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CONSUMERS' OMNICHANNEL JOURNEY: CHARACTERISTICS RELATION TO SHOWROOMING AND WEBROOMING

A JORNADA OMNICANAL DO CONSUMIDOR: RELAÇÃO DAS CARACTERÍSTICAS COM O SHOWROOMING E O WEBROOMING

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Abstract
Contemporary consumer journey is not restricted to one channel anymore. Consumers move from online to physical and vice versa incessantly. The main aim of this study is to examine the showrooming and webrooming behaviors of consumers and the factors affecting these behaviors. Stemming from epistemic theory of curiosity, this study analyses curiosity as independent variable and two mediators; market mavenism and consumer innovativeness as consumer characteristics and two outcome variables showrooming behavior and actual webrooming behavior. In order to analyze the stated relationships through convenience sampling data was collected from 391 respondents. The data was analyzed by SMART PLS 4. The findings show curiosity has a positive relationship with all constructs. Market mavenism has significant positive relationship with both showrooming and webrooming. Consumer innovativeness is positively related to webrooming on the other hand, the relationship between consumer innovativeness and showrooming is not found to be significant. These results suggest innovative consumers differ on webrooming and showrooming behavior. The study makes new contributions to the literature on curiosity and consumer characteristics for webrooming and showrooming.

Keywords: Showrooming. Webrooming. Market Maven. Interest Curiosity. Consumer Innovativeness.

Resumo
A jornada do consumidor contemporâneo não se restringe mais a um único canal. Os consumidores transitam incessantemente entre o online e o físico, e vice-versa. O principal objetivo deste estudo é examinar os comportamentos de showrooming e webrooming dos consumidores e os fatores que influenciam esses comportamentos. Partindo da teoria epistêmica da curiosidade, este estudo analisa a curiosidade como variável independente e dois mediadores: o conhecimento de mercado e a inovação do consumidor como características do consumidor, e duas variáveis de resultado: o comportamento de showrooming e o comportamento real de webrooming. Para analisar as relações estabelecidas, foram coletados dados de 391 respondentes por meio de amostragem por conveniência. Os dados foram analisados pelo SMART PLS 4. Os resultados mostram que a curiosidade tem uma relação positiva com todos os construtos. O conhecimento de mercado apresenta uma relação positiva significativa tanto com o showrooming quanto com o webrooming. A inovação do consumidor está positivamente relacionada ao webrooming; por outro lado, a relação entre inovação do consumidor e showrooming não se mostrou significativa. Esses resultados sugerem que os consumidores inovadores diferem em seus comportamentos de webrooming e showrooming. O estudo contribui para a literatura sobre curiosidade e características do consumidor em relação ao webrooming e ao showrooming.

Palavras-chave: Showrooming. Webrooming. Especialista em Mercado. Interesse e Curiosidade. Inovação do Consumidor.

1 INTRODUCTION

Digitalization has changed every aspect of life. Consumers' shopping behavior and retail settings are no exceptions. Retail sector has been concentrating on the whole consumer journey. Retailers' efforts to unify their various shopping channels to deliver a smooth, continuous customer experience stem from the principles of omnichannel retailing (Cummins *et al*., 2016). Omnichannel retailing is described as a set of integrated processes and strategic decisions designed to deliver a unified brand experience across all touchpoints such as physical stores, online channels, mobile applications, and social media, allowing customers to purchase, return, and exchange products seamlessly (Shi *et al*., 2020).

