



A tale of stores and screens: Unveiling consumer behaviour in omnichannel retailing through the lens of behavioural reasoning

Neha Sharma^{a,b}, Emiliano Acquila-Natale^c, Nirankush Dutta^a, Ángel Hernández-García^{c,*} 

^a Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani, Rajasthan 333031, India

^b Birla Institute of Management Technology, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh 201306, India

^c Departamento de Ingeniería de Organización, Administración de Empresas y Estadística, ETSI de Telecomunicación, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, Av. Complutense 30, 28040 Madrid, Spain

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the mechanisms that foster or deter consumers' adoption of digital storefronts that traditional brick-and-mortar retailers integrate for omnichannel operations in emerging markets, through the lens of Behavioural Reasoning Theory. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study first identifies specific reasons for and against shopping on the digital platforms of brick-and-mortar retailers through qualitative interviews with retail experts. These findings are then tested quantitatively with a survey of 1392 Indian omnichannel consumers, analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling and importance-performance matrix analysis.

The results reveal that perceived product quality and shopping flexibility are the main drivers for adoption, while the attractiveness of alternatives and concerns over delivery timeliness are key deterrents. Additionally, the analysis considers the influence of perceived compatibility and the moderating effect of product type, with electronics and clothing as representative of search and experience goods, respectively. The analysis finds that perceived compatibility exerts a moderate to low effect on consumers' reasoning and their attitudes, and that deterrents have a stronger negative impact for experience goods in shaping consumers' attitude towards adopting the digital storefronts of brick-and-mortar retailers. The findings advance Behavioural Reasoning Theory in retail contexts, providing actionable insights for brick-and-mortar retailers to enhance their omnichannel strategies by addressing consumer-specific motivations and barriers.

1. Introduction

The retail landscape is changing fast as consumers seamlessly mix in-store and online shopping, driving the rise of omnichannel operations (Allagiannis et al., 2021). While this evolution presents opportunities for consumer outreach and data-driven strategies (Asmare and Zewdie, 2022; Mishra, 2021; Mishra et al., 2021), it also poses notable challenges for brick-and-mortar (B&M) retailers, particularly in effectively integrating the digital storefronts, which refer to web-based platforms that allow conventional B&M retailers to showcase and transact their products or services online (Gensler et al., 2017).

At the heart of this shift is the challenge of revenue loss, as consumers use multiple channels to find better deals from different retailers (Gensler et al., 2007; Rapp et al., 2015; Schneider and Zielke, 2021), a

change that has led to strategic consumer behaviours like loyal and competitive webrooming and showrooming. In 'loyal webrooming', consumers research products online before making purchases at the same physical store (Kleinlercher et al., 2020), while 'loyal showrooming' involves gathering information in-store before completing the purchase online from the same store (Frasquet-Deltoro et al., 2021; Rejón-Guardia and Luna-Nevarez, 2017). These practices enhance consumer engagement and foster loyalty by aligning with consumers' preferences for flexible shopping experiences, and they represent a significant shift from traditional shopping patterns, where integration between online and offline channels was less prevalent (Asmare and Zewdie, 2022; Roldán Sepúlveda et al., 2022; Wolf and Steul-Fischer, 2023).

In India, notable disparities in online engagement exist between

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: p20190038@pilani.bits-pilani.ac.in, neha.sharma1@bimtech.ac.in (N. Sharma), emiliano.acquila@upm.es (E. Acquila-Natale), nirankush.dutta@pilani.bits-pilani.ac.in (N. Dutta), angel.hernandez@upm.es (Á. Hernández-García).

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B&M retailers, such as [Shoppersstop.com](#) and [Croma.com](#), and e-commerce giants like Amazon and [Flipkart.com](#).¹ While B&M retailers are building up their digital storefronts as part of their transition to an omnichannel model, they lag when compared to these e-commerce platforms that Indian consumers seem to favour arguing reasons such as better deals and discounts, accessibility, user-friendly interfaces and familiarity with the platform ([PwC, 2024](#)). This gap in consumers' retailer preferences for online shopping highlight the urgent need for thorough research into what drivers and barriers may help and hinder, respectively, B&M retailers from effectively using their digital storefronts and the need to address these challenges for ensuring the survival and relevance of B&M retailers in the online market.

Furthermore, existing literature has primarily focused on omnichannel strategies in Western markets and general product categories ([Gensler et al., 2017](#); [Mishra, 2021](#)), leaving a gap in understanding omnichannel adoption in emerging markets, such as India. This study addresses these gaps by examining how Indian consumers' reasoning influences their adoption or rejection of the digital storefronts of B&M retailers.

The study further seeks to explore how the consistency of this shopping behaviour with the consumers' existing values, lifestyles, past experiences, and needs—perceived compatibility—may affect consumers' reasoning when shopping online from B&M retailers across different product categories; the attention to product type is justified to the different motivations for purchasing search goods, such as electronics—driven mostly by utilitarian factors—and those for purchasing experience goods, such as clothing, which emphasise hedonic and experiential factors ([Chatterjee and Kumar, 2017](#); [Pallant et al., 2020](#)), a distinction that might be key for understanding how B&M retailers can tailor their omnichannel strategies to better meet consumers' specific needs.

Our study, therefore, aims to examine which consumers' reasons should be effectively leveraged by B&M retailers transitioning to omnichannel operations through digital storefronts. Specifically, the research questions guiding this study are:

RQ1. What are the key reasons for and against shopping at the digital storefronts of B&M retailers in the Indian retail market?

RQ2. How do these reasons, together with consumers' perceived compatibility, affect consumer adoption or rejection of digital storefronts of B&M retailers in the Indian retail market?

RQ3. Does product type (i.e., search vs. experience goods) moderate the effect of consumers' reasons on their attitude toward purchasing using the digital storefronts of B&M retailers, if any?

By answering these research questions, the study will provide valuable insights into how to increase the effectiveness of omnichannel strategies for B&M retailers in India, which has the third-largest online consumer base globally ([Madhukalya, 2022](#)) and offers a unique context for studying the impact of these approaches. To explore and analyse this complex retail environment, we draw on the Behavioural Reasoning Theory (BRT). BRT aims to go beyond traditional models like the Theory of Planned Behaviour ([Ajzen, 1985, 1991](#)), offering more profound insights into consumers' motivations and justifications when making

choices ([Claudy et al., 2015](#); [Westaby, 2005](#)). Our adoption of BRT is aimed toward gaining a deeper understanding of the cognitive processes that drive consumer engagement with digital storefronts in an omnichannel context.

To answer the research questions, the study adopts a mixed-methods approach. More specifically, we seek to answer RQ1 through expert interviews to identify the key reasons driving consumer adoption or rejection of digital storefronts, and we aim to answer RQ2 and RQ3 through partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) analysis of data from a consumer survey to 1392 Indian omnichannel consumers.

The findings of our study reveal several key insights: first, that perceived compatibility plays a limited role in consumer adoption of the digital storefronts of B&M retailers; second, that consumers' decision to shop online from traditional B&M stores is strongly influenced by their specific reasons for and against their decision; third, that the reasons for engaging in this behaviour outweigh the drawbacks; and fourth, that the moderating effect of product type is limited to the relationship between reasons against and attitudes.

The following sections of this study cover the conceptual background, the development of research hypotheses, and a detailed empirical analysis of consumer behaviour in the omnichannel retail environment. We aim to translate these findings into practical strategies for B&M retailers to improve their digital storefronts within an omnichannel framework. This structured approach contributes to a broader understanding of consumers' reasoning and omnichannel strategies in emerging markets, offering insights for B&M retailers adapting to the digital shift and highlighting the nuances of consumer behaviour in a more digital world.

2. Background

2.1. Drivers and barriers to online shopping in an omnichannel retail landscape

In omnichannel retailing, several factors influence consumers' decisions to engage with the digital storefronts of traditional retailers ([Ngoh and Groening, 2022](#)). One primary driver is convenience and accessibility, as omnichannel retailers offer features such as real-time stock visibility ([Beck and Rygl, 2015](#); [Lazaris et al., 2015](#); [Willmott, 2014](#)), click-and-collect, and curbside pickup ([Rahman et al., 2022a,b](#)). These options save time and add flexibility for consumers who prefer the convenience of online shopping without sacrificing the immediacy of in-store pickups ([Allagiannis et al., 2021](#); [Chang and Li, 2022](#); [Shen et al., 2018](#); [Shi et al., 2020](#)). The expanded product range available on digital storefronts also enhances the appeal of online shopping, as these platforms often feature exclusive items not available in physical stores ([Schneider and Zielke, 2020](#)). Personalised shopping experiences significantly influence consumer behaviour in omnichannel retail ([Karimi et al., 2015](#); [Marmol and Fernandez, 2019](#)); through data-driven recommendations, targeted promotions, and customised communication, retailers enhance the relevance of their digital offerings ([Pantano and Vannucci, 2019](#)). Furthermore, integrating personalization with loyalty programs across channels fosters an emotional connection with consumers through a unified experience, promoting loyal behaviour—especially in competitive categories such as electronics and clothing ([Bodhani, 2012](#); [Lewis et al., 2014](#); [Pousttchi and Hufenbach, 2014](#)). Effective salesmanship further drives consumer adoption of digital storefronts by bridging the gap between online and in-store experiences ([Kumar et al., 2019](#); [Mehra et al., 2018](#)); same as in physical stores, knowledgeable in-store staff and responsive online support guide consumers through product selection, answer questions, and provide personalised assistance that strengthens consumer confidence in their purchase decisions. This support encourages consumers to engage with both online and offline channels in a complementary way, enhancing the overall omnichannel experience ([Kumar et al., 2019](#); [Mehra et al.,](#)

¹ A comparative analysis using [SimilarWeb.com](#) reveals significant variations in online engagement among retailers. [Shoppersstop.com](#) is ranked 1359th in the country with 1.95 million visits, whereas [Croma.com](#) holds the 259th spot with 48.9 million visits. This contrasts sharply with the traffic of online retail giants: [Amazon.in](#) ranks 14th with 987.6 million visits, [Flipkart.com](#) is at 28th with 650.3 million visits, and [Myntra.com](#) ranks 33rd with 69.78 million visits. Moreover, free-riding—wherein consumers use one retailer's Web site to search for information, but then buy from another retail site that offers lower prices ([Carlton & Chevalier, 2001](#); [Van Baal & Dach, 2005](#))—behaviour patterns show that 56% of Croma's and 36% of Shoppersstop's consumers subsequently visit major online retailers like Amazon and Flipkart for their purchases.

