

# Shopping Channel Selection Behavior in the New Media Environment

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**ABSTRACT.** *New media environment brings impact and change to the traditional consumer behavior mode. Consumers share information more conveniently and quickly, and their behaviors become more active and rational. At the same time, the influencing factors of consumers' channel choice behavior have also changed, and they pay more attention to the mobile internet environment and network consumption security. Under the new media environment, shopping channel selection behavior has its own characteristics, and "Omni-channel utilization" has become the main trend. Businesses need to pay attention to how to grasp the development trend and rationally choose the channel combination plan.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Channel selection, new media environment, Omni-channel utilization*

## 1. Introduction

With the continuous advancement of the internet, especially the mobile internet, and the rapid development of the e-commerce industry, major changes have taken place in consumer behavior. Consumer behavior patterns in the traditional media environment can not fully explain the differences in behavior. At the same time, the choice of shopping channels faced by consumers is increasing, and the factors affecting the choice of shopping channels are also characterized by various characteristics. Therefore, the research on consumer channel selection has also deepened from the beginning of non-key research.

The study found that the shopping channel selection behavior in the new media environment presented a general trend of "Omni-channel utilization". At the same time, multiple choices of social mobile terminals also became the main source of channels. This article provides insights into how retailers can grasp demand and create effective marketing in a new media environment by in-depth analysis of consumer channel selection behaviors.

## **2. Shopping channel selection behavior in traditional media environment**

### ***2.1 Consumer behavior patterns in traditional media environments***

Consumer purchase behavior refers to various behaviors of consumers who purchase and use goods or services in order to meet the needs of individuals or families. Many scholars at home and abroad have explored the research on consumer behavior under the traditional media environment, mainly focusing on two aspects: one is the law of consumers when buying behavior; the other is the pattern of consumer behavior. In the discussion of the law of consumers' purchase behavior, there are mainly consumer purchasing theory, information processing theory, marginal utility theory and other consumer purchasing behavior theories, which can explain consumer purchasing behavior to a certain extent.

The consumption behavior pattern is the description of the consumption process and the simplest expression of the consumption behavior and the influencing factors. Based on the research on the consumer behavior, western scholars have put forward many easy-to-understand patterns, including the following three patterns.

#### 1) General model of consumer buying behavior

General model of consumer buying behavior is also known as stimulus-response model, which shows that all consumers' purchasing behaviors are caused by stimulus. Under the influence of various stimulating factors and through a complex process of psychological activities, consumers are motivated to purchase. Driven by the motivation, they make purchase decisions, take purchase behaviors and conduct post-purchase evaluation. This model is also known by psychologists as the "consumer black box."

#### 2) EKB model

The EKB model emphasizes the consumer purchase decision process. The consumer brain is considered to be the "central controller". After the external stimulus information enters the consumer brain, the corresponding output result, that is, the purchase decision, can be generated through processing, thereby completing a consumer decision-making activities. The model constructs a specific path for the consumer purchase decision process.

#### 3) Howard-Sheth model

Howard-Sheth model was put forward by Howard in the early 1960s. He believed that consumers' purchasing behavior includes four factors: input factor, internal factor, external factor and output factor. The stimuli of consumer buying behavior are input factors and external factors that provide information about various options by evoking and forming consumer motivations. When consumers first accept this information, they will generate a series of psychological activities that generate motivation for purchase. After the purchase motivation, choice scheme, and mediation factors interact, an attitude or tendency is formed that combines with the constraints of other purchase behaviors to produce actual purchases.

## ***2.2 The changes brought about by the new media environment***

### **2.2.1 New media environment brings consumers the speed and convenience to share information**

Due to the nature of the Internet, everyone who enters the Internet is equal in this environment, they have equal rights to use and share information in the Internet environment. Consumers can share information conveniently and quickly through social media such as WeChat and Weibo. These new ways of communication, fashion and personalization, are in line with public psychology and are easily accepted by the public. A product link from a friend can be opened in just two seconds, and both parties can comment on the product, make purchasing decisions, and bring efficient communication.

