Shopping Channel Choice Behavior in New Media Environment - Consumers under Channel Changes and Omnichannel

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ABSTRACT: *According to the evolution of four retail channels, namely single channel, multi-channel, cross-channel and omni-channel, this paper mainly summarizes the definition, characteristics and consumer behavior analysis of the channel through literature reading.. It also introducees the emergence and development of omni-channel in the new media environment. The behavior characteristics of consumers under omni-channel are analyzed, and the prospect of the future situation of omni-channel and the direction of enterprises' efforts are given.*

KEYWORDS: *New mediaenvironment, consumer behavior, channel envolution, omni-channel retailing*

I. INTRODUCTION

With the rapid development of the Internet, smart devices and new media, the shopping mode dominated by physical stores is gradually transformed into the online shopping mode dominated by traditional Internet and mobile Internet. Consumers can enjoy shopping experience anytime and anywhere. At the same time, the choice of shopping channels for consumers has gradually become complicated. Instead of focusing on one-stop shopping of a single channel, consumers will constantly change channel paths and channel combinations according to the characteristics of different channels, so as to achieve utility maximization. Consumers are the subject of fickle, new media environment is a volatile environment. Therefore, the choice of shopping channels for consumers under the new media environment is a very complex problem. This paper mainly divides the channel changes under the new media environment and expounds the channel selection behavior of consumers in each stage. Finally, it looks into the future of consumer choice in this omni-channel era.

II. EVOLUTION OF CHANNEL

In such an information explosion of the new media era, a variety of new terms are constantly produced to explain the development of The Times and changes in business operations -- B2B, B2C, C2C, O2O, new retail, omni-channel, block chain, big data...... In the last decade, consumers have gone from a single brick-and-mortar store to a 24-hour, omni-channel and personalized shopping with the Internet and mobile phones. Consumers have different choices at different stages of development. Here, we discuss the segmentation according to the evolution process of channels.

According to the classification method of channel evolution by professor li fei (2013), this paper can be divided into four stages according to the spatial dimension, namely single channel, multi-channel, cross-channel and omni-channel [1]. JiYongzhi and Zhang Mengxia (2014) [2] the single channel and multi-channel belongs to the category of traditional entity shop shopping, in the consumer to complete the whole process of shopping involves only a retailers, retailers by providing a single or more than two full channel to complete the sale of goods or services, so consumers of the whole channel selection is done within the channel; The cross-channel and omni-channel stage is formed after the vigorous development of e-commerce. In the cross-channel stage, the most representative word is O2O, in which the boundary between physical stores and virtual stores is gradually blurred [1]. Retailers complete all functions of sales through a combination of multiple retail channels. For the current era of the whole channel, the scope of "all channel" meaning: include not only transfers the ownership of the goods of all channels, and should also include all the information channel, all the production channels, all of the money (payment), all of the logistics channels, and even all customers mobile channels, etc. [3]. The following is mainly discussed in accordance with the stages of the change of retail channels.

III.   CONSUMER' CHOICE ON CHANNEL SELECT

3.1 Single channel and multiple channel phases

Single-channel marketing is the act of transferring products and services from one seller to customers or consumers through only one channel (e.g. mail, TV, radio, etc.). Technically, the single-channel era is the "brick-and-mortar store" era, serving a small number of customers. The advantage of single channel strategy is low cost, convenient and quick deployment, easy detection, let the brand with competitive advantage monopolize the market, profit maximization. However, the single-channel strategy severely limits the size and diversity of potential customers. A single channel is not a viable strategy, unless it is for a small number of very specific brands (whose market is relatively niche).

Over the past few decades, brick-and-mortar stores have been the main channel for consumers to search for products and compare and choose from them. Traditional retailers attract consumers through a series of combinatorial incentives so as to make them be attracted and make corresponding buying behaviors. Generally, a single store's retail elements or combination of retail elements will stimulate and attract consumers, including price, goods, service level, store location and store image (Bucklin, 1967; Stanley and Murphy, 1976) [4-5]. In addition, commercial aggregation will also attract consumers, except for the attraction of retail elements (Bodkin and Lord, 1997; Dennis, 2005) [6-7], scholars also studied the choice of consumers' shopping channels from the two aspects of core stores and merchant (format) combination (Roy, 1994; Kim, 2002; Oppewal and Holyoake, 2004) [8-10].