2018). In addition, perceived product quality, alongside effective salesmanship, significantly enhances consumer trust and adoption of digital storefronts (Geng and Chang, 2022); high-quality product representations—such as detailed descriptions, customer reviews, and quality assurances—provide consumers with confidence in the products they are considering buying from the digital storefronts of B&M retailers (Marmol and Fernandez, 2019). Finally, perceived channel integration also plays a crucial role in retaining customers (Verhoef et al., 2015); consistent product information, consistent marketing messages, well-synchronised new product launch across channels, unified loyalty programs, and real-time inventory visibility allow consumers to transition easily between online and offline channels (Acquila-Natale and Charro-Peláez, 2020); effective integration helps reduce showrooming behaviours, where consumers browse in-store but purchase online from competitors, and instead promotes loyal showrooming, where consumers complete purchases through the retailer's digital storefront (Sharma et al., 2023). This way, omnichannel retailers benefit from retaining customers who value both the in-store experience and the convenience of online transactions.

Despite these positive drivers, barriers persist that deter full engagement with digital storefronts of B&M retailers. Fragmented channel integration, for instance, often leads to inconsistencies in product availability (Schneider, 2020), promotional offers, or customer service across channels, disrupting the seamless experience that consumers expect and weakening their confidence in the retailer's ability to provide an integrated shopping journey. Data privacy and security concerns also pose a significant challenge, especially in emerging markets with varying digital literacy levels; consumers may hesitate to share personal and financial information if they perceive a retailer's platform as lacking robust privacy and security measures, particularly as global concerns over data privacy rise (Song and Cheng, 2023). Issues with logistics, including delayed deliveries, inaccurate orders, and complex return processes, detract from the appeal of digital shopping channels (Fernandes et al., 2018); these inefficiencies discourage repeat purchases and push consumers toward competitors with more reliable fulfilment capabilities (Akil and Ugan, 2022). The usability of digital storefronts also impacts adoption, as poorly designed websites with difficult navigation can deter loyal in-store shoppers from transitioning to online shopping (Chou et al., 2016); when the user experience is not smooth, consumers are more likely to abandon their carts or avoid the digital platform entirely. Pricing inconsistency is another important factor affecting consumer adoption of digital storefronts; consumers often perceive prices on B&M retailers' digital platforms as higher than those of pure online competitors (Mehra et al., 2018; Sharma et al., 2024) diminishing the appeal of shopping online through these retailers. Additionally, inconsistent or unclear shipping costs and discrepancies in promotional offers across channels can frustrate customers and drive them toward more transparent competitors (Halibas et al., 2023).

While extensive research, such as the ones mentioned above, has addressed drivers and barriers in omnichannel shopping, there are still gaps in understanding consumer-specific responses to these factors, particularly within emerging economies like India and across distinct product types (Frasquet et al., 2023; Hao and Kumar, 2024; Viejo-Fernández et al., 2020), which is why in this study we aim to identify and position these drivers and barriers within the Behavioural Reasoning Theory (Westaby, 2005) in the form of 'reasons for' and 'reasons against' shopping attitudes and intentions toward the digital storefronts of B&M retailers.

2.2. Behavioural reasoning theory

Traditional technology adoption models such as the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (Venkatesh et al., 2003), primarily focus on adoption enablers like perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, or social influences. To

overcome this partial approach, the Behavioural Reasoning Theory (BRT) aims at providing insight into the cognitive processes that drive acceptance and resistance behaviours, highlighting that the cognitive processes leading to resistance differ from those favouring acceptance (Gatignon and Robertson, 1989). Therefore, BRT provides a distinctive lens to understand consumer behaviour and technology acceptance, particularly regarding resistance and rejection behaviours.

BRT acknowledges that individuals often perceive simultaneous reasons that enable and inhibit their acceptance and resistance towards new behaviours (Cenfetelli and Schwarz, 2011; Ram, 1987). It further clarifies that context-specific reasons form essential links between people's beliefs, global motivations, intentions, and behaviours, aligning with the theory of explanation-based decision-making (Pennington and Hastie, 1988) and reasons theory (Westaby and Fishbein, 1996). In BRT, reasons are defined as "specific subjective factors people use to explain their anticipated behaviour" (Westaby, 2005, p. 100); these reasons are categorised into anticipated, concurrent, and post hoc, and are distinct from beliefs. Reasons are further divided into two broad dimensions: 'reasons for' and 'reasons against' performing a behaviour. This dichotomy is relevant because it encapsulates the concepts of pros/cons, benefits/costs, and facilitators/constraints, offering a nuanced understanding of consumer behaviour, especially in technology adoption, where individuals consider both positive and negative aspects of their decision-making.

When applied to omnichannel shopping, BRT provides a robust framework for analysing consumer behaviour. The retail industry, especially integrating digital and physical spaces, presents a complex landscape influencing consumer decisions. By leveraging BRT, retailers may gain deep insights into what motivates and deters consumers in this integrated retail space.

3. Model and hypothesis formulation

3.1. Attitude → behavioural intention

The core principle of BRT is that reasoning strongly impacts the mental processing of behaviour. Despite its unique approach to drivers of resistance to adoption behaviours, BRT shares with other established models, such as the Theory of Reasoned Action, the emphasis on the role of attitudes in predicting behavioural intention (Ajzen, 1991; Davis, 1989; Paul et al., 2016; Ryan and Bonfield, 1975). Considering that we investigate the behaviour of adopting (using) the digital storefront of B&M retailers, we posit:

H1. Consumers' attitude towards online shopping has a direct positive relationship with their shopping intentions from the digital storefronts of B&M retailers.

3.2. Reasoning → attitude

Wilson et al. (1995) and Hsee (1996) highlight the significance of reasons in justifying individual behaviours. Extending their work, Westaby's (2005) BRT posits that context-specific reasons critically influence attitudes and intentions toward behaviours. These reasons, defined as unique cognitions, form the basis of an individual's rationale for their actions, representing the perceived impact of various reasons on behaviour (Westaby, 2005). Drawing inspiration from the spreading activation theory of Collins and Loftus (1975), Westaby argues that reasons play a central role in decision-making, offering more predictive power than general beliefs. This principle suggests that specific counter-reasons can deter actions, even in the presence of positive beliefs, such as those related to technology adoption. For instance, in the context of online shopping from B&M retailers, while general beliefs might form overall perceptions of the shopping experience, it is the specific 'reasons for' or 'reasons against' adoption that ultimately influence the decision-making process. This nuanced understanding underscores the complexity of consumer behaviour, especially in the context of online

and offline retail integration. Therefore, we posit:

H2a: Consumers' 'reasons for' adopting digital storefronts of B&M retailers are positively associated with their attitude towards digital storefronts of omnichannel retailers.

H2b: Consumers' 'reasons against' adopting digital storefronts of B&M retailers are negatively associated with their attitude towards digital storefronts of omnichannel retailers.

3.3. Reasoning → behavioural intention

Behavioural intentions can vary significantly due to reasons beyond mere attitudes. In particular, attitudes alone may not always predict adoption, especially when negative, context-specific reasons exist (Claudy et al., 2015). For instance, in the context of mobile banking apps, despite the positive attitudes, reasons such as self-efficacy, consumer anxiety, and perceived advantages often outweighed the benefits like better pricing and convenience, leading to consumer reluctance (Gupta and Arora, 2017). Similarly, consumers might have favourable views of digital storefronts in omnichannel shopping; however, they may hesitate to shop from them due to potential drawbacks like privacy concerns or delivery issues (Chatterjee et al., 2021). Therefore, we hypothesise:

H3a: Consumers' 'reasons for' adopting the digital storefronts of B&M retailers are positively associated with their intention to purchase online from these retailers.

H3b: Consumers' 'reasons against' adopting the digital storefronts of B&M retailers are negatively associated with their intention to purchase online from these retailers.

3.4. Perceived compatibility → reasons

Perceived compatibility refers to the degree to which an innovation is perceived as consistent with existing values, lifestyles, past experiences, and needs of potential adopters (Claudy et al., 2013; Karahanna et al., 2006). Consequently, in this study, we examine compatibility not only in terms of previous shopping experiences, which is relevant when assessing consumers' likelihood to engage in omnichannel shopping (Shen et al., 2018), but also through broader lenses such as alignment with consumer values and lifestyle. Perceived compatibility plays a decisive role in determining the likelihood of adopting new technologies or innovations, as consumers generally favour technologies that align with their existing beliefs and practices; furthermore, products are adopted more rapidly when perceived as compatible with consumers' personal values (Claudy et al., 2015). Thus, we hypothesise:

H4a: The perceived compatibility of consumers with online shopping is positively associated with their 'reasons for' shopping from the digital storefronts of B&M retailers.

H4b: The perceived compatibility of consumers with online shopping is negatively associated with their 'reasons against' shopping from the digital storefronts of B&M retailers.

3.5. Perceived compatibility → attitude

In addition, perceived compatibility is a pivotal factor in shaping consumer attitudes toward new technologies (Karahanna et al., 2006; Pham and Ho, 2015; Van Slyke et al., 2007; Wang, 2018). For instance, Agarwal and Prasad (2000) discovered that the compatibility perceptions of experienced programmers significantly affected their willingness to adopt new programming languages. Similarly, Chen et al. (2002) found that consumers' attitudes towards online virtual stores were positively influenced when these platforms aligned well with their lifestyles and habits, and Amaro and Duarte (2015) and Agag and El-Masry (2016) identified perceived compatibility as a key factor influencing consumers' attitudes towards online travel and shopping activities. Limayem et al. (2007) also observed that consumers' regular use of specific technologies influences how they perceive and evaluate new

technologies, and Hernández-García et al. (2011) observed that, for online non-shoppers, the main driver for adoption of e-commerce was the cohesion between their lifestyle and online shopping. Therefore, consumers whose values and habits are more consistent with online shopping are more likely to use the digital storefronts of B&M retailers, and we hypothesise that:

H4c: Consumers' perceived compatibility with online shopping is positively associated with their attitude towards the digital storefronts of B&M retailers.

