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**RESEARCH-SHOPPER PHENOMENON:
COMBINATIONS OF CHANNELS AND
TOUCHPOINTS ON THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY IN
GENERATION Z**



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Master in Marketing Management

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Vasco Alexandre Machado Afonso

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(assinatura)

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RESUMO

A inovação nas tecnologias digitais está a revolucionar a forma como os consumidores procuram informação, comparam os vários produtos e serviços, realizam as suas compras e se relacionam com empresas e outros consumidores.

Os consumidores facilmente podem combinar diferentes canais para procurar informações sobre produtos e posteriormente comprá-los (Orús, Gurrea & Ibáñez-Sanches, 2019). A presença de múltiplos pontos de contacto (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Wagner, Schramm-Klein & Steinmann, 2020), disponível online e offline, permite que os consumidores durante a sua jornada de consumo estejam em constante interação com o retalhista (Fernández, Pérez & Vázquez-Casielles, 2018).

Na atitude de "research-shopping phenomenon" o consumidor pesquisa o produto num canal, mas compra-o através de outro, movendo-se entre canais digitais e físicos, o que resulta em novas formas de compras (Verhoef, Neslin & Vroomen, 2007). Showrooming (pesquisa em loja física e compra online) e webrooming (pesquisa online e compra na loja física), resultam precisamente de consumidores que exploram novos canais fornecidos pelo ambiente multicanal (Fernández et al., 2018; Harris, Dall'Olmo Riley & Hand, 2018). Esta atitude pode resultar numa viagem muito complexa onde canais e pontos de contacto são usados de forma intercambiável entre eles (Harris et al., 2018; Orús et al. 2019; Patten, Ozuem, Howell & Lancaster, 2020).

A importância destes conceitos na Geração Z, que começa a despontar no que respeita ao consumo e ao retalho (Thangavel, Pathak & Chandra, 2019), revela-se da maior importância. Uma geração com novos valores, preferências e ideias, que será necessário conhecer (Puiu, 2016; Desai & Lele, 2017), e em que importa diminuir a escassez de investigação que existe atualmente (Goh & Lee, 2018; Goh & Jie, 2019; Robinson & Schänzel, 2019; Chillakuri & Mahanandia, 2018; Haddouche & Salomone, 2018).

Os estudos têm-se focado essencialmente nos canais utilizados por diferentes tipos de consumidores (Harris et al., 2018; Verhoef et al. 2007). No entanto pouca relevância tem sido dada à forma como os consumidores os utilizam (Slack, Rowley & Coles, 2008; Cortinãs, Chocarro & Villanueva, 2010; Jones & Kim, 2010), e nenhuma atenção foi dada particularmente à forma como a Geração Z o está a fazer. Torna-se então fundamental

compreender o papel dos diversos pontos de contacto que o consumidor tem durante a sua jornada de compra, a forma como são usados e a importância que adquirem durante as várias etapas (Baxendale, Macdonald & Wilson, 2015). Estes dados ajudarão as empresas e *marketers* a decidirem melhor os seus investimentos em canais e pontos de contacto, compreendendo o papel de cada um na jornada de consumo e o seu contributo para o desenvolvimento da relação entre o cliente e empresa (Baxendale et al., 2015).

A atenção para este assunto justifica o interesse da investigação. Flavian, Gurrea & Orús (2020) alertam para a necessidade de compreender as experiências no mundo real, que podem envolver várias interações entre canais offline e online, apontando a importância de investigar as combinações de canais não só como uma sequência unidirecional (de online a offline, ou de offline para online), mas também as várias possibilidades de combinações de canais.

Partindo do propósito de investigar a forma como a Geração Z se move através dos diferentes canais e pontos de contacto no “showrooming” e no “webrooming” durante a jornada de consumo, decorreram os seguintes objetivos específicos: 1) quais os canais utilizados pela Geração Z no “webrooming” e “showrooming” durante a jornada de consumo; 2) quais os tipos de pontos de contacto utilizados pela Geração Z no “webrooming” e “showrooming” durante a jornada de consumo; e 3) quais os fatores que explicam o “research-shopping phenomenon” no “webrooming” e “showrooming”.

Sendo uma investigação dedutiva, parte de um enquadramento teórico dos temas abordados procurando na investigação académica suporte metodológico para responder às questões de investigação sugeridas. Os temas identificados na literatura permitiram a construção de um modelo teórico de pesquisa. Baseada em Lemon e Verhoef (2016), a investigação conceptualiza a jornada de consumo tanto no “webrooming” como no “showrooming” como um processo dinâmico baseado em três fases: pré-compra, compra e pós-compra. Em cada fase existem quatro categorias de pontos de contacto: Brand-Owned, Partner-Owned, Customer-Owned e Social/External, que serão mediados por canais online e offline. Para explicar as razões por detrás do comportamento de “research-shopping” por parte do consumidor, a investigação aplicou os três mecanismos conceptualizados por Verhoef et al. (2007): “Attribute-Driven Decision-Making”, “Lack of Channel Lock-In”, e “Cross-Channel Synergy”. Estes mecanismos explicam as razões

pelas quais a pesquisa é efetuada num determinado canal e a compra num outro canal. Estes três mecanismos não contemplam a fase pós-compra.

A metodologia, devido à natureza exploratória deste estudo, adota como método de recolha de dados a entrevista em profundidade, dada a sua utilidade para compreender a utilização de canais e pontos de contacto durante a jornada de consumo. O estudo conta com a participação de oito entrevistados entre os 19 e 25 anos. As entrevistas foram conduzidas até atingir o “ponto de saturação”. Posteriormente, foi efetuada uma análise de conteúdo das entrevistas obtidos. Para a análise de dados, foi utilizado o software NVivo 12, permitindo simplificar a análise categórica.

Concluiu-se que a forma mais comum de “research-shopping” presente entre os entrevistados foi o “webrooming”, coincidindo com as conclusões de estudos anteriores (Verhoef et al., 2007; Fernández et al., 2018; Flavián et al., 2020). No que respeita aos canais utilizados tanto no “webrooming” como no “showrooming”, a investigação concluiu que existe uma diversidade de formas pelas quais estes canais são utilizados durante a jornada do consumidor. Este comportamento não linear na utilização dos diversos canais não coincide com as definições mais simples de webrooming (pesquisar online e comprar offline) e showrooming (pesquisar offline e comprar offline). São efetivamente usos personalizados e não lineares e podem adquirir utilizações mais complexas, como revela a investigação. Esta complexidade é verificada especialmente na fase de pré-compra, tanto no “webrooming” como no “showrooming”. Este uso personalizado de canais também se verifica na utilização dos vários pontos de contacto. Relativamente aos tipos de pontos de contacto encontrados no “webrooming” como no “showrooming, destaca-se o “Brand-Owned”, surgindo em todas as fases da jornada de consumo. As lojas oficiais e as páginas de Internet oficiais são os pontos de contacto mais referidos pelos consumidores entrevistados. O vendedor também assume importância no “webrooming”, sendo que os clientes valorizam a sua opinião. No entanto, na fase pós-compra é notada a menor presença de pontos de contacto de marca, mostrando uma baixa taxa de contacto com os clientes pela marca ou empresa após a compra. O tipo “Customer-Owned” também está presente de uma forma particular que é interessante referir. Em alguns casos de “webrooming” o cliente depois de entrar na loja física para fazer a compra acaba por "dar uma olhada" nos produtos que ali existem. O mesmo acontece no “showrooming”, onde antes de finalizar a compra na página online, acaba por "dar uma vista de olhos" a outros produtos.

Relativamente às razões para um comportamento de “research-shopper” no “showrooming” os entrevistados apresentaram unanimemente como motivo o “Cross-Channel Synergy”. Os motivos são especialmente de ordem económica (obtenção de benefícios económicos) ou de uma perspetiva psicológica (sentimento de smart-purchase). No “webrooming” o “research-shopping phenomenon” tem uma maior variedade de motivos. São principalmente do tipo “Attribute-Based Decision-Making”, em que o cliente apresenta como motivos a necessidade de tocar no produto ou testá-lo, a importância do vendedor para esclarecer quaisquer dúvidas sobre o produto ou simplesmente a percepção de que o canal online é mais útil para a pesquisa.

Este estudo enriquece a teoria acerca dos comportamentos “webrooming” e “showrooming”, podendo orientar os gestores no desenvolvimento de estratégias diferenciadas que resultem na satisfação das necessidades específicas dos consumidores da Geração Z, no que concerne à disponibilidade de canais e pontos de contacto.

Este estudo utilizou um número limitado de entrevistas, pelo que futuros estudos deverão expandir este número. Para além disso, a diferenciação dos vários produtos não foi tida em conta. Esta limitação deverá ser ultrapassada em estudos posteriores, pois as categorias de produtos poderão ter influência no “webrooming” e “showrooming”.

Ainda de referir o acréscimo para futuras investigações o facto de se poder comparar a Geração Z com outras gerações, nomeadamente os *Millennials*, procurando comparar padrões de comportamento entre as duas gerações.

Palavras-Chave: Geração Z; “research shopping”; webrooming; showrooming; canais; pontos de contacto;

ABSTRACT

The study of the consumer profile of each generation is an essential tool for brand management. However, a new generation is coming to the market and will bring new requirements to retail companies. Generation Z will soon become one of the largest consumer groups. In order to analyse the attitude of “research shopper” in its main manifestations (webrooming and showrooming), the investigation tries to understand how consumers of Generation Z move through the different channels and touchpoints in the customer journey. It also seeks out to understand the factors that motivate “research shopping” behaviour.

The present study is based on a theoretical framework of the topics covered, seeking methodological support in the academy to answer the proposed research questions. Due to the exploratory nature of this study, the methodology chosen opts for in-depth interviews to accurately understand the use of channels and touchpoints during the consumption journey. The study has the participation of eight respondents between 19 and 25 years old. Subsequently, a thematic analysis of the data obtained was carried out to obtain insights into the study's objectives.

The study concluded that both in webrooming and in showrooming, multiple channels and touchpoints are used during the consumer's journey. Its use does not reflect a logical order but a dynamic that may differ in its complexity. The use of several channels and touchpoints is not linear, and there may be alternation between them, which is reflected in a customer journey that takes different forms each time the consumer carries out a transaction.

This study enriches the theory about webrooming and showrooming behaviours, guiding managers in developing differentiated strategies that result in meeting the specific needs of Generation Z consumers regarding the availability of channels and touchpoints.

Key-Words: Generation Z; “research shopping”; webrooming; showrooming, channels; touchpoints;

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

(ABDM): Attribute-Based Decision-Making

ATM - Automated Teller Machine

B.O - Brand-Owned touchpoint

(CCS): Cross-Channel Synergy

C.O - Customer-Owned touchpoint

CRM - Customer Relationship Management

E.G – For example

eWOM - electronic Word-of-Mouth

(LCLI): Lack of Channel Lock-In

P.O - Partner-Owned touchpoint

S/E - Social/External touchpoint

WOM - Word-of-Mouth

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The innovation in digital technologies is revolutionizing how consumers search for information, compare the various products and services, carry out their purchases, and relate to companies and other consumers.

Easily consumers can combine different channels to search for information about products and then buy them (Orús et al., 2019). The presence of multiple touchpoints (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Wagner et al., 2020), available online and offline, allows consumers to be in constant interaction with the retailer during their consumer journey (Fernández et al., 2018). In the "research-shopping phenomenon" attitude, the consumer searches for the product in one channel but purchases it through another one (Verhoef et al., 2007), moving between digital and physical channels resulting in new shopping activities. Showrooming (shoppers research in-store and buy online) and webrooming (shoppers research online and buy in-store), results precisely in consumers exploiting new channels provided by the multichannel environment (Fernández et al., 2018; Harris et al., 2018) embed in a "research-shopping" attitude. This attitude may result in a very complex journey where channels and contact points are used interchangeably between them (Harris et al., 2018; Orús et al. 2019; Patten et al., 2020).

In this new digital era, age is an essential factor, so there are differences in consumers' different categories and expectations (Priporas, Stylos & Fotiadis, 2017). The media and consumer research groups have been giving *Millennials* all the attention for many years (Priporas et al., 2017; Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021; perhaps it is time to turn some of the attention on Generation Z, which began its incursion into mainstream consumption (Thangavel et al., 2019). Previous studies on the topic (Puiu, 2016; Desai & Lele, 2017) established that Generation Z exhibits different consumer values, preferences, and ideas from earlier generations; therefore, exploring Generation Z's consumption characteristics is critical. Despite this compelling opportunity, there is a scarcity of research focusing on Generation Z (Goh & Lee, 2018; Goh & Jie, 2019; Robinson & Schänzel, 2019; Chillakuri & Mahanandia, 2018; Haddouche & Salomone, 2018). Therefore, it is expected that more investigation into this emerging consumer group's shopping behaviour can bring out new implications to retailers and contribute to the existing literature.

Studies mainly have focused on which channels are used by different consumer types (Harris et al., 2018; Verhoef et al. 2007). Nevertheless, less attention has been paid to how consumers use different channels (Slack et al., 2008; Cortinãs et al., 2010; Jones & Kim, 2010) and how Generation Z is doing it. It becomes critical to understand the effect of diverse touchpoints in the customer journey and understand better how they are used and their importance during the customer journey (Baxendale et al., 2015). It has not been less important for the retail environment to gain insights into this subject to provide better service to the consumer. The (re)design of customer journeys forces companies and marketers to decide how to allocate investment and efforts across touchpoints. So, it is relevant to explore each touchpoint's role within the customer journey and its contribution to developing the relationship between the customer and the company (Baxendale et al., 2015).

The attention the subject has been receiving justifies the interest in research this issue. Flavian et al. (2020) alert to a situation where real-world experiences may involve several interactions between offline and online channels, and points out the importance of future studies investigate the channel combinations not only as a unidirectional sequence (from online to offline, or from offline to online), but also the possibilities of varied channel combinations.

This research aims to investigate how the Generation Z consumer moves across the different channels and touchpoints in showrooming and webrooming through the customer journey. Thus, the following objectives were defined: 1) which channels are used by Generation Z in showrooming and webrooming through the customer journey; 2) which types of touchpoints are used in showrooming and webrooming by Generation Z through the customer journey and 3) what factors can explain the phenomenon of "research shopping" in showrooming and webrooming in Generation Z.