3.2 Multi-channel stage:

Multi-channel phase (2000-2009), retail-centric. It emphasizes that multiple channels are adopted as the way of sales and order completion at the same time, and it does not emphasize the connection between various channels and the possibility of customers' switching between channels. In other words, there is no unified operation standard and specification. Li fei (2013) pointed out that in the multi-channel stage, retailers adopted online and offline dual channels, which was the definition of multi-channel from the perspective of channel attributes [1]. From the perspective of channel functions, qi yongzhi and zhangmengxia (2015) defined the multi-channel stage as the completion of all the functions of sales through two or more independent and complete retail channels, that is, each channel completes all the functions of the channel instead of some functions [11]. At the same time, each channel strategy usually faces a different type of customer. From the perspective of scope and scale, multi-channel is the qualitative improvement of single channel, which helps the brand to open up the market, make it reach a wider and more diversified audience in marketing activities, and capture the potential consumer demand in different channels with different marketing campaign strategies. However, these various channels cannot be circulated and connected, which will inevitably lead to low operation effect and unclear effect analysis.

At this stage, the channel selection behavior of consumers is mainly the overall change of information search and purchase channel, that is, the whole purchase behavior is transferred from offline to online. The research on the influencing factors of consumer channel selection in the multi-channel stage is mainly based on the perceptive value theory, TAM theory, Nicosia theory, TRA theory and TPB theory. The current research on consumer's choice of multi-channel, is based on the original TAM model of perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, subjective norm, and other important variables, involves the theory of perceived value perceived entertainment, perceived costs, and so on, the trust mechanism of cognitive trust, institution trust, trust and consumer characteristics such as personality, these factors as independent variables. The research focuses on channel migration intention or channel migration behavior.

3.3 Cross-channel stage

In the cross-channel stage with retailers as the center (2010-2011), physical stores and virtual stores are interwoven, and the boundary between them is gradually blurred [1]. Qi yongzhi and zhangmengxia (2014) believe that the cross-channel stage means that retailers complete all the functions of sales through the combination of multiple retail channels, that is, each channel only completes part of the channel instead of all the functions [12]. It can be seen that the channel function of cross-channel stage is segmented, and consumers no longer focus on completing the whole purchase behavior in one channel. Consumers will choose information search channels and purchase channels according to different influencing factors. The most obvious example is that consumers believe that the price of goods online is low, but their perception is poor. So they will experience the products in offline stores (information collection channels) and purchase them online (purchase channels).

At present, scholars mainly study two kinds of channel selection behaviors in the cross-channel stage from channel factors, consumer characteristics, product characteristics and situational factors. The specific factors influencing the two behaviors are different. For information search channel selection behavior, channel factors mainly include search channel practicability, information quality, information service quality, accessibility, time cost and functional risk. Consumer characteristics include search experience, innovation, social network

relationship, self-efficacy, anxiety and other factors. Product features include search/experience products, standardized -- non-standardized products; Situational factors include location, emotion, time urgency, etc. For purchase channel selection behavior, channel factors include purchase channel practicability, sales service quality, after-sales service quality time cost, perceived ease of use, etc. Consumer characteristics include shopping experience, innovation, social network relationship, perceived risk, self-efficacy, etc. Product factors include product type, product price, product quality, product diversity, etc. Situational factors are basically the same as those related to information channel selection behavior.

3.4 Omni-channel stage

Darrell Rigby (2011), who first clearly proposed The concept of "omni-channel retailing", pointed out in his article "The Future of Shopping" that: "with The evolution of The situation, digital retailing is rapidly changing, and it is necessary to give it a new name 'omni-channel retailing'. This means that retailers will be able to interact with customers through multiple channels, including websites, physical stores, service terminals, direct mail and catalogues, call centers, social media, mobile devices, door-to-door services, etc[13]. The earliest domestic academia research is the Tsinghua university professor Li Fei [13,14] wrote thee times, system respectively expounds the meaning of all retail channels, causes and countermeasures, organize the channel evolution path diagram, but also to all channels in the channel concept spread, channel has the word is not only the concept of distribution channel, also is not only the concept of information channel, but is regarded as "marketing channel", also including product design, such as customer participation in design and production (such as 3 d printing), so is the marketing combination of four components. He believes that enterprises adopt the behavior of combining and integrating (cross-channel) sales in as many types of retail channels as possible to meet customers' comprehensive experience needs of shopping, entertainment and social interaction. Li fei's definition of omni-channel is not only groundbreaking for subsequent academic research, but also provides a theoretical basis for domestic industry to better understand and practice omni-channel [14].

Omni-channel stage (2012-future) is in the retail era of mouse + brick + mobile Internet [3]. Different from the previous three stages that focus on retailers and focus more on customer experience, the omni-channel stage is that retailers adopt a high degree of collaboration among as many channels as possible to meet consumers' comprehensive experience needs of shopping, entertainment and social interaction anytime and anywhere. Consumers at this stage are social, local, mobile, and personalized.