3.6. Moderating effect of product type

The influence of product type in omnichannel retailing has been explored from different prisms. For example, Van Baal and Dach (2005) and Heitz-Spahn (2013) examined how product characteristics affect behaviours like free-riding and cross-channel shopping, while Gensler et al. (2017) studied the role of product category in showrooming, and Chatterjee and Kumar (2017) analysed willingness to pay across product categories. More recently, Sari (2021) identified factors affecting channel preferences, such as hedonic motivations, shopping speed, product variety, pricing, sensory attributes, and ease of returns. However, research has yet to explore how product type might moderate the relationship between consumers' reasons and their attitude toward adopting digital storefronts of B&M retailers. Despite this gap, prior studies suggest that product type can influence how 'reasons for' and 'reasons against' shape consumer attitudes and intentions toward B&M digital storefronts. For example, consumers evaluate search goods (e.g., electronics) and experience goods (e.g., clothing) differently due to their unique characteristics and associated risks (Atkins and Hyun, 2016; Hsieh et al., 2005; Huang et al., 2009; Kim and Park, 2019; Pascual-Miguel et al., 2015).

Search goods like electronics are defined by well-documented features and standardised specifications that make them easy to compare online using detailed product information, reviews, and prices (Girard and Dion, 2010; Lim et al., 2015; Nelson, 1970; Singh and Srivastava, 2018). This abundance of online information reduces risks for consumers, especially the financial risks of buying high-value items, and encourages practices like webrooming, where consumers research online before buying (Aw, 2020; Guo et al., 2022). Digital storefronts of B&M retailers combine online information with the trustworthiness of a physical brand presence, providing post-purchase support and reinforcing brand credibility (Nielsen, 2020). Based on this, reasons for shopping online—such as product authenticity and quality, convenience, and competitive pricing—should exert a stronger positive influence on consumer attitudes and shopping intentions for electronics.

On the contrary, experience goods like clothing are characterised by fit, fabric quality, and style that are difficult to evaluate online and often need to be seen or touched in person (Gati and Tversky, 1984; Girard et al., 2003; Guo et al., 2022). Online descriptions and images frequently fall short, leading to consumer uncertainty (Chatterjee and Kumar, 2017). Consequently, while consumers may start shopping online, they often prefer to finalise clothing purchases in-store for reassurance (Heitz-Spahn, 2013). Online reviews for these products are also subjective and vary widely, making them less reliable (Rejón-Guardia and Luna-Nevarez, 2017). Additional logistical issues, such as complex returns (Maity and Arnold, 2013; Ofek et al., 2011) and delivery delays (Li et al., 2015), increase hesitation to buy clothing online. Although B&M retailers offer omnichannel options like in-store inspection, these do not fully resolve the uncertainty of online clothing purchases (Guo et al., 2022; Xie et al., 2024).

Therefore, after considering the potential mismatch differences between product type and digital storefronts—i.e., digital storefronts have a better alignment with search products than with experience products—from the previous discussion, we posit that:

H5a: The relationship between 'reasons for' and attitude towards shopping in the digital storefronts of B&M retailers will be stronger for

electronics than for clothing.

H5b: The relationship between ‘reasons against’ and attitude towards shopping in the digital storefronts of B&M retailers will be stronger for clothing than electronics.

The final research model is summarised in Fig. 1.

4. Materials and methods

As mentioned in the introduction, the research takes a mixed-methods approach, using qualitative analysis to answer RQ1, followed by quantitative analysis to answer RQ2 and RQ3. Fig. 2 provides a graphical representation of the research methodology, which will be detailed in the following subsections.

4.1. Qualitative phase: elicitation of reasons for and against adopting the digital storefronts of B&M retailers

As a preliminary step to analyse the research model shown in Fig. 1, it is necessary to uncover and understand the specific reasons—for and against—that influence Indian consumers’ decisions to shop from the digital storefronts of B&M retailers. Through a qualitative research approach, we aimed to elicit context-specific reasons, drawing upon the principles outlined in previous studies (Hoehle and Venkatesh, 2015; Shi et al., 2020; Song et al., 2019).

We conducted interviews with a selected group of experts in the field of omnichannel retailing, including two academic researchers, two strategy officers, and one business officer. The structure of these interviews was designed to foster in-depth discussions, with a guide containing open-ended questions that probed into the motivations, barriers, and various influences on consumers’ shopping decisions from integrated digital storefronts.

Each interview was audio-recorded and supplemented with handwritten notes. The recordings were transcribed verbatim, and the texts underwent a thorough analysis using Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) open and axial coding procedures. This procedure involved a meticulous, line-by-line examination of the transcripts to identify key themes and patterns. The emerging codes were then clustered into subcategories and conceptual themes, using the information from the literature review on barriers and drivers to adoption (Section 2.1) as support, in line with the methodological guidance of Miles and Huberman’s (1994) approach to facilitate information compression and conclusion drawing. The analysis led to the identification of the key reasons (Table 1) influencing consumer adoption of the digital storefronts of B&M retailers.

From Table 1, we confirmed that the ‘reasons for’ and ‘reasons against’ adopting the digital storefronts of B&M retailers match most

drivers and barriers of online shopping in omnichannel contexts identified in our review of the literature in Section 2.1, particularly those associated to logistics, which were further refined into multiple independent reasons, as it will be detailed below. However, the interviews did not identify effective salesmanship, usability or pricing consistency as ‘reasons for’ or ‘reasons against’ adopting the digital storefronts of B&M retailers, and instead unveiled reasons that had not been identified in our literature review, probably because they are specific to B&M retailers, such as perceived trust and attractiveness of alternatives, as well as other new reasons that may apply to all kind of online stores, such as product availability.

Upon this information, the research progressed to a rating stage where a group of 30 participants, randomly chosen from a database of consumers from mailinglistsglobal.com, assessed these reasons (both ‘reasons for’ and ‘reasons against’). This rating process, inspired by the methodologies of Westaby (2005), Oh and Teo (2010), Claudy et al. (2015), Gupta and Arora (2017), and Huang and Qian (2021), used a scale ranging from 1 (not a reason) to 5 (a very influential reason).

A significant insight from this stage was the participants’ struggle to differentiate between convenience and flexibility. This led to comprehensive discussions with experts and the subsequent decision to retain only the concept of flexibility—that is, throughout the remainder of the article, flexibility can be assumed to include the concepts of convenience and seamless channel integration and shopping experiences. Furthermore, insights from qualitative interviews consistently highlighted the significant role of logistics in shaping the consumer experience. This was particularly noted concerning the timeliness of deliveries, the condition of products upon arrival, and inventory access to products across online and offline channels—e.g., product availability.

Finally, after the ranking procedure, the study identified three primary ‘reasons for’ and three ‘reasons against’ shopping online in the digital storefronts of B&M retailers. Personalisation (mean = 4.6, SD = 0.33), flexibility (mean = 4.55, SD = 0.30), and perceived product quality (mean = 4.5, SD = 0.30) emerged as the leading reasons driving online shopping. In contrast, concerns regarding timeliness (mean = 4.65, SD = 0.24), the appeal of alternative options (mean = 4.61, SD = 0.28), and product availability (mean = 4.54, SD = 0.20) were identified as primary deterrents. Fig. 3 summarises the research model after incorporating the ‘reasons for’ and ‘reasons against’.

4.2. Quantitative phase: empirical analysis

4.2.1. Measurement instrument

To measure the latent variables of the nomologic network in Fig. 3, we designed a survey based on metrics and scales relevant to

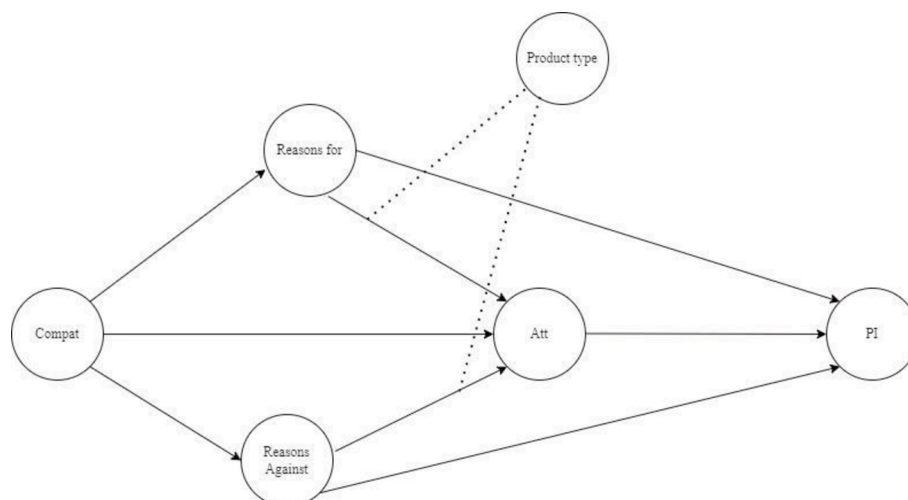


Fig. 1. Conceptual model based on BRT.

