

# EXAMINING CONSUMERS' CHANNEL-MIGRATION INTENTION UTILIZING THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR: A MULTIGROUP ANALYSIS

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined channel-migration behavior using a decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior with crossover effects in brick-and-mortar stores and the Internet. An online survey was administered at four research sites ( $N = 547$ ) and factor analysis and structural equation modeling, with multigroup analysis, were utilized for data analysis.

Hedonic beliefs did not influence either of the channels, whereas, utilitarian beliefs were significant predictors in both brick-and-mortar stores and the Internet. Additionally, normative beliefs did not influence subjective norms in either of the channels, while self-efficacy influenced perceived behavioral control (PBC) in both the channels. Attitude and subjective norms influenced channel-migration intentions for both channels; whereas, PBC was a significant predictor of channel-migration intentions on the Internet only.

The crossover effects of normative beliefs and subjective norms on attitude was significant for the Internet. The crossover effects for subjective norms and PBC on attitude was significant for brick-and-mortar stores. Attitude toward channel-migration from the Internet to brick-and-mortar stores yielded a negative influence.

**Keywords:** Channel-migration, Theory-of-planned-behavior, Multichannel consumer

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The retail industry is being driven by a new, dynamic equation set in motion by the changing consumer. In increasing numbers, consumers are taking a proactive approach to their purchase decisions and being more selective about those with whom they do business<sup>1</sup>. Consumers today are better educated about products and are quicker to migrate to different channels and retailers if they are not happy with current ones<sup>2</sup>. This behavior is called *channel-migration*, a dynamic process in which a consumer frequents one of several channel options—brick-and-mortar, catalog, or the Internet<sup>3</sup>—before making a purchase decision. Thus, because multiple complementary channels provide more diverse service outputs than single-channel strategies, a retailer increases consumer contact points by adding one of these channels, thereby expanding both the quantity and possible combinations of service outputs available to consumers<sup>4</sup>.

As such, the retail industry has matured, while expansion has dramatically slowed. Loeb<sup>5</sup> determined that retailers must find new ways to create shareholder value using a minimum number of assets (e.g., physical infrastructure, machinery, manpower). Moreover, as the consumer market splinters into smaller and more diverse groups, each consumer assumes the role of many different consumers, depending on the particular purchase occasion or shopping motivation as well as other factors that may affect a particular buying decision<sup>6</sup>.

Consumers are now placing an emphasis on personalization and are responding more favorably to retailers who understand the context of a transaction and provide this personalized service<sup>1,7</sup>. Hence, it is important for multichannel retailers to deliver an integrated multichannel customer experience. Given these new demands, it appears that multiple channels will meet the desire of flexibility as consumers shop for what they want, when they want it, and how they want it<sup>8</sup>. The challenge, then, is to understand how and when consumers use brick-and-mortar stores or the Internet, as well as what drives their propensity to migrate between these channels. The purpose of the current study was to examine how attitudes, subjective norms, and PBC predict channel-migration intentions across these two channels based on the theory of planned behavior (TPB) using multi-group analysis.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Multichannel Consumers and Channel-Migration**

Today, the quality of the consumer experience is the new differentiator in the retail world<sup>7</sup>. This increase in "consumer power" has fed consumers' demand to purchase the exact product they want, precisely when they want it, and through the channel they prefer<sup>9</sup>. Multichannel consumers are those who shop via multiple channels, which results in such consumers spending four times as much as those who confine themselves to one channel for all their purchases<sup>10</sup>.

An important issue for the multichannel retailer is the consumer's channel choices<sup>11</sup>. Each channel continues to have attractions and detractions for multichannel shoppers. Consumers may, therefore, migrate between channels or retailers depending on the benefits of each to the shoppers<sup>12</sup>. For a retailer, it is crucial not only to obtain knowledge about costs and benefits associated with different channels, but also to develop an optimized channel architecture<sup>11</sup> through which to lure consumers rather than waiting for the consumer to choose<sup>13</sup>. Capturing the purchasing power of these sophisticated consumers is a difficult and constant challenge for retailers<sup>14</sup>.