Webrooming and showrooming have become essential constructs in contemporary omnichannel research, focusing on consumers' use of multiple channels throughout the decision-making process. The retail channels are integrated for creating consistent, pleasing consumer experience. Showrooming describes the behavior of evaluating products in a physical store and subsequently purchasing them online. Showrooming refers to the practice of researching products in a physical store for examining the goods directly and ultimately making the actual purchase online (Rapp *et al*. 2015; Flavián *et al*, 2016). Webrooming is the process of searching for product information online and then purchasing in-store (Flavián *et al*., 2016). From consumers' point of view, channels are environments where they can search for information and buy goods (Konus *et al*., 2008). Although webrooming is the most common cross-channel behavior, there is a lack of research on the subject. According to Verhoef *et al* (2007), showrooming and webrooming are framed as forms of exploratory shopping behavior. In both behaviors, the exploratory dimension becomes salient because they involve information seeking, brand changing and channel switching. Baumgartner and Steenkamp in 1996, explained exploratory consumer behaviors by giving activity examples such as, looking for new varieties, changing brands, leisure-oriented shopping, searching information, purchasing novelties, and communicating about purchases. Showrooming and webrooming are stated to be exploratory behaviors through which consumers actively search for, obtain information about particular products (Huh & Kim, 2022).

Türkiye, as an emerging economy, with comparatively high young population is keeping up with new technologies and novelties in the market. According to We are Social 2025 report, 88% of the population actively uses internet. According to PWC 2024 Report about the shopping journey in Türkiye, for information seeking, 55% prefer visiting physical stores and interacting with salespeople, while 46% prefer searching online. As more consumers use channels interchangeably, it will be of value to analyze the characteristics of consumers and the motivation behind the behavior.

In this study, the showrooming and webrooming behaviors of consumers and the factors affecting these behaviors are analyzed.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In the extant literature webrooming and showrooming are analyzed through technology perspective. Many studies concentrated on consumers' reaction to this technological change phenomenon. When the perspective is changed to exploratory nature of shopping and search, consumers characteristics and motivations are gaining importance in the behavior change. Exploration in general and for the purpose of shopping is no exception and is triggered by curiosity. Online and physical exploration of goods and services stem from curiosity. In order to analyze showrooming and webrooming behavior, epistemic curiosity theory is used as the theoretical framework.

Epistemic curiosity theory suggests that curiosity-driven exploratory behavior arises from the desire to reduce uncertainty (Litman *et al*, 2005). Epistemic curiosity is viewed as a core motivational force underlying exploratory actions. Curiosity reflects an inherent drive to seek new information, either to enhance interest or to resolve uncertainty. Because both webrooming and showrooming involve efforts to gather additional insight and diminish uncertainty, they are hypothesized to be linked to consumers' curiosity.

When curious, highly involved, interested in exploring products and services people are considered market mavens come to mind first. Market mavens are individuals who possess more knowledge than others about many product types, shopping locations, and other aspects of markets, like communicate with people, and try to answer questions regarding market information. Market experts rely on their ability to acquire and share marketplace knowledge. Market mavens are driven by a desire to gather broad-ranging

information about products, shopping venues, and various marketplace activities, and they often initiate conversations or respond to others' requests for such information (Feick & Price, 1987). They tend to seek diversity and uniqueness in both their shopping and consumer experiences (Stokburger & Hoyer, 2009). In addition, market mavens typically become aware of new goods and services earlier than others, possess strong information-search capabilities, openly disseminate information within their networks. Market mavens are encouraged by the benefits offered through social media like sense of belonging, interactive engagement, and opportunities for innovation (Gauri *et al*., 2016). For market mavens, innovativeness and novelty are important attributes.

Consumer innovativeness denotes a proclivity toward discovering and experimenting with new products (Goldsmith *et al*, 2003). Prior research indicates a likely association between market mavenism and consumer innovativeness (Engelland *et al*., 2001). Both consumer innovators and market mavens frequently function as opinion leaders (Clark and Goldsmith, 2005). Supporting this linkage, Goldsmith *et al*. (2003) reported a correlation between the two.

The conceptual model of this study and the hypotheses accordingly are given below.

H1: Curiosity is positively related to market mavenism.