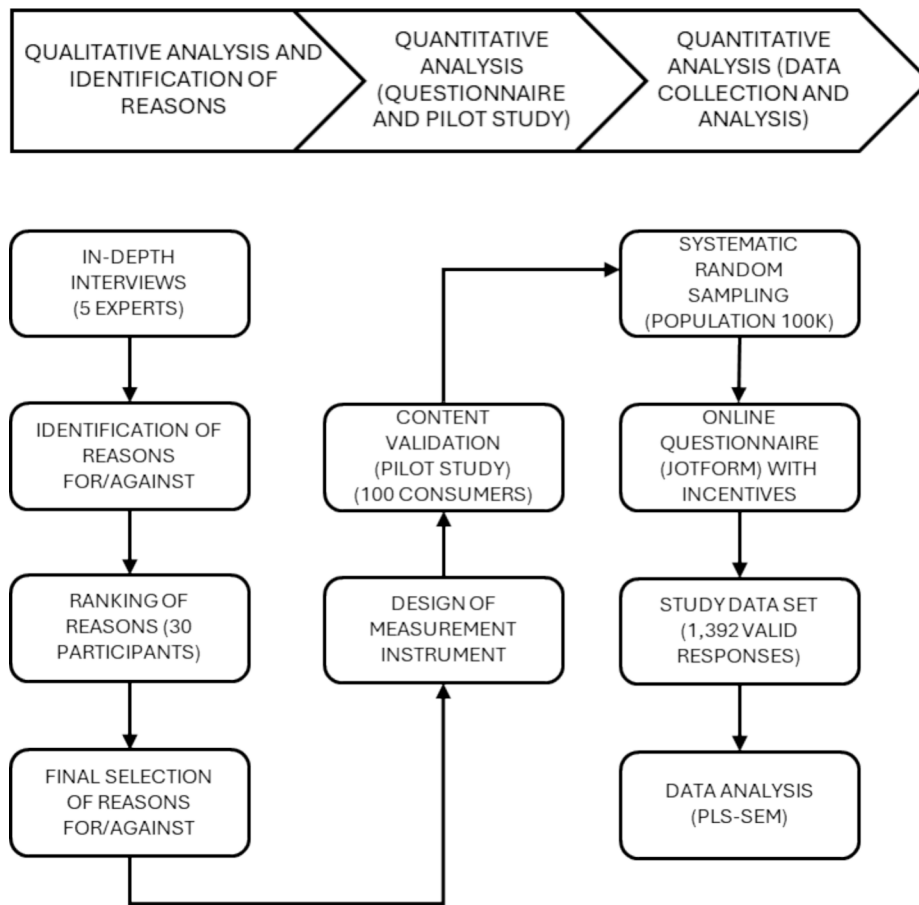


Fig. 2. Graphical representation of the research methodology.

omnichannel retail from previous research, using a five-point Likert scale to record responses ranging from strong disagreement (1) to strong agreement (5). Perceived compatibility incorporated three items from [Claudy et al. \(2013\)](#); consumer attitudes toward digital storefronts of B&M retailers and their online shopping intentions were measured using three-item scales, drawn upon previous BRT studies ([Anayat et al., 2023](#); [Huang and Qian, 2021](#)); positive attributes ('reasons for') were modelled as second-order constructs, encompassing flexibility—five items based on [Shi et al. \(2020\)](#)—, personalisation—three items from [Ameen et al. \(2022\)](#) and [Lee and Cranage \(2011\)](#)—, and perceived product quality—six items from [Geng and Chang \(2022\)](#)—; analogously, 'reasons against' were also conceptualised as a second-order latent variable, and included measures of logistics service quality (LSQ), such as product availability—four items—and delivery timeliness—three items—from [Murfield et al. \(2017\)](#), alongside the attractiveness of alternatives—four items based on [Fang et al. \(2021\)](#).

4.2.2. Data collection and sampling

Once the questionnaire was finished, we employed an online survey method targeting Indian consumers to test the research hypotheses and the research model. We utilised a comprehensive database from [mailing listsglobal.com](#), which contains a pool of 100,000 consumers. This database was selected for its wide-ranging coverage among online shopping consumers, encompassing a diverse group that includes undergraduate students, graduate working professionals proficient in English, and individuals aged between 18 and 60 years residing in metropolitan, urban, and semi-urban areas of India.

Before conducting the main survey, a pilot study was carried out with 100 randomly chosen consumers from our database. The primary goal of this initial study was to improve the content validity of our survey tool.

Following the feedback received, minor modifications were made to the phrasing of several statements to enhance clarity and comprehension (the final measurement instrument, including the abbreviations of the measurement items and latent variables, is detailed in [Table A.1 in the Appendix](#)).

For the main survey, a systematic sampling strategy was implemented, targeting every fifth member within the database. This approach led to 20,000 consumers being invited to participate in the survey. Selecting participants this way ensured that our sample accurately reflected the diverse consumer base of omnichannel shopping. To identify a representative sample of omnichannel consumers for the study, we zeroed in on individuals who had recently purchased clothing and electronics within the past three months. Our initial criterion for valid responses was that the respondents had utilised both online and offline channels for purchases from the same brand or retailer, such as Shoppersstop or Croma. These participants were asked to recall their latest purchases and indicate whether they had used both channels of these retailers. Respondents who affirmed using both channels were further queried about their frequency of engaging in webrooming and showrooming behaviours. The subsequent questions were designed to delve into their shopping preferences in these product categories.

Once the survey was validated, shopping vouchers were offered as an incentive to encourage participation in the main study. In our effort to maintain high-quality data, we also excluded surveys completed in less than five minutes. After applying all the exclusion criteria, our study yielded 1392 valid responses for analysis. Detailed demographic details of the study sample are given in [Table A.2 in the Appendix](#). Although the sample may not seem representative of the Indian population in general, it is highly representative of the Indian omnichannel consumer population, which has a high proportion of educated, upper-middle class

Table 1
Key 'reasons for/against' identified during the interviews.

Reason	Supporting quotes from interviewees
Perceived quality of the product	"When customers shop online from a known physical store, they know they will receive good quality because they are familiar with the retailer." – Interviewee A "Consumers often worry that the product might not match the quality they expected or, worse, they might receive a counterfeit product." – Interviewee B
Perceived trust	"Trust in the retailer's physical presence translates into confidence in their digital platforms, making it easier for consumers to transition between online and offline channels." – Interviewee C "Trust is a fundamental aspect when shopping online, especially in categories like electronics or apparel, where there is high involvement while purchasing." – Interviewee D
Convenience	"Consumers can shop at any time without the constraints of store hours. This flexibility is crucial for those with busy schedules or preferences for late-night or early-morning shopping." – Interviewee A "Offering options like home delivery, click-and-collect, or curbside pickup provides more control over the shopping experience." – Interviewee D
Personalization	"Personalization makes customers feel valued and understood, leading to increased loyalty and engagement." – Interviewee A "Leveraging data analytics to offer personalised recommendations and custom promotions is a key driver of consumer loyalty." – Interviewee C
Product variety	"Offering a wide range of products online expands consumer choices beyond the physical store limits and helps adapt quickly to consumer trends." – Interviewee C "Online platforms allow us to introduce new products faster than traditional brick-and-mortar stores." – Interviewee A
Flexibility	"Providing flexibility in delivery and payment options is a game-changer, enhancing convenience for consumers." – Interviewee C "Retailers must allow customers to switch between channels seamlessly, whether for research, purchase, or returns." – Interviewee D
Timely delivery	"Timely delivery and product availability are key factors in shaping consumer satisfaction. If a product arrives later than expected, it disrupts customer's confidence in the online shopping from the brand." – Interviewee C "Speed and reliability are paramount. A single delay can push customers to choose another retailer." – Interviewee D
Product condition	"Ensuring products are delivered in good condition is just as vital. No one wants to receive a damaged or incorrect item after waiting for it." – Interviewee C "Discrepancies in product specifications can lead to dissatisfaction, resulting in returns or cancellations." – Interviewee B
Privacy risk management	"Customers want assurance that their personal information is safe and won't be misused. A lack of transparency or a data breach can significantly damage customer confidence in the online shopping from the offline retailer." – Interviewee C. "As retailers gather more customer data, privacy concerns are escalating due to the growing risk of data breaches" – Interviewee A
Cross-channel consistency	"Consumers no longer see online and offline as separate entities. They want a consistent experience across all touchpoints, whether it's product information, pricing, or promotions." – Interviewee D "Inconsistent pricing or promotions across channels can confuse customers and make them less certain about shopping online with the retailer." – Interviewee B
Attractiveness of alternatives	"Since customers have more confidence in platforms like Amazon and Flipkart, it limits their willingness to shop elsewhere, making it harder for offline stores to compete online." – Interviewee A "Competing with the variety, pricing, and delivery speed of Amazon and Flipkart requires unique value propositions from other retailers." – Interviewee C

Table 1 (continued)

Reason	Supporting quotes from interviewees
Product availability	"When a product is listed online but out of stock, it disrupts the customer experience. That's why having real-time inventory visibility is so important to ensure availability across all channels." – Interviewee C "To keep up with customer expectations in an omnichannel model, retailers need to ensure products are available across all channels—having full inventory visibility is key here" – Interviewee D

shoppers living in large urban areas (Deloitte, 2023).

4.2.3. Partial least squares structural equation modelling

The data analysis in our study was performed using Partial Least Squares Path Modelling (PLS-PM), also referred to as Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), employing the SmartPLS 4.1.0.0 software. The adoption of PLS-SEM was particularly suited to our research needs, as shown in previous research on consumers' behaviours in omnichannel retailing (Cheah et al., 2019; Hair et al., 2019; Hwang et al., 2020). Our conceptual framework, as illustrated in Fig. 3, leverages the strengths of PLS-SEM in estimating complex structural models, including those that incorporate higher-order constructs (Sarstedt et al., 2019) and the evaluation of moderating effects (Becker et al., 2018).

Following the recommendations of Hair et al. (2019) and Sarstedt et al. (2019), we followed a disjoint two-stage approach in our analysis. In the disjoint two-stage approach, the initial stage incorporates only first-order constructs, while the latent variable scores obtained are subsequently used as indicators for the second-order constructs in the second stage. In the first stage, model assessment involves the evaluation of internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the lower-order components. In addition, it examines convergent validity, collinearity among indicators and the significance and relevance of the outer weights of the higher-order components. The second stage follows the standard assessment of measurement and structural models in PLS-SEM, using Mode B to estimate the higher-order component and a path weighting scheme for parameter calculation.

