Investigating consumers' path to showrooming: a perceived value-based perspective

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Abstract

Purpose – Grounded on the concept of a value trade-off, the authors of this study seek to address the question of why some people visit an offline store before purchasing online. The authors offer a novel perspective by identifying and describing the perceived value drivers (benefits and sacrifices) associated with showrooming in the context of the branded apparel segment.
Design/methodology/approach – Data collected from 318 showrooming customers were analysed in the context of the proposed perceived value framework using the structural equation modelling method.
Findings – The results showed that enhanced product evaluation, monetary savings, smart shopper feelings and perceived enjoyment (positively) and search costs and online risk (negatively) influenced consumers' showrooming value perceptions as benefits and sacrifices associated with showrooming. Only perceived consumption delay emerged as insignificant. As expected, perceived showrooming value was identified as an important driver of showrooming intentions.
Research limitations/implications – The application of this paper's findings is limited to the branded apparel segment. The model can be tested in other sectors with a larger sample size to gain deeper insights.
Practical implications – The findings can be utilized by brick-and-mortar retailers to retain showrooming customers.
Originality/value – The authors of the current research work contribute to a better understanding of showrooming by adopting a perceived-value-based perspective, which offers an alternative yet effective route for understanding showrooming.

Keywords Showrooming, Perceived value, Benefits, Sacrifices, Apparel
Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Incidences of consumers shopping solely via one channel have become a thing of the past, and modern consumers are increasingly "free-riding" (Aw, 2019) and shopping through integrated channels (Goraya *et al.*, 2020), establishing showrooming as the new norm for multi-channel shoppers (Fernández *et al.*, 2018). Showrooming signifies consumers' commitment towards inspecting products at brick-and-mortar retailers before purchasing online (Fassnacht *et al.*, 2019; Rapp *et al.*, 2015). While a PwC report revealed that 68% of shoppers deliberately gathered product information at offline stores before purchasing online, Skeldon (2015) confirmed that 41% shoppers were persistent showroomers, which highlights the escalating challenges for brick-and-mortar retailers (Daunt and Harris, 2017). The significance of showrooming can be further seen in the fact that offline retailers that spend money on employing sales-staff and offering advisory services, as well as providing a tactile experience for shoppers, get zero revenue in return (Fernández *et al.*, 2018).

Although several researchers have continued to assert that showrooming is a serious threat, which could result in the massive loss of sales and profits for brick-and-mortar

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retailers (Balakrishnan *et al.*, 2014; Mehra *et al.*, 2018), the issue remains under-explored. Existing showrooming literature clearly indicates that researchers have either examined showrooming from the perspective of channel benefits and shopping motivations (Arora and Sahney, 2018; Burns *et al.*, 2018; Gensler *et al.*, 2017; Kang, 2018) or from a decision- making (Sit *et al.*, 2017) or a value co-creation/co-destruction-based ideology (Daunt and Harris, 2017). Despite being valid and enriching, the researchers in these studies have offered a constrained view of showrooming. To fill this gap, the authors of the current study adopted a value-based outlook to understand consumers' motivation behind showrooming. Value trade-off, which is well-established as an important criterion in consumer-choice and decision-making literature (Chiu *et al.*, 2014; Dastane *et al.*, 2020; Kim *et al.*, 2007; Sweeney *et al.*, 1997; Zeithaml, 1988) offers an alternative yet effective cognitive route for investigating showrooming through the lens of perceived gains and sacrifices, which remains unmapped. The authors of the present study additionally contribute by using consumer-branded apparel as the focus of the research. Even though consumer apparel is one of the product categories deemed most susceptible to showrooming (Google Consumer Barometer, 2015; Quint *et al.*, 2013), past researchers have focused mainly on consumer electronics (Arora *et al.*, 2017; Basak *et al.*, 2017). It is anticipated that retailers selling branded apparel could be affected by showrooming because of consumers' desire for a trial and a tactile product experience in the case of apparel (Kim and Knight, 2007; Yu and Park, 2014). In this context, the main purpose of the current paper is to provide a comprehensive view of perceived value (PV), encompassing both perceived benefits and sacrifices associated with showrooming. Hence, the current research aims to answer two research questions:

RQ1. What are the potential benefits and sacrifices associated with showrooming in the context of branded apparel?

RQ2. Is perceived (showrooming) value an influential driver of showrooming intentions in the context of branded apparel?

2. Literature review

2.1 Theoretical background of showrooming

Showrooming has largely been conceptualized as a dominant form of cross-channel free-riding behaviour involving offline search followed by an online purchase (Kuksov and Liao, 2018; Schneider and Zielke, 2020). Quite recently, an important study by Sit *et al.* (2017) investigated showrooming from the perspective of consumer experience, and the researchers asserted that showroomers assimilate both price- and non-price-related information across various channels, demonstrating a showroomer's high need for information attainment (Kang, 2018). Sit *et al.* (2017) further argued that it is not just the price but also the service excellence criteria (such as product warranty and after-sales service) that affect consumers' choice of purchase channel while showrooming. Alternatively, Daunt and Harris (2017) proposed that showrooming is a form of value co-creation and co-destruction behaviour. While, on the one hand, a showroomer co-creates value with an online store by purchasing online, on the other hand, this negatively affects the brick-and-mortar retailer from whom the showroomer obtained value without engaging in a monetary transaction, signifying co-destruction. Similarly, the combination of the perceived value of in-store shopping and online shopping has been found to facilitate showrooming (Daunt and Harris, 2017). This supports the findings of Arora *et al.* (2017, 2020) and Arora and Sahney (2018), who showed that showrooming helps consumers to benefit both from online and offline channels simultaneously. Showrooming customers not only take advantage of the in-store benefits, such as touch, feel and sales-staff support, but also benefit from low prices online. Gensler *et al.* (2017) suggested that showrooming helps consumers to identify their ideal product fit

and that it is the perceived differences in offline and online prices that encourage showrooming.