The structure of this investigation consists of five chapters. After this introduction, where the investigated problem is addressed, the investigation's research questions and objectives are also defined, the second chapter is devoted to the literature review, and the theoretical background is discussed. The concepts and theories that support the methodological approaches are introduced. The third chapter presents the methodologies and justification for their use. In chapter four, results are presented, and data is analysed.

Chapter five presents the conclusions, managerial implications and limitations of the study and emerging research issues on the subject are outlined.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Research-Shopping Phenomenon

Consumers face multiple contact points in the online and offline environment, where they are allowed to interact with the retailer throughout their shopping journey. Channels such as the Internet, ATM, call-centres, physical stores, smartphone, tablet or even catalogues configure these points of approximation between consumer and retailer (Neslin, Grewal, Leghorn, Shankar, Teerling, Thomas & Verhoef, 2006; Beck & Rygl, 2015; Melero, Javier Sese & Verhoef, 2016; Kim, Song, Choi, Kim & Hong, 2019).

Verhoef et al. (2007) relate to “channel” (Neslin et al., 2006) the concept of "research shopping phenomenon". It is about searching for information on a particular channel and making a purchase on a different channel. So, looking at the customer journey, the "research shopping phenomenon" concept intermediates the pre-purchase and purchase stages of the customer journey.

However, the authors recognise that the concept of "research shopping" can result in several combinations, moving between the online and offline context. The research also concludes that the most common form of interaction concerning "research shopping" is: Internet→Physical Store. The reason is that internet search is widely mentioned in searching for information, and on the other hand, the physical store has advantages when buying (Powels, Leeflang, Teerling & Huizingh, 2011).

In addition to the concept of "research shoppers", other concepts in the literature approached the idea of alternately using online and offline channels in the consumption journey. Frasquet, Mollá & Ruiz (2015) refer to "multichannel shoppers", defining them as those consumers who combine multiple channels (online and offline) to complete the purchase process. The consumer may use a channel from a particular retailer and then use another channel from any other retailer. The authors try to perceive what motivates consumers to change channels at each stage of the purchasing process (intrinsic and extrinsic motivations). Harris et al. (2018) refers to the "multichannel shopper journey" as an action that encompasses the various combinations of purchases and channels used

by consumers from the initial stimulus for purchase to post-purchase-related activities such as product return. This journey can be linear or interactive, involve more than one channel, and occur in minutes or months. For example, consumers look for ideas and information online, examine products in the store, make the purchase through their mobile phone, and if unsatisfied, the consumer can return the product to the retailer in a predefined place (Harris et al., 2018).

Several studies focused on the factors that may influence this phenomenon: psychographic or socio-demographic characteristics (Chiu, Hsieh, Roan, Tseng & Hsieh, 2011; Heitz-Spahn, 2013; Pookulangara, Hawley & Xiao, 2011; Konus, Verhoef & Neslin, 2008; Schneider & Zielke, 2020); product characteristics (Heitz-Spahn, 2013; Van Baal & Dach, 2005) or the attributes of the channel (Chiu et al., 2011; Verhoef et al. 2007).

Verhoef et al. (2007) pointed out three factors can be identified to explain the "research shopping phenomenon", and that will be taken into account in the investigation:

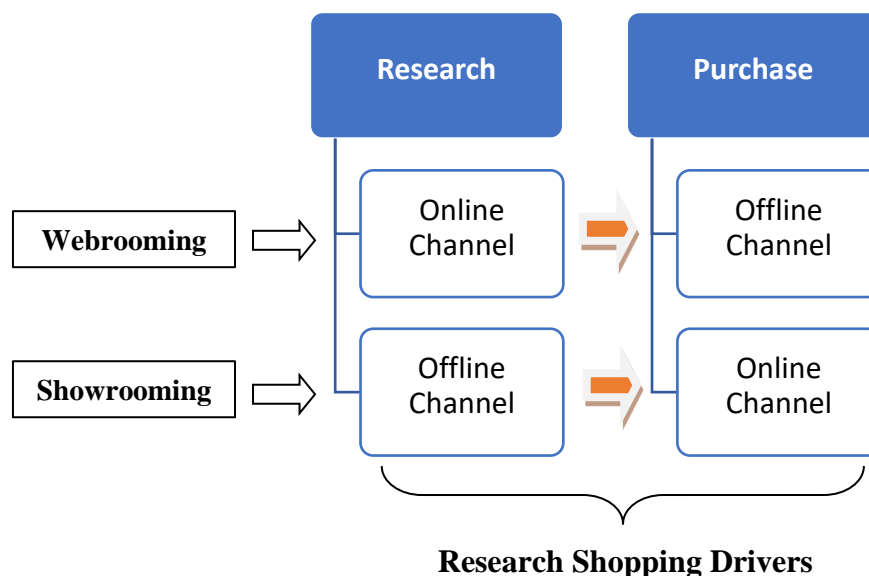
- **"Attribute-based Decision-making"** where the perception of the consumer is that there are channels that stand out more in the research process and others in the purchasing process;
- **"Lack of Channel Lock-in"**, or lack of ability to engage (this lack of "channel lock-in" promotes an attitude that will involve searching on one channel and buying on another channel, contributing to the research shopping phenomenon). It reflects a low correlation in the channels used for information search and purchase.
- **"Cross-channel Synergy"** where searching on a particular channel improves the experience of buying on another channel (for example, searching on one channel and making the purchase on another can bring financial benefits).

This framework presented a focus on two behaviours - the search decision and the purchase decision, considering channel choice decisions in a multichannel environment. All three mechanisms could explain the research shopping phenomenon (Verhoef et al., 2016).

Neslin et al. (2006) warn of the duality implicated in the concept of "research shopping". On the one hand, it can present itself as an opportunity. On the other hand, it carries some risks. The consumer's option to search the company's website and direct the customer to the store comes as an opportunity for the retailer. However, there is a risk that the search will be carried out on the website of company A, and the purchase will be made in-store B (free-ride behaviour). The possibility to understand the research shopping drivers that compel shoppers to adopt a "research shopper" attitude will be critical to retailers knows the consumer.

In line with Flavián et al. (2020), this research adopts the "research shopping phenomenon" concept (used by Verhoef et al., 2007) in line with the definitions of "webrooming" and "showrooming" and the use of its different channels: online and offline.

Figure 2.1 Research-Shopping Phenomenon (Webrooming and Showrooming)



Source: Own elaboration based on Verhoef, Neslin & Vroomen (2007).

Two types of behaviour can be identified from the research shopping process, evolving *online* and *offline* channels. They are *webrooming*, and *showrooming* and these concepts are analysed in the next chapter.

2.2 Webrooming and Showrooming

The most common form of "research shopping" is webrooming - the consumer first browses the online store for products and then goes shopping in the physical store - (Flavián, Gurrea & Orús, 2016, 2019; Fernández et al., 2018; Kang, 2018). However, it is possible to identify another relevant form of "research shopping" called showrooming – the consumer first looks for the product in the physical store and then chooses to buy them online - (Neslin, Jerath, Bodapati, Bradlow, Deighton, Gensler, Lee, Montaguti, Telang, Venkatesan, Verhoef & Zhang, 2014; Flavián et al., 2016; Gensler et al., 2017; Kokho Sit, Hoang & Inversini, 2017; Fernández et al., 2018; Kang, 2018).

During the customer journey, the shopper has to 1) evaluate the costs and benefits of channels and touchpoints, 2) choose a combination that minimises their shopping reservations, like effort, cost of time, money, and 3) maximise their shopping gains such as the right purchases, better deals, feeling confident and like a "smart shopper" (Pauwels & Nelsin, 2015; Gensler, Neslin & Verhoef, 2017; Flavián et al., 2019). Retailers' integration of online and offline channels aids consumers from the perspective of showrooming and webrooming, helping them choose more efficiently (Wolny & Charoensuksai, 2014; Zhu, Goraya & Cai, 2018).

Through the customer journey, consumers can use a channel more intensively for searching information and using a different one to buy a product. It results in various combinations or sequences of channel combinations during the process, resulting in high accuracy with the concept of the "research shopping phenomenon" (Fernández et al., 2018). About webrooming, literature presents it as the dominant "research shopping" practice, where retailers see online channels as rivalling their physical stores (Kumar, Bezawada & Trivedi, 2018) and showrooming as a simple way to display their products (Gensler et al., 2017). It implies less control from the retailers, and there is a tendency to consider webrooming and showrooming as a threat once it promotes free-riding behaviours (Chiu, Hsieh, Roan, Tseng & Hsieh, 2011; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Flavian et al., 2019). However, on the other side, consumers who use multiple channels buy more products, spend more, and are more satisfied than consumers who use a single channel (Kim & Lee, 2008). Consumers using online and offline channels in their purchasing processes are essential for retailers (Fernández et al., 2018).

Overall, the studies that have analysed webrooming and showrooming have focused mainly on the customer's predispositions to those experiences, their behaviour, and how they feel and the drivers to do it (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Studies about Showrooming and Webrooming

	Purposes	Conclusion	References
Showrooming	It defines showrooming, and investigates individual-level experiential consequences of showrooming.	There is a negative relation between showrooming and salesperson self-efficacy and performance. Showrooming negative effects can be combated through specific salesperson behaviour and strategies.	Rapp, Baker, Bachrach, Ogilvie & Beitelspacher, 2015
	It studies perceived benefits and costs of showrooming and their effects on consumer decision to showroom and trade-off between benefits and costs.	Average price savings, perceived dispersion in online prices, perceived gains in product quality and waiting time in the physical store positively associated with showrooming. Online search costs and time pressure are negatively associated.	Gensler et al., 2017
	It investigates showrooming from a positive standpoint and helps retailers to diagnose and appreciate potential opportunities that may present.	Showrooming can be conceived and managed as a positive shopper behaviour. Brick-and-mortar retailers should diagnose and understand showrooming via the lens of consumer experience.	Kokho Sit, Hoang & Inversini, 2018
	It looks to understand possible drivers of showrooming behaviour in electronics and clothing retail.	Young adults' showroomers are active smartphone users and see it as an essential tool while visiting the retail store. Showroomers are also more price-conscious in electronics. In clothes, showroomers are more impulsive than non-showroomers.	Eriksson & Fagerstrom, 2019
	It explores different ways of showrooming behaviour and develops the first typology of showrooming customers based on potential showrooming factors (loyalty and situational factors).	Four types of showroomers are found: comfort-oriented economic, mobile economic, conservative and loyal showroomers. These segments differ in their kind of showrooming but also in demographic and psychographic variables.	Schneider & Zielke, 2020
Webrooming	It employs a model-theory of planned behaviour framework intertwined with online risk, e-distrust and product involvement to augment an understanding of consumer's webrooming behaviour.	Perceived ease of searching online and perceived search benefits online and buying offline determines this behaviour. Webrooming helps to avoid the feeling of post-purchase regrets. Online risk and e-distrust inhibit consumers from buying online.	Arora & Sahney, 2018
	It analyses how consumer's online recommendations affect the	Webrooming improves the shopping experience. Online recommendations help	

Showrooming/Webrooming	omnichannel webrooming experience based on Internet, physical and mobile channels.	the confidence in the product's adequacy, although it depends on the moment of receiving the recommendation and the level of trust before interacting physically with the product. A friend's recommendation is important.	Orús et al.,2019
	It examines the influence of webrooming on the consumer's search process satisfaction	Webrooming leads to more satisfaction than showrooming behaviours. Webrooming makes consumers feel more confident and likes "smart shoppers". Perceptions of saving money also affect satisfaction. Time and/or effort during the purchase process do not influence satisfaction.	Flavián et al., 2019
	It explores how different causal conditions determine webrooming intention.	The findings reveal three configurations in which different product combinations, consumer and channel factors may interact in various ways to explain high webrooming intention. Product involvement was identified as the core condition in all configuration paths.	Aw, 2020
	It examines whether omnichannel consumers' psychographic characteristics influenced showrooming and webrooming. It also explores the way the omnichannel experience influence the way consumer create content in the social media.	The omnichannel consumer's experience in showrooming and webrooming positively affected user-generator content intention on social media. Consumer's information attainment, price comparison and social interaction positively affected showrooming: information attainment, social interaction and assortment seeking positively affected webrooming.	Kang, 2018
	It evaluates the influence routes to persuasion have on webrooming and showrooming and analysing if developing showrooming vs. pure online behaviours positively affect the price paid.	Webroomers engage in a prolonged purchasing process over time and focus on the attributes associated with the product. Showroomers more likely to buy higher value and price products, though they then search for a lower price for the same value.	Fernandéz et al., 2018
	It analysis the influence of specific combinations of online and physical channels (webrooming and showrooming) on smart shopping perceptions and feelings.	Looking at the fashion industry, webroomers have a greater perception of time/effort savings and making the right purchase and greater smart shopping feelings than showroomers. In webrooming, consumers feel more responsible and in control of their purchase outcomes.	Flavián, Gurrea & Orús, 2020
	It investigates the relationships between channel integration and consumer's online and offline patronage intentions.	The study confirms that channel integration significantly affects consumer's channel preferences. Showrooming and webrooming moderate the positive impact of channel integration on online/offline patronage intentions.	Shakir Goraya, Zhu, Akram, Shareef, Malik, Aneela & Bhatti, 2020

Source: Own elaboration

However, the variables analysed do not explain some matters that could help understand better webrooming and showrooming. The approach to the objectives we define as the purpose of the study, investigating how Generation Z moves across the different channels and touchpoints in showrooming and webrooming through the customer journey, is not addressed. The way how the consumer combines offline and online channels and touchpoints during the customer journey and the reasons why the consumer has a "research shopping" attitude implies changes in how a customer searches for, evaluates and compares information before purchasing a product (Fernández et al., 2018). Still, it may also influence the purchase and post-purchase stages.