4.2.3.1. Disjoint two-stage analysis: stage one. The results of stage 1 confirm the reliability of the measurement instrument after observation of the composite reliability values (ρ_c , ρ_a), and Cronbach's α , all surpassing the thresholds of 0.600, 0.700, and 0.700, respectively. The analysis also confirms convergent validity, with Average Variance Extracted (AVE) scores greater than the 0.5 threshold. Notably, the loading for the product availability item AVAIL3 ("I can easily check the product availability online to see if the desired product was available at the physical store") was slightly lower than 0.707; however, the item was retained to preserve content validity. Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratios², which were well below the 0.85 threshold, as shown in Table 2.

4.2.3.2. Disjoint two-stage analysis: stage two. In the second stage of the disjoint two-stage approach, the latent variable scores derived from the lower-order components serve as indicators (Mode B) for the higher-order components within the model. Subsequently, the assessment of both the measurement and structural model proceeds according to standard PLS-SEM analysis procedures (Benitez et al., 2020; Hair et al., 2018, 2019).

The analysis evaluates internal consistency reliability, convergent and discriminant validity (Tables 3 and 4). The minimum values

² Although there were negative correlations between latent variables, a further HTMT2 analysis (Roemer et al., 2021), using the semTools and cSEM packages in R, returned similar results.

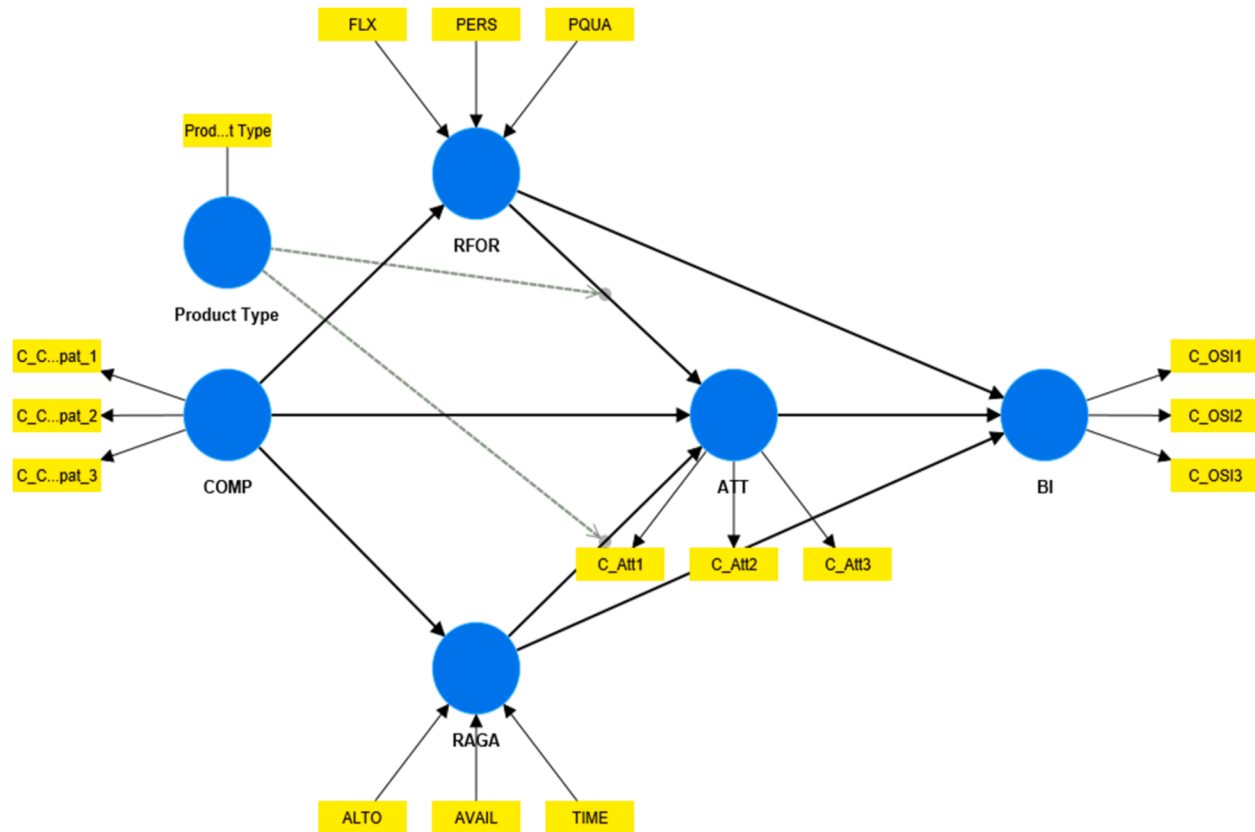


Fig. 3. Final research model.

Table 2
Discriminant validity (Stage 1, HTMT criterion).

	ALTO	ATT	AVAIL	BI	COMP	FLX	PERS	PQUA	TIME
ALTO									
ATT	0.475								
AVAIL	0.168	0.209							
BI	0.429	0.703	0.195						
COMP	0.057	0.138	0.081	0.105					
FLX	0.368	0.530	0.163	0.571	0.096				
PERS	0.117	0.315	0.241	0.335	0.059	0.252			
PQUA	0.278	0.608	0.326	0.695	0.034	0.541	0.478		
TIME	0.160	0.311	0.140	0.297	0.098	0.250	0.198	0.252	

Table 3
Internal and convergent validity.

	Cronbach's alpha	ρ_a	ρ_c	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Attitude (ATT)	0.844	0.859	0.907	0.765
Behavioural Intention (BI)	0.910	0.915	0.944	0.848
Compatibility (COMP)	0.952	0.958	0.969	0.912
Reasons Against (RA)		1.000		
Reasons For (RF)		1.000		

obtained for Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability—Dijkstra-Henseler's rho (ρ_a) and Jöreskog's rho (ρ_c)—are 0.844, 0.859 and 0.907, respectively. Reflective construct standard loadings are well over the threshold of 0.707, while all VIF values of the inner model and most of the VIF values of the outer model remain below 5 (below 3 for formative constructs); notably, items measuring perceived compatibility might

present some multicollinearity and therefore be redundant, with VIF values between 4.8 and 6. Outer weights of formative indicators are significant at $p < 0.05$. AVE values exceed 0.765 for all formative constructs, well over the 0.500 threshold. Discriminant validity is established by observing the HTMT ratio of correlations—the same comment about HTMT2 from stage 1 applies here.

Notably, the results highlight a strong relevance of the attractiveness of alternatives in the 'reasons against' construct; regarding 'reasons for,' perceived product quality emerges as the main component of the construct, followed by flexibility, while personalisation does not seem to play a relevant role in the formation of the construct.

5. Results

5.1. Analysis of the structural model

The structural model analysis (Fig. 4) reveals positive relationships between attitude toward shopping in the digital storefronts of B&M retailers and behavioural intention ($\beta = 0.295$; p -value = 0.000), in support of H1. The results show strong positive relationships between

Table 4
Factorial loadings (in parenthesis, outer weights).

	ATT	BI	COMP	RA	RF
ALTO				0.861 (0.764)	
AVAIL				0.406 (0.232)	
ATT1	0.911				
ATT2	0.927				
ATT3	0.779				
COMP1			0.949		
COMP2			0.955		
COMP3			0.960		
BI1		0.934			
BI2		0.940			
BI3		0.888			
FLX					0.779 (0.432)
PERS					0.458 (0.076)
PQUA					0.923 (0.681)
TIME				0.571 (0.434)	

‘reasons for’ and attitude ($\beta = 0.448$; p -value = 0.000) and purchasing intention ($\beta = 0.447$; p -value = 0.000), supporting H2a and H3a; alternatively, negative relationships are found between ‘reasons against’ and attitude ($\beta = -0.342$; p -value = 0.000) and purchasing intention ($\beta = -0.128$; p -value = 0.000), supporting H2b and H3b; notably, the direct effect of ‘reasons against’ is lower on purchasing intention than on attitude. While the results also confirm the positive relationship between perceived compatibility and ‘reasons for’ ($\beta = 0.065$; p -value = 0.007), ‘reasons against’ ($\beta = 0.053$; p -value = 0.023), and attitude ($\beta = 0.166$; p -value = 0.000), confirming H4a, H4b and H4c, respectively, the strength of these relationships is moderate to low.

Finally, the analysis reveals mixed findings regarding the moderating effect of product type (Fig. 5); indeed, the results cannot support that the type of product moderates the relationship between ‘reasons for’ and attitude ($\beta = 0.012$; p -value = 0.401), and therefore H5a is not supported, whereas there is a medium moderating role of product type on the relationship between ‘reasons against’ and attitude ($\beta = 0.125$; p -value = 0.004), and thus H5b is supported.

In evaluating the model, adjusted R^2 values are considered, providing insight into the in-sample predictive power (Hair et al., 2021). From the analysis, ‘reasons for’ and ‘reasons against’ can hardly be explained from compatibility alone ($\text{adj. } R^2 < 0.01$), but the model exhibits a fairly good explanation of attitude toward shopping in the

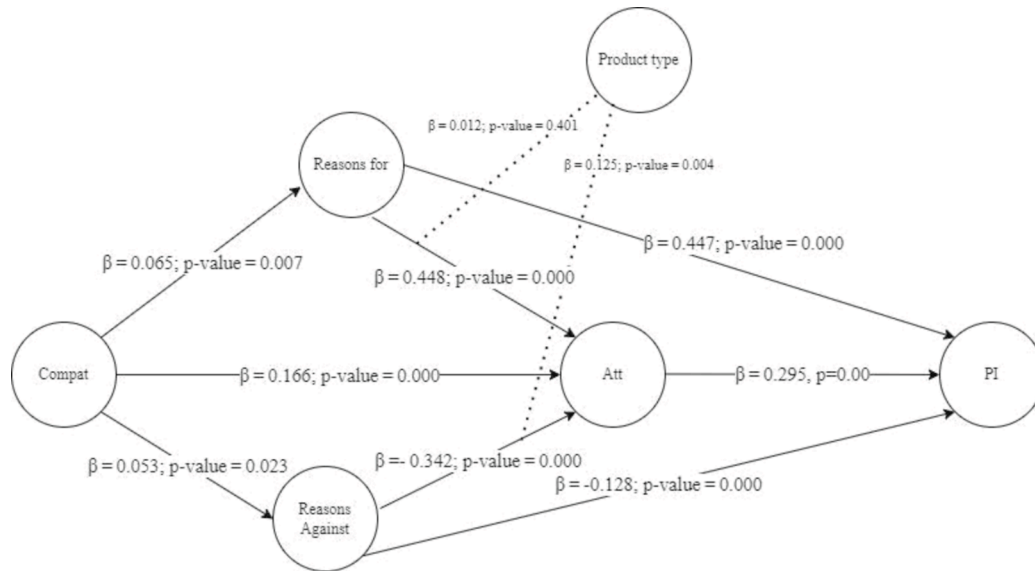


Fig. 4. Structural model.

