Multichannel consumer segmentation for hedonic and utilitarian products



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1 Introduction

With the advent of the internet, a lot has changed in consumer shopping behaviour. Retailers from all over the world start web shops, which makes the market a lot more transparent (Grewal, Iyer, & Levy, 2004). Consumers can now reach much more retailers than before. This leads to an extended choice and more information. Consumers have the possibility to browse more retailers, but they are now also able to reach one retailer via different channels. The internet can be used to search and browse, gather information about products or shops, buy and to find reviews about products (Ellis-Chadwick, Mayer, Johnston, & Chaffey, 2009). So the internet is a new alternative in all the phases of the decision making process. According to Thuiswinkel.org the internet is the most used channel for consumers to browse and search in the Netherlands (2010). In 41% of the purchases made, measured over thirty product categories, Dutch consumers searched for information on the internet before their actual purchase. The internet is used particularly to gather price and product information, while people go to the actual shop in order to touch, smell, taste, try and experience products (Overby & Lee, 2006; Thuiswinkel.org, 2010).

With the arrival of the smartphone it is now possible to browse, search and buy online anytime and anywhere. The consumer has multiple possibilities to run through the consumer decision making process. For example he can browse in magazines, look for information online and buy the product in the physical store. But it is also possible to go through this process the other way round; get information in the store from the personnel and buy the product later online. This shopping experience in which the advantages of a physical store are melted with the information-rich experience of online shopping, is called multichannel shopping (Kumar & Venkatesan, 2005). The multichannel consumer uses two or more channels in order to make a purchase.

For marketers it can be very important to identify consumer segments in channel choice and usage, because they can base their marketing strategies on these segments (Neslin et al., 2006). In the late nineties there are two studies on segmentation in the e-domain (Berry, 1999; Miller, 1996). Berry (1999) stated that customer segmentation is crucial for the success of electronic commerce. Miller (1996) has concentrated on using demographics to depict the profile of Internet users. As people started to use different channels throughout the decision making process, researchers segmented consumers based on channel usage (Keen, Wetzels, de Ruyter, & Feinberg, 2004; Konuş, Verhoef, & Neslin, 2008). A US study on multichannel shoppers identified four consumer segments based on shopping motivations (Keen et al., 2004). Konuş et al. (2008) have identified three segments solely based on channel preference. In this domain there is still a lack of research on how consumers use different channels in different product categories. As a couple of studies mention, that there has not been much research on how consumers could be segmented, based on channel usage, in different product categories (Balasubramanian, Raghunathan, & Mahajan, 2005; Bhatnagar & Ghose, 2004; Dholakia et al., 2010). Konuş et al. (2008) segmented consumers based on channel usage, for seven product categories. For mortgage, holidays and clothing more than half of the respondents fit in the uninvolved shoppers segment. These consumers do not have a strong preference for online channels or brick-and-mortar channels in any phase of the consumer decision making process. For electronics more than half of the respondents fit in the multichannel shopper segment. For books, insurance, and computers all segments were equally represented. This study had only one segment about multichannel shopping, because the other two do prefer to only use the brick-and-mortar channel or do not have a preference for a channel. This is not a segmentation of multichannel consumers, but just segmentation of consumers in which one segment is multichannel. In Table 1 there is an overview of the studies mentioned above. This table shows the gap that this study will fill. None of the studies has made segments on how consumers use different channels in different phases.

Table 1 Overview previous studies on multichannel shopping

	Did the study	Did the study								
Study	Make segments	Measure differences between product categories	Measure differences between decision making phases	Compose multichannel segments	Note:					
Levin 2003 Keen et al. 2004	٧	V	٧		Product categories were randomly chosen					
Balasubramanian 2005	·	V	٧		Study based on interviews, not empirically tested					
Konuş 2008	V	٧	٧		Based on 2 phases (search and purchase). Not really multichannel					

 $\ensuremath{\text{V}}$ means that this study included the above.

So the aim of this research is to gain a better understanding of how multichannel consumers use shopping channels in phases of the consumer decision making process in different product categories. This leads to the following research question: *How do multichannel consumers use shopping channels in different product categories in every phase of the consumer decision making process*? To get an answer to this question, this research will answer the following sub questions:

Which channels do consumers choose in every phase of the decision making process? How can consumers be segmented, based on channel usage? Are there distinct consumer segments, based on channel usage in different product categories?

Multichannel is a recent development and is still developing in new directions (Dholakia et al., 2010). More and more stores are combining their channels in order to create one seamless approach to the consumer experience through all available shopping channels. For example web shops who open pop-up stores, and physical stores who place big touch screens in their shops so that consumers can see the whole assortment at a glance (Aktiesport). Because of these developments consumer behaviour is changing. Consumers now have to choose between channels and between stores. For marketers and retailers it can be useful to know the characteristics of different segments based on channel usage, to determine how to design their channels. Because when a certain channel does not meet the expectations and preferences of the consumer, he could switch to another retailer very easily. Consumers have already been segmented on their channel usage but there might be

differences between product categories. If marketers understand which channel is chosen in a particular phase of the consumer decision making process for a particular product category, they can better adjust this channel to the needs of these consumers (Frambach, Roest, & Krishnan, 2007).

Chapter 2 will give a better explanation of the consumer decision making process, followed by how people choose channels in every step of this process and what the advantages and disadvantages are of the channels. Then a distinction will be made between hedonic and utilitarian products and how these influence channel choice. Then there is an overview of the previous research on consumer segmentation based on channel choice and channel usage and the differences between different product categories. This overview will lead to a gap which will be filled by the research in this study. Chapter 3 includes the methodology which is used to compose segments with a survey. The empirical test will identify consumer segments for the use of shopping channels in different product categories in three phases of the consumer decision making process. In the final chapter the results will be presented and some discussion and opportunities for future research.

2 Literature

2.1 How consumers choose a channel along the decision making process

Consumers do have different preferences when it comes to usage of channels. Some prefer to use only one channel, and others prefer to switch between channels at different phases of the consumer decision making process. In this chapter there will be a short explanation of the consumer decision making process and then it will focus on channel choice at different phases of this consumer decision making process.