2.3 Channels and Touchpoints

In the new retail environment, optimising the consumer experience through the various channels and contact points should be a priority. The emergence of numerous and complex modes of interaction between companies and consumers does not make consumers less demanding during the shopping journey (Melero, Sese & Verhoef, 2016). The traditional consumer has been studied in conventional channels and media, such as physical stores, television, radio, brochures, or salespeople. However, new online touchpoints and channels have been introduced and have changed consumer behaviour and decision-making (Court et al., 2009; Edelman, 2010; Batra & Keller, 2016).

Touchpoints and channels are the key elements of consumer decision journeys. In literature, the differentiation between "channel" and "touchpoint" is not clear (Fernández et al., 2018). Still, there are mostly references to the concept of "channel", or the use of both terms simultaneously without differentiation or an accurate distinction between them (Rawson, Duncan & Jones, 2013; Stein & Ramaseshan, 2016; Verhoef et al., 2016; Hallikainen, Alamäki & Laukkanen, 2018). The investigation pretends to use each of these concepts more accurately.

2.3.1 Channel

By "channel", Neslin et al. (2006) understand it as a point of contact or a mean by which a company and the consumer interact. It considers it a two-way communication route, excluding traditional mass communication channels that use only one path to reach the consumer (e.g. TV ads). From a distribution perspective, Kotler & Armstrong (2012) define "channels" as "a set of interdependent organisations that help make a product or service available for use or consumption". More recently, Halvorsrud, Kvale & Folstad (2016) refer to "channel" as a medium used to convey communications and interactions between a customer and a service provider. Channels are seen as carriers of touchpoints, and they can be digital (e.g. email), human-served (e.g. desk in a shop), or both. Shankar, Kleijnen, Ramanathan, Rizley, Hollands & Morrissey (2016), on the other hand, conceptually differentiate mediums and channels. According to the authors, a medium is a means of communication such as an app, email, or print, and a channel is a mode of transaction such as a mobile, desktop, telephone, or physical store.

According to the definitions, channels may serve various purposes and have distinct roles. Channels allow consumers to learn about brands by providing a great deal of information, which evidences a strong communication or informational role. It will also permit firms to sell their products through direct means (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012), demonstrating their relevant role as transaction platforms. After purchases, channels are also important, as they provide options for post-service activities, such as warranties and returning products (Frasquet et al., 2015).

Therefore, the definition of a channel that we propose to follow is not limited to the definition of "channel" offered by Neslin et al. (2006): a point of contact or means by which the company and the consumer interact. Following Bexandale et al. (2015), the study proposes an expansion of this definition: any form of direct or indirect contact with the brand or company, which happens at a specific time and is mediated by a particular channel (Halvorsrud et al., 2016, Kronqvist & Leinonen, 2018). Also, Verhoef et al. (2015), regarding the use of channels, states that the multichannel stage uses fewer channels than the omnichannel phase. At this stage, the boundaries between channels become even less defined and tend to disappear. The traditional division between "two-way communication channels" (interactive) and "one-way communication channels"

becomes less noticeable. According to Verhoef et al. (2015), it will then be necessary to extend the concept of "channel" to a more comprehensive concept. It includes the concept of "customer touchpoints". The current study will analyse this expansion of the concept (Baxendale et al. 2015), translated into a concrete differentiation between channels and touchpoints.

2.3.2 Touchpoint

The term "touchpoint" has recently entered academic literature (Rawson, Duncan & Jones, 2013; Baxendale et al., 2015; Stein & Ramaseshan, 2016; Rosenbaum, Otolora & Ramírez, 2017). According to Rawson et al. (2013), touchpoints are critical moments determined by consumers' interaction with the organisation and its offerings, which occur on the path-to-purchase and after. Baxendale et al. (2015) define touchpoint as an episode of direct or indirect contact with a brand. Khanna, Jacob & Yadav (2014) refer to touchpoints as all the different ways an organisation's brand interacts and impacts customers, employees, and others. Stein and Ramaseshan (2016) talk about moments of truth between a customer and any part of the company. To Halvorsrud et al. (2016), touchpoint refers to moments of contact between the customer and the service provider. Ieva and Ziliani (2017) consider it any customer contact point through which the company and the customer contact. Bosio, Rainer, and Stickdorn (2017) see it as indirect or direct contact points between consumers and service providers. Ponsignon et al. (2017) refer to contact points where customers meet and interact with the provider, evaluating their experiences in each of these touchpoints. Hallikainen et al. (2018) consider that touchpoints are episodes of direct or indirect contact with a brand or a firm that individuals can initiate (e.g. through search engines, websites, email or social media). According to Wagner, Schramm-Klein and Steinmann (2020), e-channel touchpoints represent the software alternatives that retailers can provide for e-channels (the aim of the study was online retailing). Rudkowski et al. (2020) define touchpoints as any verbal or non-verbal incident a person perceives or consciously relates to a given firm or brand.

In literature, the concept of touchpoint refers either at a specific moment in time (Stein & Ramaseshan, 2016), in a physical point of interaction (Bosio et al., 2017) or both

(Halvorsrud et al., 2016). This fact allows us to confirm the relation that exists between the concept of touchpoint and customer journey. Bosio et al. (2017) add that "a sequence of touchpoints forms a customer journey". The consumer will inevitably interact with touchpoints during the buying process.

Using a touchpoint may be the consumer's initiative, but it may also be the service provider or a complementary entity involved in the service. This contact happens at a specific time and will be mediated by a particular channel (Kronqvist & Leinonen, 2018). These are elements designed to guide and mediate the interaction between the consumer and the service provider. As mentioned, they are connected with the concept of "customer journey", as those contacts between them can occur at all stages of the customer journey (Verhoef et al., 2009). Following Kronqvist and Leinonen (2018), "touchpoint" refers to an interactive event between the organisation and the client. During the customer journey, the consumer uses multiple touchpoints (Baxendale et al., 2015; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Touchpoints emerge as an interface that mediates the interaction between the two parties and a moment of communication between the consumer and the company that occurs through a channel.

However, touchpoints are not restricted to firm-specific channels (Stein & Ramaseshan, 2016; Baxendale et al., 2015). Touchpoints do not need to link to the firm directly. Some indirect interactions during encounters between the firm and the consumer, such as direct or indirect word-of-mouth and reviews, are also considered touchpoints, intermediated by offline or online channels. Those channels may be, or not, controlled by the firm.

The concept of "touchpoints" emerges then, as an element that allows episodes of direct or indirect contact with a brand or company (Baxendale et al., 2015; Verhoef et al., 2015), such as search engines, websites, emails or social media, the seller or the simple visit to the physical store (Hallikainen et al., 2018).

2.3.3 Categories of Channels and Touchpoints

During the decision-making process, multiple consumer touchpoints can be identified. From in-store product displays, salespeople, direct word-of-mouth to TV advertising, and

magazine coverage, to online generic and branded searches, comparison agents, brand and affiliate websites, social media, and email advertising (Anderl, Becker, von Wangenheim & Schumann, 2016; Batra & Keller, 2016; Baxendale et al., 2015).

There is no consensus on how to categorise touchpoints. Various authors have built several categorisations and typologies of channels and touchpoints due to the amount and complexity of touchpoints (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2 Categorizations and typologies of channels and touchpoints

Edelman (2010)	<p>Owned channels: company and brand channels which a company/brand control.</p> <p>Earned channels: customer-created channels such as brand communities.</p>
Stephen & Galak (2012)	<p>Paid channels: activity generated by the company or its agents.</p> <p>Owned channels: activity generated by the company or its agents in channels it controls.</p> <p>Earned channels: activity not directly generated by the company but rather by other entities such as customers or journalists.</p>
Straker, Wrigley & Rosemann, (2015)	<p>Functional touchpoints: purpose split between diversion, functional and interactive (e.g. websites, email).</p> <p>Social touchpoints: purpose in main interactions; users can post and like a company/brand (e.g. Facebook, Instagram).</p> <p>Community touchpoints: similar to social touchpoints, but run by a group of users with aligned interests (e.g. discussion forums, blogs).</p> <p>Corporate touchpoints: one-way engagement from company to customer, or the other way around (e.g. FAQs).</p>
Bexandale et al. (2015)	<p>Brand-owned touchpoints: belonging to the brand (brand advertising).</p> <p>Distribution retailer's touchpoints: Comprise advertising and in-store communications.</p> <p>Third-party touchpoints: Word-of-mouth (WOM), peer observation and traditional earned media.</p>
Lemon & Verhoef (2016)	<p>Brand-owned touchpoints: designed and managed by the firm and under its control (e.g. advertising, websites).</p> <p>Partner-owned touchpoints: designed and managed by the firm and one or more of its partners.</p>

	<p>Customer-owned touchpoints: e.g. choice of payment.</p> <p>Social/external touchpoints: third-party information sources, such as review sites (e.g. TripAdvisor), social media.</p>
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<p>Zhao, Goh & Hou (2016)</p>	<p>Owned Media: Official brand website</p> <p>Paid Media: paid advertising on Google and Facebook</p> <p>Earned Media: Opinion reviews like Amazon and Yelp.</p>
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<p>Manser Payne, Peltier, & Barger (2017)</p>	<p>Personal touchpoints: Store interaction, salesforce, phone (inbound and outbound), chat and live digital conferences, trade shows, returns in store.</p> <p>Non-Personal touchpoints: Traditional advertising, non-personal in-store interactions, direct physical mail, email, catalogues, website, social networks, paid and organic search results, loyalty programs, return by email.</p>
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<p>Fernández et al. (2018)</p>	<p>Offline touchpoints: Physical store from which a purchase was made; word-of-mouth information from friends, family, or the immediate environment; trade magazines; product demonstrations given at sites outside physical stores; other physical stores.</p> <p>Online touchpoints: Online store from which a purchase was made; manufacture's websites; websites providing price and product comparison (shopbot); online reviews from other customers; online reviews from experts, blogs or forums.</p>
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Source: Own elaboration based on Hallikained et al. (2018).

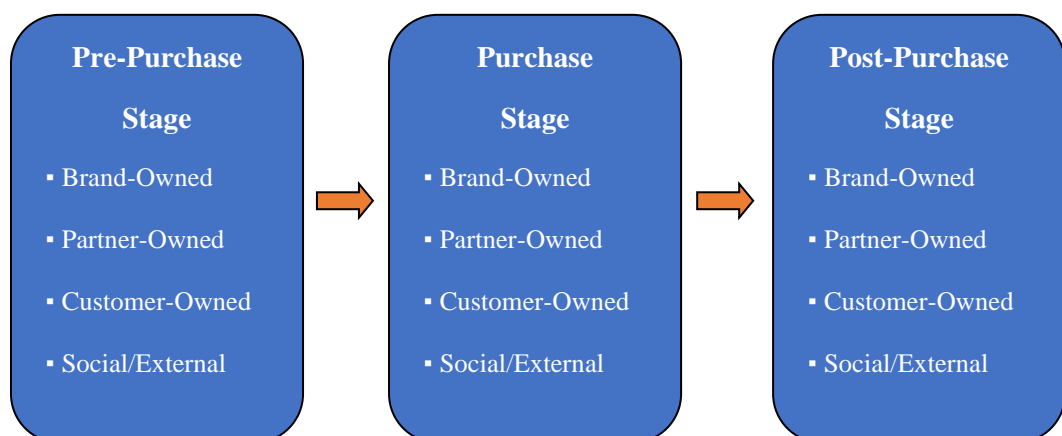
Lemon and Verhoef (2016) differentiate four different categories of touchpoints that consumers can experience on their consumer journey: Brand-Owned (BO), Partner-Owned (PO), Customer-Owned (CO), and Social/External (SE). Each of these categories contains multiple types of touchpoints. Those several touchpoints will shape the customer's experience along their journey, becoming a singular and unique path in the customer journey. Depending on each consumer's individualised purchase journey or product type, each touchpoint's preponderance may differ at each stage (pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase).

- According to the authors, **Brand-Owned** contact points are dominated and controlled by the company during the consumer/company contact experience. They include brand-owned media (websites, advertising, loyalty programs) and brand-controlled marketing elements (attributes of the product, packaging, service, price, convenience, salesforce).

- **Partner-Owned** is based on interactions during the shopping experience designed, managed and controlled by the firm and one or more of its partners. These partners may include marketing agencies, distribution partners, communication channels with whom a partnership is established. Many times, the difference between "brand-owned" and "partner-owned" contact points may be confusing (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).
- **Customer-Owned** contact points consist of customer actions that are part of the overall customer experience but that the firm, its partners or others do not influence or control. For example, customers thinking about their needs or desires. For instance, we can consider the payment method in the buying stage of the consumer's opinions in the post-purchase phase (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).
- Finally, "**Social/External**" contact points are those where the other's role is recognised as part of the shopping experience. At this point of contact, we consider the external environment surrounding the consumer and that may influence the process. Other consumers, peer influence, independent information sources, social media or review sites are examples (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

By following this approach, the investigation does not consider merely media but also consider channel partners, customers and contexts as touchpoints (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016), making it broader.

Figure 2.2 Types of touchpoints in the customer journey



Source: Own elaboration based on Lemon and Verhoef (2016)

Touchpoints can be of various natures, and consumers can contact the same touchpoint more than once during the decision process (Batra & Keller, 2016). Following Lemon and Verhoef (2016) touchpoints typology, the investigation will better understand their use by Generation Z.

2.4 Channel integration

The retail world has been changing in the last decade, where shoppers do not use only the physical or online stores, but instead, they shop through integrated channels (Shakir Goraya et al., 2020). Phenomena's such as the emergence of the Internet, mobile and social networks caused retail business models and consumers themselves to undergo profound changes. Consumers expect to consistently interchangeably and simultaneously use multiple online and offline channels and touchpoints when shopping (Verhoef et al., 2015; Li, Liu, Lim, Goh, Yang & Lee, 2018; Chopra, 2018). If there has been talking about multichannel in the last decade, there is currently a change in the retail model to the omnichannel (Rigby, 2011; Brynjolfsson et al., 2013; Beck & Rygl, 2015; Huré et al., 2017). Indeed, this paradigm shift will bring changes in the way consumers move between channels during the customer journey (Heitz-Spahn, 2013; Beck & Rygl, 2015; Li et al., 2018).