However, researchers have now started distinguishing between competitive and loyal showroomers. While the former switch both the channel and the retailer and negatively impact the profitability of brick-and-mortar retailers, the latter impact profitability positively by purchasing from the same retailer online (Schneider and Zielke, 2020). Regarding competitive showroomers, the negative impact of showrooming is not only limited to the profitability (Balakrishnan *et al.*, 2014; Mehra *et al.*, 2018) and overall store performance of brick-and-mortar retailers; a negative impact has also been shown on salespersons' self-efficacy (Rapp *et al.*, 2015), making it an issue of critical concern. Salespersons' self-efficacy here relates to salespersons' beliefs regarding their ability to convert in-store customers into buyers (Rapp *et al.*, 2015).

Interestingly, a few researchers have offered a positive perspective on showrooming in light of the first-hand selling opportunities that it offers brick-and-mortar retailers (Kuksov and Liao, 2018; Sit *et al.*, 2017), as well as the proposed view that showroomers are more likely to purchase products at higher prices offline (Viejo-Fernández *et al.*, 2020). From a strategic perspective, cross-selling (Rapp *et al.*, 2015), maintaining a unique product assortment (Mehra *et al.*, 2018) and encouraging high-quality interactions between sales staff and customers (Fassnacht *et al.*, 2019) have been proposed as effective in selling products to showroomers while they are in store.

2.2 Concept of perceived value (PV)

Zeithaml (1988, p. 14) defined customer-perceived value as "a cognitive trade-off of sacrifices and benefits which are associated with consumption practices". At a high level of abstraction, PV expresses an individual's overall assessment of the salient "give" and "get" components in exchange situations, which have been effectively utilised to understand consumer behaviour in diverse retailing situations (Charton-Vachet *et al.*, 2020; Pham *et al.*, 2018; Yoon *et al.*, 2014). In the recent years, PV has been seen as a critical factor in comprehending the multi-channel shopping behaviour of consumers (Huré *et al.*, 2017), which indicates its relevance for examining the showrooming phenomenon. Thus, the authors of current study aim to examine the PV of showrooming by assessing both the perceived benefits and sacrifices (Fang *et al.*, 2016; Lin *et al.*, 2020; Wang *et al.*, 2018) associated with showrooming. According to Zeithaml (1988), while perceived sacrifice is influenced both by perceived monetary and non-monetary price, perceived benefits take account of the advantages, paybacks and utility emerging from a product, service or behaviour, as advanced by both past (Babin *et al.*, 1994; Holbrook, 1994; Kim *et al.*, 2007) and present researchers (Hsu and Lin, 2018; Vishwakarma *et al.*, 2020; Wang *et al.*, 2018; Yu *et al.*, 2019). It is expected that the insights emerging from the PV standpoint will enrich the body of work on showrooming by capturing both gain and loss elements, which in turn are expected to determine an individual's showrooming value perceptions.

3. Proposed model and hypothesis development

Using the theoretical background of the perceived value-based intention frameworks (Dodds and Monroe, 1985; Zeithaml, 1988; Kim *et al.*, 2007; Hsu and Lin, 2018; Vishwakarma *et al.*, 2020; Yu *et al.*, 2019), the research model, shown in Figure 1, predicts how consumers' perceptions of benefits (i.e. enhanced product evaluation, monetary savings, smart shopper feelings and perceived enjoyment) and sacrifices (i.e. search costs, perceived consumption delay and online risk) linked with showrooming will influence their value perceptions. The model also tests the impact of value perceptions on consumers' intentions towards showrooming. The following sections develop the theoretical backing of the proposed hypotheses.