First have a look at the consumer decision process which was first introduced by Engel and Blackwell. The model consists of five steps as you can see in figure 1 below.

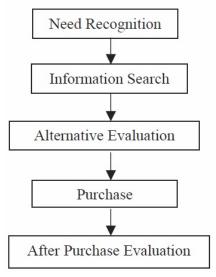


Figure 1. Consumer decision making process (Engel, Blackwell, & Kollat, 1978).

In four of these five phases of the consumer decision making process it is possible to use one or multiple channels; the information search, alternative evaluation, the purchase phase, and in some cases the after purchase evaluation phase. In the last phase it depends on the evaluation (Kumar & Venkatesan, 2005). If the consumer is satisfied with the purchase he could choose to share this positive evaluation, but if the consumer is not satisfied with the purchase he can complain or return the product via different channels. It is also possible that the consumer does nothing with the evaluation and therefore does not use a channel in the final phase. For example if one is satisfied with the purchase, he will not use a channel anymore. But if someone is not satisfied with his purchase he has the possibility to return it, which can be done through different channels.

2.1.1 Channel choice

A channel is a customer contact point, through which a customer interacts with a firm. There are different types of channels, in this study there is a distinction made between online channels and offline channels. Online channels are virtual newsletters, websites or apps that can be reached via computer, tablet or smartphone. Offline channels are the retail store, the catalog, sales force, third party agency and the call center (Neslin & Shankar, 2009). In this study, an offline channel will refer only to the brick-and-mortar store. Online channels and offline channels differ in their degree of accessibility. Online channels are accessible through the internet for everyone in the world with an internet connection, while the brick-and-mortar channel is stationary and is geographical limited.

The attributes that define offline retail channels are see-touch-handle, personal service, enjoy shopping, and fast delivery, while the attributes that define online channels are best price, large selection, and shop quickly (Levin, Levin, & Heath, 2003).

To find out how consumers move through the consumer decision making process it is necessary to see how consumers choose a channel. Consumers seek specific consumption goals, which may not only be satisfied by a product but also by the channel which is used to obtain a product (Verhoef & Donkers, 2005). So consumers will evaluate channels in every step of the decision making process. This evaluation is influenced by a couple of elements. First of all, consumers have their own preferences; one might like the internet better for information search while someone else might prefer to go to the physical store for information search. Second, consumers take into account their experiences with certain channels. These experiences are also influencing preferences and perceptions (Neslin et al., 2006; Schoenbachler & Gordon, 2002). Especially the evaluation of online channels is influenced by experience, because consumers are more confident using online channels and perceive less risk than consumers do who have not used an online channel before (Frambach et al., 2007).

Consumers who have experience with searching and comparing products in an online channel have already experienced the benefits of information search attributes (Montoya-Weiss, Voss, & Grewal, 2003), which will cost them less effort to collect information (Cook & Coupey, 1998). These preferences and experiences might differ for different product categories.

2.1.2 Advantages and disadvantages of online and offline

In every phase of the consumer decision making process online and offline channels do have different advantages and disadvantages (Forsythe, Liu, Shannon, & Gardner, 2006). In the information search phase consumers do not yet know what products are available that might satisfy their need. Because of this they search for information which can be done online and offline in brick-and-mortar stores. The benefit of an online channel in this phase is that there is much more information available on the internet than in offline channels (Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2001). In brick-and-mortar stores the consumer has to walk from shop to shop while the internet is less time consuming in this respect.

In the alternative evaluation phase the consumer has found some alternatives which he will evaluate and compare. The benefit of comparing and evaluating online is that there are special websites to compare products (kieskeurig.nl, vergelijk.nl, beslist.nl). This is much easier than in an offline channel, because online the consumer can place the products and the product information next to each other (Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2001). In brick-and-mortar stores this is difficult because the alternatives do not always come from the same store. Another benefit of online evaluating products is the possibility to read product reviews from other costumers. In a brick-and-mortar store the consumer is only able to consult the salesmen. On the other hand brick-and-mortar has the possibility to evaluate and compare the sensory aspects like scent, taste and feeling.

In the purchase phase an online channel has the advantage that the prices are lower, but the brickand-mortar channel has the advantage that the consumer does immediately own the purchase and does not have to wait for the delivery.

2.2 Hedonic versus utilitarian products

The choice between an online channel and an offline channel is also dependent on whether the product is functional or hedonic. Hedonic products are those consumed primarily for affective or sensory gratification purposes, and utilitarian products deliver more cognitively oriented benefits (Woods, 1960). Hedonic products are purchased for fun, pleasure and excitement that they provide. Examples of hedonic products are clothing and fragrances. Utilitarian products are primarily instrumental and consumers buy them for their functional benefits (Khan, Dhar, & Wertenbroch, 2005), for example cartridges or security systems. A product is not solely hedonic or utilitarian; products can be both at the same time. For example detergent is just a functional product to clean with, but some people might value the smell or texture of the product which makes it a little bit hedonic as well.

When the product is hedonic, consumers are likely to prefer the brick-and-mortar stores. For functional products, consumers prefer to use online channels (Nicholson, Clarke, & Blakemore, 2002). For hedonic products it is important for consumers to be exposed to the sensory and/or experiential elements of a product (Schmitt, 1999). When a consumer is familiar with the product category of a hedonic product, he might not need to sensorial experience the product anymore because he knows what to expect. When someone has experience with buying a product from a certain product category, "he might have learned the consumption language which let him convert verbal representations of attributes into experiential benefits" (Balasubramanian et al., 2005, p. 16).

