

A Study on Show Rooming and Web Rooming Behavior of Consumers (With Reference to Chennai City)

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Abstract

In the digital age, consumer shopping behavior has undergone a significant transformation due to advancements in technology, the rise of e-commerce and changing market dynamics. Each and every consumer is different in terms of their imaginative, evaluative and emotional components of consumption experiences. This study aims to identify the behavior pattern of consumers to address these trends, businesses must adopt an integrated Omni channel approach that enhances the shopping experience across both physical and digital platforms

I. INTRODUCTION

Consumers in today's era are smarter, more intelligent, and more connected than before. A big portion of the population is tech-savvy around us. All of them want access to everything on their fingertips. The rise of e-commerce has revolutionized the way consumers interact with brands, leading to the emergence of various shopping models. For this purpose, it becomes essential to understand the ever-changing behavior of consumers. The retail landscape has shifted from traditional brick-and-mortar stores to a hybrid model that integrates both offline and online channels. This shift has given rise to multi-channel and Omni channel retailing, where consumers interact with multiple touch points before making a purchase

decision. The two prominent shopping trends among consumers in Omni channel retail are show rooming and web rooming.

Show rooming refers to the practice of visiting brick-and-mortar retail stores to inspect a product but then purchase it from online retailers at a lower price. The show roomers are the consumers who are engaged in show rooming activity. In simple words, it is called Research offline, Purchase Online. Consumers engage in show rooming for various reasons such as to inspect or examine the product, to try out the product to know whether it fits him/her or not, to get expert advice from the sales assistance in the physical stores, to get a detailed product information before buying it and also to compare the product price between offline and online stores, to check any discounts and offers are available in physical stores.

Web rooming is the practice of researching the relevant product information in online but then make a purchase in physical stores. It is the exact opposite of show rooming. The web roomers are the consumers who are engaged in web rooming activity. In simple words, it is called Research Online, Purchase Offline. It is also termed as Reverse Show rooming. Consumers engage in web rooming for various reasons such as to save time by researching the product before visiting stores, to avoid product disappointment, to avoid online frauds, to get immediate ownership of products, to spend quality time with family and friends. The emergence of show rooming and web rooming insists the businesses to understand and adapt the consumer preferences in order to stay competitive in the business environment.

Benefits of Showrooming

- Show rooming helps the consumers to physically examine the products before making purchase decisions.
- It reduces impulse purchase.
- It helps the Consumers to gain product knowledge.
- Consumers can make the purchase anywhere, anytime.

Limitations of Showrooming

- Consumers end up their purchase in online to get a product for lower price compared to physical stores but it adds additional shipping cost.
- There is no possibility of immediate ownership.
- Consumers might face issues with delivery such as delays, damaged products or wrong items which will be an inconvenience compared to purchasing directly from a store.

Benefits of Webrooming

- Web rooming helps the Consumers to research the products thoroughly in online and helps them to take better decision making.

- Web rooming helps the Consumers to avoid product disappointment.
- Web rooming ends up in immediate delivery of goods. It helps the consumer to get the product at the right time.

Limitations of Webrooming

- Consumers face technical issues while researching the products in online.
- It is a time-consuming process.
- There is a possibility of pressure from sales staff in physical stores which ends up in impulsive buying.
- There is a chance of mismatch between the product quality, features what the Consumers researched in online and what they see in offline stores.

Online Platforms Used by the Consumers to Research the Products:

Google

- Google is the most widely used search engine globally.
- It enables the users to enter keywords or phrases to search for information on the web.
- It provides searched results, experts opinion, Customer reviews etc.

Social Media Platforms

- Social media platforms refer to the online platforms which allows people to create, share, exchange information with others.
- Consumers get valuable insights through influencer recommendations.
- Social media advertisements and brand pages showcase the product details.
- Some of the examples for social media platforms are Facebook, Instagram, YouTube etc.

E-Commerce Platforms

- E-Commerce platforms refer to an online stores or online platforms or websites where customers can buy products and services from businesses.
- It provides detailed product descriptions.
- It is flexible for the consumers to research the desired information.
- Some of the examples of e-commerce platforms are Amazon, Flipkart, Etsy, Myntra, eBay, Big Commerce.

Review Sites

- Review site refers to the website where the reviews can be posted about people, product, services and businesses.
- It is an online platform which encourages consumers to provide opinions, ratings on product or services.