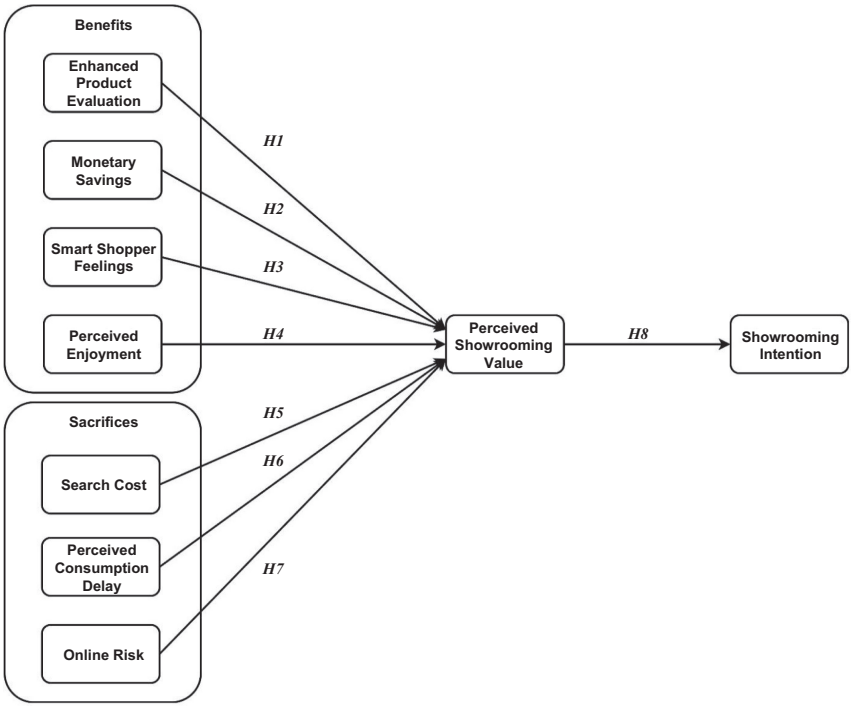


Figure 1.
Conceptual framework (Adapted from Kim *et al.*, 2007)

3.1 Potential benefits of showrooming

Numerous researchers have consistently documented the relevance of perceived benefits as an important component of the value framework (Kim *et al.*, 2007; Yu *et al.*, 2017a; Zeithaml, 1988). There exists ample empirical evidence suggesting the complementary association between perceived benefits and an individuals' value perceptions (Dastane *et al.*, 2020; Ledden *et al.*, 2007; Lin *et al.*, 2012). Based on the verified impact of perceived benefits on channel choices (Verhoef *et al.*, 2007; Wang *et al.*, 2015) and on the value emerging from the shopping experience (Huré *et al.*, 2017), it is proposed that the benefits associated with showrooming will enhance the PV of showrooming. In line with the existing multi-channel choice behaviour literature, it is argued that showrooming for branded apparel will assist consumers in obtaining benefits such as better product evaluation, smart shopper feelings, value for money and perceived enjoyment.

As a product category, consumer apparel warrants physical product evaluation before any purchase commitment is made (Jacobs *et al.*, 2010; Yu *et al.*, 2012; Yu and Park, 2014). Consumers often aim to acquire full information on sensory attributes such as colour, design, fabric and fit before purchasing apparel (Kim and Knight, 2007). It is argued that physical examination of the apparel in-store will help showroomers in assessing apparel on tactile, visual and trial attributes (Eckman *et al.*, 1990), which is not possible online (Levy and Weitz, 2008; Shim and Lee, 2011). According to Arora and Sahney (2018), touching and feeling the product in-store not only fosters better product evaluation but also helps customers to gain confidence in making final product choices (Peck and Childers, 2006). Further, regarding better product evaluation, another showrooming benefit relates to the monetary savings emerging through product purchase at lower prices online (Chiu *et al.*, 2014). Arora and

Sahney (2018) and Burns *et al.* (2018) affirmed that showrooming helps consumers to attain products at low prices, creating value for money on account of the high price dispersion across online and offline channels (Gensler *et al.*, 2017). Similarly, it has further been argued that showrooming may stimulate smart shopper feelings among consumers (Flavián *et al.*, 2020). This is because showrooming assists shoppers in making the right product purchases at the right prices by combining an offline channel for search and an online channel for purchase (Arora and Sahney, 2018). Gensler *et al.* (2017) indicated that showrooming may make consumers feel smart when they purchase (similar) products at lower prices online. In general, Verhoef *et al.* (2007, p. 132) have proposed that "searching on one channel allows them [shoppers] to make better purchase decisions on another channel due to their own 'smart' search behaviour", in turn stimulating smart shopper feelings. Finally, Kesari and Atulekar (2016) proposed that visiting stores lets customers enjoy the experience of shopping with friends and family. These researchers argued that, while showrooming for consumer apparel, consumers might enjoy the experience of product trials in stores. Past researchers have also demonstrated that consumers relish spending time with their friends and family while shopping, which is not possible online (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003; Kang, 2018). Based on the discussion above, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1–H4. Enhanced product evaluation (*H1*), monetary savings (*H2*), smart shopper feelings (*H3*) and perceived enjoyment (*H4*) are positively related to perceived value (PV) in the context of showrooming for branded apparel.