2.2.1 Channel preference for hedonic products in every phase

In this study there is a distinction made between hedonic and utilitarian products, because for hedonic product categories consumers want to touch and inspect the product before they purchase it (Lynch, Kent, & Srinivasan, 2001). For utilitarian or functional products, consumers don't feel the need to touch it. When consumers have the need to inspect and experience a product, it is more likely that they choose an offline retail channel. And if a product is utilitarian, consumers would rationally try to minimize their costs and effort and therefore choose an online channel. But as seen in the study of Levin et al (2003), the preference for an online channel or an offline retail channel can be different in every phase of the consumer decision making process. For high-touch products like clothing, health and grooming, and sporting goods consumers preferred an offline retail channel over an online channel in the search phase of the consumer decision making process (Levin et al., 2003). In the alternative evaluation phase, consumers balance the advantages and disadvantages on a couple of factors. For hedonic products it is necessary to inspect and experience the products in order to make a choice, this is easier to do in an offline retail channel. In the purchase phase the effort and costs are rationally seen, more important than the hedonic aspects of the product. So rationally seen it would be logical that multichannel consumers purchase online, because takes less time and effort compared to going to and offline store. The study of Levin et al. shows that for clothing, health and grooming, and sporting goods, consumers strongly prefer offline shopping in the purchase phase (respectively 95%, 97,5% and 95%)(Levin, 2003). This study is ten years old, so a lot may have changed. Furthermore the respondents may not have been multichannel consumers.

2.2.2 Channel preference for utilitarian products in every phase

For utilitarian or functional products, the information about the product is more important than the need to experience the product. Online channels are able to provide much more information about a

product than offline channels, because the salesman is not always the expert anymore. The internet contains a lot of reviews of other customers, and consumers have the possibility to compare products based on the features of different products. So both in the search phase and the alternative evaluation phase, it would take less effort to use an online channel for utilitarian products. The purchase phase can be both online and offline, but as people might already be on the internet because of the previous phases, they might use an online channel for this phase as well. This choice will be more dependent on previous experiences with a channel and someone's own preference (Neslin et al., 2006; Schoenbachler & Gordon, 2002).

2.3 How consumers can be segmented according to channel usage

As stated in the introduction, there are a couple of studies that claim to have segmented and profiled multichannel consumers. Consumer can be segmented for their channel choice based on demographics and psychographic variables. An example of a study which based it segments on psychographic variables is the study from Keen et al (2004). This study found four clusters: the generalist who does not have a preference for a particular channel but it is the entire profile of the product experience. Second, the formatters who value the physical store format and its atmosphere above all and therefore will only buy in a retail store. Third is the price sensitives who value the price of a product and therefore seek the channel with the lowest price. Fourth is the experiencers who have a strong attitude towards a channel because of previous experience (Keen et al., 2004). Although this study claims to have segmented multichannel consumers, the segments are not really about consumers who use different and more than one channel in their decision making process. The study from Konuş et al. found three segments. First the uninvolved shoppers do not have a clear preference for a channel and show a low degree of shopping involvement. Second segment is multichannel enthusiasts, who show positive attitudes towards multiple channels and high levels of innovativeness. The third segment is called the store-focused consumers, who prefer brick-andmortar stores and show a negative attitude towards other channels. (Konuş et al., 2008) While this study claims to have segmented consumers based on multichannel preferences, this study has only one actual segment on multichannel consumers. The other two segments are based on one single channel or do not have any preference for a channel at all.

The segments of Keen et al. (2004) are based on six independent variables: retail format (internet, retail and catalog), effort (ease of use), control (on decision making process), subjective norm, attitude towards the channel (positive or negative), and price (high, medium, low), while the three segments of Konuş et al. (2008) are based on channel preference, shopping involvement and innovativeness.

A third study on consumer segmentation found that 63% of the consumers of a large US retailer were store-only shoppers, 12% were catalog-only shoppers, 12% were internet-only shoppers, 12% were dual channel shoppers, and about 1% of the customers shopped across all three channels (Thomas & Sullivan, 2005).

Marketers must understand the characteristics of consumer segments in order to design and target their channels (Konuş et al., 2008). Multichannel segmentation is the base to serve the current customers and to reach new customers (Neslin & Shankar, 2009). As stated above, there has been some segmentation which involves differences in channel usage, but not the use of multiple channels in every phase of the decision making process.

2.4 Multichannel segmentation across categories

Konuş et al.'s (2008) study on multichannel shopper segments did pay attention to the differences between product categories. They studied the multichannel attitudes and behaviours across seven product categories: mortgage, health insurance, holidays, books, computers, electronics, and clothing. These product categories are selected based on their differences in complexity, purchase frequency, and tangibility. They tested how their segments (uninvolved shoppers, multichannel enthusiasts and store-focused consumers) are represented in each product category. For mortgage, holidays and clothing more than half of the respondents fit in the uninvolved shoppers segment. For electronics more than half of the respondents fit in the multichannel shopper segment. For books, insurance, and computers all segments were equally represented. (Konuş et al., 2008)

Also a study from Levin et al. (2003) did research on whether consumers preferred an online or offline retail channel for eight product categories in the search, evaluation, and purchase phase of the decision making process. The product categories in this study (Airline Tickets, Books, CDs, Clothing, Computer Software, Electronic Products, Health and Grooming Products, and Sporting Goods) were randomly chosen and are not based on previous literature. For clothing, health and grooming products, and sporting goods respondents preferred using offline retail channels for every phase in the decision making process. For airline tickets and computer software there was a strong preference for online channels in the search and evaluation phase, in the purchase phase there was an equal preference for online channels and brick-and-mortar. For books, CD's, and electronic products there was no preference for an online or offline retail channel in the search and evaluation phase, but there was a strong preference for an offline retail channel in the purchase phase of the decision making process. (Levin et al., 2003). This study is rather old and much could have changed in ten years, especially with the rise of tablets and smartphones who contribute to the accessibility of online channels.

3 Methodology

In order to compose consumer segments, this study will conduct a survey. These segments will describe different groups of consumers who prefer online or offline channels in the three phases of the consumer decision making process, for hedonic and utilitarian products.