At this stage, the research on the influencing factors of consumer shopping channel choice behavior mainly focuses on the influencing factors of mobile channel use. However, the difference between offline channel choice behavior and traditional online channel choice behavior is not obvious. In the consumer-centered omni-channel stage, scholars focus on the intention and behavior of mobile shopping channels, and their theoretical basis is basically the same as before, mainly including trust extension theory, UTAUT model, perceived value theory and cost-benefit theory. The main influencing factors include the trust, convenience, entertainment and perceived sociability of web shopping services. At this stage, consumers pay more attention to shopping experience.

IV.   CONSUMER CHANNEL SELECTION BEHAVIOR
4.1 Single-channel and multi-channel stages

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V. IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN OMNI-CHANNEL STAGE

From single channel, multi-channel and cross-channel to omni-channel, channel evolution has experienced such a path, and omni-channel is an advanced stage of channel development and evolution. In the omni-channel, each channel is complete and can complete the whole process of consumer shopping independently. At the same time, each channel can be integrated with each other at will to jointly constitute the complete retail purchase process of consumers. Generally speaking, omni-channel retail means that an enterprise sells goods or services in an integrated way such as physical store channel, e-commerce channel and mobile application channel in order to meet the needs of consumers at any time, any place and in any way, and provides customers with undifferentiated shopping experience in all sales channels. These sales methods not only include the traditional brick-and-mortar stores and brick-and-mortar stores, but also include the official B2C mall and third-party e-commerce platforms.

5.1 Inevitability of omni-channel implementation:

Is omnichanity as good as the legend suggests? According to the data, the company with omni-channel marketing strategy has 89% customer retention rate, while the company without omni-channel marketing strategy has 33% customer retention rate. Omni-channel strategy company's customer life cycle value will be increased by 30%; Its customers spend 13% more in the store; It also gives consumers the possibility to check out on any device; Allowing consumers to order products from any device; And allowing consumers to buy products anytime, anywhere.

The opportunity cost lost by a company without an omni-channel plan would be 10% of potential revenue, a figure roughly equal to the annual growth targets proposed by many companies. What this means is that there is a lot of lost revenue from not having a fully built customer experience. Why is that? The sudden rise of omni-channel customers is the main reason. It is the omni-channel customer group that has the most vitality, purchasing power and influence in the market. They not only purchase omni-channel, participate in the design, production, receiving and consumption of omni-channel, but also conduct omni-channel evaluation, feedback and communication. Omni-channel customers have penetrated into every link of business activities. If an enterprise only carries OUT omni-channel sales reform, it is definitely "OUT". As professor li fei said, omni-channel marketing is not a "spare tire" chosen by a company's marketing strategy, but the inevitable direction of marketing reform. Therefore, enterprises must implement omni-channel [3].

5.2 Omni-channel behavior of consumers:

Omni-channel era [1]. (see figure 1) they may purchase online, experience and purchase in physical stores, or experience and purchase under the influence of dark social contact. In this more digital age, content is even more important to them. The shopping approach has also shifted from being channel-centric, as the previous company had hoped, to being consumer-centric. Consumers want their interactions with each brand to be purchase related and consistent (75% of consumers want them to have a consistent experience whenever and wherever they are, for example, on the web, on social media, on mobile, in person).

Figure 1. Omni-channel behavior pattern of omni-channel customer group

Functional / Channels			1.To collect information	2.Design and production	3.Place the order	4.payment	5.Pickup policy	6.consumption	7.Feedback comments
Offline channels	A physical store		The scene view	Design	The site to buy	The site to buy	Inside the store	Different way offline	The store feedback
	To the letter		Read the letter	None	Mail	Mail	All types of cash on delivery		Letter feedback
	catalogue		Read the directory	None	Mail	Mail	Express to your home or Courier station		Telephone feedback
	Fixed telephone		Calls	Design	Calls	Calls			Letter feedback
	TV		Watch TV	None	Other way	Other way			None
	Other		Advertising information	None	None	Other way			None
Online channels	Desktop iPad Mobile terminals	Search	Searching for information	Design and production	None	None	None	Different way online	Review comments
		Web site	To view comments		Online&anytime	Online& anytime			Site feedback
		Online							Online feedback
		E-Mail	Social discussion						EMail feedback
		Weibo							Weibo comments
		WeChat	Compare etc.						WeChat comments
		SMS							SMS communication
		Other							Other feedback

Images source: omni-channel marketing: a new strategy

We need to emphasize again that the ultimate goal of omni-channel is to enable consumers to experience the same consumer experience whenever and wherever they are. And we're in a retail era that's a long way from the omni-channel that we define. The research on consumer channel selection behavior can help enterprises to eliminate the inconsistencies of consumer experience in the whole channel process.