3.2 Perceived sacrifice related to showrooming

According to the taxonomy of the PV framework, the concept of sacrifice comprises both monetary and non-monetary considerations (Kim *et al.*, 2019; Ledden *et al.*, 2007; Zeithaml, 1988), and the same holds true for showrooming. The authors of the present research contend that while showrooming for branded apparel a showrooming customer incurs huge search costs in collecting additional product information at brick-and-mortar retailers. A showroomer first incurs time, effort and money costs in visiting an offline store (Hu *et al.*, 2018; Lala and Chakraborty, 2015), and time and efforts are again invested in finding and purchasing similar product(s) online (Gensler *et al.*, 2017). Similarly, Chou *et al.* (2016) proposed that cross-channel free-riding entails requires a great deal of money, time, and effort costs. In addition, a showrooming consumer faces the risk of delayed deliveries, which has often been associated with showrooming (Flavián *et al.*, 2020; Reid *et al.*, 2016). Park and Kim (2007) claimed that, whenever a shopper purchases apparel online, there is always a risk of consumption delay (Yu *et al.*, 2012). This is because the consumer may not receive products on time and may bear the cost of late deliveries (Chiu *et al.*, 2011). Finally, a showrooming customer assumes shopping risks, such as product performance and financial risk, which have been consistently linked with non-store forms of retailing (Forsythe *et al.*, 2006; Verhoef *et al.*, 2007; Yu and Park, 2014). Further, Yu *et al.* (2012) proposed that, while shopping for apparel online, shopping risks are increased due to the insecurities connected with online credit-card usage and the potential abuse of important personal and financial information online (Arora and Sahney, 2018; Chou *et al.*, 2016). Online channels, by their nature, generate more uncertainty because of the higher risk of fraudulent transactions online and the fear of receiving the wrong products (Chiu *et al.*, 2011). Considering the proven negative impact of sacrifice elements on PV (Kim *et al.*, 2007; Lau *et al.*, 2019; Wang *et al.*, 2013; Zeithaml, 1988), the following hypotheses are proposed:

H5–H7. Search costs (*H5*), perceived consumption delay (*H6*) and online risk (*H7*) are negatively related to perceived value (PV) in the context of showrooming for branded apparel.

3.3 Perceived value (PV) and its impact on intentions

PV has often been considered as one of the noteworthy prerequisites of behavioural intentions (Kim *et al.*, 2007; Vishwakarma *et al.*, 2020; Wang *et al.*, 2013, 2018; Yang *et al.*, 2016). As noted earlier, in the case of showrooming, PV indicates a consumer's overall calculation of the benefits and sacrifices associated with examining products at brick-and-mortar retailers before purchasing online. It is only after the comprehensive evaluation of the benefits and sacrifices that consumers arrive at the total PV (Wang *et al.*, 2013, 2018), which in turn determines the adoption of specific types of behaviour (behavioural intention). As consumers are presumed to be rational human beings, striving to maximise their shopping utility, it is proposed that:

H8. Perceived value (PV) associated with showrooming is positively related to behavioural intentions towards showrooming in the context of branded apparel.

4. Method

4.1 Instrument development

To achieve the study objectives, measurement items were adopted from existing literature but were adapted to the showrooming context. These items were pre-tested by two marketing professors and three marketing doctoral students for their suitability in the current context. All the adopted items were measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = "Strongly disagree", 2 = "Disagree", 3 = "Neutral", 4 = "Agree", and 5 = "Strongly agree"). The adapted items are presented in Table 1.

4.2 Data collection

Data were collected offline across a mix of tier-1 and tier-2 cities in India. As the current study is focused on showrooming, following Arora and Sahney (2018) and Chiu *et al.* (2011), only those multi-channel shoppers who visited an offline store but later purchased branded apparel online were included in the survey. This was assured by asking respondents screening questions. The first question asked was about apparel online shopping: "Do you shop for branded apparel online?" Those who answered yes were further asked: "Did you visit any physical store before buying any branded apparel online?" Only those respondents who answered "Yes" to both these questions were considered, following which printed questionnaires were given to the respondents. The authors of the study reached out to around 750 respondents, of which 390 were found suitable based on the screening questions. From these 390 respondents, 318 useable data points were considered for the final analysis after the removal of incomplete questionnaires. The respondents' profile is shown in Table 2.

5. Data analysis

Data analysis involved the examination of the measurement model followed by structural equation modelling (SEM). The statistical software used to execute the multiple regression analysis and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were SPPS and AMOS. The authors of the study adopted AMOS, a covariance-based SEM technique for the analysis, as it is a perfect fit when the sample size is large and the aim is to investigate the presumed hypotheses (Byrne, 2010).

5.1 Preliminary test

Before proceeding to the CFA and SEM analysis, the data were checked for missing values and outliers. The descriptive data analysis revealed that there were neither any outliers nor