3.1 Sample

The sample will contain Dutch men and women with the minimum age of 18. The lower limit of 18 years old is chosen because then people are mature enough to handle their own money and buy online without the need of permission from a parent. There is no upper limit of the sample because it is a convenience sample in order to get as many as respondents. Also a wide range of respondents makes is possible to have different segments. Respondents will be contacted by email via a respondent panel which contains people from all ages. This panel is not truly representative for the whole Dutch society, because it does not contain an equal distribution of men and women, different age categories or socio-economic status, because it is a convenience sample.

To make a distinction between hedonic and utilitarian products, four products are chosen as an example for the survey, one mainly hedonic product, one mainly utilitarian product and two products in between. The product that is considered the most hedonic will be clothing because clothing is considered to be purchased for fun, pleasure and excitement because people buy it in order to have a certain identity. Clothing is also a product that people want to try and feel before they purchase it. Also people do buy clothing regularly, so respondents will be familiar with buying this product. The mainly utilitarian product will be represented by a study book, because this is bought with a functional goal and it is not important how it looks or smells. The information about the product is the most important. The products in between are furniture and mobile phones. The furniture is chosen because this is a product what most of the times is more expensive and people do not buy it regularly. The mobile phone is chosen because people are able to find a lot of information online and most people get a new one every 2 years. Furniture and a mobile phone are both hedonic and functional, because it does matter how it looks and feels, but on the other hand all the information is available online.

The survey is in Dutch because all the respondents are Dutch. The whole survey can be found in annex 1.

3.2 Measures

The survey will be conducted online because this way it is easier to reach a lot of people. For the online survey the program Qualtrics is used. This program can easily give the data of the survey in Excel and SPSS, which is needed to test the data.

The survey will first show the respondent information on what the survey is about and also definitions of what is meant with an online channel and a brick-and-mortar channel. The definitions of each of the phases of the decision making process (the exact information can be found in annex 1) are provided. Then the respondents move on to the questions about what channel they choose in each phase for the four different products. They are also questioned about how long ago they made

the purchase they had in mind and what they exactly bought. These questions are inserted as extra information to identify outliers.

In the product search phase people have to indicate on a scale from 1 to 7 (in which 1 is not important and 7 is very important) the importance of the information sources: online channel, offline channel, knowledge and experience with the product. For the evaluation phase, the respondents have to indicate the importance of an online channel, an offline channel, or their routine in their behavior. For the product purchase phase the respondents have to indicate the importance of an online channel and an offline channel.

To measure this, respondents are asked to imagine the last time they purchased a particular item. The data will be obtained in order to compose segments. To profile the segments there are demographic questions at the end of the survey (gender, age and educational level), also the respondents are asked whether they own a computer/laptop, tablet or smartphone. This last question is to indicate whether people who do own more electronic devices, use online channels more than people who do only have a computer/laptop.

3.3 Analysis

Demographics

First of all there is a look at the descriptive statistics of the data to see how the demographics and the social-economic status is distributed. The survey yielded 147 respondents which completed the survey, of which 33 male and 114 female. The youngest respondent was 17 and the oldest 72, half of the respondents was younger than 30 and the average age was 37. Regarding the highest finished educational level, 60% of the respondents had finished an HBO or WO (bachelor and/or master) study, 17% finished a MBO level 2,3 or 4 study, 19% has HAVO or VWO as highest finished educational level, and the other options had a percentage of less than 3. There is 40% who is still studying, 16% is working for less than 12 hours a week, 43% is working for more than 12 hours a week, and 15% is unemployed or might be retired (as this was not an option). Among the respondents 98% has a computer or laptop, 43% of the respondents has a tablet, and 77% of them have a smartphone. This sample is not really representative for the Dutch population, because the level of education is much higher in the sample than in the Dutch population (only 33,6% of the population has finished a HBO or WO study) (Eurostat, 2014). Also this sample contains much more women than men. Because a lot of students participated, the amount of studying respondents is higher than the Dutch population, and also the percentage of working people is a little bit lower than the average population (65 % work at least 12 hours a week) (nationaalkompas, 2012).

Principal component analysis

To reduce the amount of variables a principal component analysis (PCA) will be carried out. So all the variables which indicate the importance of a channel or source (online, offline, routine, knowledge) for each phase and each product are insert in the PCA. This way it is possible to see whether different variables can be merged together into one new variable. The KMO value is 0,747 which is bigger than 0,6, which means sampling adequacy. For the PCA the Oblimin rotation is used, because the components are allowed to correlate. The initial eigenvalue >1 criterion in SPSS implies to retain with

three components, also the scree plot implies to merge the variables together to three components. This is as expected because the questions are the same for four products, so three questions to indicate the importance of an offline channel, three to indicate the importance for an online channel and two questions to indicate the importance of knowledge and experience. But when computing these variables into components it is not possible to see the differences across product categories. The factor loadings of the principal component analysis showed that there are no significant differences between the three phases of the consumer decision making process.

Because there are no significant differences in the usage of different channels in every phase of the consumer decision making process, the analysis will segment consumers based on their channel choice for four different products. Therefore twelve new variables are created, one for every product in every channel (online, offline and knowledge/experience). With these twelve new variables a cluster analysis will be done in order to compose segments based on these variables. For the clustering the ward's method will be used. Finally with the demographics for every segment and the cluster centers for each variable the segments will be profiled.

4. Survey results

4.1 clustering

With the twelve new variables a hierarchical cluster analysis is carried out, using Ward's method. To have an indication of how many different segments of consumers can be made the agglomeration coefficient is used to see at which step it increases a lot. As you can see in table 2 the agglomeration coefficient increases a lot at stage 145 which indicates three segments, and at stage 143 which indicates five segments. When choosing three segments there was one segment that did a lot in the brick-and-mortar store and not on the internet. Another segment had high scores on almost everything but books, and the third segment varied according the different products. These kinds of segments are already found in the study from Konuş (2008). The aim of this study is to find multichannel consumer segments, when choosing five segments there could be interesting differences between segments and not just one segment in which the consumer prefers one channel. When choosing five segments, there is still one segment that prefers to buy everything online and a segment that prefers to buy everything in brick-and-mortar stores, but there are three segments that differ in their channel preference for different product categories. Therefore five segments are chosen, so that there are more differences between segments.