Consumers are now driving the entire retail process<sup>15</sup>. Various facets of shopping behaviors have been examined in past investigations. One study stated that consumers' use of a channel in the shopping process must be considered in light of the final outcome (either information search or purchase of the product). It is also necessary to examine the process of using the channel because channels differ in terms of the opportunities they provide consumers<sup>16</sup>. In a similar vein, another study investigated channel-migration of consumers for the same firm and found a greater perceived integration between the firm's channels led to firm loyalty and was associated with higher customer satisfaction<sup>4, 17</sup>. Additionally, this consumer channel migration has been found to be an important factor in consumer relationship management, because consumers who buy from distinct channel combinations may be different with respect to key drivers of consumer profitability<sup>3, 10</sup>. Furthermore, research examining multichannel choice behaviors for information search and product purchase have yielded evidence concerning differences among channel users, with multichannel users exhibiting no difference in shopping orientation between offline and online purchases<sup>18</sup>. Kumar and Venkatesan's<sup>19</sup> findings indicated that cross-buying, consumer-initiated

contacts, purchase frequency, and number of different channels of contact had a positive impact on multichannel shopping. Kim and Park's<sup>20</sup> study, based on TBP, also provided strong support for the relationships among attitude, PBC, information search, and online purchases. These results further indicated that positive attitudes toward the offline retailer increased the likelihood of the consumer purchasing from the online version of the same retailer. Finally, results by Palmer<sup>21</sup>, who investigated multichannel behaviors on 120 products, indicated that brick-and-mortar stores were preferred for display and delivery, whereas the Internet offered the lowest price options.

Channel-migration is a complex phenomenon and, given that multichannel retailing is a challenging proposition, it also offers retailers enormous opportunities. When retailers effectively integrate multichannel operations, they gain new ways to build loyalty among existing consumers, as well as the potential to attract new consumers<sup>9</sup>. As such, the current study was designed to examine migrating behavior for brick-and-mortar stores and the Internet. The Theory of Planned Behavior<sup>22</sup> is described in the next section and the decomposition of the model and crossover effects are discussed followed by the development of study the hypotheses.

## 2.2 Theory of Planned Behavior

The conceptual framework presented here, draws on the theory of planned behavior model (TBP) which can adequately predict and explain behaviors in specific contexts<sup>22</sup>. In this study, the context is channel-migration while shopping; specifically, using any combination of the two channels (i.e., brick-and-mortar stores and the Internet) as the retailing medium. According to TBP, behavioral intention is the direct antecedent of the actual behavior (B). Behavioral intention (BI) is defined as an individual's likelihood of engaging in the behavior of interest and is a function of three components: (1) attitude (A), (2) subjective norm (SN), and (3) perceived behavioral control (PBC). Attitude, SN, and PBC are measured via the expectancy-value model. Attitude toward the behavior (A) is a function of the beliefs and evaluation of those beliefs. Subjective Norm is a function of an individual's belief that specific individuals or groups think they should or should not perform a behavior (i.e., normative beliefs (NB) and the individual's motivation to comply with those referents (MC)). Perceived behavioral control is determined from two subcomponents: (a) control belief or perceptions of obstacles or resources affecting the behavior and (b) perceived power or the-importance of barriers or resources.

## 2.3 Decomposition and Crossover effects

Decomposition of belief structures in TPB appears to produce more parsimonious and understandable models<sup>23-26</sup>. Decomposition of a belief structure also allows a better understanding of the relationships between belief structures and antecedents of intentions. Thus, in the current study attitudinal beliefs toward channel-migration were measured using hedonic and utilitarian dimensions, as prior studies have indicated the influence of these two variables on attitude<sup>27, 28</sup>. Normative belief structure was not decomposed as significant referents (i.e., friends and family) are expected to be of like mind and decomposition would not provide additional insight. Control over the execution of a behavior depends on the presence of various internal and external factors that may serve to facilitate or interfere in the shopping experience<sup>29</sup>. In this study, self-efficacy, that is, an individual's self-confidence in his or her ability to perform a behavior<sup>30,31</sup>.