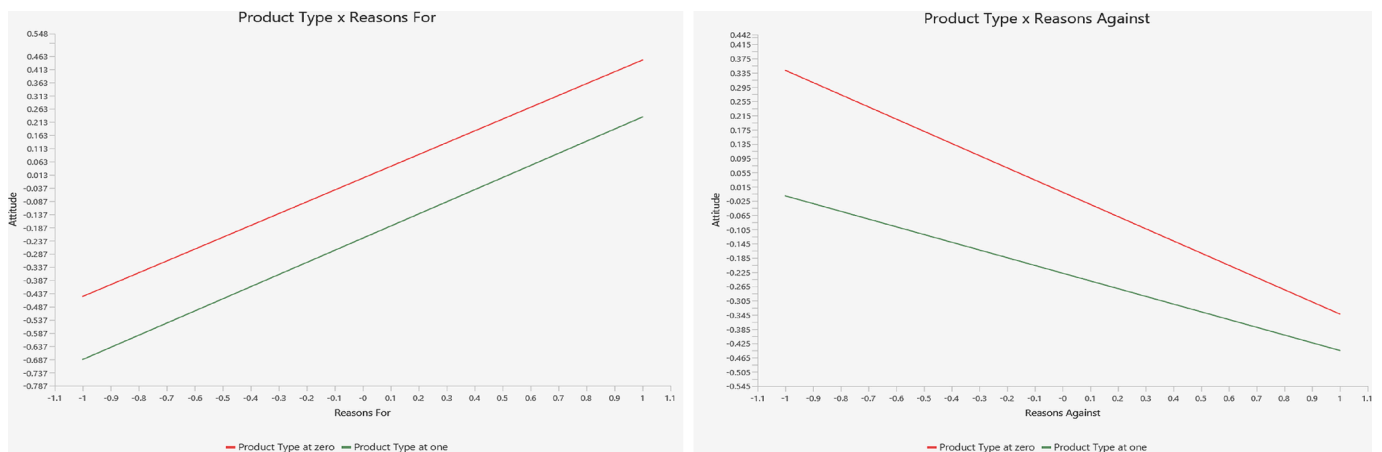


Fig. 5. Moderating effect of product type on the relationship between ‘reasons for’ and attitude (left) and ‘reasons against’ and attitude (right).

digital stores of B&M retailers ($\text{adj. } R^2 = 0.43$) and purchasing intention ($\text{adj. } R^2 = 0.54$).

The analysis of effect sizes (f^2) reveals a medium effect of ‘reasons for’ on purchasing intention ($f^2 = 0.275$), a small to medium effect of ‘reasons for’ on attitude ($f^2 = 0.129$), attitude on purchasing intention ($f^2 = 0.113$), ‘reasons against’ on attitude ($f^2 = 0.069$) and intention ($f^2 = 0.026$), and between compatibility and attitude ($f^2 = 0.038$). No other effects were found.

5.2. Importance-performance matrix analysis

Finally, we performed an Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA). The IPMA enhances result interpretation by incorporating a dimension that examines the average values of latent variable scores, highlighting predecessors with significant importance for the target construct (i.e., those exerting a strong total effect), yet exhibiting comparatively lower performance (i.e., low average latent variable scores) (Ringle and Sarstedt, 2016). The analysis results at the construct level (Fig. 6) reveal that ‘reasons for’ are paramount in enhancing purchasing intention in the case of the digital storefronts of B&M retailers, both directly and indirectly, through their effect on forming positive attitudes. From Fig. 6, most antecedents have similar performance levels, with room for improvement, and with ‘reasons against’ showing the lowest performance among them. Additionally, the results of the IPMA at the construct level suggest that, to enhance shopping in the digital storefronts of B&M retailers, improving ‘reasons for’ should be given higher priority, followed by ‘reasons against’. The results at the indicator level (Fig. 7) suggest that two ‘reasons for’ and one ‘reason against’ have the strongest effect on purchasing intention: perceived product quality and flexibility, and the attractiveness of alternatives,

respectively; the latter, incidentally, also has the largest room for improvement.

6. Discussion

6.1. Main discussion of results

The study proposed that perceived compatibility might affect reasons and attitudes; while this effect was found, it was minimal in the case of the former, suggesting that perceived compatibility plays a negligible role in shaping omnichannel consumers’ reasoning, whether for or against, and moderate in the case of the latter—however, low when compared to the effect of ‘reasons for’ and ‘reasons against’. This result suggests that consumers’ reasons are not heavily dependent on whether online shopping fits very well with consumers’ values, lifestyles, habits and preferences, and challenges previous findings by Claudy et al. (2015), Eccarius and Lu (2020), and Turja et al. (2020). However, it must also be noted that prior research—e.g., Chin and Gopal (1995), Taylor and Todd (1995), Nor and Pearson (2007), and Herrero-Crespo et al. (2013)—found no significant impact of compatibility on purchase intention. Particularly, as Herrero-Crespo et al. (2013) note, this finding might be explained because, as consumers gain more experience with online shopping, the influence of perceived compatibility diminishes, shifting the focus to other factors that become more influential in driving the adoption of these platforms.

As expected, consumers’ attitudes and intentions to buy from traditional B&M stores online are greatly influenced by reasons for doing so, and negatively impacted by reasons against performing the anticipated behaviour. However, the analysis found that the positive effect of ‘reasons for’ is stronger, suggesting that ‘reasons for’ may outweigh ‘reasons

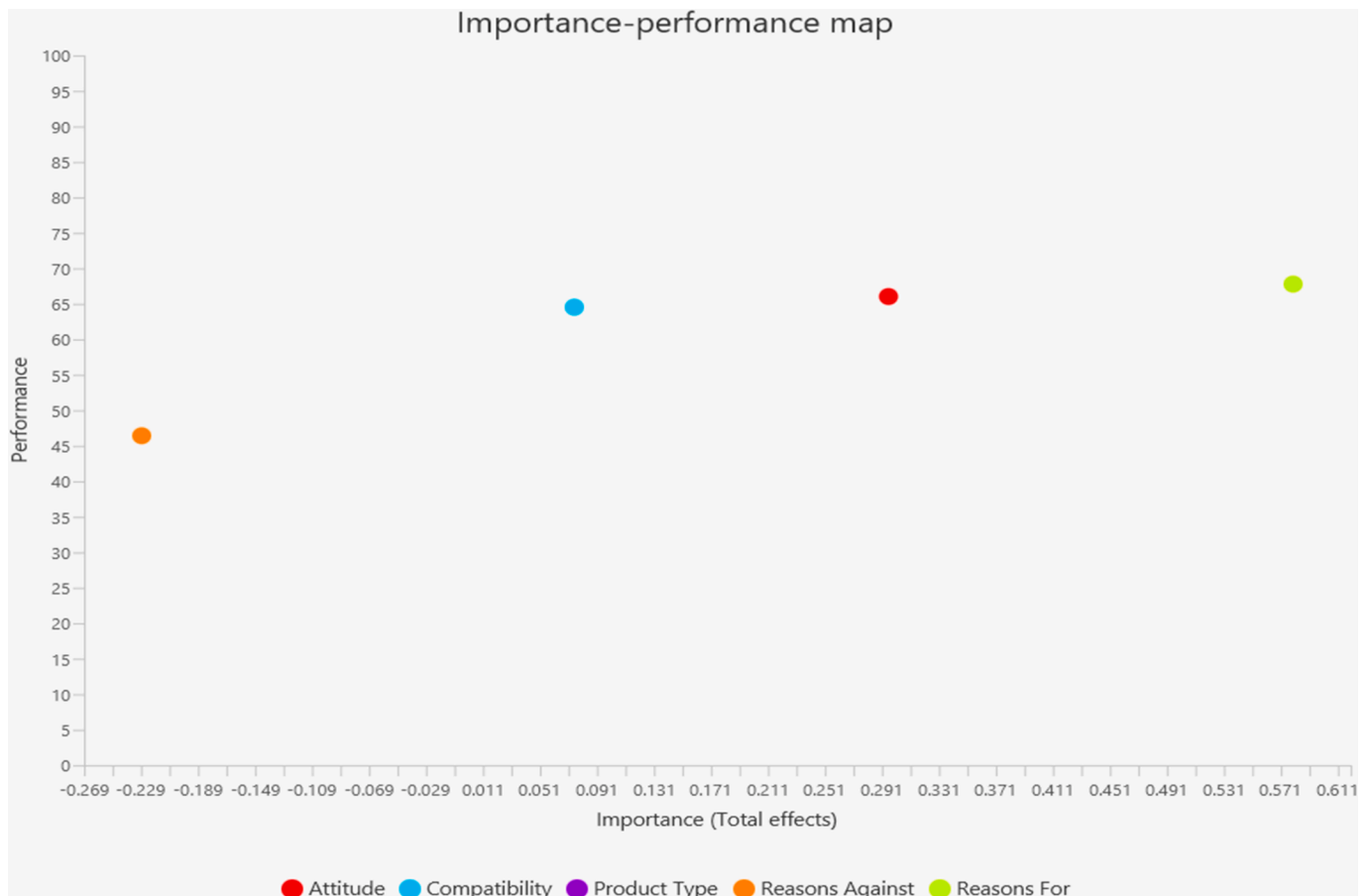


Fig. 6. Importance-performance map (construct level; target latent variable: purchasing intention).