Construct	Items	FL
Perceived showrooming value (PSV)	*(AVE: 0.576, CR: 0.844)* (Gupta and Kim, 2010; Kim *et al.*, 2007; Wang *et al.*, 2018)	
	PSV1: I get good value for money when I purchase branded apparel via showrooming	0.81
	PSV2: According to me, it is worthwhile to showroom while shopping for branded apparel	0.78
	PSV3: It is beneficial to showroom while purchasing branded apparel	0.74
	PSV4: Overall, showrooming offers good shopping value	0.70
Showrooming intention (SINT)	*(AVE: 0.689, CR: 0.869)* (Rejón-Guardia and Luna-Nevarez, 2017)	
	SINT1: I have the intention to visit an offline store before purchasing branded apparel online	0.77
	SINT2: My prediction is that I will inspect branded apparel at B&M retailers before purchasing online	0.89
	SINT3: I am going to collect information at B&M retailers before purchasing apparel online	0.83
Benefits		
Enhanced product evaluation benefits (PEB)	*(AVE: 0.674, CR: 0.949)* (Kim, 2004; Eckman *et al.*, 1990)	
	While shopping for apparel, showrooming (visiting an offline store before purchasing offline) helps me make sure that	
	PEB1: The apparel is well constructed	0.89
	PEB2: It is likely to be durable during wear and care	0.78
	PEB3: It is made of high-quality materials/fabrics	0.78
	PEB4: It is fashionable	0.80
	PEB5: Material of the apparel is soft and comfortable on my body	0.82
	PEB6: Colour of the apparel is attractive	0.83
	PEB7: Overall appearance of the sweaters is attractive	0.80
	PEB8: Apparel fits on my body well/ conforms to my shape of the body	0.89
	PEB9: It looks good or bad on me	0.79
Monetary savings (MSV)	*(AVE: 0.557, CR: 0.790)* (Atkins and Kim, 2012; Flavian *et al.*, 2020)	
	While showrooming, purchasing products online helps me get	
	MSV1: A lower price than normal	0.69
	MSV2: A reasonable price	0.79
	MSV3: A good deal on the purchase	0.76
Smart shopper feelings (SSF)	*(AVE: 0.596, CR: 0.816)* (Atkins and Kim, 2012; Flavian *et al.*, 2020)	
	When I make purchases via showrooming. . .	
	SSF1: I feel good about the purchases I have made	0.72
	SSF2: I feel as if I have made a good purchase	0.78
	SSF3: I take pride in making product purchases via showrooming	0.81
Perceived enjoyment (PENJ)	*(AVE: 0.697, CR: 0.873)* (Kesari and Atulkar, 2016)	
	PENJ1: I enjoy the entertaining environment in stores	0.82
	PENJ2: It makes me relaxed from a daily stressful lifestyle	0.84
	PENJ3: I visit the store or mall as a recreational centre to enjoy with my family and friends	0.85
Sacrifices		
Search costs (SCOS)	*(AVE: 0.791, CR: 0.919)* (Lin *et al.*, 2020; Jones *et al.*, 2000)	
	SCOS1: Searching for products offline before purchasing online would require a lot of money	0.87
	SCOS2: Searching products offline before purchasing online would require a lot of time	0.91
	SCOS3: Searching products offline before purchasing online would require a lot of physical and mental effort	0.88

(*continued*)

Table 1. Reliability and validity structure

Construct	Items	FL
Perceived consumption delay (PCD)	*(AVE: 0.790, CR: 0.919)* (Park and Kim, 2007)	
	PCD1: I may need to wait for a long time until I can get the clothing from the internet and wear it	0.89
	PCD2: I may not be able to wear this clothing item on time	0.90
	PCD3: I may need to postpone wearing this clothing item	0.88
Online risks (OR)	*(AVE: 0.686, CR: 0.867)* (Chiu *et al.*, 2011)	
	While showrooming, with respect to purchasing apparel online, I fear	
	OR1: If I purchase online, there is a high possibility of getting the wrong product	0.77
	OR3: I feel insecure about my personal data	0.90
	OR4: I fear fraudulent transactions online	0.81

Table 1.

Note(s): FL: Factor loadings

Characteristics	*n*	%
Gender		
Male	177	55.67
Female	141	44.33
Age (years)		
18–24	131	41.20
25–30	150	47.17
31–35	37	11.63
Education		
Undergraduate	141	44.34
Post graduate (MBA, M. Tech etc.)	134	42.14
PhD	43	13.52
Income (per month)		
25,000–30,000	166	52.20
30,001–35,000	113	35.53
35,001 and above	39	12.27
Shopping apparel online (in last year)		
1–5 times	157	49.37
6–10 times	87	27.35
11 and above	74	23.28

Table 2.
Respondents' characteristics

Note(s): $n = 318$

any missing or invalid values in the collected data set. According to the normality assumption of SEM, the data were also checked for skewness and kurtosis. The results showed that the values for skewness and kurtosis were below the recommended values of 3.0 and 10.0, respectively (Kline, 2005).

5.2 Reliability and validity measures

CFA was employed to analyse the reliability and validity of the research instrument. The results of the CFA showed that the data fit well ($X^2 = 685.59$, $X^2/df = 1.402$, CFI = 0.971, TLI = 0.967, RMSEA = 0.036). These metrics for the model fit were above the corresponding cut-off values recommended by Hair *et al.* (2010). Further, the factor loadings of the items were

examined. All items' loadings exceeded the recommended 0.60 level (Hair *et al.*, 2014), except for the six items for perceived evaluation benefits and three items for online risk, which consequently were excluded from further analysis. Composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha (α) values were calculated, and the values for all the constructs were higher than 0.70 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994), thus ensuring reliability. Likewise, the calculated average variance extracted (AVE) values were above the suggested threshold of 0.50 (Hair *et al.*, 2014), confirming convergent validity (see Table 1). Further, the results showed support for discriminant validity as the value of the square root of the AVE for each construct was found to be greater than inter-construct correlations (see Table 3). Additionally, variance inflation factor (VIF) values were calculated to test for multicollinearity. The VIF values were within acceptable limits (below 10), confirming no multicollinearity issues in the current study (see Table 4).