Table 2 Agglomeration coefficients to decide on number of segments

	Agglomeration coefficient	Percentage of increase	Number of segments
Stage:			
141	3958.99	4.76	7
142	4159.27	5.06	6
143	4476.04	7.62	5
144	4865.67	8.70	4
145	5503.63	13.11	3
146	6351.44	15.40	2

The results of the segments in relation to the twelve variables are shown in table 3. In table 3 the cluster centers of each segment for each variable are shown. In the conducted ANOVA (with all twelve variables) all the p-values are <0.05, so the segments are significantly different from each other for each variable.

Table 3 Final cluster centers per variable for every segment (unstandardized)

Segm	ents:				
Variables:	1 n=44	2 n=25	3 n= 15	4 n= 32	5 n= 31
Online book	5.51	3.09	4.40	5.38	3.19
Online clothing	5.40	<u>1.57</u>	6.16	2.83	<u>1.45</u>
Online furniture	4.81	4.75	4.07	3.48	2.22
Online phone	4.90	5.36	6.47	6.50	<u>2.86</u>
Knowledge book	4.38	<u>2.60</u>	4.27	4.41	5.06
Knowledge clothing	4.97	3.48	3.57	5.05	5.35
Knowledge furniture	4.78	3.08	2.83	5.11	4.84
Knowledge phone	4.73	3.08	3.00	5.00	4.52
Offline book	3.77	3.04	2.71	2.81	4.33
Offline clothing	4.70	5.52	<u>2.31</u>	6.48	6.59
Offline furniture	5.62	<u>3.57</u>	4.36	6.21	6.43
Offline phone	5.86	<u>2.69</u>	<u>1.87</u>	<u>2.64</u>	6.13

The scores in this table are average scores. Bold numbers indicate a significantly high score; underlined numbers indicate a significantly low score.

Table 3 shows five segments, they respectively contain 44, 25, 15, 32, and 31 respondents. This is an acceptable distribution among the five segments for a total of 147 respondents, because they are not too small or too big. The names of the variables are chosen as an indication on what channel or source (Online, Offline or Knowledge) is rated for its importance for each of the four products (Book, clothing, furniture and phone). The scores in the table represent the final cluster centers for each variable for every segment. When a score is shown in **bold** this means that this is a significantly high score, compared to the other segments which are not bold. If a score is shown <u>underlined</u> this means that this is a significantly low score, compared to the other segments which are not in underlined.

4.2 Segment profiling

In table 4 you can find demographics and interesting facts of every segment. According to this information it is possible to create a profile for each segment. The expected values compared with the real values give an indication of whether this is relatively high or low in that segment.

Chi-square

Person's chi-square has a p-value of 0,045 for the variable gender, this is <0,05 and therefore significant. This means that there is a significant difference between the segments for the number of female/male respondents. For the level of education there is a p-value of 0,919 which is > 0,05 and therefore there are no significant differences between segments for level of education. For the possession of electronic devices there are individual chi-squares because one respondent can possess more than one of the options. There is no significant difference for owning a laptop, what can be explained because everybody does have a laptop or computer. For owning a tablet there are no significant differences between segments as well. For the possession of a smartphone a significant difference between segments is found (0,008<0,005), which means that some segments do possess a significantly little number of smartphones and some a significantly high number of smartphones. The socio-economic status variables have individual chi-squares because more options are possible here. None of the socio-economic status variables is significant, what indicates no significant differences between segments for the number of respondents that are studying, working for less than 12 hours, working for more than 12 hours, and retired or unemployed people. The p-values of the chi-squares can be found in the most right column of table 4.

Table 4 Segment profiles

	Segments:					
Variables:	1 n=44	2 n=25	3 n= 15	4 n= 32	5 n= 31	Chi-square
						p-value
Female	37 (34)	20 (19)	8 (12)	28 (25)	21 (24)	0,045
Avarage age (37)	37	32	38	29	48	
Level of education:						0,919
- First phase	2 (1)	1 (1)	0 (0)	0 (1)	1 (4)	
- Havo/VWO	8 (8)	3 (5)	4 (3)	8 (6)	5 (6)	
- MBO	9 (8)	3 (5)	1 (3)	6 (6)	8 (6)	
- HBO/WO	25 (26)	18 (15)	10 (9)	18 (19)	17 (19)	
In possession of:						
 Computer/laptop 	44 (43)	25 (25)	15 (15)	32 (32)	29 (31)	,108
- Tablet	21 (19)	12 (11)	9 (6)	13 (14)	8 (13)	,182
- Smartphone	32 (34)	24 (19)	11 (12)	28 (25)	18 (24)	,008
Socio-economic status						
- Studying	21 (17)	13 (10)	4 (6)	13 (13)	7 (13)	,105
- Work <12 hours	9 (7)	1 (4)	1 (2)	9 (5)	4 (5)	,096
- Work >12 hours	15 (19)	13 (11)	8 (6)	13 (14)	14 (13)	,551
- Unemployed/retired	8 (7)	1 (4)	3 (2)	3 (5)	7 (5)	,226

The numbers in between brackets are the expected values. The numbers out of brackets are the observed values.

Segment 1: This is the biggest segment and consists of mainly women who study or are retired. This is the female student and housewife segment which loves to shop both online and offline. For books and clothing, this segment prefers an online channel. For furniture and smartphones this segment uses both online and offline channels and the respondents in this segment use their knowledge and experience. This segment has overall high scores, which means that they use every channel. This segment also scores high on their knowledge and experiences on which they base their channel choice. This segment could be named the *female multichannel shoppers*.

Segment 2: This segment consists of young, highly educated students and working people who do possess more than expected electronic devices. For clothing this segment prefers an offline channel over an online channel. For furniture and smartphones there is a slight preference for an online channel, for books there is no preference for an online or offline channel, meaning that these respondents do not buy books. This segment is named the *category dependent shoppers*.

Segment 3: This is the smallest segment and consists mainly of working men, who possess more than average tablets. They prefer to shop online, especially for books, clothing and smartphones. This segment is named the *online-orientated men*.