Now all kinds of broadcast platform rapid development, such as the recent popular TikTok, inadvertently brought a number of goods. A large number of users on TikTok have been recommending and buying crazily. Some time ago, Taobao also cooperated with Douyin, and the sales link of Taobao could be linked on the platform. Many Taobao sellers said they were shocked by the sales volume of their stores, and the information sharing and communication brought by the live streaming platform were amazing. The existence of these platforms also puts consumers at the forefront of information sharing and marketing.

### **2.2.2 New media environment makes consumer behavior more personalized**

Personalization mainly includes the following two points: First, in terms of consumers, the personalization of design can help consumers to effectively obtain related services or products; second, in terms of merchants, the personalization of design helps to help merchants. Limit the range of potential consumers, meet the individual service and product needs of consumers, and then improve their sales. In essence, personalization is a process of matching merchants and consumers based on consumer preferences and characteristics, combined with environmental factors.

In the traditional environment, companies are segmenting and locating the customer base to provide specific products and services for different customer groups. But nowadays consumers' individualized demands are becoming more and more obvious. The demand for personalized information and the demand for personalized products have become the development direction. Enterprises and customers even have one-on-one services.

### **2.2.3 Consumers have a higher demand for services in the new media environment**

Online shopping can be developed, consumers can browse the world without leaving their homes, and can use the fragmented time to make decisions and place orders, which is inseparable from the lower product prices of online shopping than traditional channels. However, if the product price is low and the service quality is poor, the consumers will not pay for it. Therefore, the more the network shopping develops, the higher the consumers' demand for the service will be. This demand is reflected in the communication attitude of merchants, service speed, logistics

efficiency, express delivery attitude, return and replacement process time, etc. In every link of the consumer shopping, there is a flood of demand for service.

At the same time, strengthening the security of consumers' payment security and personal privacy information is an important means to improve the reputation of merchants. Merchants should vigorously protect the security of consumer information, especially private information, and ensure that consumers' personal information is never revealed, and consumers' trust and security are enhanced.

#### **2.2.4 Consumer behavior is more proactive in the new media environment**

The initiative of consumer behavior is mainly reflected in two aspects: one is the initiative for product search and purchase; the other is the initiative to share goods. In the traditional environment, consumers need to go to the physical store to see and try, in order to know that the goods are not suitable, the value is not worth buying, it is a very time and energy. In the new media environment, if you see a passer-by's clothes with a sense of design on the street, you will open Taobao and search for goods by entering keywords. More and more young women said that browsing shopping website has become their own way of leisure and entertainment, in the process of browsing there will be input information from the goods, plus now "free mail" "freight insurance" and other services, so even if not the need to buy goods will try. The initiative of sharing is mainly reflected in the fact that consumers will actively interact with the surrounding family members, friends, colleagues, classmates, etc. on the quality "performance" price of the product or service until they choose the product they think is appropriate. This process of sharing is actually the process of marketing communication.

#### **2.2.5 Consumer behavior in the new media environment is more rational**

Online consumers can make rational decisions in product selection and purchase without being restricted by geography and other conditions while accepting a lot of information, because the Internet world is full of abundant resources and information. Nowadays, when introducing their own products, merchants have also provided product information, text + picture + video as much as possible, to provide consumers with sufficient perception for decision making. At the same time, the product reviews provided by the shopping site, as well as the interaction between consumers and consumers, can provide a yardstick for rational decision-making. The above-mentioned sharing behavior anytime and anywhere is actually a decision-making process. With the opinions from the familiar objects, the consumption behavior is more rational.

### 3. Analysis of shopping channel selection behavior in the new media environment

#### 3.1 Factors affecting shopping channel selection behavior

In recent years, many scholars have conducted empirical studies on the influencing factors of consumers' channel choice behavior, which are summarized as follows:

