	1	
Internet savviness	0.197	0.005

4.1.4 Hypothesis 3a

H3a: There is a significant relationship between the quality of sales staff and intention to showroom.

Within this hypothesis, the researcher assumes that the sales staff may effectively prevent consumers from showrooming; this may be accomplished by either the availability of the sales staff or the general increase in the quality of service they provide.

From the test result, it can be determined that there is a significant relationship between the quality of the sales staff and the consumers' intention to showroom as the p-value is 0.009, which is >0.05, and therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. However, a negative relationship suggests that the lack of quality sales staff will increase showrooming.

Table 9:Spearman correlation test hypothesis 3a n=206

variable	Correlation coefficient	Sig. (2-tailed)
Intention to showroom	1	
Quality of sales staff	-0.181	0.009

4.1.5 Hypothesis 3b

H3b: There is a significant relationship between the user's need to touch and feel and intention to showroom.

Throughout this hypothesis, the impact of tactile information on the consumer's intention to showroom will be tested. The assumption within this hypothesis is that since a high level of product involvement demands intensive information search, therefore when purchasing online, the consumers will need every possible information, even physical information that is not available online.

As evident from the table below, there is a significant relationship as the p-value is less than 0.05, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. As for the correlation coefficient, there is a positive relationship meaning the higher the need to examine a product, in this case physically, the higher the consumer's chances of showrooming.

Table 10: Spearman correlation test hypothesis 3b n=206

variable	Correlation coefficient	sig. (2-tailed)
Intention to showroom	1	
Need for tactile information	0.284	<0.001

4.1.6 Hypothesis 3c

H3c: There is a significant relationship between shopping enjoyment and intention to showroom.

Within this hypothesis, the significance of shopping enjoyment will be tested, which itself is one of the benefits that one may obtain by shopping at a physical store. The assumption of this hypothesis is as follows, given that if a consumer enjoys the act of shopping purely in a physical form, then they will not partake in showrooming behavior. The p-value suggests no significant relationship between enjoying shopping and intention to showroom; therefore, the null hypothesis is failed to be rejected.

Table 11: Spearman correlation test hypothesis 3c n=206

variable	Correlation coefficient	sig. (2-tailed)
Intention to showroom	1	
shopping enjoyment	0.085	0.23

4.1.7 Hypothesis 4a

H4a: There is a significant relationship between the perceived large variety of alternatives and intention to showroom.

Hypothesis 4a tests one of the benefits of searching for online information; it is assumed in this hypothesis that a variety of product alternatives online may significantly impact the intention to showroom. The test resulted in a p-value of less than 0.05; hence, rejecting the null hypothesis is possible, consequently confirming a significant relationship. However, the relationship is negative, given that the correlation coefficient is negative. The negative relationship explains that as the online variety of alternatives is decreased, the intention to showroom will increase. Given that physical retail stores do not hold a large

variety of products, this prevents consumers from showrooming, since if the product allocated online may not be available in a physical store.

Table 12: Spearman correlation test hypothesis 4a n=206

variable	Correlation coefficient	sig. (2-tailed)
Intention to showroom	1	
Wide variety of alternatives	-0.194	0.005

4.1.8 Hypothesis 4b

H4b: there is a significant relationship between the access to wider information and intention to showroom.

The second online search benefit is the availability of abundant information online and the significant impact on the consumers to showroom.

As seen below the null hypothesis was failed to be rejected given that there is a p-value higher than 0.05. in conclusion a large quantity of information plays no role in the behavior of showrooming.

Table 13: Spearman correlation test hypothesis 4b n=206

variable	Correlation coefficient	sig. (2-tailed)
Intention to showroom	1	
Access to wider information	0.052	0.463

4.1.9 Hypothesis 4c

H4c: There is relationship between the perceived online price dispersion and intention to showroom.

This hypothesis will test the relationship between the price dispersion online and the intention to showroom. The spearman test below indicates a negative relationship between the intention to showroom and the dispersion of prices online, suggesting that as the price differences online decreases, the intention to showroom increases. Moreover, a significant relationship was possible to find; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 14: Spearman correlation test hypothesis 4c n=206

variable	Correlation coefficient	sig. (2-tailed)
Intention to showroom	1	
Online price-dispersion	-0.241	<0.001

4.1.10 Hypothesis 5a

H5a: there is a relationship between the perceived ease of use and intention to showroom.