Crossover effects concerning the TBP have been shown to enhance model fit<sup>25</sup>. Previous studies have provided evidence for “crossover” effects whereby, findings noted that NB and SN have an influence on attitude<sup>25, 32, 33</sup>. Research has indicated that PBC also influences attitude; however, no empirical study has evaluated this important relationship<sup>34</sup>. In the current study, the crossover effects of NB, SN, and PBC on attitude were examined. Finally, prior research<sup>4, 35</sup> has indicated a positive influence of additional online channels on an offline channel on consumer's intention. Thus, the influence of attitudinal beliefs of migrating from the Internet and the attitude toward migrating from a physical store were analyzed.

## 2.4 Study Variables and Hypothesis Development

The purpose of the current study was to predict consumer channel-migration behaviors toward brick-and-mortar stores and the Internet with predictions based on behavioral intentions. The following section presents the hypotheses and the relationship between the variables via the research model.

**Beliefs Toward Channel-Migration:** Retail attributes can be identified as utilitarian or hedonic. Utilitarian attributes offer practical functionality, whereas hedonic attributes satisfy emotional desires<sup>36</sup>. Historically, researchers have directed attention to the emotional aspects of shopping and the need to understand the shopping experience from both utilitarian and hedonic perspectives<sup>37-40</sup>. However, even in light of extensive literature on the impact of hedonic and utilitarian values in shopping, no study has examined this value system with respect to

channel-migration. Thus, the hypotheses of this study are stated as follows:

H1a: Hedonic and utilitarian beliefs have a positive influence on attitude toward channel-migration from brick-and-mortar stores to the Internet.

H1b: Hedonic and utilitarian beliefs have a positive influence on channel-migration from the Internet to brick-and-mortar stores.

**Normative Beliefs (NB):** Most social scientists agree that individual behavior is motivated, in large part, by “social” factors including the desire for prestige, esteem, popularity, or acceptance<sup>41</sup>. Normative Beliefs constitute the underlying determinants of the SN and are concerned with the likelihood that important referent individuals or groups approve or disapprove of certain behaviors<sup>42</sup>. In a consumer context, shoppers’ purchase decisions are likely to be influenced primarily by family and nonfamily referents<sup>43</sup>. In the current study, family and friends were the two referent groups. Additionally, the crossover effect of NB on attitude was examined. Thus, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H2a: NB will have a positive influence on SN for brick-and-mortar stores.

H2b: NB will have a positive influence on SN for the Internet.

H2c: NB will have a positive influence on attitude toward channel-migration from brick-and-mortar stores to the Internet.

H2d: NB will have a positive influence on attitude toward channel-migration from the Internet to brick-and-mortar stores.

**Self-efficacy:** Self-efficacy is defined as individual’s judgment of his or her capabilities to perform a behavior. Bandura<sup>30</sup> stated the stronger the perceived self-efficacy, the more active the efforts. Applied to channel-migration, self-efficacy refers to consumers’ judgments of their own capabilities to obtain product information and purchase products from the three channels. Therefore, the resulting hypotheses are as follows:

H3a: Self-efficacy will have a positive influence on PBC when migrating from brick-and-mortar stores to the Internet.

H3b: Self-efficacy will have a positive influence on PBC when migrating from the Internet to brick-and-mortar stores.

**Attitude Toward Channel-migration, SN, and PBC:** Attitude has long been shown to influence BI<sup>44</sup> via substantial empirical support. Attitudes toward channel-migration is defined as the consumer’s

evaluation of the desirability of using a channel to purchase products. Using deductive logic, favorable attitude is likely to encourage consumers to switch channels.

Shopping is an experience that people enjoy because it allows them the opportunity to meet with others<sup>37</sup>. Additionally, consumers' selection of shopping channel is influenced by the belief that people similar to them use that channel<sup>45</sup>. Subjective Norm suggests that behavior is instigated by one's desire to act as others do or as they think one should, and hence, will reflect consumer perceptions of whether channel-migration behavior is accepted, encouraged, and implemented by the consumer's circle of influence<sup>46</sup>.

Perceived Behavioral Control represents perceptions of control rather than actual control and, the more accurate the PBC, the more likely it will reflect true control over the behavior in question. Therefore, by providing more shopping channel choices a retailer may increase the perceived level of control<sup>47, 48</sup>. Additionally, the crossover effects and the influence of attitude on migrating from the Internet to brick-and-mortar stores were examined. In light of this, the third and final sets of hypotheses are stated as follows:

H4a: Attitude, SN, and PBC will have a positive influence on channel-migration intentions from brick-and-mortar stores to the Internet.