*Table 1 Summary of factors affecting consumer behavior*

Researcher	Proposed time	Influencing factor
Dabholka & Inman	2004	Psychological characteristics (lifestyle, innovative traits) and behavioral characteristics (previous shopping experience)
Liu Cuihua	2010	Entertainment, social and other hedonic factors; waiting time, information availability, etc.
Wang Yazhuo	2011	Consumer factors (shopping motives, perceived risks, etc.), channel factors, situational factors, product factors
Cao yuzhi	2012	Differences in end-user devices, communication networks, convenience, personalization, and risk between the consumer-aware mobile Internet environment and the online environment
Long Zhenjie	2013	Customer factors, situational factors, product attributes, channel characteristics, business factors
Zhang Lu	2014	Perceived useful, subjective norms, consumer experience, personal attributes, network behavior attributes
Zhang Wenhui	2015	Consumer motivation willingness situation, consumption search channel context, consumption occurrence process situation, consumption information communication situation, consumption communication interaction situation
Guo Yan	2016	Product exploration, risk
Luo Huan	2017	Product information display, shopping website features, product purchase experience, online consumer protection

Research on influencing factors of consumer behavior is a hot topic in consumer research. A large number of researchers elaborate from various perspectives in this field, and there are many influencing factors of consumer behavior in the context of

new media or the Internet. In the process of sorting out the table, it was found that most of the research methods used empirical research routes. On the basis of one or several theories, this paper analyzes and summarizes the influencing factors of consumer behavior in the context of mobile Internet by taking research approaches such as background elaboration, hypothesis presentation, model establishment, scale development, data collection, test analysis and management enlightenment.

As can be seen from the above table, the research on the influencing factors of consumer channel selection behavior has been long. With the development of the Internet, in recent years, the mobile Internet environment and website features have gradually become the focus of attention. Among them, the use of e-commerce websites determines the first impression of consumers, whether the pages are beautiful and elegant, whether the retrieval is convenient, whether the commodities are complete, and whether the payment methods are diverse constitute the brand image of e-commerce websites. At the same time, consumers pay more and more attention to the characteristics of channels and network security, which mainly includes after-sales security and security. After-sale guarantee includes return and exchange, refund, after-sale maintenance, etc. However, the internal factors from consumers (shopping motivation, etc.) are still the main influencing factors, but the content of motivation is becoming more and more abundant. In the past, it was necessary to promote the purchase behavior, but now many of them are not really needed, but may generate the purchase intention due to curiosity, novelty, or booking mood.

### ***3.2 Shopping channel selection behavior characteristics in the new media environment***

#### **3.2.1 A combination of online and offline channels**

Now many retail companies choose the O2O model, which combines offline stores and online stores. Consumers generally choose two ways: one is to try on in a physical store, try it out, and feel it is appropriate to determine the item to be purchased and then buy it online. The other is to post to the home after the online store purchase, or some chain stores are nearby, you can go to the store to pick up the goods. For some brand stores, many customers will choose to go to the physical store to try the online store to buy, or choose the online order store to pick up, for most of the unknown online stores, everyone tends to choose online payment mailing home. Either way is the combination of online and offline products, which can meet consumers' requirements on commodities and prices to the greatest extent. Compared with traditional offline physical stores, it is more convenient and faster. For merchants, the existence of online stores reduces the cost of inventory and stores, and has more marketing effects.

#### **3.2.2 Mobile shopping is more common**

Statistics show that more and more consumers choose mobile phones such as smartphones, tablets, and wearable devices to make purchases. Compared with computers, mobile devices are more convenient and lighter. Smartphones are now

almost one person. As long as there is a network, you can read and place orders anytime, anywhere. More and more people will choose to use the fragmentation time to make shopping. On the one hand, the fast-paced life makes the use of time tighter. On the other hand, fragmentation using the mobile terminal has become a modern lifestyle. Nowadays, the amount of mobile shopping transactions has risen sharply, and many merchants are targeting business opportunities, launching devices and services in an endless stream.

### **3.2.3 Shopping channels from social networking platforms**

With the development of the Internet and the improvement of the level of information technology, people have almost entered the era of information transparency. Social networking is an emerging platform for disseminating information, and a link can enable a consumer to communicate with thousands of consumers. Take Weibo as an example. Many “Web Red” bloggers on Weibo use the live broadcast or update Weibo every day to promote the clothing of their own Taobao store, interact with fans and attract fans to buy. Our consumers can enter the store directly by clicking the corresponding link on Weibo.