Segment 4: This segment consists of mainly women and the average age (29) is the lowest of all segments. They possess more smartphones than expected (see table 4). This segment consists mainly of students. For books and smartphones they prefer an online channel, and for furniture and clothing they prefer an offline channel. The respondents in this segment use their own knowledge and experience in their decision making process. This segment is named the *female student hedonic shoppers*.

Segment 5: This segment consists of older (highest average age) working and retired people who do not like to shop with an online channel. They also possess less than average smartphones, laptops

and tablets. This segment prefers an offline channel over an online channel for all the four product categories. This segment also scores significantly high on the use of their own knowledge and experience in the decision making process. This segment could be named the *conservative offline shoppers*.

Hedonic vs. utilitarian product category

Clothing is considered the most hedonic product category in this study. The channel preferences for clothing differ across the segments. The segments that do shop online for clothing are the segments that generally prefer to shop online for different product categories (segment 1 & 3). The most utilitarian product in this study is considered books. Only segment 5 (conservative offline shoppers) prefers to buy books in an offline channel, for all the other segments there was a slight preference for an online channel. For furniture only segment 2 (category dependent shoppers) prefers an online channel, the other segments prefer to buy furniture in a brick-and-mortar store. For smartphones segments 2, 3 and 4 prefer an online channel and segment one uses both channels, segment 5 again prefers an offline channel.

For the hedonic product category, clothing, a preference for a brick-and-mortar store was expected. The results of the segmentation show that there are groups of consumers who prefer to shop online for every product category, also for clothing. Utilitarian products were expected to be bought via an online channel, which most of the segments do. Only the conservative offline shoppers still prefer to buy books in a brick-and-mortar store.

5. Conclusion & discussion

5.1 Conclusion

The main idea of this thesis was to make consumer segments based on multichannel usage in different product categories in every phase of the consumer decision making process. The research question was: How do multichannel consumers use shopping channels in different product categories in every phase of the consumer decision making process? The first sub-question to answer the main research question was: Which channels do consumers choose in every phase of the decision making process? The answer for this question is that consumers use one and the same channel in every phase of the decision making process and they do not switch channels between phases. So if a consumer decides to search for a product in a brick-and-mortar store, he will also evaluate the alternatives there and finally buy it in a brick-and-mortar store. It was still possible to make consumer segments based on different product categories and different channels. Therefore it is possible to answer the two other sub questions: How can consumers be segmented, based on channel usage? and Are there distinct consumer segments, based on channel usage in different product categories? The segmentation resulted in five segments: female multichannel shoppers, category dependent shoppers, online-orientated men, female student hedonic shoppers, conservative offline shoppers.

There is a segment in which male consumers prefer to buy everything online, and there is a segment in which older consumers prefer to still buy everything in a brick-and-mortar store. There are two segments for which their channel choice depends on the product category and there is one channel of mainly women who use all the channels. This indicates that there are also differences for men and women.

This study can conclude that the channel choice for an hedonic or utilitarian product does depend on what kind of consumers are involved, because there are consumers that buy everything online and there are consumers that buy everything offline. Channel choice for different product categories is dependent on the consumer segment.

5.2 Implications

The introduction said that this study will contribute to the marketing strategies of marketers. With the segmentation in this study marketers could link their product to one of the product categories in this study and see what channels consumer prefer in different segments for that product. Online channels for (study-) books should be targeted on the female multichannel shoppers (which contain a lot of students), the online-orientated men and the female student hedonic shoppers. A brick-and-mortar store for books should be targeted on category-dependent shoppers and conservative offline shoppers.

For clothing, marketers should target their online channel to female multichannel shoppers who love to shop or the housewives who do have a lot of time to shop. They should also target their online channel to the online-orientated men. A brick-and-mortar store for clothing should be targeted on the category dependent shoppers, the female student hedonic shoppers and the conservative offline shoppers.

The online channel for furniture should focus on female multichannel shoppers and category dependent shoppers, the brick-and-mortar store should focus on female student hedonic shoppers,

conservative offline shoppers, and also on female multichannel shoppers because they buy both online and offline.

For a smartphone the online channel should focus on online-orientated men and female student hedonic shoppers. A brick-and-mortar store should focus on female multichannel shoppers and conservative offline shoppers.

So every brick-and-mortar store should take into account desires and needs of the older conservative people who like to buy everything offline. This means that a brick-and-mortar store should always have personnel around to help this customer segment, especially when shops are implementing online technology in their stores.

For every product category is described on which segments the online and offline channel should focus on, but these results can also help to find new strategies in order to make segments switch in their channel usage. For example to help the older conservative offline shoppers with how they could use online channels, because then they do not have to leave their house, what might be a helpful solution for people who are less mobile.

The scientific gap in the literature as stated in the introduction is that there was no study who made segments based on how consumers use different channels in different phases of the decision making process. This study found five significant segments in which consumers differ in their preference for an online or offline channel for different product categories. These segments show significant differences in gender and age. This study found that consumers use only one channel in each phase of the decision making process, even though the expectation was that consumers are becoming more and more multichannel and use online and offline channels simultaneously. Previous studies did segmentation on channel choice for different product categories, or in different phases of the decision making process. This study tried to do all in one. Also this study took into account the difference between hedonic and utilitarian product categories, which adds a new perspective on the channel usage for these product categories.

5.3 Limitations and future research

During this study some limitations emerged which will be discussed below. This should help further research to not make the same missteps.

First of all, a survey may not be the best option, because the respondents have to think about what they do and might give unreliable answers, because when people actually are in a certain situation, they might act totally different from what they said they would do. Despite that, an observation would become too complicated for the amount of time that was available for this study. An observation to analyse the channel usage of consumers in different phases of the decision making process, should follow consumers along the process when they purchase something. This is difficult because you have to find consumers that are at the beginning of the decision making problem (recognizing a problem that should be solved with a product). If you would approach people on the street, you do not know whether they have already orientated and gained information online or offline in a previous shopping trip. You will have to ask them, and hope that they give a reliable answer. It is also possible to do an experiment in which you give consumers the possibility to shop for a particular product and follow them in their channel choice in each phase of the decision making process. The advantage of these methods is that you can actually follow a decision making process in

reality, instead of asking them hypothetical questions in which they might give unreliable answers. These methods are quite time and effort consuming and therefore not suitable for this minor thesis, but it is definitely possible for future research.