H4b: Attitude, SN, and PBC will have a positive influence on channel-migration intentions from the Internet to brick-and-mortar stores.

H4c: SN will have a positive influence on attitude toward channel-migration from brick-and-mortar stores to the Internet.

H4d: SN will have a positive influence on attitude toward channel-migration from the Internet to brick-and-mortar stores.

H4e: PBC will have a positive influence on attitude toward channel-migration from brick-and-mortar stores to the Internet.

H4f: PBC will have a positive influence on attitude toward channel-migration from the Internet to brick-and-mortar stores.

H4g: Attitude toward channel-migration from the Internet to brick-and-mortar stores will have a positive influence on attitude toward channel-migration from brick-and-mortar stores to the Internet.

### 3. METHODS

Behavioral beliefs were adapted from the scale developed by Babin et al.<sup>37</sup>. The scale included seven items on a 7-point range bipolar-scale: -3 = “Unlikely” to +3 = “Likely”. The attitudes toward each channel were measured from a scale developed by Taylor & Todd<sup>25,26</sup>. The three 7-point semantic differential scales included the following sets: foolish/wise and bad/good. Normative Beliefs and SN items were also adapted from Taylor and Todd<sup>25,26</sup>. Four normative items were included to measure NB. Subjective Norms were measured using four statements on a bipolar scale (-3 “unlikely” to +3 “likely”). Channel-migration intention was measured using a 7-point range bipolar scale (-3 “unlikely” to +3 “likely”) adapted from Taylor and Todd<sup>25,26</sup> and consisted of two statements. Consumer demographic characteristics were measured for a descriptive purpose and included gender, age, classification (i.e., students, faculty, or staff), and annual household income. The survey instrument was pretested with students ( $N = 50$ ) at a major land-grant university. Based on pretest results, items were revised to ensure readability and a logical flow of questions. The pretest sample was not included in the final data set.

#### 3.1 Participants and Data Collection

Participants in the current study comprised of staff, faculty, and students from four different universities in the Southern and Midwestern United States. The survey instrument was developed using the software SurveyMonkey and was administered online. Since the study assumed that respondents would be conversant with online shopping, a Web survey was deemed a good fit for the study. This study was based on convenience sampling, with a total of 547 completed surveys obtained. Even though the majority of respondents were college students, this cohort wields formidable spending power and hence, need to be investigated as their discretionary spending increased 13% from \$270 billion in 2009 to \$306 billion in 2010, making them an important demographic segment<sup>49</sup>.

#### 3.2 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS and LISREL. Frequency statistics were obtained for the demographic variables. Behavioral, NB, and self-efficacy were measured using the expectancy-value model. The indirect measures of attitude were obtained as a product of the beliefs toward channel-migration and its outcomes. The indirect measures of SN were obtained as a product of NB and motivation to comply. The indirect measures of PBC were obtained as a product of control beliefs and

perceived power. To test the proposed hypotheses and explore the causal relationships, a structural equation model (SEM) was used.

### 3.3 Demographic Profile

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency ( <i>N</i> = 547)	Percent
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	453	82.8
Male	94	17.2
<b>Age</b>		
18 – 22	290	53.0
23 – 27	68	12.4
28 – 32	44	8.0
33 – 37	22	4.0
38 – 42	22	4.0
43 – 47	30	5.5
48 – 52	29	5.3
Over 52	42	7.7
<b>Household income</b>		
Less than \$9,999	52	9.5
\$10,000 - \$29,999	68	12.4
\$30,000 - \$49,999	87	15.9
\$50,000 - \$69,999	95	17.4
\$70,000 - \$89,999	80	14.6
\$90,001 or more	16	30.2
<b>Classification</b>		
Undergraduate	342	62.6
Graduate	62	11.3
Faculty and Staff	143	26.1

A total of 547 usable questionnaires were included in data analysis. The demographic profile indicated that 82.8% of respondents were female, with 53% between 18 and 27 years of age, and 30% with an annual household income of over \$90,000. The higher income can be attributed to the fact that participants were asked to report gross household income. Participants included undergraduate students (62.6%), graduate students (11.3%), and faculty and staff (26.1%).