For the future of omni-channel retail, we can perceive it through the shopping scenario described by the UK customer experience research company Webcredible in its omni-channel report in 2012:

Pursuit vogue of Emily to see someone on the street after wearing a pair of beautiful shoes, the design of the shoes with Google glasses, immediately color scan down, after Google glasses applied to find the shoes of information, as well as relevant brand, using the tablet PC, or mobile phone terminal found this brand recently shop inventory information, shipping information, such as simulated trying on her cell phone APP again concurrent snapshot graph to friends, and get their high praise. Emily was tempted to buy, but wanted to try it on herself. So she walked into the nearest store via a cellphone terminal. Store by face recognition, brush card quickly identify her previous purchase information, such as the information automatically sent to the shop assistant Tracy handheld tablet, remind her to meet greetings, when miss Emily to browse commodity, Tracy according to tablet phone her basket not settlement information on the Internet, to introduce her to her interest in commodity information, prompt the goods according to her purchase history can give some discount now, Emily by actually touching, try on this pair of shoes, intend to buy. Instead of waiting in line to pay, I decided to pay for my unfinished online shopping cart with a free WIFI phone in the store. Emily completed her online order at the store, and her purchase was automatically sent to the store's database. When Emily left, Emily thought holding shoes is too cumbersome, so through the mobile phone to apply for home delivery. At this point, Emily finished a shopping.

5.3 What should the enterprise do?

Through the description of the above scenario, we can find that all the designs of omnichanity channel are actually aimed at eliminating the difference of consumers' experience. Committed to the pursuit of database online channel materialization, offline channel network, bring customers seamless experience. How do enterprises meet the arrival of the omni-channel era?

1. Established "Outlets" type national shopping platform. It is necessary to break the fragmented and decentralized "state of vassal separation", establish a joint, national, or even global shopping platform, realize the integration of national and global shopping, and expand the categories of goods and infinite extension of shelves.

2. Omni-channel innovation within the organization. It mainly includes: establishing a flat organizational structure suitable for omni-channel; Corporate culture reconstruction, break down the barriers between enterprise departments and channels, and establish cross-departmental omni-channel; Traditional brick-and-mortar stores are virtualized, and online stores and mobile platforms are materialized. Internal channel flow of retail enterprises; And build omni-channel platform.

3. Intelligent customer relationship system and accurate marketing. Mainly including the establishment of intelligent customer service center; Implement customer experience and loyalty programs; Accurate marketing -- promotion and promotion [15].

VI. CONCLUSION

There are still many problems to be solved in China's move to omni-channel. But it comes down to the consumer experience. Just as the current scholars start from 4Cs to study the omni-channel strategy of enterprises. The future omni-channel construction also involves the application of big data, artificial intelligence, block chain and other new technologies, as well as multi-industry integration and the formation of business ecology. In addition, the collection and use of consumer information in the process of omni-channel formation will also form certain social problems, which need to be solved by corresponding rules. In general, the arrival of omnichannel is unstoppable. Omnichannel sales can meet the fragmented and diversified needs of customers and catch the hearts of consumers. Nowadays, there are a complete range of products, so to speak, only unexpected products can not be bought. Therefore, products integrated with creativity are unexpected products, which can dazzle customers and finally hold their hearts firmly.

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Abstract: This paper focuses on the definition of channels, the characteristics of channels, and the analysis of consumer behavior under the channels in accordance with the changing stages of the four retail channels of single-channel, multi-channel, cross-channel, and omnichannel. It also highlighted the e There are still many problems to be solved in China's move to omni-channel. But it comes down to the consumer experience. Just as the current scholars start from 4Cs to study the omni-channel strategy of enterprises. The future omni-channel construction also involves the application of big data, artificial intelligence, block chain and other new technologies, as well as multi-industry integration and the formation of business ecology. In addition, the collection and use of consumer information in the process of omni-channel formation will also form certain social problems, which need to be solved by corresponding rules. In general, the arrival of omnichannel is unstoppable. Omnichannel sales can meet the fragmented and diversified needs of customers and catch the hearts of consumers. Nowadays, there are a complete range of products, so to speak, only unexpected products can not be bought. Therefore, products integrated with creativity are unexpected products, which can dazzle customers and finally hold their hearts firmly.mergence and development of the omni-channel under the new media environment. Analyzes the behavioral characteristics of consumers under the omnichannel, and gives omni-channel future scenarios and the direction of the company's efforts.

Keywords: New mediaenvironment, consumer behavior, channel envolution, omni-channel retailing