H2: Curiosity is positively related to consumer innovativeness

H3. Market mavenism is positively related to showrooming

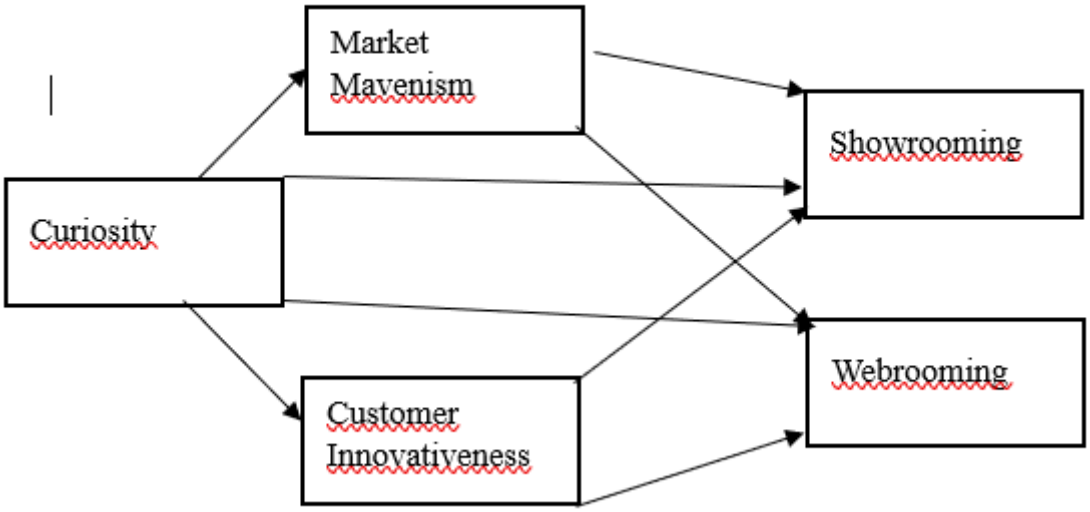
H4: Market mavenism is positively related to webrooming.

H5. Consumer innovativeness is positively related to showrooming.

H6: Consumer innovativeness is positively related to webrooming

Table 1

Conceptual Model



3 METHODOLOGY

In order to measure the above, stated scales were adopted from the literature and translated to Turkish. The items were measured on a 5 -point Likert scale. The population of this study consists of consumers actively involved in showrooming and webrooming behaviors. In order to reach the target population one screening question regarding previous showrooming/webrooming experiences was included. Through convenience sampling, online survey was distributed. A total of 391 responses are collected, majority is female (247, 63%), mean age is 36.

Table 1

Data Selected

Variables	**Original Study**	**Items**
Showrooming	Rapp *et al*,2015	4
Webrooming	Rapp *et al*,2015	4
Curiosity	Litman *et al*, 2010	5
Market mavenism	Feick & Price,1987	6
Consumer Innovativeness	Baumgartner & Steenkamp,1996	3

Table 2: Scales adopted

3.1 Methods and findings

Quantitative data analysis using Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4 was used to test structural model. PLS-SEM was used based on its ability to handle complex models with formative and reflective indicators, exemption of the data normality requirement (Hair & Alamer, 2022). The structural model tests six main hypotheses of the conceptual framework.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using PLS-SEM. According to Afthanorhan (2013) PLS-SEM path modeling using SMARTPLS is useful for confirmatory factor analysis as it is more reliable and valid.

The reliability of constructs are tested by composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha (>,70). Convergent validity was estimated by calculating the average variance extracted (AVE) (Hair *et al*., 2022). As reliability thresholds are CR above 0.70 and AVE above 0.5, all scales were reliable as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Factor Loadings & Reliability

		Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Consumer Innovativeness	**CI1**	0.848	0.908	0.914	0.763
	CI2	0.794			
	CI3	0.970			
Interest Curiosity	**IC1**	0.926	0.941	0.943	0.802
	IC2	0.909			
	IC3	0.833			
	IC5	0.911			
Market Mavenism	**MM1**	0.953	0.940	0.945	0.719
	MM2	0.866			
	MM3	0.790			
	MM4	0.948			
	MM5	0.726			
	MM6	0.778			
Showrooming	**SH1**	0.766	0.897	0.901	0.689
	SH2	0.886			
	SH3	0.866			
	SH4	0.797			
Webrooming	**WB1**	0.790	0.901	0.903	0.696
	WB2	0.889			
	WB3	0.829			

Fornell-Larcker criterion was used for testing the validity. Table 3 showing the square root of the AVE is higher than the inter-construct correlation, showing good discriminant validity. Another discriminant validity criterion is heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) correlation ratio in which all values are smaller than 0.90. Therefore, discriminant validity is established for this model.