### 3.4 Measurement Model and Structural Model Testing

The four-step approach recommended by Mulaik and Millsap<sup>50</sup> was used as a guide to test the SEM. The four-step approach consists of a

common factor analysis to establish the number of latent variables and assess construct validity and a CFA to confirm the measurement model, including reliability and validity of measures, test of the structural model, and test of nested models or model modification to obtain the model of best fit. The causal model testing was conducted using LISREL 8.72 with maximum-likelihood estimation method. Fit statistics, including chi-square, comparative fit index (CFI), Standardized Root Mean Squared Residual (SRMR), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), assessed model fit. A chi-square test assessed the adequacy of the hypothesized model to reflect variance and covariance of the data. For the statistical significance of parameter estimates,  $t$  values were used. Generally, fit statistics greater than or equal to .90 for CFI indicate a good model fit<sup>51</sup>. Similarly, RMSEA values lower than 0.05 and SRMR values lower than 0.08 indicate adequate model fit.

The first step identified latent variables in the model using SPSS as an exploratory factor analysis and a principal component with varimax rotation. A minimum eigenvalue of one was used as the criterion to control the number of factors extracted. Measured variables with factor or pattern coefficients greater than .40 on a single factor were included as part of the factor (see Table 2).

**Brick-and-mortar stores:** An exploratory factor analysis revealed two factors, Hedonic Behavioral Beliefs ( $\alpha = 0.89$ ) and Utilitarian Behavioral Beliefs ( $\alpha = 0.88$ ), which explained 78.32% of the total variance.

**Internet:** An exploratory factor analysis revealed two factors, Hedonic Behavioral Beliefs ( $\alpha = 0.94$ ) and Utilitarian Behavioral Beliefs ( $\alpha = 0.93$ ), which explained 87.12% of the total variance.

The second step was to test the fit of the measurement model by constraining or referencing the factor loading of one variable per latent construct to one. The fit of the measurement model was acceptable ( $\chi^2 = 33778.08$ , CFI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.068, and SRMR = 0.052). Therefore, the measurement model was retained without any modifications. The third step tested the fit of the structural model by adding the hypothesized relationships between latent variables. The final model revealed an overall acceptable fit ( $\chi^2 = 2421.92$ ,  $df = 910$ ,  $p = 0.00000$ , CFI = .95, RMSEA = 0.055, and SRMR = 0.059). Figure 1 displays the results of the causal model analysis only showing the statistically significant paths. The effect sizes have been placed directly below the path coefficients. A parameter estimate  $t$  value greater than 2.00 was considered an indicator of statistical significance<sup>52</sup>.