Incorporating new technologies in the retail business has altered the consumer purchasing process, making it an omnichannel experience, where the boundaries between the various channels tend to disappear (Orús et al., 2019). Retailing is moving towards a model in which the total integration of various platforms creates a seamless experience for the consumer (Verhoef et al., 2015). The integration of retailer's shopping channels pretends to create a cohesive and seamless shopping experience for consumers. In a more omnichannel environment, it is scarce that consumers shop solely via physical or online stores (Shakir Goraya et al., 2020).

This evolution to an omnichannel paradigm could be disruptive for retailers (Picot-Coupey & Huré, 2016). Satisfying this type of consumer implies a more complex strategy

regarding meeting customer's expectations. The range of channel options must be more significant and varied and must add and integrate channels to offer switching opportunities, blurring the boundaries between channels and touchpoints (Verhoef et al., 2015). Attention to redesigning strategies must concern brick-and-mortar retailers and online retailers (Picot-Coupé & Huré, 2016).

2.4.1 Distinction between Multichannel, Cross-channel and Omnichannel

Verhoef et al. (2015) warn of how the emergence of channels such as mobile phone, tablets, social media and the integration of these channels in the offline and online environment has changed and will continue to change retail models. We are moving from a multichannel and cross-channel retail model to an omnichannel model. Even if more channels are involved, their borders are becoming increasingly tenuous and erased, implying that retailers rethink all their competitiveness strategies (Hallikainen et al., 2018; Mosquera, Ayensa, Pascual & Murillo, 2019).

In this regard, the literature is populated with concepts such as "multichannel", "cross-channel", and "omnichannel", which are often confused and used indiscriminately (Beck & Rygl, 2015; Klaus, 2013). There is no consensus regarding such definitions in the literature so far (Picot-Coupé & Huré, 2016). Table 2.3 summarises the multichannel, cross-channel and omnichannel characteristics as pointed out in the literature.

Table 2.3 Characteristics of Multichannel, Cross-channel and Omnichannel.

Concept	Definition	References
Multichannel	Multichannel purchase is defined as buying behaviour that involves multiple channels.	Kumar & Venkatesan (2005)
	It is the design, deployment, coordination, and evaluation of channels through which firms and customers interact, intending to enhance customer value through effective customer acquisition, retention, and development.	Neslin et al. (2006)

	Consists in operating multiple channels as independent entities.	Chatterjee (2010)
	It refers to the place where different channels of shopping are still being operated in isolation.	Frazer & Stiehler (2014)
	Focus on interactive channels. Retail channels: store, website, direct marketing (catalogue). Separation of channels without overlapping. Management is done by channel, with objectives established by channel (e.g. sales per channel, experience by channel).	Verhoef et al. (2015)
	In the "multichannel" flap, the channels exist without the possibility of the consumer triggering some interaction or promoting integration between the different channels.	Beck & Rygl (2015)
	The multichannel consumer refers to those who combine multiple channels to complete the purchasing process. They can browse the same channel as the retailer, or they can browse on others.	Frasquet et al. (2015)
	Multichannel designates the strategy of operating the different channels independently	Huré et al. (2017)
	Multichannel refers to behaviour through multiple channels, such as those of offline and online channels.	Hallikainen et al. (2018)
Cross-channel	The consumer may have some kind of partial interaction with the retailer. In turn, the retailer manages to have some control of at least two different channels.	Beck & Rygl (2015)
	The cross-channel strategy integrates multiple channels, which allow the consumer to move between channels and touchpoints.	Huré et al. (2017)
	It consists of integrating multiple channels allowing cross-channel movements of products, money and information.	Chatterjee (2010)

	Cross-channel free-riding consists, for consumers, to use one retailer's channel to prepare a purchase and then switch to another retailer's channel to purchase.	Heitz-Spahn (2013)
	Retailer's choices of ways to better satisfy the consumers' expectations of a seamless shopping experience through an integrated multichannel strategy. The alignment of brand, product offering and marketing message to offer a uniform customer experience across channels.	Cao (2014)
	Cross-channel integration is the degree to which a firm coordinates the objectives, design, and deployment of its channels to create synergies for the firm and offer particular benefits to its consumer.	Cao & Li (2015)
Omnichannel	It is an integrated sales experience that melds the physical stores' advantages with the information-rich experience of online shopping.	Rigby (2011)
	As the retailing industry evolves towards a seamless "omnichannel retailing" experience, the distinctions between physical and online will vanish, turning the world into a showroom without walls.	Brynjolfsson et al. (2013)
	Retail refers to a set of activities where there is a complete integration of the various channels, controlled in full by the retailer and perceptible by the consumer.	Beck & Rygl (2015)
	Omnichannel management is the synergistic management of the various channels and touchpoints available to consumers to optimise the consumer experience through multiple channels. The different channels interact between them and are used simultaneously.	Verhoef et al. (2016)
	The omnichannel strategy enshrines the complete alignment of different channels and touchpoints, which optimises the consumer experience.	Huré et al. (2017)
	Refers to the omnichannel from the retailer's point of view, such as using various channels to interact with consumers and respond to their requests. Given the multiple channels'	Chopra (2018)

complementarities, companies should develop omnichannel based on product characteristics and customer needs.

Synergy, integration of the various channels. Li et al. (2018)
 Simplification of interaction between channels and customers. The proliferation of social media, Wi-Fi in stores, mobile phones culminated in showrooming where consumers explore the channel for product evaluation before buying on another channel (Bell et al., 2015). Integrates multiple channels that allow the consumer to take advantage of all retail channels (online and offline) when buying. Concern to provide the same type of experience regardless of the channel used. Coordination between the areas of promotion, information transaction, product and price, order and consumer service.

Source: Own elaboration based on Picot-Coupey et al. (2016)

Multichannel, cross-channel and omnichannel retailing concepts are referred to as specific strategies with their focus and scope on a continuum, based on the intensity of channel integration (Picot-Coupey et al., 2016).

Given the lack of consensus in the literature, Table 2.4 provides an overviewed scope of those concepts, helping to understand this continuum on the intensity of channel integration moving from a multichannel perspective to an omnichannel one.

Table 2.4 Multichannel, Cross-channel and Omnichannel integration

- Channel integration intensity +		
Multichannel	Cross-channel	Omnichannel
A strategy that operates channels as independent entities.	A strategy that integrates multiple channels to allow consumers cross-channel movements and synergies.	A strategy that manages channels as intermingled touchpoints allow consumers to live a seamless experience within a brand ecosystem.

Coexistence of several channels, considered as separate and in competition.	Suppression of the frontier between channels to enhance the channel's respective roles and to minimise the potential frictions when moving from one channel to another.	Informational and transactional touchpoints integrated within a unique channel to allow a seamless consumer journey.
The separation between channels. The historical channel is dominant. The added channels could cause conflicts between channels: cannibalisation of sales.	Synergies among channels. The historical channel is (re)considered given the added channels.	Unique channel (articulation). The historical channel becomes a touchpoint among others within a unique channel.
Buy on physical stores, websites and mobile channel.	Use of more than one channel, but not all widespread channels.	Store, website, mobile channel, social media and all other customer touchpoints (including mass communications channels as TV) used as informational and transactional touchpoints.
Focus on maximising the performance of each channel (physical store, phone, web, mobile).	Focus on managing channel conflicts, suppressing the frontiers between channels, and minimising frictions when moving through channels.	Synergetic management of channels and touchpoints, trying to optimise the shopping experience.
Sales do not adapt to selling behaviour.	Adapt selling behaviour using different arguments depending on the channel.	Adapt selling behaviour using different arguments depending on each customer's needs and knowledge of the product.
Data are not shared across channels.	Data are partially shared across channels.	Data are shared across channels.

Sources: Picot-Coupey et al. (2016), Beck and Rygl (2015), Verhoef et al. (2015), Mosquera et al. (2017).

The differentiation and discussion of multichannel, cross-channel, and omnichannel concepts related to the different channel integration intensity are related to the investigation. Verhoef et al. (2015) sustain that the multichannel phase uses fewer channels than the omnichannel phase. The reason has to do precisely with the different channel integration intensity. More channel integration means more channels during the customer journey at the consumer disposal. Li et al. (2018) mentions their concern about the intensity with which retailers are present in each channel.

From this perspective, the way Generation Z moves between channels and touchpoints will be influenced by channel integration level during the customer journey. Consumers

can gain both relative and absolute benefits in an integrated channel reality, including effectiveness, efficiency, availability of products and comfort in use, cost savings, and accessibility from anywhere (Arora & Sahney, 2018).

2.4.2 Walking to an integrated vision

In the age of omnichannel, channels are used alternately during research and purchase. It also coincides with the same stage of the purchasing process, thanks to the proliferation of mobile devices. The challenge is to leverage synergies between channels to provide an integrated, continuous (seamless) and unique experience that retains the consumer throughout the purchase process (customer journey) (Flavián et al., 2020).

If in the multichannel phase, the concept of "research shopping" gained some attention, in the omnichannel phase, the "showrooming" and "webrooming" gained some prominence (Fernández et al., 2018; Flavián et al., 2019). The customer can search for information in the store and simultaneously be on any mobile device looking for additional information or even a lower price online (Raap, Baker, Bachrach, Ogilvie & Beitelspacher, 2015). The reverse is also possible (webrooming).

Huré et al. (2017) point out that switching between channels and devices such as applications, desktops, laptops, or mobile phones is part of omnichannel consumers' experience. Retailers need to keep this in mind. From multichannel behaviour, we move towards omnichannel behaviour where consumers move similarly between different channels and services in their consumer journey (Lee, Chan, Chong & Thadini, 2019).

Despite introducing new channels and touchpoints and the importance that consumers give to their experience's satisfaction and personalisation through their use, most companies continue to manage their channels individually and separately (Melero et al., 2016). However, consumers require a similar experience among the various channels used during the customer journey (Huré, Picot-Coupey & Ackermann, 2017). The distinctions between the physical store and the online store will tend to disappear (Verhoef et al., 2015).

2.5 Customer Journey

Nowadays, customer's experiences and interactions with retailers and brands are made through multiple offline and online channels and touchpoints (Rudkowski, Heney, Yu, Hong, Sedlezky & Gunn, 2020). Customer's journeys are defined as the process of purchasing and experiencing products and services as seen from a customer's perspective and is seen as a walk in the customers' shoes (Holmlid & Evenson, 2008). It is crucial not to lose sight of the customer in the digital environment because of its complexity. It requires knowing how the customer journey occurs. Understanding the customer journey is essential to help create an instrument for organisations to predict consumers.

A shopper journey is a form of the customer journey in which the customer activities are oriented around shopping activities - search, purchasing and post-purchasing. It has been in the past a physical action (in a brick-and-mortar store, in a catalogue) where it was involved a single channel (Verhoef et al., 2007). The Internet changes the nature of shopping and the shopper journey. Technology has facilitated new activities such as online reviews, comparison of prices, stock checking or click-and-collect services. The "research shopping phenomenon", with the webrooming and showrooming manifestations, is also part of that changing environment.

The shopper journey evolves from a single journey to a journey where customers move from one channel to another where they are no longer fixed or stable. Instead, they are interactive, not linear, where consumers can conduct different channels simultaneously, in a non-sequential manner or as funnel-like (Harris et al., 2018). The number and types of touchpoints and channels take us to more complex customer journeys, which are, at the same time, more customised and personal.

Despite its importance, customer journey study has not received enough attention in academic literature (Rudkowski et al., 2020). Folstad & Kvale (2018) point out that the customer journey is an immature field of study for academics. Moving to omnichannel management, there is a lack of literature that provides a better understanding of the customer's dynamics along their journey. A more integrated and coordinated experience is needed to understand the independence between channels and the need for coherence.

The process of mapping the customer journey through several channels and touchpoints can be made along pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase stages from a customer's perspective (Halvorsrud et al., 2016; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). In Table 2.5, studies related to channels and touchpoints during the customer journey are mentioned.

Table 2.5 Shopping stages analysed in the literature

Study	Main Aim	Shopping stages
Keen, Wetzels, de Ruyter & Feinberg. (2004)	Investigate intention to purchase in different channels	Purchase
Thomas & Sullivan (2005)	Understand channel choice overtime to design marketing communications	Purchase
Knox (2005)	Analyse the effects of marketing communications in channel migration	Purchase
Verhoef et al. (2007)	Understand research shopping phenomenon	Search and purchase
Kushwaha & Shankar (2007)	Analyse the drivers and consequences of channel choices.	Purchase
Konus, Verhoef & Neslin (2008)	Segment shoppers and find covariates.	Search and purchase
Schröder & Zaharia (2008)	Explain multichannel behaviour through shopping motives.	Search and purchase
Van Bruggen, Antia, Japs, Reinartz & Pallas (2010)	Changes in technology have led to significant alterations in how customers interact with firms and consequently to a phenomenon of "channel multiplicity."	Pre-purchase, purchase e post-purchase
Gensler, Vergoef & Böhm (2012)	Explain consumer's channels choices in the different stages of the buying process.	Search, Purchase and After-sales.
Wolny & Charoensuksai (2014)	The study adopts an inductive approach allowing for realistic patterns to emerge of how consumers use and react to different media and channels in their shopping journeys for cosmetics.	Orientation/inspiration/horizon scanning; Information search; Evaluation; Purchase; Post-purchase
Frasquet et al. (2015)	Analyse the drivers of channel choice for the several stages of the purchase process	Search, Purchase and Post-Sales.
Stain & Ramaseshan (2016)	Identify, categorising and defining the distinct elements that occur during	Search, Purchase, Post-Purchase

	customer experience at different touchpoints.	
Kang (2018)	Examine consumers psychographic characteristics in showrooming and webrooming and, which were related to user-generated content creation on social media.	Search, Purchase and Post-Purchase.
Kokho Sit, Hoang & Inversini (2018)	Investigate showrooming seeking potential opportunities that may be present in this shopping behaviour.	Search; purchase; post-purchase.
Barwitz & Maas, (2018)	Reasons for customers interaction choices.	Search, Purchase and Post-Purchase.
Flavián et al. (2020)	Combination of online and physical channels on smart shopping perceptions.	Purchase
Rudkowski et al. (2020)	Study differences and similarities of brand-based pop-ups and marketplace-based pop-ups, how MBPUs fit in the customer journey and how touchpoints influence the understanding of MBPU customer journey.	Pre-purchase, Purchase and Post-purchase
Nam & Kannan, (2020)	Understand how customer journeys vary in different cultural contexts during the customer journey.	Pre-purchase, Purchase and Post-purchase

Source: Own elaboration

The studies presented in Table 2.5 have some limitations, although they are essential for understanding consumer behaviour in webrooming and showrooming modalities. Studies are concerned mainly in consumer's intentions and behaviours, trying to understand their drivers, reasons for choices and the consequences that come from them (Keen et al., 2004; Thomas & Sullivan, 2005; Kushwaha & Shankar, 2007; Schröder & Zaharia, 2008; Gensler et al., 2012; Wolny & Charouensuksai, 2014; Frasquet et al., 2015; Barwitz & Maas, 2018; Flavián et al., 2020). Others studies have concerned about psychographic characteristics in webrooming and showrooming (Kang, 2018) or only about touchpoints (Stain & Ramaseshan, 2016; Rudkowski et al., 2020). Some of the investigations are limited to purchase or pre-purchase/purchase stages in combination (Verhoef et al., 2007; Flavián et al., 2020).