The following hypothesis will test one of the benefits of purchasing online; this particular hypothesis will test the relationship of the variable the ease of using application or websites to complete a purchase and its impact on the consumer's intention to showroom.

The correlation test suggests no significant relationship between the two variables, given that the p-value is well above 0.05; therefore, the null hypothesis is failed to be rejected.

Table 15: Spearman correlation test hypothesis 5a n=206

variable	Correlation coefficient	sig. (2-tailed)
Intention to showroom	1	
Perceived ease of use	-0.057	0.414

4.1.11 Hypothesis 5b

H5b: There is a relationship between the perceived cost saving and intention to showroom.

For this following hypothesis, the relationship between consumer's perception of saving on costs online and their intention to showroom will be tested. This hypothesis assumes that consumers showroom as a result of the low prices set on online platforms. Consumers mainly perceive that online prices are lower than that of physical electronic retail stores; therefore, they may finalize their purchases online and take advantages of in-store services.

The table below indicates that there is a significant relationship between intention to showroom and the consumer's perception of saving on cost online, given that the p-value is less than 0.05. Furthermore, there appears to be a positive correlation coefficient suggesting that as the perception of cost-saving online increases, so will the intention to showroom. In conclusion, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 16: Spearman correlation test hypothesis 5b n=206

variable	Correlation coefficient	sig. (2-tailed)
Intention to showroom	1	
Perceived cost of saving	0.19	<0.001

4.1.12 Hypothesis 5c

H5c: There is a relationship between online trust and intention to showroom.

The final variable that will be tested is the trust consumers have towards online stores and how that affects their intention to showroom. Online trust plays a vital role in the phenomenon of showrooming, given that if a consumer does not trust online platforms, they will not complete their purchase online and, consequently, will not showroom.

As seen in the table below, there is, in fact, a significant relationship as indicated by the p-value, which is below 0.05; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Furthermore, there is a positive correlation coefficient, suggesting that as trust towards online platform increases, so will the consumer's intention to showroom.

Table 17:Spearman correlation test hypothesis 5c n=206

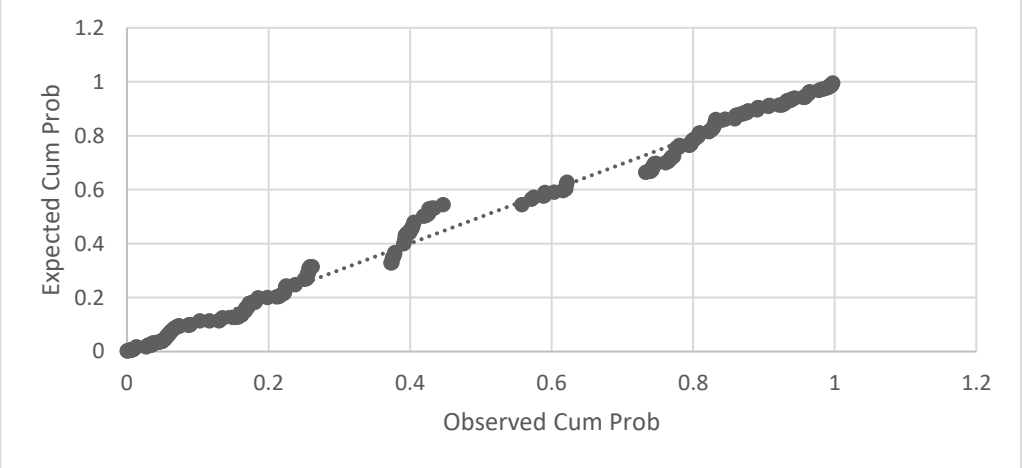
variable	Correlation coefficient	sig. (2-tailed)
Intention to showroom	1	
Online trust	0.043	<0.001

4.2 Multiple Linear regression analysis

Conducting a multiple linear regression of the model is imperative, particularly in the post correlation testing phase. The multiple linear regression mainly affirms that the overall model being tested is significant and determines the overall fit and the contribution of each independent variable to the model as a whole. The assumptions of the linear regression were tested before moving forwards with conducting the multiple linear regression.