5.3 Structural model and hypothesis testing

The current study proposed eight hypotheses that were tested using SEM. SEM reveals both the R^2 values, which show the amount of variation explained by the independent variable and the estimates of path coefficients, describing the strength of relationships between variables (dependent and independent). The SEM results revealed that the data fit well in the proposed model. To achieve this, the overall model fit indices were examined. These included the adjusted X^2 and other indices such as the goodness of fit index (GFI), the adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI), the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) (see Table 5).

Figure 2 shows the path estimates of the research model. PV was determined by the product evaluation benefits, monetary savings, smart shopper feelings, perceived enjoyment,

	OR	PSV	PEB	PENJ	SINT	SCOS	SSF	PCD	MSV
OR	0.828								
PSV	−0.342	0.759							
PEB	−0.126	0.519	0.821						
PENJ	−0.045	0.291	0.118	0.835					
SINT	−0.123	0.429	0.198	0.335	0.830				
SCOS	0.254	−0.415	−0.110	−0.182	−0.349	0.889			
SSF	−0.062	0.474	0.330	0.046	0.214	−0.216	0.772		
PCD	0.302	−0.200	−0.048	−0.087	−0.090	0.197	−0.075	0.889	
MSV	−0.023	0.470	0.319	0.194	0.446	−0.303	0.387	−0.070	0.746

Table 3. Discriminant validity

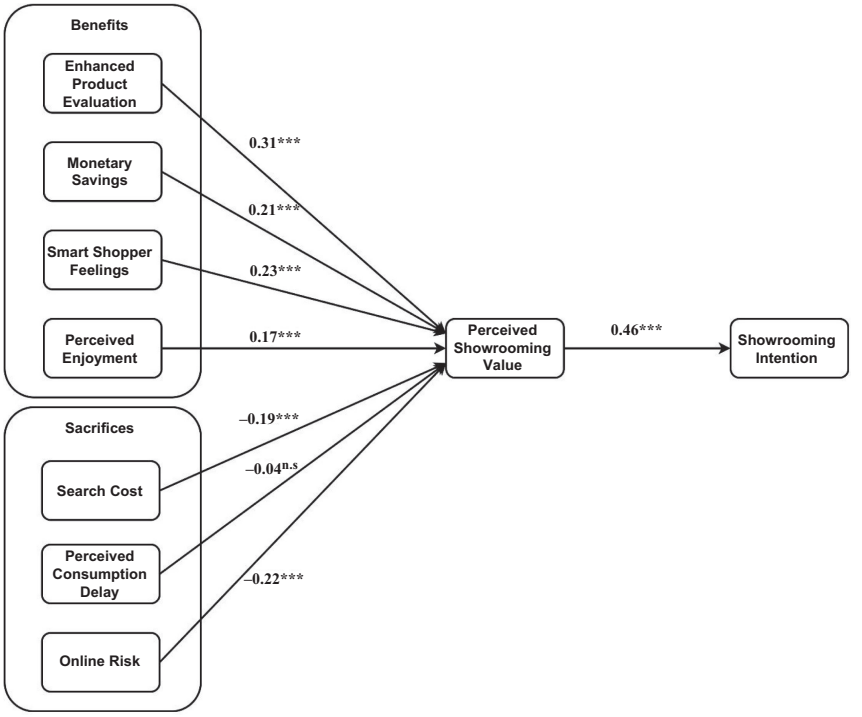
Construct	Tolerance	VIF
Dependent variable: perceived showrooming value (PSV)		
Enhanced product evaluation benefits (PEB)	0.80	1.25
Monetary savings (MSV)	0.67	1.50
Smart shopper feelings (SSF)	0.73	1.38
Perceived enjoyment (PENJ)	0.92	1.09
Search costs (SCOS)	0.78	1.29
Perceived consumption delay (PCD)	0.87	1.15
Online risks (OR)	0.82	1.22
Dependent variable: showrooming intention (SINT)		
Perceived showrooming value (PSV)	1.00	1.00

Table 4. Multicollinearity results

search costs, perceived consumption delay and online risks, resulting in explained variance (R^2 = 0.58). Hence, the PV variable explained 58% of the variance in the perceived showrooming value. Furthermore, the perceived showrooming value was found to be a sole predictor of showrooming intentions, explaining around 21% of variance (R^2 = 0.21). Thus, the value for the variance explained by perceived showrooming value and showrooming intention (0.58 and 0.21, respectively) were higher than the cut-off value of 0.10 (Falk and Miller, 1992). With respect to hypotheses testing, as anticipated, enhanced product evaluation (H1; $\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$), monetary savings (H2; $\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.001$), smart shopper feelings (H3; $\beta = 0.23$, $p < 0.001$) and perceived enjoyment (H4; $\beta = 0.17$, $p < 0.001$) displayed a

Table 5.
Model fit summary of the research model

Fit index	Recommended value	Research model
X^2/df	≤3.00	1.458
GFI	≥0.80	0.884
AGFI	≥0.80	0.860
NFI	≥0.90	0.902
TLI	≥0.90	0.962
CFI	≥0.90	0.967
RMSEA	≤0.08	0.038



Note(s): ***$p < 0.001$
n.s = not significant

Figure 2.
Results of hypothesis testing

significant impact on perceived showrooming value, while both search costs (H5; $\beta = -0.19$, $p < 0.001$) and online risk (H7; $\beta = -0.22$, $p < 0.001$) were observed to negatively affect the perceived showrooming value. However, an insignificant impact for perceived consumption delay (H6; $\beta = -0.04$, $p < 0.001$) was observed on showrooming value perceptions. Overall, perceived showrooming value notably determined behavioural intentions towards showrooming, providing support for H8 ($\beta = 0.46$, $p < 0.001$). Table 6 presents the results of hypotheses testing.