- It helps the consumers to find popular brands easily.
- The examples for review sites are Trustpilot, Wirecutter.

Comparison Sites

- Comparison site is a vertical search engine which helps the users to easily filter, compare the products price, features, reviews of the products etc.
- It helps in making cost-effective purchase decisions.
- Some of the examples for comparison sites are PriceDekho, MySmartPrice.

Need for the Study

- To gain insight into consumer shopping habits.
- To investigate the impact of digitalization in shaping Consumer Buying behavior.
- This study will help to address the challenges faced by Consumers during show rooming and web rooming.
- To identify the gap between consumer expectations and retail strategies.

Objectives of the Study

- To examine the factors influencing show rooming and Web rooming.
- To identify the challenges faced by the Consumers during show rooming and Web rooming.
- To find out the highly show roomed and web roomed product among various product categories.
- To identify the most frequently used online platform by the consumers to research the products.
- To measure the satisfaction level of consumers engaged in show rooming and Web rooming.

Scope of the Study

- This study is limited to consumers residing in Chennai city and focuses on their show rooming and web rooming behavior.
- The study seeks to offer meaningful insights for businesses and policymakers to formulate effective strategies in response to evolving consumer behavior.
- Understanding show rooming and web rooming trends will help retailers optimize their online and offline presence, enhancing customer engagement and sales performance.
- The research examines the psychological and behavioral factors influencing consumers tendency to engage in show rooming and web rooming.

Limitations of the Study

- The study was conducted only in Chennai city.
- The study was constrained to the sample size of 185 respondents.
- The study followed cross-sectional approach, conducted at single point in time.
- The opinion of the respondents may vary from time to time, person to person. Therefore, findings cannot be generalized.

Methodology

Research Design

Research design is the approach taken to do research and establishes a clear and logical plan to address a predetermined research topic through the collection, interpretation, analysis of data. This research is based on analytical and descriptive nature.

Sampling Frame

A sampling frame is a list or other tool used to specify the population of interest for a researcher. The persons who are residing in Chennai are the sampling frame for the study.

Sampling Unit

A single value contained in a simple database is referred to as a sample unit. The sampling unit for the study is the persons who are engaged in show rooming and web rooming.

Sample Size

Sample size is the number of respondents or observation that a study includes. The study sample size was 185 respondents.

Sampling Method

The study was done by using Convenience Sampling Method.

Data Collection Method

Primary data were collected for this research study by using the structured questionnaire.

Review of literature

Jose Marcos Carvalho de Mesquita, Hyunju Shin, Joao Paulo Longuinho, and Luiz Rodrigo Cunha Moura (2024) performed research to investigate the role of show rooming behavior on show rooming satisfaction and customer loyalty while exploring its antecedents. This study found that internet savvy and the perceived advantages of show rooming have a beneficial impact on show rooming behavior. The authors found that consumer loyalty and show rooming behavior are mediated by show rooming satisfaction.

Sheetal Jain, Amit Shankar (2023) examined the major drivers behind show rooming behavior of luxury consumers. This study used the Stimulus-Organism-Response Model and the Value-Based Adoption Model. For this study, data was collected from 404 luxury fashion consumers in India. This study revealed that the factors such as sales-staff assistance, evaluation convenience, deals and discounts, and online purchase convenience influenced show rooming intention.

Sourabh Arora, Sangeeta Sahney, and Rashmi Ranjan Parida (2022) investigated the justification of consumers behind show rooming behavior. This study adopted a qualitative approach, and inductive thematic analysis was employed to discover the reasons for the show rooming behavior of consumers. This study found the distinction between situational and intentional show rooming conduct. The situational conduct includes store-related and sales personnel-related factors, whereas intentional show rooming conduct includes motivational and ability-related factors. This study showed the consequences of show rooming behavior of consumers in India. This study revealed that the factors such as sales-staff assistance, evaluation convenience, deals and discounts, and online purchase convenience influenced show rooming intention.

Table 1
Chi Square Test for Gender and Spent Time to Research the Products in Online

Cross tabulation		Gender		Total	Inference
		Male	Female		
Time spent to research the products in online	Less than 1hour	58	60	118	Pearson Chi-Square = 7.668
	1-3 hour	16	35	51	
	3-5 hour	0	4	4	p value = 0.053
	More than 5 hours	5	7	12	
Total		79	106	185	

Interpretation

It is inferred that Pearson chi-square value is 7.668 and the p value is 0.053 which is more than the level of significance (0.05). Therefore, there is no association between gender and time spent to research the products in online. Hence, H₀ is accepted.