Given the diversity of channels and touchpoints, the variety of options the consumer can take in a multichannel/omnichannel context is variable. Showrooming and webrooming have emerged from consumers' choice to explore the various channels in different ways. It will transform the purchase journey, which can then have many settings (Harris et al., 2018). This diversity presents itself as a challenge to retailers in trying to understand and predict consumer patterns.

Being sensitive to this issue, following Frasquet et al. (2015), Nam & Kannan (2020) and Rudkowski et al. (2020), this study considers three stages: pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase. This approach contributes to better understand Generation Z's consumer behaviour and their choices during the buying process.

- The first stage, pre-purchase, encapsulates touchpoints that have to do with customer behaviours such as awareness, need recognition, search and consideration (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). It includes all the experience before purchase, from recognising the need/impulse to its satisfaction with the purchase. At this stage, consumers identify needs, discover products or brands, research information, build a range of options and evaluate alternatives (Nam & Kannan, 2020). In the pre-purchase stage, the consumer considers several options, researches products, and improves recognition (Rudkowski et al., 2020).
- The purchase stage encompasses all interactions with the brand and its environment during the purchase process. Behaviours such as choice, ordering and payment are recognised. The purchase stage includes consumer interactions with a particular touchpoint during the actual time of purchase (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).
- The post-purchase stage involves the consumer's interaction with the brand and its environment after the purchase is made. It includes touchpoints where behaviours such as use and consumption, post-purchase satisfaction, referrals and loyalty are recognised (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Post-purchase also includes product return, complaint, repair, or maintenance services (Frasquet et al., 2015).

2.6 Generation Z: They're here

Generations are defined as groups of people born within the same span of years who share a unique identity due to life experiences (Mulyani, Aryanto & Chang, 2019). At least five different generations are identified in the modern world: the traditionalists (born between 1928 and 1944); the Baby Boomer Generation (born between 1945 and 1965); Generation X (born between 1965 and 1979); Generation Y- Millennial's - (born between 1980 and 1995); and Generation Z (born after 1995 till 2010) (Bassiouni & Hackley, 2014; Fister-Gale, 2015; Priporas et al., 2017; Dolot, 2018).

Generation Z is highly educated, technologically savvy, innovative, creative, and heavy technology users (Dolot, 2018). They are a challenge since they seem to behave differently from other generations (Priporas et al., 2017). Wood (2013), besides their interest in technology, identify other characteristics like the insistence on ease of use, the desire to feel safe, and the will to escape temporarily the reality they face.

The shopping experience has changed over the years with more online shopping, exchanges of information through smartphones, laptops and multi-touch laptops. Some of this technology was employed by retailers to improve their relationships with customers (Pantano & Priporas, 2016). Digitalisation transversal to all industries, eliminating online/offline shopping boundaries is essential for retailers (Ernst & Young, 2019). It is more important than ever to explore consumers' complex behaviour to understand them and satisfy their needs. Generation Z's expectations, or also called "digital natives" (Reinartz, Wiegand & Imschloss, 2019), imply that companies must keep up with the pace of change to maintain their position. Digitalisation has made Generation Z a more demanding one compared to earlier generations. They expect interactivity and value easy and quick transactions and information provided online (Priporas et al., 2017). Compared to Generation X and Y, Generation Z has been found to place more trust in user-generated information than in company-generated information (Reinartz et al., 2019). Socially, generation Z has also crossed through several experiences and changes. The economic crisis of 2008, the growing income gap, the rise of the platform economy, the increasing acceptance of LGBT community or the problem with climate changes are some of the issues that concern this generation nowadays (Reinartz et al., 2019)

This generation was born with Internet technology and 'being virtually connected', living digital permanently. Indeed, this context influences them concerning the "research shopping phenomenon". Generation Z stands out from other generations in at least one aspect: they have never seen the world without the Internet (Chillakuri, 2020). It allows this generation to easily move between the real and virtual worlds using different mobile devices, comment on reality, and manifest their opinion on social media (Dolot, 2018). Research has focused mainly on Generation Z application of digital devices in daily life, not particularly for shopping and the impact on this generation's customer journey. That leads to a lack of information about behavioural patterns, attitudes to the retail experience and future expectations about it (Priporas et al., 2017).

Effectively more insights are needed about the customer's interactions in Generation Z in the retail setting (Priporas et al., 2017). This emerging new generation has disruptive ways of shopping, and for sure, they will need a different treatment from Baby Boomers, Gen X or Millennials.

The year 1995 to 2001 will be considered the birth date gap of generation Z for this research, which puts the age range of this population between 19 - 25 years old (Ismail, Nguyen, Chen, Melewar & Mohamad, 2020).

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research problem and relevance of the investigation

Advances in technology made it critical to create new business models, which need to be attended by academic research. The relevance of studying how Generation Z moves through the different channels and touchpoints during the consumer journey concerning showrooming and webrooming phenomena is essential in a context of change and evolution.

Identifying and influencing the drivers of customer's behaviour remains one of the significant challenges in marketing (McDonald, Oates, Alevizou, Young & Hwang, 2012). The differentiating features of Generation Z and the increasingly digital world with its several channels and touchpoints make it imperative to understand this new customer. Understanding the next generation of customers is of vital importance to managers and leaders (Sakdiyakorn, Golubovskaya & Solnet, 2021). Gen Z will be the biggest challenge for companies, as they are unlike any customers before them, and they expect great things from the brands they buy (Priporas et al., 2017). The focus on innovation, technology, relationships and social responsibility that Generation Z imposes on companies is very demanding. Consumers expect retailers to adapt fast to this dynamic environment (Priporas et al., 2017). So, retailers need to know how this new generation uses the diversity of channels and touchpoints presented in showrooming and webrooming. They must be prepared for this new type of consumer that is already buying every single day.

The purpose of this research is to investigate how the Generation Z consumer moves across the different channels and touchpoints in showrooming and webrooming through the customer journey, translated in the following research questions:

RQ1) Which channels are used by Generation Z in webrooming and showrooming through the customer journey;

RQ2) Which types of touchpoints are used in webrooming and showrooming by Generation Z through the customer journey;

RQ3) What factors can explain the phenomenon of "research shopping" in webrooming and showrooming in Generation Z;

3.2 Research Method and Strategy

Taking the research questions formulated above into account, the qualitative methodology approach is more suitable to our goals since it provides richer and deeper information for exploring viewpoints, allowing the researchers to understand better the problem under study (Priporas et al., 2017). These are very abstract constructs based on memories and perceptions. More specifically, a qualitative approach is considered adequate in the scope of this study because 1) it integrates the personal experiences of consumers in the investigation; 2) it includes different consumer's realities and interpretations of the "research-shopping phenomenon"; 3) it produces deeper knowledge of the "research shopping phenomenon" (Sit et al., 2018).

Deductive research is developed since it used as support concepts already existing in the literature. The research questions mentioned are prompted and stimulated by the literature. The research questions in qualitative research are closely connected to the relevant literature (Bryman, 2012). Several studies that focus on showrooming, webrooming and Generation Z also choose qualitative approaches (Stein & Ramaseshan, 2016; Priporas et al., 2017; Kokho Sit et al., 2018; Schneider & Zielke, 2020; Harris et al., 2018; Rudkowski et al., 2020).

Exploratory research is used to understand the existing problem better and helps to identify issues that can motivate future research (Swedberg, 2020). This type of study's choice is due to the lack of literature about the issues raised by the initial research questions. Exploratory research is the soul of good research, where the ambition to say something new is present and where the research would come to a standstill (Swedberg, 2020).

3.3 Theoretical Research Model

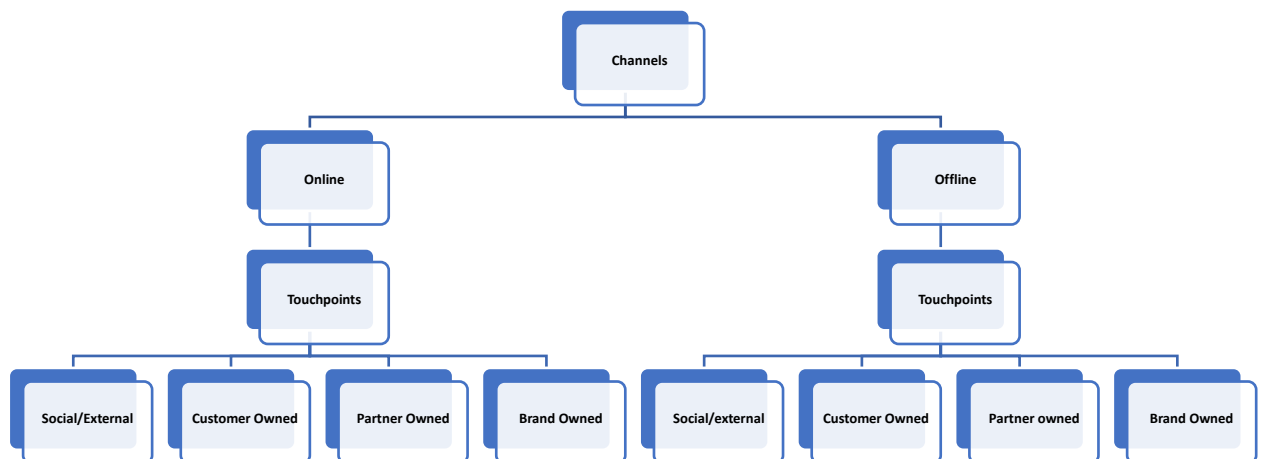
Intending to achieve the primary purpose of this research (investigate how the Generation Z moves across the different channels and touchpoints in showrooming and webrooming through the customer journey), two following specific objectives were explicitly defined regarding channels and touchpoints:

RQ1) Which channels are used by Generation Z in showrooming and webrooming through the customer journey;

RQ2) Which types of touchpoints are used in showrooming and webrooming by Generation Z through the customer journey;

To answer those two specific objectives, the investigation sees channels as carriers of touchpoints (Halvorsrud et al., 2016). Two basic channels during the customer journey will be considered: the offline channel (physical stores) and the online channel (Frasquet et al., 2015; Fernández et al., 2018; Kim, Song, Choi, Kim & Hong, 2019).

Figure 3.1 Channels and touchpoints: structure in the investigation



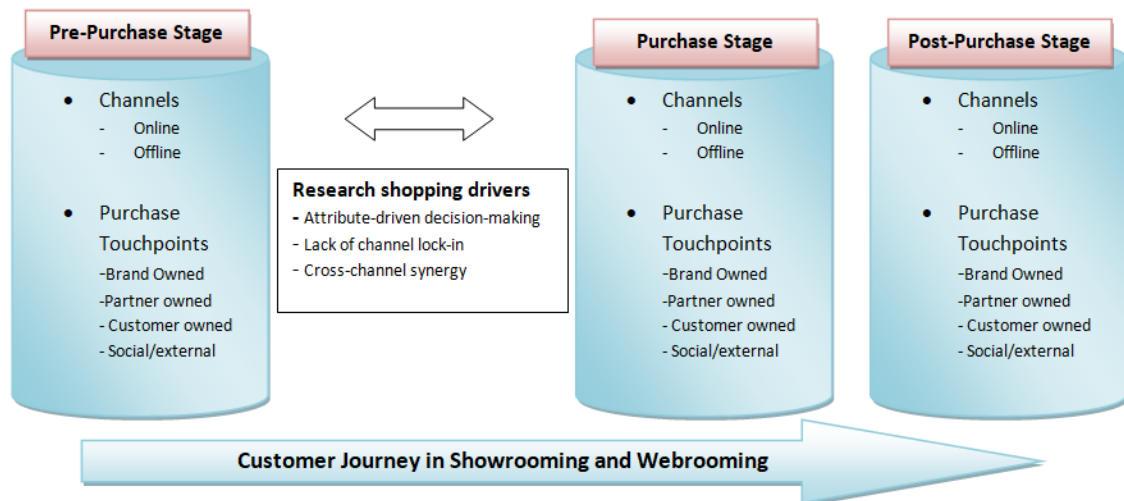
Source: Own elaboration based on Frasset et al. (2015); Halvorsrud et al (2016); Lemon & Verhoef (2016); Fernández et al. (2018); Kim et al. (2019).

The expansion of the concept of “touchpoints” (Bexandale et al. 2015) and the need to build a more comprehensive one (Verhoef et al., 2015) is translated into a concrete

differentiation between channels and touchpoints mentioned before. Figure 3.1. defines the approach that the investigation follows regarding “channels” and “touchpoints”, allowing to respond to RQ1 and RQ2.

The themes identified were informed from the literature and used in the research instrument design, which was then applied in interviews. The evidence observed in the literature allowed us to construct a Theoretical Research Model that we present below (Figure 3.2.).