Another limitation of this study is that the sample is not representative for the whole Dutch society. This can be ascribed to the fact that this study used a convenience sample. The majority of the respondents is female and the educational level of the sample is relatively high. This could have biased the results in a way that most women like to shop, and do this in a different way than men do. So for future research it is recommended to have an equal distribution of men and women and an equal distribution in the level of education, so that it becomes representative for the Dutch society.

In the comments of the survey there were six respondents who said that they did not clearly understand what was meant by the option 'routinematig'. This was explained maybe a little too concise in the introduction of the survey. Also there were three people who missed the availability of the option 'retired' at the question about their status. So in a next study the information about the possible options should be explained more briefly and there should be an option 'retired' at the question about socio-economic status.

The results of the cluster analysis in Table 3 are not standardized. This means that the results did not take into account that some respondents might give more overall extreme scores and some respondents who overall give very average scores. When the average scores of each respondent for the variables about channel choice would be standardized, it does not matter whether someone gives extreme scores here or not. Because the results are not standardized here, it could be possible that one segment consist of people who gave very extreme scores for online shopping in every product category for example.

This study made segments for four different product categories. Each segment has different preferences for channel usage for each product category. For future research it would be interesting to see how segmentation can be done within one product category. Then a marketer could implement different marketing strategies for different segments.

This study assumed that clothing is a hedonic product. For some people this is, but some people see it as something they need, just because they have to wear something. So, on the one hand there are consumers who love to go shopping for clothes and want to feel the texture and try everything on. For these consumers shopping for clothing is a hedonic activity that they enjoy. There are also people who do not mind the fit and fabric, but just need new clothing because the old clothing was broken. For future research it might be wise to choose another product to represent a hedonic product, for example flowers or a perfume.

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Annex 1. Survey

Beste deelnemer, Fijn dat u mee wilt doen aan dit onderzoek over uw gebruik van internet bij het kopen van producten. Het onderzoek is uitsluitend bedoeld voor academische doeleinden en er zijn geen commerciële bedrijven bij betrokken. Het invullen van de vragenlijst duurt ongeveer 10 minuten. Deelname is geheel anoniem. U kunt op elk moment tijdens het onderzoek beslissen om te stoppen met invullen. Het afronden van het onderzoek wordt beschouwd als toestemming voor deelname in dit onderzoek. Let op bij het invullen, want er is geen mogelijkheid om terug te keren naar een voorafgaande vraag.

Tegenwoordig hebben we niet alleen de mogelijkheid om in fysieke winkels te winkelen maar kunnen we ook online producten bestellen. Voordat u daadwerkelijk iets koopt gaat u op zoek naar een bepaald product en zoekt u hier informatie over, in dit onderzoek noemen we dat de 'zoek fase'. Dit kunt u online doen via computer, smartphone of tablet, of in een fysieke winkel in een winkelstraat. Het is natuurlijk ook mogelijk dat u uw kennis en ervaring met het product gebruikt. Na het zoeken van informatie over producten, gaat u de gevonden alternatieven vergelijken en evalueren om zo tot een uiteindelijke keuze te komen, dit noemen we de 'evaluatie fase'. Dit kan eveneens online via computer, smartphone of tablet, of in een fysieke winkel in een winkelstraat. Het is natuurlijk ook mogelijk dat u routinematig (zonder evaluatie) een product kiest. De daadwerkelijke aankoop noemen we de 'koop fase'. Dit kan online via internet via computer, smartphone of tablet of offline in een fysieke winkel in een winkelstraat. Hierna worden vragen gesteld over uw aankopen van een studieboek, kleding, meubels en mobiele telefoon.

Hoe lang is het geleden dat u een studieboek kocht (voor uzelf of een ander)?

O	Afgelopen week
O	Afgelopen maand
O	Afgelopen half jaar
O	Afgelopen jaar
O	Langer dan een jaar geleden namelijk:
O	Nog nooit. *Denk dan bij de volgende vraag aan de laatste keer dat u een willekeurig boek kocht.

Denk aan de laatste keer dat u een studieboek nodig had. Geef aan op een schaal van 1 tot 7 (waarbij 1 niet belangrijk is en 7 heel belangrijk) hoe belangrijk informatiebronnen waren bij uw zoektocht naar een studieboek.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Een online kanaal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Een offline kanaal (fysieke winkel)	•	•	•	•	•	•	O
Kennis en ervaring	0	O	O	O	O	O	O

Denk aan de laatste keer dat u een studieboek nodig had. Geef aan op een schaal van 1 tot 7 (waarbij 1 niet belangrijk is en 7 heel belangrijk) hoe belangrijk deze hulpmiddelen waren bij uw vergelijking en evaluatie van alternatieven van een studieboek.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Een online kanaal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Een offline kanaal (fysieke winkel)	O	O	0	O	0	•	O
Routinematig	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Denk aan de laatste keer dat u een studieboek nodig had. Geef aan op een schaal van 1 tot 7 (waarbij 1 niet belangrijk is en 7 heel belangrijk) hoe belangrijk deze kanalen waren bij de aankoop van dit studieboek.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Een online kanaal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Een offline kanaal (fysieke winkel)	O	0	0	0	0	0	O

Wat voor kledingstuk kocht u het meest recent?

Hoe lang is het geleden dat u een kledingstuk kocht?