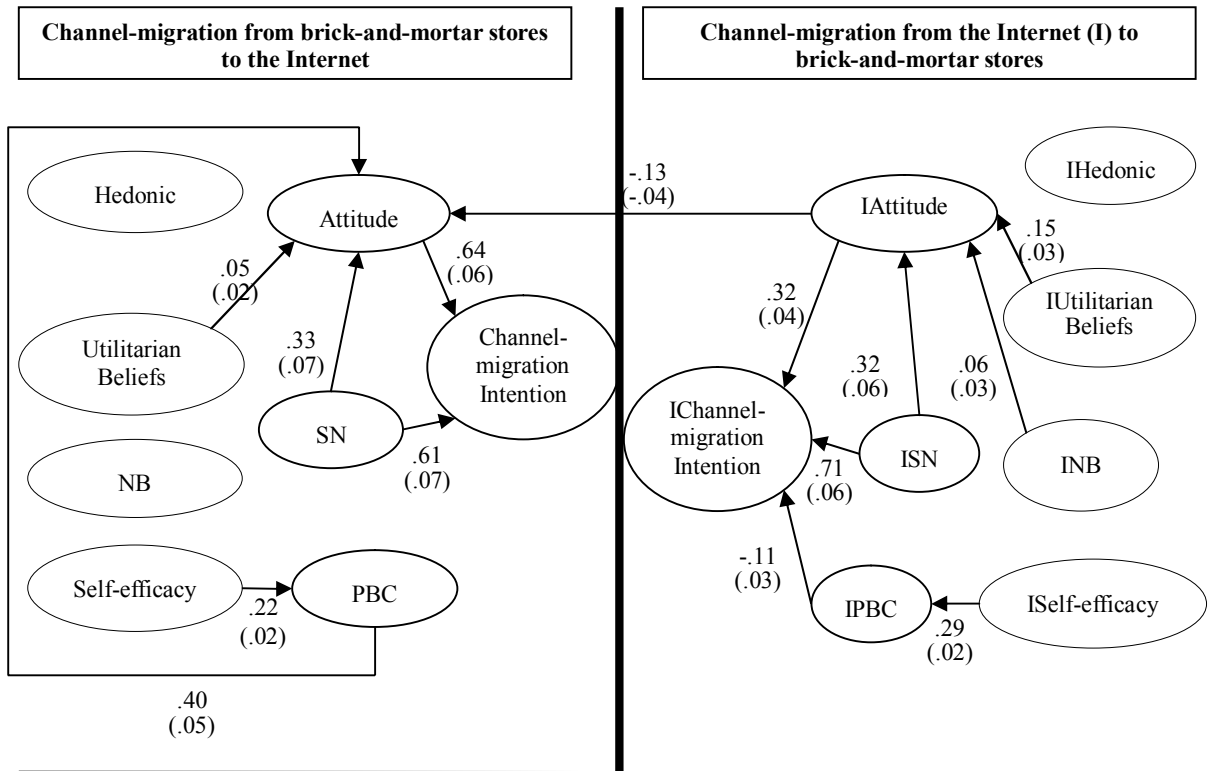
**Brick-and-mortar stores:** Hedonic beliefs yielded a statistically significant influence on attitude, thus, H1a was partially supported. Normative Beliefs did not impact SN or attitude, hence, H2a and H2c were not supported. Self-efficacy positively influenced PBC in support of hypothesis H3a. Only attitude and SN influenced channel-migration intentions, thus, partially supported H4a. Subjective Norms and PBC yielded a statistically significant influence on attitude in support of hypotheses H4c and H4e.

**Internet:** Hedonic beliefs did not influence attitude, thus, H1a was partially supported. Subjective Norm was not influenced by NB, hence, H2b was not supported. Normative Beliefs yielded a statistically significant influence on attitude in support of hypothesis H2d. Perceived behavioral control was significantly influenced by self-efficacy, supporting H3b. The hypothesis, H4b was fully supported by a significant influence of attitude, SN, and PBC. However, PBC influence on channel-migration was negative. Subjective Norm significantly influenced attitude, thus, supported H4d. Perceived behavioral control did not influence attitude toward channel-migration from the Internet to bricks-and-mortar stores, thus, H4f was not supported. Finally, attitude toward channel-migration from the Internet to bricks-and-mortar stores influenced attitude toward channel-migration from bricks-and-mortar stores to the Internet; however, the relationship was negative and supported hypothesis H4g.