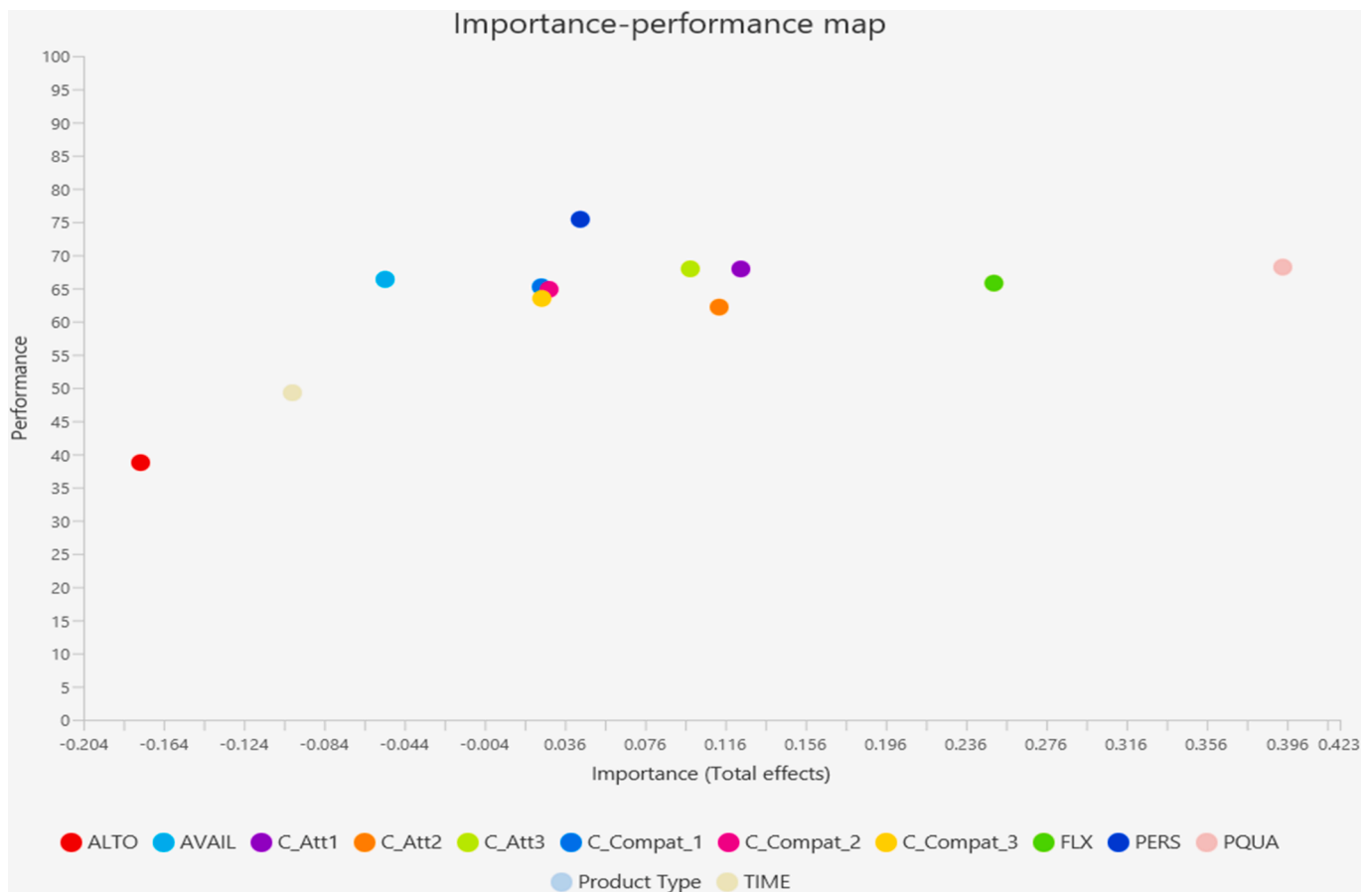


Fig. 7. Importance-performance map (indicator level; target latent variable: purchasing intention).

against'. Therefore, as B&M retailers incorporate online sales channels, they should consider both groups of reasons but prioritise those that drive shopping on their digital platforms. A closer look at the components of 'reasons for' and 'reasons against', as well as an observation of the IPMA analysis, highlights the relevant role of two reasons that shape positively—perceived product quality and flexibility—and one that shapes negatively—attractiveness of alternatives—consumers' attitudes and intentions toward the digital storefronts of B&M retailers. Regarding perceived product quality, the results align with existing literature (Rahman et al., 2022b; Son et al., 2021) that underscores the importance of quality in guiding well-informed and satisfying purchasing decisions in omnichannel retail. The importance of flexibility suggests that omnichannel consumers also seem to value the ability to seamlessly navigate online and offline shopping platforms, which refutes the notion that increased shopping flexibility might lead to consumer ambiguity (Merschmann and Thonemann, 2011; Shi et al., 2020) and stresses the pivotal role of flexibility in providing true omnichannel, seamless shopping experiences (Cocco and Demoulin, 2022). Concerning the attractiveness of alternatives, the results suggest that the availability of equal or more appealing alternatives from competing e-commerce platforms is a dominant reason deterring consumers from online shopping at traditional retailers, which resonates with earlier studies by Rusbult (1980), Ping (1994), Yim et al. (2007), Chang et al. (2014), and Kim et al. (2021). While this result poses a significant challenge in the overcrowded digital retail landscape, where alternatives are plentiful, when combined with the former two reasons, it can give a slight upper hand to B&M retailers by leveraging their ability to integrate online and offline channels in a flexible way, if they can offer a high-quality shopping experience across all channels.

While the relevance of delivery speed in enhancing online shopping experiences is well-documented—e.g., Dhaigude and Mohan (2023),

Murfield et al. (2017), Tzeng et al. (2021), Uvet (2020), Yumurtaci Hüseyinoğlu et al. (2018)—, our research suggests that concerns about delivery timeliness might exert a weaker effect than other reasons on consumer attitude towards online purchases from B&M retailers. Prior studies indicate that consumer expectations regarding delivery times are influenced by various factors, including product type, purchase purpose, brand loyalty, secure packaging, attractive discounts, and free or paid delivery (Chaturvedi and Agnihotri, 2019; Ma, 2017), underscoring the need for further research into situational factors that could explain the reduced impact of these expectations in our findings.

Furthermore, the analysis of our study reveals nuanced findings regarding the moderating effect of product type. Surprisingly, our results indicate that product type does not significantly moderate the relationship between reasons for shopping and consumer attitudes. This suggests that consumers prioritise these 'reasons for' in the same way and that their effect on attitude may be similar across these categories; that is, consumers' expectations about the flexibility in the shopping process, perceived product quality and personalisation of the shopping experience may be approximately uniform across both product categories. Conversely, we find that product type does moderate the impact of reasons against digital storefront shopping, such as attractiveness of alternatives, issues related to delivery and product availability; considering that purchasing of clothing may be largely affected by issues like fit, trends and seasonal availability, which are generally not so relevant in electronics, the support for the research hypothesis can be further explained by a higher sensitivity of consumers to delays, stock shortages and the uniqueness of some garments (Kim et al., 2021; Rossolov et al., 2021; Son et al., 2021). When combined with the effect of 'reasons for' and 'reasons against' on attitude, this result indicates that clothing B&M retailers should pay close attention to these 'reasons against', as they might be as important, if not more, than 'reasons for' the adoption of

B&M digital storefronts; this is also supported by the results of the IPMA analysis, as there is larger room for improvement in the performance of 'reasons against', especially in the attractiveness of competitors and product availability.

6.2. Contributions to theory

One of the main theoretical contributions is the novel use of BRT in retailing, for two reasons: first, our study expands the scope of the BRT beyond previous applications, such as eco-friendly behaviour (Ashfaq et al., 2021; Tan et al., 2021) and mobile banking (Gupta and Arora, 2017), to omnichannel retailing, and underscores the importance of examining both positive and negative reasoning in consumer decision-making in omnichannel retailing; second, by adopting the BRT, the research can move beyond the generic formulations of influencing variables—e.g., perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use—used in traditional acceptance theories, while offering a comprehensive approach to understanding the specific factors that drive consumer choices in an omnichannel retailing context. Particularly, the qualitative exploration of 'reasons for' and 'reasons against' adoption of digital storefronts of B&M retailers helped confirm findings from existing research on drivers and barriers of online shopping and offers valuable insight on specific reasons, and their relevance in omnichannel contexts, especially in developing markets like India.

Furthermore, the study also sheds light on the complex dynamics that may arise between factors that motivate and deter consumer behaviour. A key finding from the study is that 'reasons for' significantly increase purchasing intention at the digital storefronts of B&M retailers. Specifically, perceived product quality and flexibility strongly enhance consumer engagement and the desire to purchase. Additionally, the research pioneers the exploration of the moderating effect of product type in the relationship between 'reasons for/against' and attitude; the results unveiled an imbalance of the moderating effect of product type, whereby no effect was observed in the (positive) relationship between 'reasons for' and consumer attitudes, but a stronger effect was observed in the (negative) relationship between 'reasons against' and consumer attitudes for experience goods, such as clothing.

6.3. Additional implications for practice

The findings of our study shed light on factors influencing consumers' intention to use the digital storefronts of B&M retailers and complement the results of prior research on the development of omnichannel capabilities by B&M retailers—e.g., Jindal et al. (2021). One implication from our findings is that B&M retailers transitioning to omnichannel retailing may leverage product quality-focused strategies that can lead to more favourable attitudes towards their digital storefronts—instead of engaging in low-pricing strategies commonly associated with pure-play online stores, for example—; by doing so, and as a byproduct, the focus on product quality may also increase the perceived attractiveness of their own offer when compared to the alternatives, and thus alleviate the negative effect of 'reasons against' that price differences currently exert in India regarding attractiveness (PwC, 2024).

The study also highlighted the important role of flexibility in shaping consumers' attitude towards shopping using the digital storefronts of B&M retailers; compared to pure players, B&M have the advantage that they can provide integrated multichannel experiences that online-only stores cannot replicate (Hokkanen et al., 2020). Therefore, these experiences can, and must be tailored to the various consumer preferences and demands; for this, it is critical to ensure the seamless execution of omnichannel operations, including adequate delivery options and efficient fulfilment processes (Cocco and Demoulin, 2022). Prior research across different sectors suggests that getting inside or outside digital experts on board can play a pivotal role in creating such cohesive and satisfying consumer journeys—e.g., Cota et al. (2023), Langley and Rieple (2021).