The first assumption to checked is the linear relationship between the dependent and independent variables, which was proven to be linear, as seen in the probability plot below. Most points are following more or less the trend line; although there may be some variations away from the trend line, nevertheless, they generally are following the trend line; therefore, linearity between the variables can be confirmed.

Table 18: Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual



For the second assumption, multicollinearity was tested to ensure that the independent variables are unrelated; if the independent variables were somehow related, it would cause issues while estimating the regression coefficient.

The assumption was tested through the collinearity statistics by ensuring the Tolerance is not >0.7, which is the case for all the variables. Also, none of the values are <0.1, which means that the predictor is redundant. It can be concluded that there are no multicollinearities among the independent variables.

Table 19: Collinearity statistics of the model

Model	Tolerance
Internet Savviness	0.602
Product involvement	0.573
Quality of sales staff	0.690
Shopping enjoyment	0.329
Need for tactile information	0.367
Wide variety of alternatives	0.281
Access to wider information	0.547
online price dispersion	0.338
Perceived ease of use	0.295
perceived cost saving	0.255
Online trust	0.426

The third assumption that must be met is to have standard residuals between -3 and 3. The table below shows that the standard residual is from -2.996 to 2.602, allowing us to continue with the assumption testing.

Table 20: Residual statistics for cook's distance and Std. residual

Column1	Minimum	Maximum
Std. Residual	-2.996	2.602
Cook's Distance	0.000	0.031

Since the Assumptions are satisfactory, analysis of the multiple linear regression may proceed.

The first test that will be analysed is the ANOVA of the model, which will determine if the overall model has any significance. As seen in Table 21, there is a significance as indicated by the p-value which is < 0.05; therefore, it allows the multilinear regression analysis to continue.

Table 21: Model ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	61.497	11	5.591	6.554	.000[b]
Residual	164.581	193	0.853		
Total	226.078	204			

The following table to be interpreted summarises the overall model; this helps determine what percentage of the variance is accounted for by identifying the R square. In this case, the model summary suggests that the model confirms that 27.2% of variances are accounted for as seen in table 22.

Table 22: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.522[a]	0.272	0.231	0.924

The model coefficients table below describes how the independent variable significantly predicts the dependent variable and how the independent variable may impact the dependent variable.

The first step is to check the significance of each variable which in this case, some of the variables have a significant impact on the intention to showroom except for the following variables access to wider information, shopping enjoyment, online price dispersion, perceived ease of use, perceived cost-saving, and online trust.

Out of the variables that significantly impact the intention to showroom are the consumer's internet savviness, quality of sales staff, need for tactile information, product involvement, and the availability of a wide variety of alternatives on online platforms. Out of the previously mentioned variables, the one with the most decisive impact on the intention to showroom is the need to physically examine the products through touch and feel or, in other words, through tactile information. The data suggests that as one unit in tactile information is increased, the intention to showroom increases by 0.374, as indicated by the beta. The need for tactile information is followed by the second most impactful variable, which is the savviness of the consumer with regards to their internet shopping abilities.

Table 23: Model Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Sig.
	B	
(Constant)	-0.221	0.089
Internet Savviness	0.293	0.001
Product involvement	-0.162	0.098
Quality of sales staff	-0.207	0.022
Shopping enjoyment	0.106	0.222
Need for tactile information	0.374	0.000
Wide variety of alternatives	-0.243	0.044
access to wider information	0.021	0.832
online price dispersion	-0.026	0.816
Perceived ease of use	0.012	0.899
perceived cost saving	-0.065	0.492
Online trust	-0.139	0.116

5 Conclusion of the findings

Data collected from the survey have given the ability to understand the inner behaviours of a consumer when showrooming in the real world. The following chapter will discuss the findings analysed in the previous section to confirm pre-existing theories or gain new insights within Showrooming.