Figure 3.2 Theoretical Research Model of the investigation



Source: Own elaboration based on Lemon et al. (2007); Frassetto et al. (2015); Halvorsrud et al (2016); Lemon & Verhoef (2016)

Based on Lemon and Verhoef's (2016) Process Model for Customer Journey and Experience, the investigation conceptualises the customer journey as a dynamic process with three key stages: pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase.

Within each stage of the model, there are four categories of touchpoints: a brand owned (BO), partner-owned (PO), customer-owned (CO) and social/external (SE) (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Those touchpoints will be mediated by a particular channel (Kronqvist & Leinonen, 2018; Halvorsrud et al., 2016). In the present study, two basic channels will

be analysed during the customer journey: the offline channel (physical stores) and the online channel (Fernández et al., 2018; Kim, Song, Choi, Kim & Hong, 2019; Kim, Libaque-Saenz & Park, 2019; Maggioni, Sands, Ferraro, Pallant, Shedd & Tojib, 2020; Zhang, Dai, Sun & Yang, 2020; Weber & Maier, 2020).

Verhoef et al. (2007) establish three mechanisms to explain research shopping: attribute-driven decision-making, lack of channel lock-in, and cross-channel synergy. Those mechanisms explain the reasons for search in one channel and buy in another channel. Those three mechanisms do not contemplate the post-purchase stage.

This approach will thus contribute to understanding the Gen Z consumer in showrooming and webrooming, the channels and touchpoints they use, and the reasons for the "research shopping phenomenon" (webrooming and showrooming).

3.4 Data collection

The data was obtained using semi-structured interviews with Generation Z consumers. Semi-structured interviews are used so that the researcher can keep more of an open mind about concepts and theories that can emerge out of the data, and allows obtaining specific details about consumers' experiences that might not be gained using another research method's (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Bryman, 2012).

The semi-structured interview consisted of five main sections, as following: (a) demographic profile (b) identification of the type of "research shopping phenomenon", (c) description of the pre-purchase stage, (d) description of the purchase stage, (e) description of the post-purchase stage.

The first part of the interview aims to do a demographic analysis of the sample to understand the background better. Phase (b) is devoted to exploring the type of research shopping phenomenon respondents are engaged in - webrooming or showrooming (or both). In phase (c), the first phase of the customer journey is analysed by exploring the pre-purchase phase, the channels used and related touchpoints, and underlined motivations for "research-shopping phenomenon" behaviour. In phase (d), the purchase phase, the channels and touchpoints types used and exploring the motivations for

"research shopping" are collected. The post-purchase phase is scrutinised in phase (e) concerning what channels and touchpoint types are used.

Table 3.1 Literature sources and overall interview design

(a) Demographic Profile
Gender, age, occupation, life stage, location (Stein & Ramaseshan, 2016; Harris et al., 2018)
(b) Identification of the type of "research-shopping phenomenon"
Shopping frequency, products/services shopped, attitude to shopping in general and the main types of shopping they engaged in (Verhoef et al. 2007; Harris et al., 2018)
(c) Description of the pre-purchase stage
Channels used (Harris et al., 2018), pre-purchase touchpoints (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Rudkowski et al., 2020) and research shopping drivers (Verhoef et al. 2007).
(d) Description of the purchase stage
Channels used (Harris et al., 2018), purchase touchpoints (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Rudkowski et al., 2020) and research shopping drivers (Verhoef et al. 2007).
(e) Description of the post-purchase stage
Channels used (Harris et al., 2018), post-purchase touchpoints (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Rudkowski et al., 2020).

Source: Own elaboration based on Verhoef et al. 2007; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Stein & Ramaseshan, 2016; Harris et al., 2018; Rudkowski et al., 2020.

Participants are asked to describe a shopper journey that sprang the mind, to explain each stage of its journey - activity performed and channels and touchpoints used. Participants are encouraged to talk about the shopper journey in the broadest possible way (Harris et al., 2018). Table 3.2 shows in each stage of the customer journey the related questions.

Table 3.2 Interview questions in each stage of the customer journey analysis

Customer Journey Stage	Concept	Authors from who we based our questions	Interview Questions
Pre-purchase	It has to do with customer's behaviours such as awareness, need for recognition, search and considerations.	Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Nam & Kannan, 2020; Rudkowski et al., 2020; Flavián et al., 2020; Harris et al., 2018; Goraya et al, 2020; Kokho Sit et al, 2018.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How did you start your search? - Why did you start searching this way? What criteria did you use? - What channels did you use when you did your search? Why these channels? - Describe to me the several moments you establish a connection with a brand/company during the pre-purchase stage (touchpoints). - What type of touchpoint was it? (Brand-Owned, Partner-Owned, Customer-Owned, Social/External) - Why did you choose/discard this channel? (research-shopping drivers) - Which devices did you use? - How did you make your final decision?
Purchase	Behaviour like choice, ordering and payment are recognised.	Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Flavián et al., 2020; Harris et al., 2018; Goraya et al, 2020; Kokho Sit et al, 2018.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describe why you choose to buy this way? - Describe what you do when you buy it? - What channels did you use when you made your payment? - Describe to me the several moments you establish a connection with a brand/company during the purchase stage (touchpoints). - What type of touchpoint was? (Brand owned, partner-owned, customer-owned, social/external) - Why did you choose/discard this channel? (research-shopping drivers) - Which devices did you use? - How did you make your final decision?
Post-Purchase	Interaction of the consumer with the brand	Lemon & Verhoef, 2016;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describe the period between the purchase of the product and when you start using it for the first time?

	<p>and its environment after the purchase. Post-purchase satisfaction, referral and loyalty. It also includes product return, complaint and repair or maintenance services.</p>	<p>Frasquet et al., 2015; Flavián et al., 2020; Harris et al., 2018; Goraya et al., 2020; Kokho Sit et al., 2018; Cao et al., 2018.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describe to me the several moments you establish a connection with a brand/company during the post-purchase stage (touchpoints). - What type of touchpoint was it? (Brand owned, partner-owned, customer-owned, social/external) - Why did you choose/discard this channel? (research-shopping drivers) - Which devices did you use?
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Source: Own elaboration

In each interview (i) the questions were worded clearly, (ii) the wording was open-ended to enable respondents to choose their own words when answering questions and allow them to contribute as much detailed information as they desire, and (iii) the questions were as neutral as possible to avoid wording that might influence answers (Stein & Ramaseshan, 2016).

One pre-test interview was applied before began the recollection of data. The intention was to test how well the interview flows and gain some experience (Bryman, 2012). It validated the interview guide after some changes in wording and the sequence of questions.

3.5 Sampling Techniques

Qualitative research uses non-probability samples for selecting the population for study (Bryman, 2012). In the investigation, units were deliberately selected to reflect particular features of groups within the population. The sample is not intended to be statistically representative: the chances of establishing each element are unknown, but, instead, the characteristics of the population are used as the basis of the selection (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). We use the criterion-based or purposive sample, where the participants' selection was made because they have particular features or characteristics that will enable detailed

exploration and understanding of the investigation (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Sampling is conducted regarding the research goals so that units of analysis are selected in terms of criteria that will allow the research questions to be answered (Bryman, 2012). It will permit all members of the sample to be relevant to the subject matter and that, within each of the key criteria, some diversity is included.

Designing a purposive or criteria-based approach implied some key stages. The criteria that operate as inclusive were age (between 19 and 25 - Generation Z) and any behaviour embracing webrooming and/or showrooming phenomenon in less than a year. The investigation seeks to diversify gender, occupation, academic classification, and the place where the subject lived within these two inclusive elements.

Respondents were addressed by "opportunistic sampling" (Bryman, 2012), capitalising on opportunities to collect data from specific individuals, contact with who is largely unforeseen but who may provide data relevant to the research questions. Each informant signed participant consent, ensuring only those prepared to contribute and correspond to the established ethical standards.

Interviews were conducted until theoretical saturation was believed to have been achieved. The saturation criterion enables us to know when to stop the data collection, avoid wasting time and the waste of evidence, and generalise the results to the universe of the population to which the analysed group belongs (Guerra, 2006). When new data no longer suggest new insights into an emergent theory or no longer suggest new dimensions of theoretical categories, the saturation criterion is achieved (Bryman, 2012). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight consumers.

3.6 Management, analysis and data interpretation

For confidentiality purposes, all names of the respondents remain anonymous and referred to as (E). They were also numbered from one to eight to identify each one.

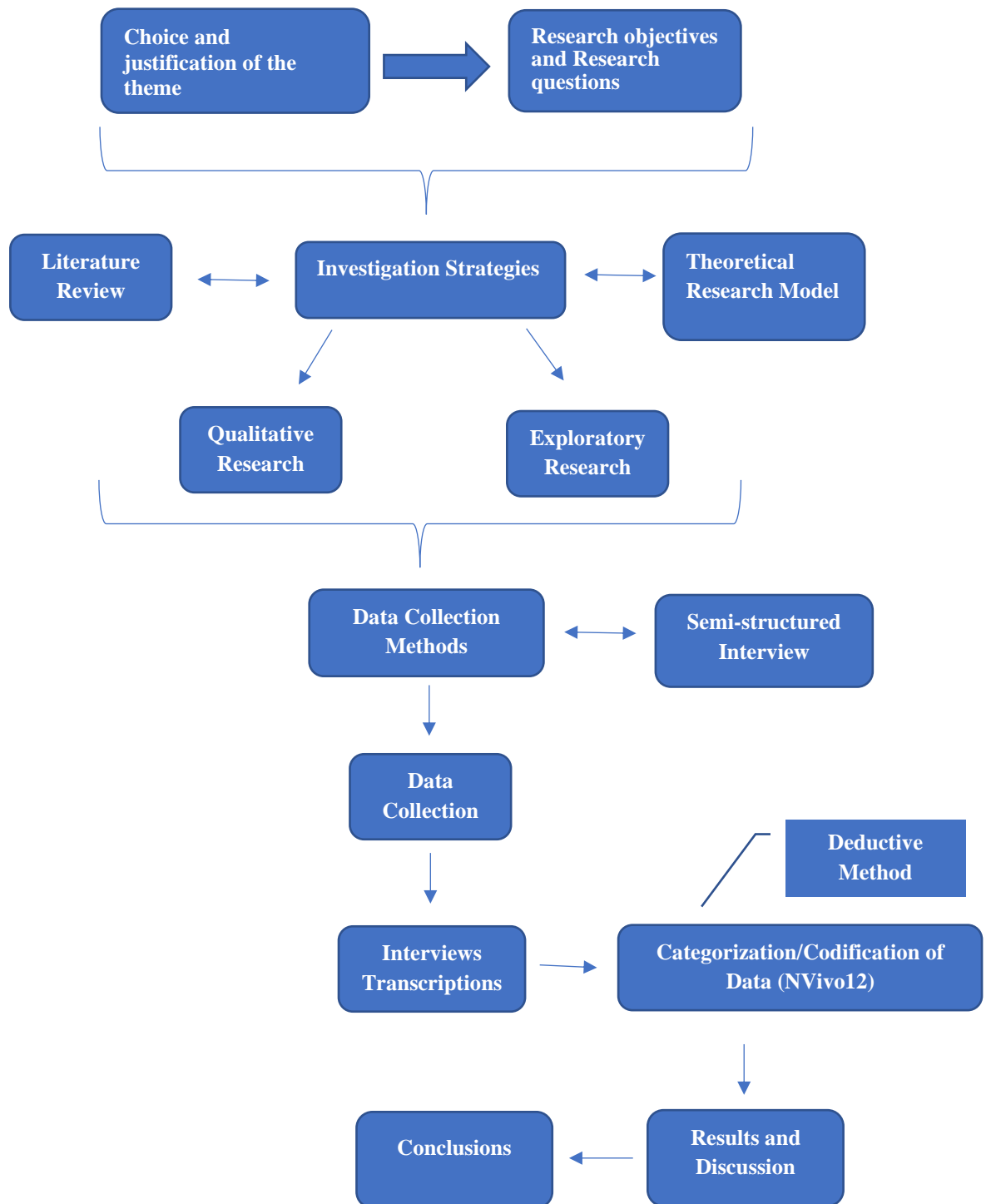
After each interview was completed and transcribed, the analysis and interpretation of the data were initiated. The need for intelligibility to the facts, seeking its epistemological validity, implies data analysis (Giorgi, 2003).

Among the various types of content analysis, categorical analysis (Bardin, 1995) or thematic analysis (Ghiglione & Matalon, 1997; Bryman, 2012) was chosen. A thematic analysis implies detecting nuclei of meaning and whose presence and frequency may have some meaning (Poirier, Clapier-Valladon & Raybaut, 1999).

In the first phase, based on the *corpus* obtained from the interviews, the categories were defined (a priori) in a deductive way. The categorization was made by referencing the theoretical models presented for the classification of channels, touchpoints and research shopping drivers. Categorization implies the classification and reduction of data obtained after its identification, intending to serve better the research objectives (Alhojailan & Ibrahim, 2012; Mayer, 2015).

For data analysis, NVivo 12 software was used, permitting simplifying the categorical analysis. NVivo 12 permits the identification of themes through the creation of codes (nodes) in each transcription. It allows that data could be broken down into their components and label. It permits that data becomes more manageable than if the researcher listens and relisting the records (Bryman, 2012). The categories, represented in the Software NVivo12 by "nodes", were created in a deductive way (based on the defined theoretical framework). The categorisation, starting from units of context (broader message segments), identified the registration unit (elements of meaning to be codified), giving rise to two significant analysis themes (webrooming and showrooming), respective categories, and subcategories gathered from the *corpus* of analysis (Appendixes VI; VII).

Figure 3.3 Research Design



Source: Own elaboration

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the information collected in the interviews. It begins with the characterisation of the respondents who constitute the sample. The research use coding based on the evidence retrieved from the theory for data analysis, allowing the development of two main categories: webrooming and showrooming. These two categories are also those set during research. From the categories raised by the literature review, the research analyses as subcategories the stages that constitute the customer journey: pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase. The answer to the questions raised by the investigation will be carried out under the aegis of those categories and subcategories.