However, B&M retailers that aim to enhance their logistics process to improve flexibility, product availability, timeliness of delivery and personalisation to foster adoption of their digital storefronts should be aware that they may incur in high operational costs; therefore, wisely choosing which delivery and pickup options to offer may become imperative to mitigate these increased costs. B&M retailers can find ways to mitigate these costs, such as capitalising on their physical stores to provide certain services and drive consumers from online to offline shopping; for example, using their physical stores as fulfilment centres (Mancuso et al., 2023), leveraging third-party delivery services (Yokoi, 2022), or offering in-store or curbside pickup options—that consumers seem to appreciate more since the pandemic, especially in the US, India and Brazil (PYMNTS, 2023)—to enhance consumer convenience and reduce the burden of last-mile delivery costs.

Regarding product type, the results suggest that no specific actions may be required to strengthen 'reasons for'; that is, regardless of product category, retailers should promote flexible shopping options, high product quality and personalised information and deals, and give them high priority, according to the IPMA analysis. However, and as mentioned earlier, clothing B&M retailers should also pay special attention to delivering unique products and shopping experiences that set them apart from competitors, as well as to their delivery options and their timeliness.

7. Limitations and future research directions

While providing valuable insights into omnichannel retailing, this study acknowledges several limitations that pave the way for future research. First, the research did not examine the user interfaces of digital storefronts, a critical aspect for retailers to compete effectively in the online market. Future studies should study the design and usability of these interfaces to understand how they influence consumer behaviour and retailer performance.

Second, the research was limited to a narrow range of product categories. Expanding this to include other categories could offer richer insights into how reasons influence consumer decisions across various sectors and different types of search and experience products. Additionally, examining how different reasons affect various consumer segments within these categories would deepen theoretical and practical knowledge of digital transformations in retail.

Third, the geographical diversity of the data collected is limited to Indian consumers. The generalisability of the findings is therefore limited, given the focus on the Indian retail sector—a market where omnichannel strategies are still emerging. Investigating these dynamics in other developing or established markets could provide additional perspectives and enhance the generalisability of the results. Future research could also explore how geographic location influences consumer behaviours and attitudes towards digital storefronts, which would help tailor digital strategies to different demographic and geographic segments.

Fourth, recall bias could affect the accuracy of the self-reported data. Future research could improve this by employing more objective data collection methods, such as observational studies or longitudinal tracking, to minimise reliance on self-reported data.

Fifth, future studies could also explore situational elements, such as the impact of store crowding on digital storefront usage; incentives, such as free warranty extensions aimed at influencing shopping intentions; and consumer characteristics, such as ambiguity tolerance and promotion fatigue. Moreover, examining service quality and addressing service failures may provide strategies to reduce switching behaviours and foster loyalty through showrooming practices. These areas offer substantial scope for developing a comprehensive understanding of omnichannel retailing challenges and opportunities.

Sixth, and final, we have pointed out the need to carefully balance the overall quality of the omnichannel shopping experience provided by the B&M retailers when conducting omnichannel operations, the quality

of their products and the pricing strategy so that perceived product quality is maximised, and the attractiveness of alternatives is minimised. Future research should be aimed at establishing the conditions under which this optimisation might occur.

8. Concluding remarks

The evolving retail landscape, driven by the rapid integration of digital storefronts and omnichannel operations, presents challenges and opportunities for B&M retailers, who are pushed to offer omnichannel experiences that integrate traditional offline operations with new digital storefronts. Our study explores the complexity of consumer behaviour within this context, aiming to shed light on the reasons driving their engagement with the digital storefronts of B&M retailers transitioning to an omnichannel model.

The findings underscore the interplay between different variables that shape consumer attitudes and intentions towards online shopping from B&M retailers. From our analysis of a sample of Indian consumers, while perceived compatibility with online shopping plays a limited role, the ‘reasons for’ and ‘reasons against’ embracing the digital storefronts of B&M retailers significantly impact consumer behaviour. Notably, perceived product quality, flexibility—or seamless channel integration along the shopping process—and the attractiveness of alternatives emerge as key determinants driving or hindering consumer engagement. Understanding these dynamics is essential for B&M retailers aiming to enhance their digital storefronts and compete effectively in the omnichannel space. Our study also explores the moderating effect of product type on consumer attitudes, emphasising the need for tailored strategies across different product categories.

Appendix

Table A1
Measurement instrument.

Construct	Item	Reference
Flexibility (FLX)	FLX1. I can try on products in physical stores and order them online. FLX2. I can choose alternative channels for a given service. FLX3. I can order online and make payment and pick-up offline. FLX 4. The after-sales service is available across different channels. FLX 5. I can accomplish specific tasks through preferred channels	(Shi et al., 2020)
Personalisation (PERS)	PERS1. Digital storefronts of this retailer can provide me with personalised deals/ads that are tailored to my activity context. PERS2. Digital storefronts of this retailer can provide me with more relevant promotional information that is tailored to my preferences or personal interests. PERS3. Digital storefronts of this retailer can provide me with the kind of deals/ads that I might like.	(Ameen et al., 2022; Lee and Cranage, 2011)
Product quality (PQUA)	PQUA1. The product purchased through digital storefronts of this retailer has an acceptable standard of quality PQUA2. The product purchased through digital storefronts of this retailer has consistent quality PQUA3. The product purchased through digital storefronts of this retailer would perform consistently	(Geng and Chang, 2022)
Attractiveness of alternatives (ALTO)	ALTO1. I feel there are other good retailer alternatives available online compared to the digital storefronts of this retailer ALTO2. I am happy with the products and services of another retailer ALTO3. I believe that, compared to the digital storefront of this retailer, other online retailers satisfy me more ALTO4. Compared to this retailer, there are many other retailers with whom I am satisfied	(Fang et al., 2021)
Timeliness (TIME)	TIME1. Digital storefront of this retailer provided a specific and convenient date for pickup on placing of my order TIME2. Digital storefront of this retailer was able to deliver the product on the date specified TIME3. Digital storefront of this retailer was able to deliver product quickly on request TIME4. Digital storefronts of this retailer specified delivery time slot	(Murfield et al., 2017)
Product availability (AVAIL)	AVAIL1. The product I wanted was available for delivery at store AVAIL2. The waiting time for out-of-stock items to become available for delivery was reasonable AVAIL3. I could easily check the product availability online to see if the desired product was available at physical store AVAIL4. When my desired product was not available, the store offered suitable alternative products for store pickup or delivery	(Murfield et al., 2017)
Compatibility (COMP)	COMP1. Purchasing in the digital storefront of this retailer will be compatible with all aspects of my shopping habits COMP2. Purchasing in the digital storefront of this retailer will fit into my shopping style COMP3. Purchasing in the digital storefront of this retailer will fit well with the way I like to shop	(Claudy et al., 2015)

(continued on next page)

The results of the study suggest that, by leveraging the unique offline capabilities of B&M retailers and prioritising quality-focused strategies, they can enhance the attractiveness of their digital storefronts and differentiate themselves in a crowded marketplace.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Neha Sharma: Writing – original draft, Visualization, Software, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Emiliano Acquila-Natale:** Writing – review & editing, Validation, Supervision, Project administration, Investigation, Formal analysis. **Nirankush Dutta:** Writing – review & editing, Validation, Supervision, Project administration, Methodology, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Ángel Hernández-García:** Writing – original draft, Visualization, Software, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

During the preparation of this work the authors used ChatGPT-4o in order to support wording and rephrasing. After using this tool/service, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the published article.

Table A1 (continued)

Construct	Item	Reference
Online shopping intention (BI)	BI1. I will use digital storefronts of this retailer in the near future. BI2. I intend to use digital storefronts of this retailer frequently in the future. BI3. I prefer to recommend digital storefronts of this retailer to people around me	(Anayat et al., 2023; Huang and Qian, 2021)
Attitude (ATT)	ATT1. I am interested in using digital storefronts of this retailer ATT2. I would consider digital storefronts of this retailer as an option in the future ATT3. Buying from digital storefronts of this retailer would make me feel happy	(Anayat et al., 2023; Huang and Qian, 2021)

Table A2

Descriptive statistics across product types.

Electronics			Clothing		
Criterion	Characteristic	Pct.	Criterion	Characteristic	Pct.
Age (Years)	Mean	32.12	Age (Years)	Mean	32.78
	Std. Dev.	10.63		Std. Dev.	10.03
Gender	Male	57	Gender	Male	43
	Female	43		Female	57
Education	Intermediate	14	Education	Intermediate	20
	Bachelor's Degree	50		Bachelor's Degree	40
	Master's Degree	30		Master's Degree	32
	Ph.D.	6		Ph.D.	8
Occupation	Unemployed	3	Occupation	Unemployed	2
	Homemaker	14		Homemaker	22
	Student	24		Student	13
	Self-employed	26		Self-employed	25
	Employed in organisation	32		Employed in organisation	39
Income	Up to 5 lakhs	17	Income	Up to 5 lakhs	14
	5–10 lakhs	23		5–10 lakhs	30
	10–15 lakhs	28		10–15 lakhs	35
	15–20 lakhs	14		15–20 lakhs	15
	Over 20 lakhs	9		Over 20 lakhs	5
Location	Rural	8	Location	Rural	9
	Semi-urban	11		Semi-urban	11
	Urban	36		Urban	38
	Metropolitan	45		Metropolitan	42
Showrooming Frequency	Rare	18.8	Showrooming Frequency	Rare	13.3
	Sometimes	33.4		Sometimes	29.4
	Often	25.4		Often	27.7
	Always	22.5		Always	29.6
Webrooming Frequency	Rare	7.3	Webrooming Frequency	Rare	10.9
	Sometimes	30.6		Sometimes	24
	Often	34.2		Often	34
	Always	27.9		Always	31

Data availability

The authors do not have permission to share data.

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