**Table 2.** Factor Analysis of Behavioral Beliefs

Factor items	Brick-and-mortar Stores				Internet			
	Factor loading	Eigen value	% of variance	$\alpha$	Factor loading	Eigen value	% of variance	$\alpha$
<b>Hedonic Behavioral Beliefs</b>		3.00	42.92	.89		3.28	46.83	.94
It is enjoyable	.89				.91			
It is fun	.88				.88			
It is rewarding	.82				.77			
The shopping experience truly felt satisfying	.81				.86			
<b>Utilitarian Behavioral Beliefs</b>		2.47	35.40	.89		2.82	40.29	.93
It is easy	.91				.89			
It is convenient	.89				.86			
It is efficient	.85				.88			
<b>Attitude</b>		2.61	86.91	.92		2.58	86.03	.92
I think changing from A <sub>1,2</sub> to B <sub>1,2</sub> is bad/good	.93				.94			
Changing from A <sub>1,2</sub> to B <sub>1,2</sub> is foolish/wise	.92				.93			
Using B <sub>1,2</sub> instead of A <sub>1,2</sub> is bad/good	.90				.92			
<b>Normative Beliefs</b>		1.94	48.53	.64		2.56	63.99	.81
My friends approve of my changing from A <sub>1,2</sub> to B <sub>1,2</sub>	.67				.83			
My family approves of my changing from A <sub>1,2</sub> to B <sub>1,2</sub>	.57				.81			
My friends would think that I should change from A <sub>1,2</sub> to B <sub>1,2</sub>	.80				.80			
<b>Subjective Norms</b>		1.44	72.15	.61		1.55	77.61	.71
The people who influence my decisions would approve of my changing from A <sub>1,2</sub> to B <sub>1,2</sub>	.85				.88			
The people who influence my decisions think that I should change from A <sub>1,2</sub> to B <sub>1,2</sub>	.85				.88			
<b>Self-efficacy</b>		1.79	89.62	.88		1.79	89.45	.88
I would be able to change from A <sub>1,2</sub> to B <sub>1,2</sub>	.95				.95			
I have the resources, knowledge and ability to change from A <sub>1,2</sub> to B <sub>1,2</sub>	.95				.95			
I would feel comfortable changing from A <sub>1,2</sub> to B <sub>1,2</sub> on my own	.86				.89			
<b>Perceived Behavioral Control</b>		2.48	82.74	.90		2.49	83.13	.90
I know enough to change from A <sub>1,2</sub> to B <sub>1,2</sub> on my own	.94				.94			
If I wanted to, I could easily change from A <sub>1,2</sub> to B <sub>1,2</sub> on my own	.92				.90			
My family would think that I should change from A <sub>1,2</sub> to B <sub>1,2</sub>	.73				.76			
<b>Channel-migration Intention</b>		1.61	80.45	.76		1.60	80.16	.75
I intend to change to B <sub>1,2</sub> from A <sub>1,2</sub> while shopping	.90				.90			
I plan to change to B <sub>1,2</sub> from A <sub>1,2</sub> for all my shopping	.90				.90			

A<sub>1</sub>: brick-and-mortar stores    A<sub>2</sub>: Internet    B<sub>1</sub>: Internet    B<sub>2</sub>: brick-and-mortar



**Figure 2.** Theory of Planned Behavior with belief decomposition and crossover effects: Statistically significant paths

$R^2_{\text{Attitude (Stores)}}$	0.32	$R^2_{\text{Attitude (Internet)}}$	0.27
$R^2_{\text{PBC (Stores)}}$	0.44	$R^2_{\text{PBC (Internet)}}$	0.47
$R^2_{\text{Channel-migration Intention (Stores)}}$	0.62	$R^2_{\text{Channel-migration Intention (Internet)}}$	0.74

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the consumer data analysis conducted in the current study suggest that independent variables in each channel have similarities and differences when predicting dependent variables. Hedonic beliefs did not influence the attitude toward channel-migration for both channels; therefore, indicating that consumers' attitudes toward channel-migration is not influenced by experiential factors. However, utilitarian beliefs significantly influenced the attitudes for both channels. The current findings imply that shoppers, considering migrating between these two channels, may be influenced by the convenience factor, which poses that the belief that migrating channels will be more efficient. This finding supports the general trend of technologically savvy consumers who are comfortable shopping via multiple channels.

Normative beliefs are defined as the tendency to conform to the expectations of significant others. In the current study, NB were not a significant predictor for either channel. This result contradicts earlier studies on online purchase intentions and retail store patronage, where NB positively affected SN<sup>53, 54</sup>. In other words, consumers will not be influenced by their peers when considering channel-migration for shopping needs. This finding is important, insofar as “peer influence” is an important consideration in retail and its absence in deciding whether to switch channels when shopping may have important implications for retail strategy. The crossover effect of NB significantly influenced attitudes for both channels, thus, supporting Taylor and Todd’s<sup>25</sup> findings. Self-efficacy was a significant predictor of PBC in both channels. Measure of self-efficacy is a powerful indicator of whether consumers perceive a degree of control over migrating channels while shopping.