4.1 Sample Characterization

Table (4.1) presents each informant's profile, including age, gender, occupation, academic qualification, place of living, and which type of research shopping phenomenon (webrooming and/or showrooming) is involved in their buying story. A pseudonym (**E**), followed by a subsequential number, is used to identify each participant. The interviewee (**E3**) reports two webrooming behaviours, which are distinguished between them as follows: the pseudonym (**E3₍₁₎**) refers to the bought of shoes, and the pseudonym (**E3₍₂₎**) refers to the bought of a computer. Eight participants were chosen using purposive and opportunistic sampling which have agreed to participate in the investigation. Five women and three men aged between 19 and 25 years, residents in several areas of Mainland Portugal, with several academic qualifications and belonging to Generation Z comprises the analysed sample. Regarding the “research shopping phenomenon”, four of the interviewees reported both webrooming and showrooming experiences; three interviewed only reported one webrooming experience, and one interviewed reported two webrooming experiences.

Table 4.1 Profile of the respondents

	Age	Gender	Occupation	Academic Graduation	Place Living	Webrooming	Showrooming
E1	25	F	Scientific Consultant	Degree	Lisboa	X	X
E2	19	F	Higher Education Student	12 th year	Lisboa	X	X
E3	22	F	Pharmacy Technician	Degree	Tavira	X X	----
E4	22	M	Higher Education Student	12 th year	Serpa	X	----
E5	24	F	Real Estate Consultant	Degree	Lisboa	X	----
E6	24	M	Pharmaceutical Sales Representative	12 th year	Tunes	X	X
E7	23	F	Master's Degree Student	Degree	Faro	X	X
E8	24	M	Real Estate Consultant	Degree	Portimão	X	----

Legend: **X** represents the type of behaviour that the customer performs.

Source: Own elaboration

The type of products that respondents said they buy range from electronics to apparel (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Type of products

	Webrooming	Showrooming
E1	Sandals	Sport Pants
E2	Pants	Smartphone
E3⁽¹⁾	Shoes	----
E3⁽²⁾	Computer	----
E4	Television	----
E5	Espadrilles	----
E6	Sneakers	Shoes
E7	Vacuum Cleaner	Blouse & Pants
E8	Computer	----

Source: Own elaboration

It represents a generation that has already entered the labour market or is studying and not working yet (Dolot, 2018).

Next, the analysis is made by looking at the two main categories separately (webrooming and showrooming), seeking to accomplish the proposed research questions for the investigation:

RQ1) Which channels are used by Generation Z in webrooming and showrooming through the customer journey;

RQ2) Which types of touchpoints are used in webrooming and showrooming by Generation Z through the customer journey;

RQ3) What factors can explain the phenomenon of "research shopping" in webrooming and showrooming in Generation Z;

4.2 Webrooming characterisation in the investigation

In the current research, Generation Z customers prefer shopping in physical stores than buy online. The most pronounced behaviour is to search for a product online and make the purchase offline. In fact, Generation Z demonstrates a greater inclination for webrooming behaviour. All of the interviewed use physical stores to purchase apparel and fashion items. This evidence that the investigation demonstrated coincides with those confirmed by Verhoef et al. (2007), Fernández et al. (2018) and Flavian et al. (2019, 2020).

4.2.1 Channels and touchpoints used by Generation Z in webrooming through the customer journey

This chapter analyses the channels and the various touchpoints referred to by the interviewees who had a webrooming behaviour. The analysis is performed for each of the

stages of the journey customer, using categorizations raised by literature and mentioned in the chapter dedicated to the methodology used in the investigation.

-Pre-purchase stage -

The pre-purchase stage in webrooming noticed in the investigation is manifested by various types of behaviour concerning consumer movements between online and offline channels, proving that it is not restricted to a linear and straightforward online research phenomenon at this stage. It may effectively mean that the consumer during the pre-purchase stage moves between online and offline channels, even if the online channel has more prevalence and appears as the decisive one for the purchase to take place offline.

At the pre-purchase stage in webrooming, four types of use of online and offline channels made by the interviewed were detected in the investigation.

1) A simpler behaviour that can be to identify, and merely seen in one of the interviews, refers to a movement that occurred only in the online channel (**E6**). In this situation, the consumer used a single channel and a single touchpoint (official online page of the store) to buy a pair of sneakers: “...was at Adidas. I even checked online, but I went to the store, ask if they had to try and that’s it...”.

Figure 4.1 Webrooming in pre-purchase: use of one channel.



Source: Own elaboration

Nevertheless, in the pre-purchase stage, not all the interviews revealed such a simple behaviour. The majority of the interviewed demonstrate a non-linear behaviour at this stage of the customer journey, oscillating between online and offline channels. This non-linearity or oscillation between the use of online and offline channels may present itself in several ways. Some interviews reflect this non-linearity of channel utilisation in a noticeable way, which seems to be a characteristic at this stage.

2) In the interviews **(E1)**, **(E2)**, **(E3₍₂₎)**, **(E4)** and **(E5)** there is an alternation in two phases between the online and the offline channels. The customer starts searching on the online channel (as expected in a webrooming behaviour), but the offline channel also plays a role at this stage of the customer journey, the last channel that the customer uses. Effectively, in the pre-purchase stage in webrooming the most expected behaviour is the online search. So, it is crucial to analyse the reasons for using the offline channel in the pre-purchase stage and understand its use by Generation Z.

Figure 4.2 Webrooming in pre-purchase: use of two channels



Source: Own elaboration

In the interview **(E1)**, the customer starts searching online for sandals but standing before uncertainty about the product, the decision to go to a physical store is made: “... *I wasn't sure about my size, so I ended up going to the physical store to try it out.*”.

In the interview **(E3₍₂₎)**, the customer searches online for a computer, but when going to the store, there is indecision between two products, where the decision arises after the help of the seller: “(...) *we search online to be sure about what I wanted (...) then we went to the store and the employee helped us (...)*”.

In the interview **(E2)**, online search is a way of selecting a group of products (pants) that interest the consumers to facilitate the purchase process. “(...) *I made the selection. I knew more or less what it was that I wanted, then in the store, I also took a look just to see if there was something that was not on the online page. (...)*”. The use of the offline channel is justifiable by this last attitude of the consumer

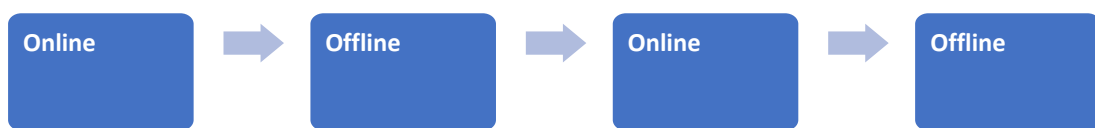
The interview **(E4)** also uses the search online emerges as a way to select a group of products (televisions) before going to the physical store. The consumer reports that once it is in the store, it ends up taking a look. “(...) *I started to search in several online pages. (...) then a made a selection of two or three (...) I ended up taking a walk in the store.*”.

In the interview (E5), the customer starts searching on the Internet for espadrilles. There is no online availability, so the consumer chose to go to the physical store, where there was also no possibility to purchase the product in question. It allowed the consumer to move "at least five times" between the online channel and the offline channel during the pre-purchase stage: "(...) *We went to the store many times to see if there were any there, and I went many times to the store page (...)*".

Examples with a different degree of complexity regarding webrooming are presented by the interviews (E3₍₁₎), (E8) and (E7). It is possible to confirm a more complex variation of the customer's path involving online and offline channels, where the transition between these two channels occurs in four moments.

3) In interviews (E3₍₁₎), (E8), the last channel used in the pre-purchase stage is offline.

Figure 4.3 Webrooming in pre-purchase: use of four channels (online → offline)



Source: Own elaboration

In the interview (E3₍₁₎), searching for shoes, it is possible to demonstrate this balance between channels: "(...) *I research in the application of Stradivarius (...)* I had the opportunity to go to the store physically... ah... I saw the shoes... but I didn't buy it right away because I was still undecided. (...) Then I went back to online, went back to research. (...) After, I went back to the physical store (...) I even saw some clothes, then I went back to the shoes section (...)". Interview (E3₍₁₎) shows a movement combined between the online and the offline channels, absolutely non-linear, where the customer starts searching online, then goes to the offline channel, to then go back to the online store and finally to the physical store where "I still saw some clothes". In the interview (E8), there is a similar interspersed movement between online and offline channels when searching for a computer: "(...)I searched online (...) the I went to Worten and Fnac (...) in the store itself happened I be seeing this model but there are many models of the same

computer (...) so in the store I went to the Internet to see what the Internet had to sell me.”

4) The interview (E7) differs from the interviews (E3₍₁₎) and (E8), although there are also four moments of nonlinear use between the online and offline channels. The difference is that the last channel used in the pre-purchase stage is the online one.

Figure 4.4 Webrooming in pre-purchase: use of four channels (offline → online)



Source: Own elaboration

In the path to buying a vacuum cleaner, interviewed (E7) starts by “(...) asking the opinion (of a friend) (...) I started seeing on the site (...) when I went to the stores (...) and I listened to people’s opinions. (...) When I actually chose (...) I took a picture of that little card that comes with the specifics of the vacuum cleaner (...) those 4 days since I saw it until effectively buy it was just researching online (...)”.

In the pre-purchase stage of the customer journey in webrooming, it is relevant to highlight the Customer-Owned touchpoint in some interviews, justifying why the offline channel appears as the last channel before the purchase in two types of dislocation between channels (mentioned before). In the interviews (E2), (E3₍₁₎), (E4), consumers revealed that when going to the physical store to make the purchase, they "ended up taking a little walk around the store" in the physical store by their initiative. This idea presupposes a Customer-Owned touchpoint in the offline channel, making this channel the last to be used before purchasing in the same channel. Effectively, the customer is a cocreator of value, and it takes part of the experience with its action, where the firm or its partners have no control or influence. In table 4.3, the touchpoints used by the consumer in both channels on the pre-purchase stage are visible.

Table 4.3 Touchpoints in webrooming (pre-purchase stage)

	Pre-purchase stage	
	Online	Offline
E1	B.O; P.O	B.O
E2	B.O	B.O; C.O
E3 ⁽¹⁾	B.O	B.O; C.O
E3 ⁽²⁾	B.O	B.O
E4	B.O	B.O; C.O
E5	B.O	B.O; C.O
E6	B.O	-----
E7	B.O; C.O	S/E; B.O; C.O
E8	B.O	B.O; C.O

Source: Own elaboration

A frequency analyses of each touchpoint category at this stage in both channels revealed a pattern of results. Brand-Owned touchpoint is prevalent at this stage in webrooming. In all interviews, a Brand-Owned touchpoint type is present. In the research of information about the products, the interviewees preferred mainly the web pages belonging to brands or companies.

- Purchase stage -

The purchase stage encompasses all interactions with the brand and its environment during the purchase process. Behaviours such as choice, ordering and payment are recognised. Webrooming is characterised by the search being done online and the purchase offline. So, the purchase stage privileges the offline channel. Two types of touchpoints types were found: Brand-Owned and Customer-Owned.

In the Brand-Owned touchpoints type, the presence of the seller in the physical store occupies an important place in the interviews analysed, becoming predominant at this stage. The seller demonstrates to be present at this stage by helping in the purchasing process.

In the interview **(E1)**, when buying sandals, the seller adverts to the customer that all models available are exposed. Then, checking that the product does not exist, opts for another available one. This action is seen as a smart purchase by the customer since he had access to a product that was not available anymore in the online store: *"(...) In this case it turns out to be an advantage because I had access to a product that was not available anymore in the online store."*

In the interview **(E4)**, the interviewee reports the situation in which the seller tests the product (television): *"Before making the payment the television was tested in front of us, they took it from the box, turned it on, went to the settings, went to do that testing process (...)"*.

Interviewee **(E5)** shows whom the seller proves to be decisive in solving a problem for the customer who had difficulties buying on the online channel or in the offline channel (espadrilles): *"I placed the order directly with the seller and asked him to reserve it when arrives at the store and I would pick it up."*

The investigation also reported the importance for the consumer to attest to the seller's opinion and hear what he has to say about the product. This fact can be confirmed in several of the conducted interviews.

The interviewee's speech **(E4)** when buying a television is one of the examples: *"That's when I realized that there was a personal opinion of the seller. And often this does not occur online (...). I really like the opinion of the person behind the counter (...)".* The seller's opinion, and the fact that it is face to face, is valued. Interviewee's **(E8)** also refers the importance of hearing the seller opinion when buying a computer: *"(...) I also wanted to hear the opinion of the seller who ends up knowing more than I (...)"*.

In the interview the fact that the seller has the same vacuum cleaner seem to be important **(E7)** for the consumer to decide to buy it: *"(...) I choose to buy in Home & Cook in Outlet because the seller also had the same vacuum cleaner I had seen (...)"*.

The store itself and the service that the brand offers were also referred as one of the Brand-Owned touchpoints to note and made the difference at the purchase stage. Some examples can be pointed in the conducted interviews. The first example (1) is the fact that the product is in stock made the difference at the time of purchasing a computer (**E3₍₂₎**): “(...) *I wanted it immediately. I didn't want to wait for it.*”. Other examples can be pointed out: (2) the offer of a discount promoted the immediate purchase of the product: “*I bought it right away because (...) they were discounted (...)*” (**E6**); (3) the delivery of a loyalty card at the time of purchase: “(...) *as I made a purchase above X value, (...) they gave me a loyalty card (...)*” (**E7**); or (3) the fact that the invoice is stored in the system without the necessity of being printed: “(...) *you don't need to keep the bead [in Worten]. (...) for any eventuality, if there is any problem with the bead (...).*” (**E8**).

During purchase, the customer's choice of payment method is primarily a Customer-Owned touchpoint. In the purchasing situations reported by the interviewees, the preferred payment method is the ATM card and the credit card. Only one interviewed (**E1**) paid in currency.

- Post-purchase stage -

Some of the interviewees did not report experiences that occurred in the post-purchase stage (**E2**; (**E3₍₂₎**); **E6**; **E8**). Table 4.4. shows the analysis of the post-purchase experiences described by the interviewees, presenting types of channels and touchpoints used.