Table 3

Fornell_Lacker

	Consumer Innovativeness	Interest Curiosity	Market Mavenism	Showrooming	Webrooming
Consumer Innovativeness	0.874				
Interest Curiosity	0.225	0.895			
Market Mavenism	0.526	0.489	0.848		
Showrooming	0.301	0.501	0.532	0.830	
Webrooming	0.319	0.423	0.463	0.721	0.834

Table 4

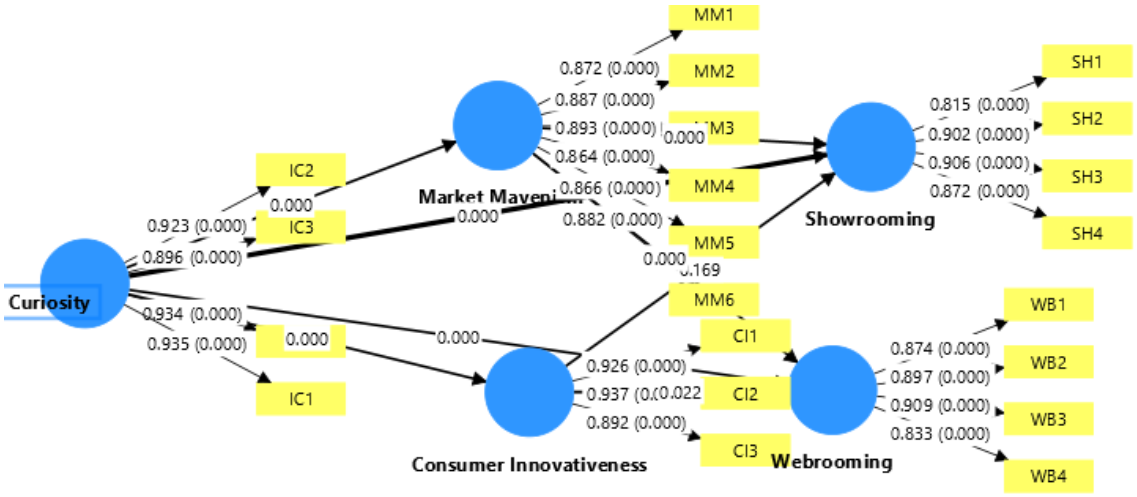
Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) correlation

	Consumer Innovativeness	Curiosity	Market Mavenism	Showrooming	Webrooming
Consumer Innovativeness					
Curiosity	0.221				
Market Mavenism	0.533	0.480			
Showrooming	0.300	0.501	0.529		
Webrooming	0.319	0.423	0.463	0.725	

Having established the reliability and validity of the measurement model, the structural model was analyzed using PLS SEM.

Table 5

Model



Firstly, model fit was tested by using Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), Normed Fit Index (NFI) and the exact model fit (bootstrapped based statistical inference). The SRMR shows the difference between the observed and the model implied correlation matrix (Hu & Bentler, 1998), results smaller than 0,08 are considered a good fit. The SRMR value is 0.053 and the NFI 0.9 and the dULS < bootstrapped HI 95% of dULS and dG < bootstrapped HI 95% of dG all implying the model fit.