Occupation and Time Spent to Research the Products in Online

H₀: There is no association between occupation and time spent to research the products in online.

H₁: There is an association between occupation and time spent to research the products in online.

Table 2
Chi Square Test for Occupation and Spent Time to Research the Products in Online

Cross tabulation		Occupation					Total	Inference
		Student	Salaried person	Self employed	Home maker	Professional		
Time spent to research the products in online	Less than 1hour	79	26	5	5	3	118	Pearson Chi-Square = 19.939 p value = 0.068
	1-3 hour	39	8	0	4	0	51	
	3-5 hour	2	0	0	1	1	4	
	More than 5 hours	8	2	1	1	0	12	
Total		128	36	6	11	4	185	

Interpretation

It is inferred that Pearson chi-square value is 19.939 and p value is 0.068 which is more than the level of significance (0.05). Therefore, there is no association between occupation and time spent to research the products in online. Hence, HO is accepted.

Table 3
Paried T-Test for Satisfaction Level of Respondents Towards Showrooming and Webrooming

	Category	Mean	Standard deviation	t-value	p-value
Level of Satisfaction	Show rooming	4.29	0.773	6.615	<0.001
	Web rooming	3.82	0.878		

Interpretation

From the above table, it is inferred that the mean value of show rooming is greater than the mean value of web rooming. The p value (<0.001) which is less than the significance value of 0.05. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the satisfaction level of respondents towards show rooming and web rooming. Hence, H1 is accepted.

Findings of the Study

- The opinion of the respondents on factors influencing their online purchase shows that:
 - **Shop from anywhere, anytime:** 44.9% agreed
 - **Wide variety of products:** 51.4% agreed
 - **Online reviews and ratings:** 41.6% agreed
 - **Availability of better discounts & price deals:** 43.8% agreed
 - **Flexible payment option:** 45.9% agreed
- The opinion of respondents towards frequency of using online platforms to research products shows that:
 - **Google:** 36.8% of the respondents always use google to research products online.
 - **Social Media Platforms:** 41.1% of the respondents often use these platforms to research products online.
 - **E-Commerce Platforms:** 54.6% of the respondents always use these E-commerce Platforms to research the products online.
 - **Review Sites:** 33.5% of the respondents often use review sites to research products online, 23.8% always use these sites.
 - **Comparison Sites:** 13% of the respondents rarely use these sites.

Suggestions

1. To reduce show rooming, consumer's preference should be identified. The main factors influencing consumers to do online purchase are wide variety of products, flexible payment option. There is a need to bring changes in physical stores to address this issue.
2. Since, majority of the consumers use e-commerce platforms to research the products online, make these platforms as user friendly and providing accurate information makes the consumers to think which may lead to online shopping.
3. By providing same-day or next day delivery options along with free shipping which helps to attract the web roomers, ends up in online shopping.
4. Since consumers often face misleading product information, online retailers should ensure product descriptions are authentic and accurate which helps to increase online sales and reduce web rooming.
5. To reduce show rooming activity, offer in-store only discounts, bundle deals or loyalty rewards help in retaining the customers.

II.CONCLUSION

The study on show rooming and web rooming provides a comprehensive understanding of consumer purchasing patterns in an evolving retail landscape. This study highlights the factors influencing offline and online purchase, challenges faced by the consumers while visiting stores to examine the products before making online purchase and while browsing the products online before making offline purchase. It also focuses on the product categories generally show roomed and web roomed by the consumers.

This study indicates that show rooming is primarily driven by the need to physically examine the products, compare prices, receive expert advice, whereas web rooming is influenced by the factors such as online reviews, convenience, to avoid product disappointment. To address these trends, businesses must adopt an integrated Omni channel approach that enhances the shopping experience across both physical and digital platforms. Ultimately, the success of the retailers depends on their ability to adapt to changing consumer behaviors and offer a seamless shopping experience. Retailers should leverage advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, integrating real-time inventory updates and augmented reality features to analyze consumer preferences and to reduce the likelihood of losing sales to competitors.

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