In this section of the chapter, the previous two tests are analysed to identify the variables that significantly affect Showrooming. It is evident from the table below that the enjoyment of shopping did not have any significance towards Showrooming, and it was also found to be insignificant by both tests. Also, it was surprising to find that access to more information online did not prove significant as this was one of the key attributes that drove consumers to purchase online; however, this can be interpreted by emphasising that showroomers tend to collect the necessary information primarily through actual electronic retail stores rather than purely online. Another interesting variable that was found not to impact Showrooming was the perceived ease of using online retailer websites.

Table 24:Multi-liear coefficients and spearman correlation results

Variables	Multi-linear model coefficients	Spearman correlation test	
Internet savviness	0.001	0.005	
Product involvement	0.098	0.029	
Quality of sales staff	0.022	0.009	
Shopping enjoyment	0.222	0.23	
Need for tactile information	0.001	<0.001	
Wide variety of alternatives	0.044	0.005	
Access to wider information	0.832	0.463	
Online price dispersion	0.816	<0.001	
Perceived ease of use	0.899	0.414	
Perceived cost saving	0.492	<0.001	
Online trust	0.116	<0.001	

In this following subsection, the variables found to be significant in the Spearman correlation but insignificant in the Multi-linear coefficients will be discussed; this would mean the following variables are significant but are not the most significant with regards to the model as a whole.

As the data suggested, the consumer's involvement towards a product does indeed impact the intention to showroom, and this is because showrooms are information-oriented consumers. This research paper evolves around consumer electronics which are regarded as high involvement products, ergo the riskier and more expensive a product is, the more it will be showroomed. Although the data also suggests a negative relationship between the level of involvement and showrooming, this can be because if the level of risk and the price are significantly higher, such as for TV sets or cars, users would not be willing to finalize their purchase online. Nevertheless, consumers may purchase the lower end of high involvement products such as laptops and mobile phones, which can be confirmed by Arora and Sahney (2018) findings, where they found that most showroomed electronic products are usually phones, digital cameras, and laptops.

The Next variable that will be discussed is the dispersion of online price and the online cost saving. Overall, it was evident through previous research that price plays a significant role in the intention to showroom. showroomers are

generally price-sensitive consumers and therefore find it fitting to go through lengthy information gathering and price comparison processes. However, it is not as straightforward as to why the dispersion of price has a negative relation towards the intention to showroom. The intuition indicates that as dispersion of online prices increases, the intention to showroom decreases; as per the data, it can be interpreted that if there are less variety of prices on online platforms, then consumers will showroom.

As for trust towards online platforms, there is a significant relationship towards showrooming, as trust plays a key role, and since it revolves around the basis of what showrooming is, "Purchasing online". Therefore, the more consumers trust online shopping platforms, the more they will showroom as per what the data indicated.

For this following subsection, the author will describe the most critical factors that affect and influence the intention to showroom; this is determined by having a significant result in both the Spearman correlation and the multi-linear regression.

It was identified that one of the four critical factors that influence showrooming behaviour is the consumer's knowledge and the know-how regarding internet shopping, as this has shown significance in both tests. showroomers are generally internet literate and have expertise in switching multiple channels to find the best price for a product that fits their needs.

Another factor that does seem to play an essential role in the model as a whole is the availability of wider variety of products. However, it may not perform an indispensable role mainly because consumers face more choices and become somewhat confused. The prior assumption is backed by the negative relationship evident within the Spearman correlation, meaning that the likelihood of showrooming will increase as the variety online is decreased.

Likewise, the quality of the in-store sales staff has shown to have a significant effect on the intention to showroom, which contradicts Gensler et al. (2017), where the research found out that increasing the number of the staff would not reduce showrooming. However, the Spearman correlation test suggests that

as the service quality of the sales staff is improved rather than the quantity, then the consumer's intention to showroom will decrease.

The final variable that has shown to have significance within both testing methods is the consumers need to touch, test, feel, or examine a product before purchase. The need for tactile information explains that consumers receive product specific knowledge when they physically examine it, which cannot be executed online. After reviewing it, they will likely purchase the said product online given, as mentioned before, showroomers are price-sensitive and information-oriented consumers and prefer to take advantage of all available channels before finalizing their purchase online.