6. Discussion

The authors of the current study sought to provide rich insights on showrooming through the proposed value-based intention framework. It is increasingly becoming important for apparel retailers to gain a deeper understanding of showrooming owing to its anticipated negative impact on the profitability of brick-and-mortar retailers (Balakrishnan *et al.*, 2014). In this study, the researchers aimed to analyse the key influences of showrooming based on the concept a value trade-off by scrutinizing the perceived benefits and sacrifices linked with showrooming (Holbrook, 1994; Kim *et al.*, 2007; Zeithaml, 1988). Based on the results observed in the present study, both perceived benefits and sacrifice significantly determined an individual's showrooming value perceptions, in line with previous research (Chen and Dubinsky, 2003; Kim *et al.*, 2007; Sweeney *et al.*, 1997; Wang *et al.*, 2013; Yu *et al.*, 2017b). The perceived benefits of showrooming seemed to have a greater impact than the level of perceived sacrifice on perceived showrooming value. In other words, showrooming customers were attracted more by the benefits associated with showrooming than they were dissuaded by the associated sacrifices.

The authors of the current study proposed four factors, under the umbrella of perceived benefits, that can be associated with showrooming and, among these, product evaluation benefits contributed the most to perceived showrooming value, followed by smart shopping feelings and monetary savings. In contrast, perceived enjoyment displayed the least influence in the formation of perceived showrooming value. The results of the research revealed that visiting a brick-and-mortar retailer before purchasing online helped showrooming customers to evaluate branded apparel effectively. This is because, while inspecting branded apparel in-store, showrooming customers could successfully assess it in relation to various important attributes such as texture, fit, length, quality, colour and the feel of the fabric (Eckman *et al.*, 1990; Shim and Lee, 2011). Most importantly, consumers were able to determine the look and fit of the apparel while inspecting products in-store, both of which have been found to be important criteria for satisfactory apparel purchases (Kim and Forsythe, 2008; Park *et al.*, 2008; Rosa *et al.*, 2006; Yu *et al.*, 2012). This finding is consistent with Gensler *et al.* (2017) and Arora and Sahney (2018), who asserted that showrooming helps consumers to identify the

Table 6. Summary results of hypothesized model testing

Hypothesis	Path	Standardized coefficient (β)	*t*-value	Result
H1	PEB → PSV	0.31	5.77***	Supported
H2	MSV→ PSV	0.21	3.33***	Supported
H3	SSF → PSV	0.23	3.88***	Supported
H4	PENJ → PSV	0.17	3.44***	Supported
H5	SCOS → PSV	−0.19	−3.57***	Supported
H6	PCD → PSV	−0.04	$-0.73^{n.s}$	Not Supported
H7	OR → PSV	−0.22	−4.02***	Supported
H8	PSV →SINT	0.46	7.32***	Supported

Note(s): ***$p < 0.001$; n.s. = not significant

ideal product fit by enabling better product evaluation in-store through physical engagement. As well as enhanced product evaluation, monetary savings emerged as an important benefit that enhanced consumers' value perceptions of showrooming. This is because showrooming customers can acquire apparel at lower prices online, which has often been recognized as one of the key benefits associated with online shopping (Chiu *et al.*, 2014; Gensler *et al.*, 2012; Verhoef *et al.*, 2007). This supports the findings of prior showrooming research, which has asserted that showrooming helps consumers to acquire products at economical and reasonable prices online (Burns *et al.*, 2018). In line with the recent showrooming research, an association between smart shopper feelings and showrooming was also established (Flavián *et al.*, 2020). Results confirmed that purchasing the right products at the right prices online via showrooming led to smart shopper feelings among consumers (Gensler *et al.*, 2017; Verhoef *et al.*, 2007). Finally, the results revealed that showrooming does not just concern making rational product choices; it is also a way of experiencing pleasure and enjoyment while inspecting products in-store, which is consistent with the findings of prior showrooming research (Arora and Sahney, 2018; Kang, 2018).

