Showrooming, Webrooming, and User-Generated Content Creation:
The Moderating Effect of SoLoMo

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Keywords: Showrooming, SoLoMo, user-generated content, webrooming

Significance. In comparison with traditional multichannel shoppers, omnichannel shoppers simultaneously use all channels including brick-and-mortar stores, catalogs, web, mobile, and social media, not just one or two channels (Thoma, 2010). Due to the surge in smartphone and tablet purchases as well as increased engagement with user-generated content on social media platforms, showrooming and webrooming are prominent shopping trends among shoppers in omnichannel retail. Showrooming describes the practice of examining products in a brick-and-mortar store but ultimately making the actual purchase online or on a mobile device (Richter, 2013). Webrooming describes the practice of researching products online or on a mobile device but ultimately making the actual purchase in a brick and mortar store (Kramer, 2014). As one of today's dominant consumer trends, Social-Local-Mobile (SoLoMo) is the convergence of social media platforms, mobile commerce, and new geolocation technologies (Rouse, 2013). An increasing number of retailers are implementing the omnichannel retailing strategy through SoLoMo apps (e.g., Facebook Places, Foursquare, AroundMe, Groupon, LivingSocial, and Yelp) for customers' real-time personalized shopping experience. Despite the growing importance of omnichannel retailing in this regard, there is a significant lack of research examining underlying factors that influence consumers' showrooming and webrooming as a purchase behavior, as well as user-generated content creation as a post-purchase behavior. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine (1) whether omnichannel shoppers' motives (i.e., information attainment, price comparison, social interaction, assortment seeking, and convenience seeking) were related to showrooming and webrooming (H3-H7), which were related to user-generated content creation intention on social media (H1-H2) and (2) whether the SoLoMo experience moderated the links between showrooming/webrooming and user-generated content creation intention (H8).

Conceptual Model. Based on five stages of the consumer purchasing decision process, problem recognition was conceptualized as five exogenous constructs: (a) information attainment, (b) price comparison, (c) social interaction, (d) assortment seeking, and (e) convenience seeking. Information search, evaluation of alternatives, and purchase stages were conceptualized as showrooming and webrooming. The post-purchase behavior stage was conceptualized as user-generated content creation intention on social media (see Figure 1).

Method. An online survey was administered to a total of 680 omnichannel shoppers with showrooming and webrooming experience from a U.S. consumer panel. This study focused on apparel and beauty product categories because apparel is found to be one of the more heavily showroomed product categories.

Participant Characteristics. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 54, and they were women (53.3%) and men (46.7%). The majority of participants were Caucasian (81.1%), followed by Asian/Pacific Islander (7.3%). The median income was $60,000-$69,999.

Results. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to test the convergent and discriminant validity and composite reliability of the set of measures. A structural analysis was conducted using the

maximum likelihood estimation method. The model exhibited a good fit with the data ($\chi^2 = 913.59$ with 309 *df*, $\chi^2/df = 2.95$, CFI = .94, NNFI = .93, RMSEA = .058, and SRMR = .068). Regarding H1, showrooming ($\beta = .27$, $t = 6.20$, $p < .001$) and webrooming ($\beta = .22$, $t = 5.21$, $p < .001$) were related to user-generated content creation intention. For H3a-H7a, information attainment ($\gamma = .22$, $t = 3.60$, $p < .001$), price comparison ($\gamma = .24$, $t = 3.70$, $p < .001$), and social interaction ($\gamma = .10$, $t = 2.12$, $p < .05$) were positively related to showrooming. For H3b-H7b, information attainment ($\gamma = .18$, $t = 2.92$, $p < .001$), social interaction ($\gamma = .20$, $t = 4.73$, $p < .001$), and assortment seeking ($\gamma = .13$, $t = 2.53$, $p < .05$) were positively related to webrooming. For H8, the SoLoMo experience moderated the link between webrooming and user-generated content creation, $F (1, 676) = 4.18$, $p < .05$.
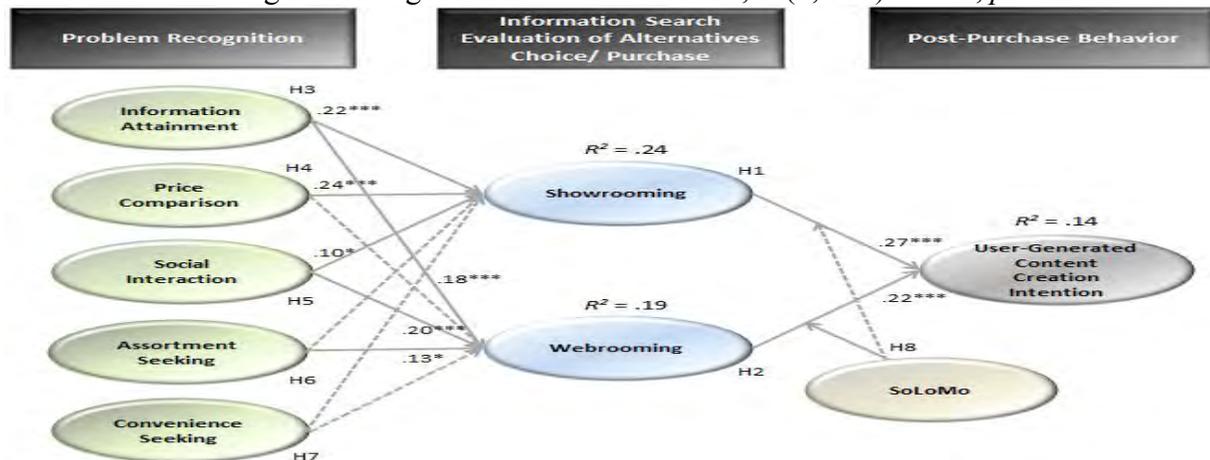

Figure 1. Final model

    <u>Conclusions and Implications</u>. To satisfy showroomers' and webroomers' user-generated content creation intentions, retailers need to vastly extend the social share buttons, enabling the ability to share products and promotions via social media. To fulfill showroomers' and webroomers' information attainment and social interaction motives, retailers need to reinforce shoppers' omnichannel access to information across all channels, provide in-store customers with real-time feedback and customized information with social interaction, and accelerate interactions by fostering virtual communities. To satisfy showroomers' price comparison inclination, retailers need to offer price comparisons across all channels. To fulfill webroomers' assortment seeking, retailers could provide their online stores with information on merchandise in stock via the retailers' inventory control systems. The relationship between webrooming and user-generated content creation intention was greater for SoLoMo consumers than non-SoLoMo consumers.

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