5.1 Theoretical implication

The goal of the research was to determine the attributes that cause consumers to partake in showrooming behaviour. The study considered the beneficial factors of the channels that a typical showroomer would use, by taking advantage of the benefit of searching for information both on online and offline platforms. Finally, the benefits consumers generally receive while finalizing a purchase online was considered. The study further contributes to the literature of a very recent phenomenon: showrooming and omnichannel consumer behaviour.

Additionally, the research has identified that price does play a role in showrooming which confirms the theory based on the research conducted by Gensler, Neslin, and Verhoef (2017). However, it is not the most important role as other non-price factors had a more significant effect, such as the need for tactile information, quality of in-store sales staff, and the consumers' level of savviness towards online shopping.

Contrary to Gensler, Nelsin, and Verhoed (2017), a correlation was found between the quality of sales staff and the consumer's intention to showroom. However, they did mention that although they could not find a correlation, they did acknowledge that knowledgeable and trustworthy staff may lead to more in-store purchases. The Assumption by Gensler, Nelsin, and Verhoef (2017) regarding the antagonistic relationship of the quality of staff members and

intention to showroom can be confirmed within this spearman test conducted in this research, which indicated a correlation coefficient of -0.181.

The need for tactile information was more than evident within the analysis chapter of the thesis. The theory provided by Gensler et al. (2017) regarding the importance of touching and feeling when seeking further information about a specific product is reaffirmed as this was also a key factor that contributed to the intention to showroom. Not only was the need for tactile information found to be an essential factor, but it was also the most vital driving factor in the model as a whole that drives showrooming behaviour.

The availability of a more comprehensive selection of alternatives happens to have a negative effect on the intention to showroom, contrary to the theories set by Ammeter (2018) and Adnan (2014). Although the theories set by the previously mentioned authors were solely regarding the benefits of purchasing online and indeed wider variety attracts consumers to complete purchases online; however, that is not the case for the intention to showroom as it has a negative effect. As mentioned in the discussion chapter, the negative effect could be since physical retailers do not possess the wide variety of alternatives that online stores offer; therefore, they do not get showroomed given that the product may not be available in physical retail stores.

The availability of a substantial amount of information on online platforms did not affect showrooming. However, according to the theory provided by Gensler et al. (2017), there is a positive relationship between the abundant information online and the will of consumers to purchase online.

Gensler et al. (2017) theorized that when consumers purchase a product online, they perceive that online prices are more dispersed. Therefore, the consumer subjectively distributes online prices, consequently increasing consumer search time and effort intensely. As it was evident from the tactile information variable, showroomers are very information-oriented consumers. However, the theory provided by Gensler et al. (2017) does not correspond to the statistical data of this paper, given that Gensler et al. (2017) found a positive relationship between dispersion of price online and showrooming contrary to this paper's findings where a negative relationship was recorded. However, this

could be since the sample collected for this paper regards consumers as a whole rather than only showrooming consumers.

The Variable ease of use was found to have no significant effect on the intention to showroom. However, previous research papers such as Teo (2001) and Arora et al. (2017) suggest that the ease of use does contribute to the intention to purchase using online platforms.

The joy a consumer receives while shopping in physical stores was also found to have no impact on the intention to showroom, and however shopping enjoyment has a positive relationship when it concerns the choice of using offline channels over online channels as found by Verhoef (2007).

A significant relationship was identified between the intention to showroom and the level of involvement a customer has towards a product, as was the case in the research conducted by Sanjay and Sanjay (2013) and Arora et al. (2017). However, a negative relationship was recorded by the data analysed in this research paper. As mentioned before in the discussion section of this chapter, the negative relationship could be because there are only certain products that fall within the high involvement category that are vulnerable to consumers who showroom such as laptops, mobile phones, and digital cameras, as discovered by Arora and Sahney (2018).

The ability for consumers to use the internet effectively has also shown to have a significance towards the intention to showroom, as the ability to use various internet shopping channels and price comparison sites are the building foundation of a successful showroomer given that these digital aids provide the consumer with valuable information as per to the finding of Quint et al. (2013), and Macdonald and Uncles (2007).

As for the final Variable trust towards online platforms, there was a significant positive relationship towards the intention to showroom; this is backed and confirmed by the finding of Arora and Sahney (2018).

