

Maximising omnichannel shopping intention: the impact of experiencing flow and satisfaction

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Abstract

This study explores how shoppers' decision-making styles (maximisers vs satisficers) affect omnichannel continuance intention. There is a paucity of knowledge on how shoppers' decision-making styles impact perception of customer shopping experience during an omnichannel shopping journey. We study the mediation effect of shopping experience (i.e., flow and satisfaction experience) on shoppers' intention to further use omnichannel platforms. The study applied a survey (n = 227) to examine shoppers' past experiences with omnichannel shopping stores. The findings show that maximisers are more likely to reuse omnichannel shopping in their future purchase compared to satisficers, and this relationship is mediated by experiencing flow and satisfaction. Taken together, findings show that implementation of omnichannel retailing must blend the experience of flow and satisfaction for shoppers to continue to use it in the future.

Keywords: Maximisers and Satisficers, Omnichannel, Shopping experience.

1. Introduction

The rapid development of digitalisation has tremendously shifted the retail sector, moving from a multichannel to an omnichannel strategy, which in turn, influences customers' shopping habits. The omnichannel strategy is a new retail approach that aims to provide a consistent and seamless customer shopping experience by integrating all different available channels (Verhoef et al., 2015). However, in the multichannel model, channels are managed and control independently with focusing more on sales rather than the customer experience (Verhoef et al., 2015). On the other hand, the omnichannel model allows customers to access information and product selection 24/7 simultaneously (Kim et al., 2022). Despite the fact that the omnichannel strategy overcomes several obstacles associated with customer shopping experience (Prassida & Hsu, 2022), the challenges to satisfy consumers' needs have become more complex and formidable than ever (Shi et al., 2020). Consumers who shop within omnichannels spend more money (Sopadjieva et al., 2017), and are more profitable to retailers, as their purchasing power is 3.5 times more than single and multichannel shoppers (Melero et al., 2016). According to Shi et al. (2020) claim that more than 40% of omnichannel customers are not served effectively by companies due to a lack of targeting and therefore satisfying specific customers' needs. Furthermore, Lee et al. (2019) more than 73% of participants are not satisfied with the omnichannel shopping experience because they believed that omnichannel retailers need to provide a more seamless shopping experience across channels.

Considering these results, omnichannel retailers need to invest more effort in understanding their customers to boost the quality of their shopping experience. Considering these results, research on omnichannel retailing needs to put more effort into understanding their customers to boost the quality of their shopping experience. Consequently, motivated by the above trends and gaps, this study will focus on omnichannel customer continuance intention based on applying bounded rationality theory. It distinguishes between individuals' decision-making styles (Schwartz et al., 2002). In addition, this study will examine the two key components of customer shopping experience: flow experience and satisfaction experience, as mediation mechanisms in the relationship between decision-making styles and omnichannel continuance intention.

2. Conceptual Framework

1.1 Omnichannel retailing

Omnichannel model is an evolved strategy of the multichannel model (Verhoef et al., 2015) and it is considered as a new phase in retailing. The fundamental and underlying mechanisms of the omnichannel strategy lie in the blurring the boundaries between the online and offline channels (Asmare & Zewdie, 2022). Studies on the omnichannel have mainly explored the characteristics of assessing the performance of omnichannel design (WANG & JIANG, 2022), and the role of distribution and logistics (Shi et al., 2020). However, research in omnichannel shopping journey is lacking on how customers process and evaluate information available to them and the effect of this evaluation on the intention to continuance to use omnichannel shopping.

Although, the omnichannel model offers a variety of information and available options, it can increase increasing cognitive overload (Rahman et al., 2022). In addition, the complexity of the omnichannel shopping environment rises the importance to investigate whether the omnichannel shopping journey varies across subgroups of consumers (Salviatti et al., 2022). Thus, in order to deeply understand how shoppers process and integrate information across their holistic omnichannel shopping journey this study will apply bounded rationality theory based on consumers decision-making styles (Schwartz et al., 2002), as discussed below.

1.2 Consumers decision-making styles

When making decisions, bounded rationality theory distinguishes between two types of decision-making styles: maximisers and satisficers. Individuals with the maximising styles aim to achieve the best possible outcome, while those with the satisficing outcome settle down for the good enough choice (Cheek & Schwartz, 2016; Schwartz et al., 2002). Previous studies found that maximisers perform extensive search for information, spend more time and effort to compare between and evaluate large number of alternatives in their consideration set (Schwartz et al., 2002). However, satisficers avoid the pay-off cost that associated with investing time and effort (Nenkov et al., 2008) and stop evaluate alternatives when they find the first option meets the minimum threshold criteria (Schwartz et al., 2002).