At the same time, there are a lot of Weibo bloggers who specialize in issuing discount coupons and coupons. They push various merchandise coupons every day and attach a brief introduction. When fans click to receive, they can directly purchase the corresponding products at the activity price.

Many brand products have registered their own Weibo, such as Starbucks, Durex and so on, they interact with fans every day, and share their brand stories and product information with fans, which is a good way to maintain the continuous growth of sales performance, but also makes the social platform play the role of shopping.

There is also the rise of WeChat small procedures, many businesses have seized on the characteristics of consumers love convenient to promote their own small procedures, so that consumers in the use of daily WeChat unconsciously shopping. Like “MissFresh”, the app download conversion was completed through the intelligent identification system of Sogou input method. Later, it was continuously promoted on WeChat and Weibo. Consumers word of mouth passed and quickly pushed orders.

### **3.3 *Omni-channel use has become the main trend***

Omni-channel is a new concept that comes with mobile networks and big data. It was first appeared in an article in the Harvard Business Review in 2011 entitled “The Future of Shopping”: with the development of the Internet and mobile information technology, digital retailing is undergoing major changes, and a new field has emerged—Omni-channel retail, that is, retailers can include physical stores, direct mail and catalogs, call centers, on-site services, websites, services. Terminals, mobile devices, social media and other channels interact with customers. Customers can use the website to compare and select information, try on and try in physical

stores, and achieve real purchase on the mobile side. More and more new generations of consumers, their consumption philosophy is "you want to buy immediately", the company provides an Omni-channel retail platform, just to meet their desire to switch between various shopping channels freely and conveniently.

In the Omni-channel environment, there are differences in the path of information search and purchase between consumers' choice behaviors, which are represented by the combination of offline (offline) and online (network) paths, forming four main consumer channel selection behavior patterns. : Online channel search and purchase, offline channel search and purchase, online search and offline purchase, offline search and online purchase. This has been reflected in the above-mentioned "Features of Shopping Channel Selection Behavior in New Media Environments".

In recent years, in order to cater to the needs of the market and consumers, merchants began to grasp the development trend of omnichannel, analyze the behavior of consumer channel utilization, and rationally choose the channel combination scheme. For example, Suning launched Suning Tesco in 2010, and tried to unify products, prices, services, etc. online and offline; Fei Niu relied on RT-Mart's national physical store resources to open up online and offline, and conduct Omni-channel business operations.

*Table 2 Current Omni-channel business model of retail enterprises in China*

<b>Channel</b>	<b>Typical merchant representative</b>	<b>Feature</b>
Online and offline channels	Suning: "Stores + E-commerce + Retail Service Providers", try the omni-channel model to achieve information sharing in stores, PCs, mobile phones and TVs.	Consumers search for product information online and pay online, and can also pay for purchases online after they are optimistic about the product. Logistics can choose to be delivered to your door or from a physical store.
Mobile shopping	Wangfujing Department Store Group: Promote mobile APP applications, Wi-Fi in stores, and positioning functions in department stores and Shuang'an shopping malls	Personalization, precision, high convenience and high utilization of consumer fragmentation time are the main features of mobile shopping. Combining the trend of Internet + localized service, consumers can enjoy the shopping experience anytime, anywhere.
Social network platform	Starbucks: interact with fans in China using WeChat + Weibo	Every consumer can easily communicate with friends, relatives, colleagues, peers, experts, etc. on their social platforms to obtain other types of consumer information, suggestions and opinions.



As can be seen from the Omni-channel operation mode of China's retail enterprises summarized in the above table, most of the three modes are matched with the characteristics of consumer behavior. In line with the "consumer-centered" operation thinking, they seize the characteristics of consumers in the era of mobile Internet and "user-centered" to enhance users' perception and participation in products. Moreover, the interactive role of social media is brought into full play to listen to consumers' demands for products, services and other aspects.