5.2 Managerial implication

Future retail managers can implement the results of this research to prevent or at the least reduce potential showroomers. The study suggests that shoppers would prefer to interact with products in a physical store and later shift to an online platform to finalize their purchase. This behavior mentioned before proves to be a challenge to retailers and will probably prove to be an even more significant challenge in the post-Corona pandemic world. The post-Corona pandemic world is predicted to have more consumers who will execute online purchases. The increase in online activities in the future is due to the fact that they were forced in one way or another to purchase products online as it was not possible to do so in physical retail stores.

The results also suggested that consumers perceive online prices to be cheaper. However, this will not be possible to solve as there is a different cost structure regarding offline retailers as they generally have higher fixed costs than online shops. Nevertheless, Offline retailers may utilize other strategies such as improving their overall staff service quality, which will help retain customers. Furthermore, offline retailers have the advantage of not possessing a wide variety of alternative products, unlike within online stores, which tends to affect showrooming negatively; therefore, having less variety may attract customers to an offline retailer to seek guidance from the sales staff. It should also be noted that it is not only the quality the staff members need to improve but also the speed at which they can reach a customer.

Another managerial implication that can be considered is targeting consumers who generally use their mobile phones in-store. Mobile assisted shoppers were shown to be a fact during the survey as most respondents admitted that when they are within consumer electronic stores, they tend to look for information online through their mobile phones; this could be interpreted as an occurrence due to the lack of sales staff or training. However, suppose that is not the case, and smartphones are being used; nonetheless, in that case, it would be recommended to the retailer to integrate an in-store mobile platform where consumers can look for information through their mobile phones without going through other websites and getting exposed to a wide range of online price categories. To sum up, the retailer could implement a QR code mechanism that would shift the Customers from the internet information to their in-store

web information platform or, in other words, create a seamless omnichannel experience for the customers where they can switch from online to offline information platforms.

5.3 Limitation

The Study itself faced many challenges and limitation. Firstly, the research paper was written during the COVID-19 pandemic when sporadic lockdowns occurred within the year in which this paper was being written. These said changes prevented the researcher from gathering a real-world sample through surveying respondents within premises of consumer electronic stores; this resulted in the under-representation of the older age groups. Nevertheless, the researcher implemented the weighting function within SPSS to balance the survey respondents according to the real-life population. This nature of research would be best conducted with a larger sample where the better outcome of results can be witnessed. This research only provides an insight into the vast and complex phenomenon that is showrooming; therefore, it does not represent a complete examination of said phenomenon. In future research, it would be recommended to analyse showrooming from multiple dimensions, that being the staff, customer, and the general managerial body of an organization, to provide a more comprehensive evaluation of the showrooming behaviour. Furthermore, an additional study would need to be conducted for the potential of showrooming in post-COVID-19 pandemic, as there may be an increase in this behaviour in the long run.

5.4 Future research

It would be recommended for future research to observe and analyse how consumer electronics stores can engage showroomers by diverging them away from online platforms. Another suggestion would be to research a better training mechanism for instore sales staff which concentrates on their abilities to influence and improve a consumer's in-store journey. It would also be impressive to investigate different pricing strategies that would shift showroomers to purchase in-store. Finally, it would be interesting to research a collaboration method between physical consumer electronic retail stores and online shopping platforms.

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Appendix A

I often search for information regarding electronic products in physical stores in order to later buy the product online

- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Strongly agree

I attach great importance to electronic products that I purchase

- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Strongly agree

It is easy for me to successfully use different internet shopping sites in the process of purchasing

- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Strongly agree

In general, the sales staff of electronic retail stores provide friendly and responsive service

- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Strongly agree

I feel more comfortable purchasing an electronic product after physically examining it

- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Strongly agree

Shopping in a physical store is generally fun

- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Strongly agree

The shopping websites have wide assortment of electronic products

- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Strongly agree

Generally, I use my smartphone to get more online information about electronic product

- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Neither agree or disagree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Strongly agree

Online channels offer various price ranges to choose from

- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Neither agree or disagree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Strongly agree

Overall, online shopping is easy for me

- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Strongly agree

Online stores offer me a more competitive price

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Most online stores are trustworthy

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Age

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74