However, according to Rodriguez-Torrico et al. (2020) consumer behaviour within omnichannel shopping is not the same for all individuals. Therefore, understanding the effect of shoppers' decision-making styles on omnichannel continuance intention will enrich retailers to understand how to engage with and maintain better relationship with different omnichannel shoppers' characteristics.

1.3 Consumer decision-making styles and omnichannel re-usage intention

Shopping within the omnichannel environment allows consumers to combine different shopping channels simultaneously and interchangeably anytime and from anywhere. However, the omnichannel shopping environment is more dynamic and complex than the single channel shopping model (Asmare & Zewdie, 2022; Rahman et al., 2022). Therefore, it is plausible to expect that continuance shopping intention within the omnichannel environment will vary across different shoppers. Building on bounded rationality theory maximisers not only for internal information, but they also they seek more active information from friends and family to support before making decisions compared to satisficers (Iyengar et al., 2006; Schwartz et al., 2002). In addition to that during the post-purchase stage, maximisers compared to satisficers invested more effort in gathering more information through reading customer reviews (Kim, 2022). Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1. Maximisers as opposed to satisficers will have a higher level of omnichannel re-usage intention.

1.4 The mediating roles of omnichannel shopping experience

a. Experience Flow

The flow theory, also known the optimal experience theory, was developed to examine the nature of intrinsic motivation in activities, specifically flow. This theory posits that individuals can achieve an optimal experience when they perceive that the environment provides ample opportunities for action (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Flow is defined as a state of mind in which people become completely immersed in an activity to the point that they lose track of time and their surroundings (Quach et al., 2020). According to Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi (2014) when analysing flow, it is important to consider the interactions between the individual and the environment, which in this context would be the omnichannel environment. According to (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988), when individuals experiences flow, the time pass slower or faster compared to the ordinary experiences, and this experience is intrinsically rewarding. In addition to that, flow experience results in higher level of control, ability to focus on the gaol and enjoying the shopping process (Bilgihan et al., 2014). Prior research suggests that superior omnichannel service integration is related to the flow experience that positively influence loyalty (Quach et al., 2020). Consequently, drawing on bounded rationality theory, it is expected that the relationship between shoppers' decision-making styles and omnichannel continuance intention will be mediated by flow experience. More specifically,

the higher consumers experience flow while shopping the higher their intention to continue to use omnichannel shopping in the future. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2a. The relationship between consumers’ decision-making styles and omnichannel re-usage intention will be mediated by experience flow.

b. Experience satisfaction

According to Pereira et al. (2022) satisfaction with the omnichannel shopping increases when consumers are aware of their empowerment and utilise full variety available channels. Prior studies show that maximisers pursuit to spend extensive time with greater effort associated when making decisions (Polman, 2010) and score higher confidence in their own abilities to perform a given task compared to satisficers (Lai, 2010). It seems that the omnichannel shopping environment can fulfill in maximisers extensive need for information in finding the best possible outcome, and ultimately results in increasing the satisfaction experience more than satisficers, which in turn will positively affect omnichannel continuance intention. Thus, we hypothesis that:

H2b. The relationship between consumers’ decision-making styles and omnichannel re-usage intention will be mediated experience satisfaction.

Furthermore, this study also expected sequential mediation effect of perceiving optimal flow experience on satisfaction with the omnichannel shopping experience which in turn would result in increasing customers’ omnichannel continuance intention. Thus, we hypothesised that:

H3. The relationship between consumers’ decision-making styles and omnichannel re-usage intention will be sequentially mediated by experience flow and satisfaction.