Among the sacrifice elements, search costs and online risk markedly deterred consumers' showrooming value perceptions. It was shown that showrooming incurs a huge investment of time, money and effort in first visiting an offline store and later purchasing online. Aw (2019), utilizing the principle of least effort (Zipf, 1949), similarly classified visiting an offline store as a laborious activity that requires a huge investment of time and effort. Additionally, as expected, the strong negative impact of online shopping risk was observed on showrooming value perceptions. Perceived risk has often previously been considered a critical sacrifice element that reduces shopping value perceptions (Hsu and Lin, 2016; Yu *et al.*, 2017a). Arora and Sahney (2018) similarly endorsed the negative impact of online risk on showrooming. When consumers perceive a high rate of fraudulent practices online, coupled with the fear of receiving mismatched products and the loss of personal and confidential information, they are less likely to shop online (Chiu *et al.*, 2011; Chou *et al.*, 2016; Forsythe *et al.*, 2006), thus dissuading them from showrooming. Surprisingly, the proposed relationship between the perceived consumption delay and the perceived showrooming value emerged as insignificant, which supports Gensler *et al.* (2017). This might be because of same-day (or faster) delivery services offered by online retailers, which minimizes the waiting costs online and assures faster delivery. Finally, PV was found to have a high influence on behavioural intentions towards showrooming. This supports the findings of Chu and Lu (2007), Wang *et al.* (2013), and Yu *et al.* (2017b), and signifies that it is indeed the analysis of "benefit" and "sacrifice" components collectively (the value emerging from showrooming) that determines consumers' behavioural intentions towards showrooming.

6.1 Implications of the study

The authors in the present study validate a theoretical model that elicits a better understanding of the key factors that facilitate showrooming. The researchers make a novel attempt by utilising the value-based ideology to investigate consumers' motivation in relation to showrooming. The authors enrich the body of work on showrooming by identifying both perceived benefits and sacrifices related to showrooming. This knowledge will help brick-and-mortar retailers to formulate sound strategies to encourage the in-store purchase behaviour of showrooming customers and to discourage them from switching to an online retailer. This can be achieved, for instance, by offering on-the-spot deals and discounts to showroomers, stressing online risks and underlining how purchasing in-store helps consumers to access various tactile, visual and trial benefits.

According to Arora and Sahney (2018), it is apparent that when a customer engages in showrooming, it is the brick-and-mortar retailer that gets the first opportunity to sell (Kuksov and Liao, 2018; Sit *et al.*, 2017). Hence, brick-and-mortar retailers, by formulating the right

kind of strategies, can convert showroomers into buyers (Sit *et al.*, 2017). Based on the results of the present study, brick-and-mortar retailers can retain showroomers by manipulating the overall PV of showrooming in such a way that both the benefit elements that enhance the value associated with brick-and-mortar retailers and the sacrifice elements that deter online shopping are highlighted and stressed. Additionally, brick-and-mortar retailers must aim to enhance the value associated with purchasing apparel in-store, which, in turn, will magnify the sacrificing cost associated with showrooming. One of the key benefits that can be associated with showrooming, and principally with brick-and-mortar retailers, is the enhanced product evaluation in-store. Brick-and-mortar retailers must reinforce the need for the evaluation of apparel in-store on a range of attributes, such as fit, texture, quality, size and colour, as this will encourage customers to keep visiting stores. Mass advertising campaigns can be launched by brick-and-mortar retailers in communicating the benefits (and necessity) of "trying on" and "touching and feeling" apparel in stores (Eckman *et al.*, 1990; Kim and Knight, 2007), without which consumers may end up making poor product choices online. Customers should also be made aware of the enjoyable experience of shopping in-store, which is not possible online (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003; Arora and Sahney, 2018; Kang, 2018). Further, while customers are inspecting products in-store, brick-and-mortar retailers must offer special discounts, deals and offers to customers to stimulate in-store purchasing, in line with Arora and Sahney (2018) and Schneider and Zielke (2020). This is because the findings of the present study revealed monetary savings to be one of the key factors stimulating the online purchase behaviour of showrooming customers. Further, brick-and-mortar retailers must aim to stress the risks associated with shopping online as this will increase the perceived sacrifice associated with showrooming. Brick-and-mortar retailers can constantly remind customers of the risk of receiving incorrect products, as well as the risk of fraudulent transactions and the misuse of information when they shop for apparel online (Yu *et al.*, 2012). This in turn is expected to induce the customers to purchase offline while they are inspecting products in stores.

6.2 Limitations and future scope

One of the key limitations of the study is that the findings and implications provided are limited to the consumer apparel sector. Future researchers can utilize the proposed model in other industries that are susceptible to showrooming, such as electronics, computer accessories and toys. Further, the small sample size limits generalisation; hence, the model must be tested on a large sample to provide richer and more wide-ranging insights. A qualitative study may be undertaken by future researchers to augment the list of benefits and sacrifices that can be associated with showrooming.

7. Conclusion

The researchers of the present study make a rich contribution to the showrooming literature by examining consumers' motivation for showrooming based on a value-based adoption framework. There is certainly a need for brick-and-mortar retailers to devise effective strategies to transform showrooming customers into purchasers to generate sales and improve profitability. By exploring both benefit and sacrifice elements, this study has shown that while enhanced product evaluation, money savings, smart shopper feelings and perceived enjoyment amplify the PV associated with showrooming, search cost and online risk diminish the perceived showrooming value. To retain showrooming customers, brick-and-mortar retailers must capitalise on the search value associated with offline apparel shopping owing to the tactile, visual and trial benefits available in-store. Additionally, risks associated with online shopping can be magnified by brick-and-mortar retailers in mass

advertising campaigns to dissuade showrooming customers from switching to online stores. Most importantly, the focus must be placed on enhancing the in-store purchase value by offering special deals and discounts to customers to encourage on-the-spot purchases. It is anticipated that the findings emerging from this study will provide a sound basis for brick-and-mortar store managers to manage showroomers.

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