Attitude and SN were significant predictors of channel-migration intentions for both channels. Previous studies on consumers’ BI have supported a causal relationship between a favorable attitude and intentions<sup>25, 26, 55</sup>. In consumer research, attitude has been considered the most important predictor of a person’s BI<sup>55</sup>. However, this assumption is not supported in the current study, as both channels yielded a larger path coefficient value for SN. These findings support Ajzen’s<sup>56</sup>, which stated that the weight of each belief (i.e., attitude, SN) in influencing a person’s BI may vary based on the nature of the behavior under investigation. This supports research findings, which suggest that, while attitude and SN influence intentions, the SN component may be more influential because of the nature of new shopping behaviors<sup>57</sup>. In other words, individuals attempt to fit in with perceived opinions of important others concerning the shopping method via channel-migration. These findings are important especially when viewed with respect to NB. As stated earlier, SN was not influenced by NB; conversely, SN positively influenced channel-migration intentions. Thus, it can be inferred that, while individuals may not conform to peer or family influence with respect to channel-migration, their channel-migration intentions are positively influenced by their social environment. Furthermore, the significant influence of the crossover effect of SN on attitude supported previous studies<sup>33</sup> for both channels.

Perceived behavioral control significantly influenced channel-migration intentions for the Internet. Earlier research has found that consumers may feel perceived control is as real as actual control and can, therefore, enhance the evaluation and value of the experience (i.e., channel-migration)<sup>57</sup>. The negative relationship between PBC and channel-migration intention is similar to Lim and Dubinsky’s<sup>54</sup> study. As

such, it can be inferred that, when consumers have higher perceived control over their abilities to migrate from the Internet to brick-and-mortar stores, they are less likely to switch channels than when they experience lower PBC over channel-migration. The crossover effect of PBC on attitude toward channel-migration was significant only for brick-and-mortar stores. Thus, it can be inferred that higher perceived control in migrating from brick-and-mortar stores to the internet will result in a more positive attitude toward such channel-migration. Finally, attitudes toward channel-migration from the Internet to brick-and-mortar stores negatively influenced attitude toward channel-migration from brick-and-mortar stores to the Internet. This finding has important implications for retailers as it indicates that consumers who are already shopping on the Internet hold a lower view of migrating to brick-and-mortar. In other words, consumers are more comfortable shopping online and see no reason to migrate between the channels.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Overall, the current study succeeded in predicting the causal relationships for brick-and-mortar stores and the Internet, with implications for academia as well as the retail industry.

**Educator Implications and Recommendations:** Earlier research has used a larger number of variables to predict attitudes toward shopping behavior. This study was able to predict attitude using the hedonic and utilitarian behavioral belief scale, thereby reducing the number of variables required. Such a reduction in the number of items is apt to lower the administration time of the questionnaire and, consequently, reduce participant fatigue. However, results did not support earlier research that has established the predictive power of NB for SN. Due to recent developments in technology and burgeoning Internet use, researchers must examine other variables that may influence SN, such as online blogs, user-generated reviews, and other online decision aids.

This research explored the crossover effect from PBC to attitude and found the effect to be important for brick-and-mortar stores. This researcher suggests that further studies utilizing TBP with crossover effects examine this relationship, as PBC is an important variable that makes TBP a robust research model. Additionally, its influence on other variables may provide further insight in channel-migration behavior. Furthermore, findings from this study indicate a relationship between the attitude variable for both channels. This finding is significant given that the number of multi-channel consumers is increasing and it is, therefore,

imperative to understand how consumer attitudes toward channel-migration for each channel may influence channel-migration behavior; a topic that requires further exploration.

**Retailer Implications and Recommendations:** Influence of peers as well as the need to conform are important parameters that affect retail strategy. As this study indicates, consumers are not influenced by their peers or family, rather their attitudes toward channel-migration are influenced by their SN. As more consumers use “non-traditional” aids such as blogs, customer-generated reviews, or e-word-of-mouth, it is important for retailers to consider such tools as an integral part of their retailing strategy as these elements may influence channel-migration intentions. Additionally, retailers can no longer assume consumers behave in similar fashions across channels and, therefore, should strive to understand the shift in consumer perceptions with regard to retail formats. Due to the increase of technologically savvy consumers, retailers must work harder to understand what influences attitudes to migrate between channels, especially since both channels have very different things to offer. Offering the “online” channel in stores with the help of kiosks as well as driving traffic between channels by utilizing social media may increase consumer loyalty. In conclusion, even though the distinction between retail formats is becoming diffused, they are not becoming homogenous. Consumers do perceive the various retail formats differently, however, the points of difference and the perceptions of these retail formats are constantly evolving.

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