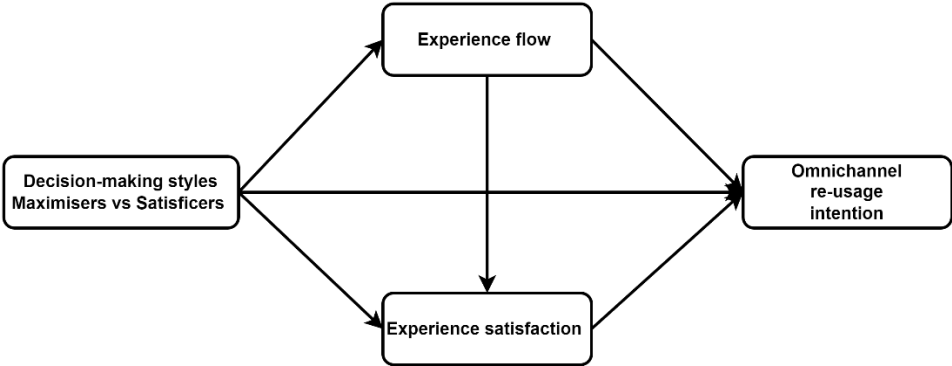


Fig.1. Conceptual Framework.

3. Methodology

3.1 Pretest study

A pretest was conducted to verify the effectiveness of the independent variable on the dependent variables. A total of 40 participants (24 female, 16 male, $M_{\text{age}} = 31.87$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 6.82$) who were not involved in the main study recruited from Qualtrics. Thus, no modification was made to the main study.

3.2 Main study

Participants

Two hundred and seventy-one participants completed Study 2 (33% females, $M_{\text{age}} = 33.98$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 7.09$) were recruited from Qualtrics. First, omnichannel term has been explained followed by two screening questions; whether they have a recent purchase using omnichannel store, and how many channels they used. After filtering the two questions, there were 227 valid participants (28.9% females, $M_{\text{age}} = 34.33$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 7.12$).

Participants read the questionnaire which was built to reflect on their past omnichannel experiences, followed by demographic information and the Maximisation Tendency Scale (MTS). MTS used in this study to allocate participants into maximisers vs satisficers based on their average score (Diab et al., 2008). There is substantial theoretical and empirical support in the previous literature for the actual split between maximisers and satisficers on the MTS. Particularly, the establishment of the decision-making style as a trait, suggested by Schwartz et al. (2002), clearly classifying individuals into maximisers and satisficers operationalised by using a median split. Existence research has consistently followed Schwartz's approach (Iyengar et al., 2006; Karimi et al., 2018). Therefore, in this study, there were 124 participants scored above the median (maximisers), and 103 scored below the median (satisficers).

Measures

All measures used in this study were adopted from existing literature. Experience flow was measured using three items adapted from Quach et al. (2020), and the internal reliability was examined using Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.778$). Experience satisfaction was measured using three items adapted from Murfield et al. (2017) with $\alpha = 0.797$. Three items that adapted from Gao et al. (2021) used to measure omnichannel re-usage intention with $\alpha = 0.782$.

4. Results

ANOVA test was used to test H1. As expected, compared to satisficers, maximisers were more willing to re-use omnichannel shopping ($M_{\text{Maximisers}} = 5.81$, $SD = 0.84$, vs. $M_{\text{Satisficers}} =$

4.81, SD = 1.16, $F(1, 225) = 56.313$, $p < .001$), supporting H1. Further, PROCESS macro (Model 4) was used to test the parallel mediation effects of experiencing flow and satisfaction on the relationship between consumers' decision-making styles omnichannel re-usage intention (H2a-b). Results confirm that experience flow and satisfaction fully mediated the proposed relationship with total indirect effect ($\beta = 0.890$, 95% CI = 0.669 to 1.141). thus, H2a-b were supported as shown in Figure 2.

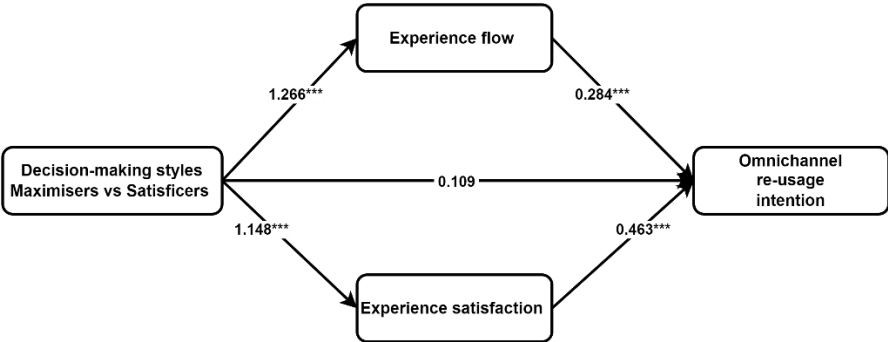


Fig. 2. The results of the parallel mediation model. *** $p < 0.001$.