- O Afgelopen week
- O Afgelopen maand
- O Afgelopen half jaar
- Afgelopen jaar
- O Langer dan een jaar geleden namelijk:

Denk aan de laatste keer dat u kleding nodig had. Geef aan op een schaal van 1 tot 7 (waarbij 1 niet belangrijk is en 7 heel belangrijk) hoe belangrijk deze informatiebronnen waren bij uw zoektocht naar kleding.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Een online kanaal	O	0	0	0	0	0	O
Een offline kanaal (fysieke winkel)	o	0	•	•	•	O	O
Kennis en ervaring	O	O	0	0	0	•	O

Denk aan de laatste keer dat u kleding nodig had. Geef aan op een schaal van 1 tot 7 (waarbij 1 niet belangrijk is en 7 heel belangrijk) hoe belangrijk deze hulpmiddelen waren bij uw vergelijking en evaluatie van alternatieven van dit/deze kleding(stukken).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Een online kanaal	O	0	0	0	0	O	O

Een offline kanaal (fysieke winkel)	0	0	•	•	•	•	•
Routinematig	O	O .	O .	O	O	O .	O

Denk aan de laatste keer dat u kleding nodig had. Geef aan op een schaal van 1 tot 7 (waarbij 1 niet belangrijk is en 7 heel belangrijk) hoe belangrijk deze kanalen waren bij de aankoop van dit/deze kleding(stukken).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Een online kanaal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Een offline kanaal (fysieke winkel)	0	•	•	•	•	•	O

Hoe lang is het geledendat u een meubel kocht?

- O Afgelopen week
- Afgelopen maand
- O Afgelopen half jaar
- O Afgelopen jaar
- O Langer dan een jaar geleden namelijk: _____
- O Nog nooit. * Denk bij de volgende vragen aan de laatste keer dat u iets voor in huis kocht

Wat is het meubel dat u het meest recent kocht?

Denk aan de laatste keer dat u een meubel nodig had. Geef aan op een schaal van 1 tot 7 (waarbij 1 niet belangrijk is en 7 heel belangrijk) hoe belangrijk deze informatiebronnen waren bij uw zoektocht naar dit meubel.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Een online kanaal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Een offline kanaal (fysieke winkel)	O	O	•	O	O	•	•
Kennis en ervaring	0	O	•	O	0	O	O

Denk aan de laatste keer dat u een meubel nodig had. Geef aan op een schaal van 1 tot 7 (waarbij 1 niet belangrijk is en 7 heel belangrijk) hoe belangrijk deze hulpmiddelen waren bij uw vergelijking en evaluatie van alternatieven van dit meubel.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Een online kanaal	O	0	•	•	0	•	0
Een offline kanaal (fysieke winkel)	•	•	•	•	0	•	O
Routinematig	•	O	•	O	O	O	O

Denk aan de laatste keer dat u een meubel nodig had. Geef aan op een schaal van 1 tot 7 (waarbij 1 niet belangrijk is en 7 heel belangrijk) hoe belangrijk deze kanalen waren bij de aankoop van dit meubel.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Een online kanaal	O	0	0	0	0	0	O
Een offline kanaal (fysieke winkel)	•	•	•	•	•	•	O

Hoe lang is het geleden dat u een mobiele telefoon kocht?

- Afgelopen week
- Afgelopen maand
- O Afgelopen half jaar
- Afgelopen jaar
- O Langer dan een jaar geleden namelijk:
- O Nog nooit. *Denk bij de volgende vragen aan de laatste keer dat u een electronisch apparaat kocht.

Denk aan de laatste keer dat u een mobiele telefoon nodig had. Geef aan op een schaal van 1 tot 7 (waarbij 1 niet belangrijk is en 7 heel belangrijk) hoe belangrijk deze informatiebronnen waren bij uw zoektocht naar deze mobiele telefoon.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Een online kanaal	0	0	0	•	0	0	O
Een offline kanaal (fysieke winkel)	0	•	•	•	•	•	O
Kennis en ervaring	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Denk aan de laatste keer dat u een mobiele telefoon nodig had. Geef aan op een schaal van 1 tot 7 (waarbij 1 niet belangrijk is en 7 heel belangrijk) hoe belangrijk deze hulpmiddelen waren bij uw vergelijking en evaluatie van alternatieven van deze mobiele telefoon.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Een online kanaal	0	0	0	0	0	0	O
Een offline kanaal (fysieke winkel)	•	•	•	•	•	•	O
Routinematig	O	O	•	O	O	O	O

Denk aan de laatste keer dat u een mobiele telefoon nodig had. Geef aan op een schaal van 1 tot 7 (waarbij 1 niet belangrijk is en 7 heel belangrijk) hoe belangrijk deze kanalen waren bij de aankoop van deze mobiele telefoon.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Een online kanaal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

ка	winkel)						.	•				
Wa	Wat is uw geslacht?											
O) Man											
O	Vrouw											
Wa	Wat is uw leeftijd?											
Wa	Wat is uw hoogst afgeronde opleiding?											
0	Basisonderwi	js										
\mathbf{O}	Tweede fase	voorgez	zet onderwijs	(HAVO/VWC))							
\mathbf{C}	MBO niveau	1										
0	MBO niveau 2	2, 3 en 4	4									
0	HBO/WO(Bac	chelor e	n/of Master)									
We	elke van de vol	gende p	oroducten he	eft u tot uw b	eschikking? (meerdere an	twoorden mo	gelijk)				
	Computer / la	aptop										
	Tablet											
	Smartphone											
	Geen van dez	:e										
Ge	Geef aan wat voor u van toepassing is. Meerdere antwoorden mogelijk. Ik ben momenteel:											
	Studerende											
	Werkzaam vo	or min	der dan 12 uu	ır per week								
	Werkzaam vo	or mee	r dan 12 uur	per week								

Een offline

■ Werkeloos

Aan Wageningen Universiteit worden vaker studies verricht waarvoor wij op zoek zijn naar deelnemers. Mogen wij u hiervoor af en toe (maximaal 1 keer per maand) benaderen per email? Zo ja, schrijf hieronder uw e-mailadres (niet nodig als u dit al eerder heeft aangegeven):

Klaar!Heeft u nog opmerkingen over deze vragenlijst dan kunt u die hieronder kwijt. Hartelijk dank voor uw deelname aan dit onderzoek.