The direct and indirect effects of interest curiosity on showrooming and webrooming through mediating variables, market mavenism and customer innovativeness are examined. Table 4 and Table 5 present the structural models' results. Curiosity has a positive relationship with market mavenism (β = .462, p =000), and consumer innovativeness (β = .210, p =000). Curiosity showed positive relationships with showrooming (β = .301, p=000) and webrooming (β = 249, p < .001). The relationship between consumer innovativeness and showrooming (β = .111, p = .124) is not significant. While the relationship is positive and significant between innovativeness and webrooming (β = .111, p=004). Market mavenism is positively related to showrooming (β = .329, p=000) and webrooming (β = .261, p = 000). The indirect effect of curiosity on webrooming through market mavenism is significant (indirect effect: .121, 95% confidence interval [CI95%] = .069, .174, p< .01). It also has a significant indirect effect on showrooming through market mavenism (indirect effect: .152, 95% confidence interval [CI95%] = .0104, .1201, p< .01).

Table 6

Direct Relationships

	Estimate	T Value	P values	Confidence Interval 2.5%	97.5%
Consumer Innovativeness -> Showrooming	0.050	0.953	0.340	-0.058	0.153
Consumer Innovativeness -> Webrooming	0.111	2.011	0.044	0.005	0.220
Curiosity -> Consumer Innovativeness	0.210	4.511	0.000	0.110	0.292
Curiosity -> Market Mavenism	0.462	9.552	0.000	0.354	0.546
Curiosity -> Showrooming	0.301	5.437	0.000	0.192	0.408
Curiosity -> Webrooming	0.249	4.355	0.000	0.136	0.357
Market Mavenism -> Showrooming	0.329	5.937	0.000	0.212	0.430
Market Mavenism -> Webrooming	0.261	4.072	0.000	0.126	0.382

Table 7

Indirect Effect

	Estimate	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics	P values	Confidence Int. 5.0%	95.0%
Curiosity -> Market Mavenism -> Showrooming	0.152	0.030	5.086	0.000	0.104	0.201
Curiosity -> Market Mavenism -> Webrooming	0.121	0.032	3.684	0.000	0.069	0.174
Curiosity -> Consumer Innovativeness -> Showrooming	0.010	0.011	0.946	0.172	0.008	0.029
Curiosity -> Consumer Innovativeness -> Webrooming	0.023	0.012	1.890	0.029	0.004	0.044

4 DISCUSSION

As consumers' use of channels become more and more interchangeable, it becomes more important to understand the motivation and characteristics influencing the behavior. In this study, a structural equation modeling was used and the findings showed that all hypotheses were supported except H6: Consumer innovativeness has a positive relationship with showrooming. This study shows that curiosity is related to different consumers characteristics and also to showrooming and webrooming, The findings are in line with literature as market mavens are stated to enjoy market based information seeking (Feick & Price, 1987; Litman & Jimmerson, 2004).

It can also be concluded that curiosity is highly related to consumer innovativeness. Innovator consumers prefer webrooming. On the other hand, the findings of this study do not indicate a relationship between consumer innovativeness and showrooming. It can be explained from the point of view that innovator consumers in this study favor digital channels for information search. This preference may simply result from their tendency to check things online and prefer shopping as the experience in store supersedes that of digital channel. Innovators like the atmospherics and the experience they have in the physical store but search online.

5 IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The majority of the studies about showrooming and webrooming concentrate on technology adaptation perspective. This study focusing on consumer characteristics and motivation of curiosity is trying to contribute to the theory through providing a different perspective to the subject. As omnichannel retailing is crucial for success, it is important to clarify the consumer characteristics affecting the showrooming and webrooming preference. The shopping journey of the consumer shall be analyzed deeply as stated by Verhoef *et al* (2007) consumers channel preferences might be different at different points of the journey. From managerial implications point of view, this study underlines that market mavens, a very important market segment for reaching the rest of the market, enjoys both showrooming and webrooming. Concentrating only on digital channels and neglecting the experience provided in the physical stores might result in the losing market mavens interest in the product.

As the showrooming and webrooming behavior without any category distinction is studied here in future, the differences based on product categories can be analyzed to see category specific effects.

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Authors' Contribution

Both authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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