#### **4. Marketing implications for the retail industry**

##### ***4.1 Multiple retail channel companies should differentiate their targeting for different channel members***

Market segmentation can be summarized as coordinating the interests of members of different channels. Differentiate the main products or services of online and offline retail channels, and match consumer channel preferences with market characteristics, which can effectively enhance the attractiveness and synergy of the entire channel environment and enhance the respective members of each channel. The study found that as the size of multi-channel users grows, consumers pay more attention to the value of shopping than traditional single-channel physical store shoppers. Therefore, for multi-channel retail enterprises, they should fully coordinate the interests of different channel members, enhance the shopping value of consumers and improve the utilization rate of retail channels. Online retail channels and traditional retail channels exist at the same time, there will inevitably be conflicts, but if the two can be rationally divided and the complementary advantages of the channels can be utilized, marketing costs can be saved and the service and added value of products can be improved. For example, in order to reduce the cost of storage in physical stores, multi-channel retail enterprises can consider installing digital large-screen shelves in physical stores, so that customers can take out their mobile phones after entering the stores and place orders, and can choose self-service or logistics distribution. The facility not only improves the consumer experience, but also reduces the hassle of in-stock inventory.

##### ***4.2 Utilize big data to meet the individual needs of consumers***

For example, in the US Macy's department store, it cooperates with DeHeng's US branch to use consumer data collected by big data technology to accurately analyze consumer shopping preferences, consumer psychology, etc. through advanced consumption habit tracking technology. Then, predicting the purchase behavior and pushing personalized product information to meet the individual needs of consumers, so that consumers buy more when they buy something in Macy's department store. For example, the technology alerts Clinique cosmetics buyers about 10 times a week to restock their stores, and also sends them precise information based on big data analysis of their purchases of other fashion items, such as the latest fashion bags.

Nowadays, domestic e-commerce companies such as Taobao, Jingdong, Vipshop, and some websites use similar data analysis technology. Consumers' search records on Taobao will be quickly identified and relevant products will be pushed in time. Not only that, but also push related products, with a mark next to the product. If you are not interested, you can pass it directly. This is also a disguised understanding of consumer demand.

In the era of big data, user information is wealth. Behind every smart phone is a living person specimen with detailed information and personal tags. The business is precisely targeting this information and grasping business opportunities. However, in the middle of this, we must pay attention to the security of user data. Nowadays, people are paying more and more attention to privacy security. In this era of information exposure, enterprises need to assume such social responsibility.

#### ***4.3 Layout mobile e-commerce for a seamless shopping experience***

Now many retail companies still insist on offline stores, with e-commerce and mobile channels as complementary supplements. The result is that physical store channels, e-commerce channels, and mobile e-commerce channels cannot be well integrated, and consumers cannot get an indiscriminate shopping experience during the shopping process.

According to the results of the survey, nearly 80% of netizens in China use the mobile terminals such as mobile phones to access the Internet, socialize, and shop. Each mobile phone is a person, customer, and consumer with certain identities. Because the mobile terminal frees people from huge computer equipment, as long as they have a network, they can check product information and browse any retail store at any time. Therefore, the extensive layout of mobile e-commerce is an important step for retailers to switch to omnichannel. Of course, in this process, the security and privacy of mobile payment cannot be ignored. Only consumers can build trust in the security of mobile payments and protect the privacy of consumers' mobile payments, so that they can scientifically layout mobile e-commerce and provide consumers with a more seamless shopping experience.

### **5. Summary of research points**

In order to analyze the shopping channel selection behavior in the new media environment, the article begins with the traditional media selection behavior of consumer shopping channels, and introduces three common consumer behavior patterns. Then the five changes that the new media environment brings to consumers are analyzed, which is a major reason to promote changes in the shopping channel.

Through the literature analysis and summary of the factors affecting the consumer channel selection behavior in the past ten years, the general situation and changes of the influencing factors are obtained, and more and more attentions from the mobile Internet are found. In line with the five changes brought about by the above new media environment, consumers' shopping channel selection behavior has

three characteristics: online and offline, more popular mobile shopping and multiple choices from social networking sites. It is the omni-channel shopping choice and the combined use of online and offline mobile terminals, completely breaking the monotony of channel selection in the traditional environment. In this environment, how retailers grasp consumer and market demand, innovate retail channels, and enhance the competitiveness of multi-channel integration. The article concludes with marketing implications.

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