

Applying channel preferences as a mediating and segmentation variable in the case of sports goods customers – an omnichannel behaviour perspective

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Abstract

Current customer segmentations in the omnichannel retail environment focus heavily on channel usage and are rather descriptive in nature. To step back one stage in the buying process, our attempt focuses on channel preferences (based on three dimensions: appropriateness, attractiveness, satisfactoriness) and is developing a predictive model instead. When considering information and buying channels in a two-phase analysis of the purchase behaviour of sport goods, the key decision factor of need for touch appears to be prevalent. By incorporating this as exogenous variable into a generalized SEM model of omnichannel buying behaviour we found evidence for the mediating role of channel preferences. We identified five clusters, which have different characteristics and can be regarded as webroomers, omnishoppers, hesitants as well as online or offline shoppers.

Keywords: *omnichannel customer preferences; PLS-SEM modelling; customer segmentation*

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