PROCESS macro (Model 6) was used to examine the sequential mediation effect (H3). Figure 3 and Table 1 summarise findings of all pathways, which all are significant. The serial pathway “shoppers’ decision-making styles → experience flow → experience satisfaction → omnichannel re-usage intention” was significant ($\beta = 0.283$, 95% CI = 0.153 to 0.455), implying that shoppers’ decision-making styles was fully and serially mediated by experiencing flow and satisfaction. Thus, H3 is supported.

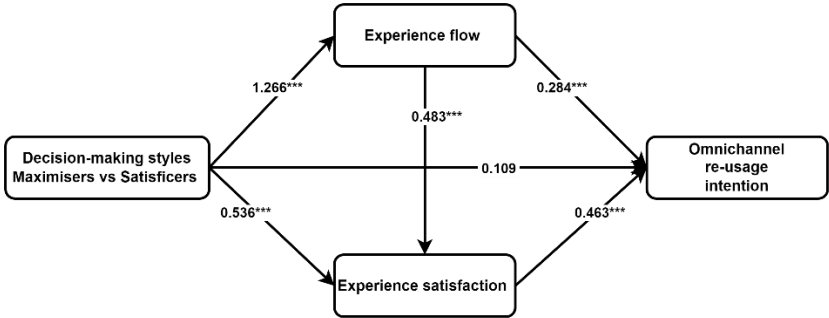


Fig. 3. The results of the sequential mediation model. *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 1. Summary of the direct and indirect pathways of the serial mediation model.

| | Coefficient | SE | 95% CI | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------|---------|-------|
| | | | Lower | Upper |
| Direct effect | | | | |
| MSDS → EF | 1.266*** | 0.129 | 1.011 | 1.522 |
| MSDS → SAT | 0.536*** | 0.132 | 0.275 | 0.796 |
| EF → SAT | 0.483*** | 0.057 | 0.370 | 0.595 |
| MSDS → RUI (c') | 0.109 | 0.129 | - 0.145 | 0.364 |
| EF → RUI | 0.284*** | 0.062 | 0.162 | 0.406 |
| SAT → RUI | 0.463*** | 0.063 | 0.339 | 0.587 |
| Indirect effect | | | | |
| Ind1: MSDS → EF → RUI | 0.359 | 0.106 | 0.160 | 0.577 |
| Ind2: MSDS → SAT → RUI | 0.248 | 0.074 | 0.119 | 0.408 |
| Ind3: MSDS → EF → SAT → RUI | 0.283 | 0.077 | 0.153 | 0.455 |
| Total indirect effects | 0.890 | 0.117 | 0.668 | 1.125 |
| Total effects | 1.001*** | 0.133 | 0.737 | 1.263 |

Note: MSDS = maximisers vs satisficers decision-making styles, EF = experience flow, SAT = experience satisfaction, RUI = omnichannel re-usage intention, *** p < 0.001.

5. Discussion

This study contributes to current literature on omnichannel shopping as well as literature in psychology and decision-making styles. literature shows that omnichannel shoppers purchase more items, spend more, and pay higher prices compared to single-channel shoppers (Mishra et al., 2021). However, distinguishing between omnichannel shoppers' characteristics is rarely examined (Silva et al., 2020; Valentini et al., 2020). Considering the role of decision-making styles, this study provides several novel contributions. First, findings show that shoppers with maximising tendency are more willing to re-use omnichannel shopping than satisficers. In addition, this study further explores the factors that drive shoppers' intention to re-use omnichannels. Thus, experience flow and satisfaction are crucial influential factors in shaping shoppers to re-use omnichannel shopping, which companies need to consider when design their omnichannel strategies. Companies need to tailor their marketing strategies on targeting different shoppers' characteristics to motivate them to continue shopping within omnichannel. They should provide more flexible and easier shopping tools that can enhance the flow across different shopping activities and increase omnichannel satisfaction experience. For instance, instead of forcing shoppers, especially satisficers, to go through every aspect to complete their shopping journey, companies can provide additional links using, for example, scan-and-go, virtual reality, to ease the shopping process for satisficers, and provide more information for maximisers. Retailers can use this information to develop targeted strategies that enhance the omnichannel shopping experience and encourage continued use of omnichannel channels.

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