Table 4.4 Channels and Touchpoints in the post-purchase stage in webrooming

	Post-purchase stage	
	Online	Offline
E1	S/E	----
E3₍₁₎	S/E	----
E4	----	S/E; C.O
E5	----	B.O
E7	B.O	S/E

Source: Own elaboration

Analysing interviews **(E1)** and **(E3₍₁₎)**, the use of the online channel in this stage is associated with the type of Social/External touchpoint: *"I sent a picture to a friend" (E1); "(...) I sent a picture saying: "look, that's cute (...). I sent a picture to my boyfriend..." (E3₍₁₎)*. The need for sharing and search for approval of the purchase made by the customer's social circle establishes an encounter between the customer and others.

Nevertheless, also, with the use of offline channels, the Social/External touchpoint is used. In interviews **(E4)** and **(E7)** where the customers claim to have commented with friends (word of mouth) about their purchases: *"I ended up commenting with friends (...)"(E4); "But I mentioned with several of my friends that the vacuum cleaner was good, that it was light (...)"(E7)*.

The interviewee in **(E4)** refers to the delivery service of the product, the option to transport it himself to his house, despite having the possibility of delivery at home: *"(...) I ended up taking it at home. But also had the possibility of delivery at home (...)*. This option to take the product from the store is considered a Customer-Owned touchpoint type since it can be considered a customer action relative to the firm but from which the firm has no control or influence.

Interview (E7) regarding the use of the online channel has a particularity. The store took the initiative of sending a post-purchase email to the customer: “(...) they also send a small email. (...)”. It is a Brand-Owned type touchpoint.

4.2.2 Research Shopping Drivers in Webrooming

Next, the investigation analyses the research shopping drivers that explain the "research shopping phenomenon" in the interviews made in webrooming. This analysis permits finding out the reason's consumers search on one channel and buy on another channel. More than one research shopping driver may be pointed out. Table 4.5 demonstrate the findings of the investigation.

Table 4.5 Research Shopping Drivers in Webrooming

Research Shopping Drivers	Interviews
Cross-Channel Synergy	(E1); (E3(1)); (E6)
Attribute-Based Decisions-Making	(E1); (E2); (E3(1)); (E3(2)); (E4); (E5); (E7); (E8)
Lack of Channel Lock-In	(E2); (E5)

Source: Own elaboration

The analyses of the reasons that result in a research shopping attitude in webrooming prove to be heterogeneous. Several drivers were identified.

“Attribute-based decision-making” emerges as the major motive for research shopping in the conducted interviews. This mechanism is based on the perspective that one channel is more likely to be used in search, while other channels excel on attitudes that drive purchase. In the webrooming experiences collected in the interviews, the reasons presented by the customers to justify the search in the online channel and the purchase in the offline channel as an “attribute-based decision-making” motive are of different types.

1) For instance, the fact that there is a need to test the product in the physical store since

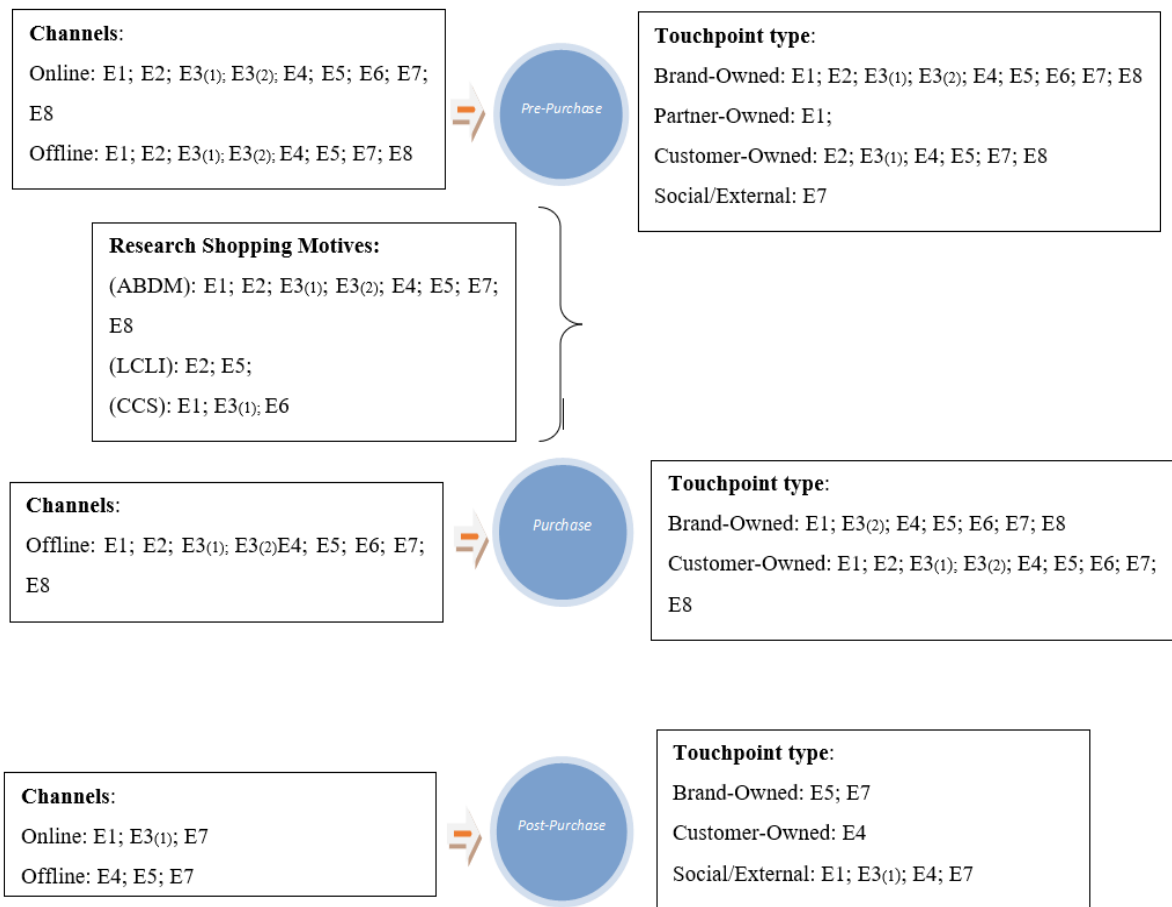
there was no certainty about the right size: “(...) *I wasn't sure about my size, so I ended up going to the physical store to try.*” (E1); “*But anyway I wanted to go to the store to try them.*” (E2); “(...) *the models and sizes vary a lot, so I prefer to buy in a physical store.*”. (E5). Having the possibility of only trying the products on the offline channel, makes this channel preferred to the online channel. 2) Another reason is the need to touch the product physically. This makes the consumer go to the offline channel to purchase the product: “(...) *because I wanted to see it live, as it was because often it's not quite what I think it is.*” (E3₍₁₎); “(...) *I'd rather see physically...*”. (E4). 3) A third reason is presented in the interview (E3₍₂₎), where the customer considers more advantageous to buy in the physical store because of the importance that the seller has in clarifying any doubts. According to the interviewee, the online channel does not have this facility: “(...) *I think that the experience of the employee, someone that understands about it, turns things easier.*”. 4) The last example of an "attribute-based decision-making" motivation for research shopping is seen in the interview (E8). The online channel appears useful for gathering information regarding the purchase. However, it is also considered to be a risk at the time of purchase. Buying in the physical store is mentioned as an advantage. If there is any problem in the post-purchase, for the customer is easier to solve it in the offline channel: “(...) *I'm a little afraid to buy on the internet. (...) Because if I had a problem later with the computer, buying on the Internet would end up being a problem.*”.

Another driver for research shopping that is noted in the interviews is the “cross-channel synergy”, where searching in one channel enhances the experience of purchasing in another channel. 1) In the interview (E1), the online store's search made the customer go to a physical store to search for sandals of the correct size. The customer ended up buying another model that existed there since the one she previously saw online was unavailable. This situation could end up in a case of "negative cross-channel synergy" if the customer did not find a model that he liked, turning his visit to the physical store into a negative experience. However, since the consumer regarded this as an asset, providing the customer with a smart shop feeling, it is a motive of "cross-channel synergy" where the online channel's search improved the experience of purchasing in the offline channel. 2) Another example is the attainment of a better deal in the store when interviewee (E3₍₁₎) moves a second time to the physical store to buy shoes: “(...) *when I went to the store again, they were on sale (...)*”. The same is observed in the interview (E6) where after researching online for a pair of sneakers, going to the store, the customer came across a

discount: *"I bought it right away (...)"*. The purchase on the offline channel is due to the perception of an economic benefit.

Finally, the interviews come up with examples of "lack of channel lock-in" motives for research shopping attitudes. Those motives have to do with the low channel lock-in, making high search attitudes in one channel not translate into high purchase attitudes. 1) It can be observed in the interview **(E2)** since the online store does not allow online shopping, so the correlation that could exist between "online search" and "online shopping" is not possible: *"(...) at the time the Lefties website did not have the online purchase part. Now they have."* 2) The other example of this type of motivation is presented in the interview **(E5)**. Curiously, this interviewee presents a reason that refers to a possible post-purchase situation, but that has a clear influence on the motivation for a research shopping attitude (who occurs between the pre-purchase and purchase stage). Fearing the possibility of a possible situation of returning the product in the post-purchase stage and with the difficulties that would come from online purchase to do so, the consumer prefers to buy on the offline channel where a possible product return will be facilitated: *"... online returns are more complicated than physical ones. (...) So I preferred to choose to go to the physical store to facilitate the return process if necessary."* Clearly, research shopping is stimulated by the lack of correlation between research and purchase. Although there are height search attitudes, they do not translate into a purchase attitude. This attitude represents a "lack of channel lock-in" motive.

Figure 4.5 Channels, touchpoints and research shopping motivation in webrooming



Source: Own elaboration

4.3 Showrooming characterisation in the investigation

In addition to webrooming, the other behaviour that results from the research shopping phenomenon is showrooming. In the investigation, four interviewees reported having had showrooming behaviours. The channels used and the types of touchpoints that customers have travelled throughout their customer journey are identified and the drivers for a research shopping behaviour.

4.3.1 Channels and touchpoints used by Generation Z in showrooming through the customer journey

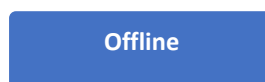
This chapter analyses the channels and the various touchpoints referred to by the interviewees who had a showrooming behaviour. The analysis is performed for each of the stages of the journey customer, using categorizations raised by literature and mentioned in the chapter dedicated to the methodology used in the investigation.

- Pre-purchase stage -

This stage of the customer journey in showrooming is also the testimony of various types of behaviour regarding consumer movements between online and offline channels. The Generation Z customer on the interviews reveals a non-linear behaviour, moving between online and offline channels in showrooming. At the pre-purchase stage in showrooming, three types of use of online and offline channels made by the interviewed were detected in the investigation.

1) The first behaviour that can be identified is the one that uses only the offline channel at the pre-purchase stage: *"I started seeing some sports pants in the store (...)* (E1). Using a single channel and a single touchpoint, becomes the most straightforward behaviour seen in the showrooming experiences reported in the investigation.

Figure 4.6 Showrooming in pre-purchase: use of one channel.

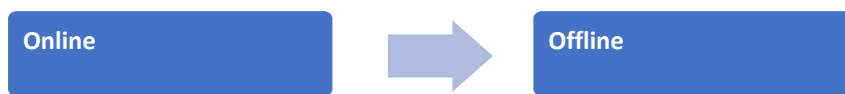


Source: Own elaboration

However, most interviews demonstrate a different and more complex use of channels and touchpoints in the pre-purchase stage.

2) For example, in the interview (E2) is possible to identify the non-linearity in the pre-purchase stage in showrooming, when buying a smartphone. The consumer starts his search on the online channel. However, proving to be insufficient, the consumer feels the need to search in the offline channel afterwards: *"First I searched online and then I tried to go to the stores and see the product. (...) to stir, see if I fit well (...)".*

Figure 4.7 Showrooming in pre-purchase: use of two channels (online-offline)



Source: Own elaboration

Using the online channel, (E2) starts the pre-purchase stage by using Brand-Owned touchpoints: *"(...) I went to see on the FNAC page (...) and other sites more to see in terms of price."*; *"(...) searched even on Apple's website, comparing models."*. This initial research (E2) also used the Social/External touchpoints types: *"(...) and then Youtubers, internet articles... but yes... many YouTube videos (product reviews, unboxings)"*. Despite using the online channel looking for prices and features, the customer also uses the offline channel in the pre-purchase stage to buy the smartphone. The reason has to do with the need to touch the product: *"To see what it's like... (...) it's different from being myself taking my own opinions about it"*. It is an action that represents a customer action, where he thinks about his own needs and desires and decides that it is important to see and touch the smartphone before buy ii. It represents a Customer-Owned touchpoint.

The interview (E6) is represented a situation where the customer has a similar movement between online and offline channels when buying shoes. The customer starts its pre-purchase on the online channel, searching on pages dedicated to fashion on social networks (Instagram and Facebook) (Social/External touchpoint). The purpose of the online channel is to inspire the consumer to choose what shoes will he buy. The interviewee (E6) then moves to the offline channel, searching in several physical stores: *"(...) Zara... had searched at Foreva, had searched at Aldo (...)"* resorting to Brand-Owned touchpoints.

3) Interview (E7) presents a particular non-linearity use of channels in showrooming when buying a blouse and pants (Fig. 4.8).

Figure 4.8 Showrooming in pre-purchase: use of two channels (offline-online)



Source: Own elaboration

This particular non-linearity in the interview (E7) happens due to the Covid-19 pandemic. What could be a pre-purchase on the offline channel and purchase on the same channel does not occur. The customer starts searching in the offline channel and ends up searching in the online channel. After the first quarantine due to the pandemic, the customer went to the physical store. Nevertheless, due to some fear of handling the clothes (blouse and pants), the customer chooses to take a picture of the label and then searched the products on the brand's online channel to buy them: *“I didn't want to be there touching in the clothes too much... so I saw, I took a picture of the label, I pointed out the reference, I came home, I went to the site, and I looked for them (...)”*.

Concerning the touchpoint types used, it should be noted that when accessing the official website of the physical store, one interviewed has a similar attitude to what had been already noted in webrooming behaviour (E2; E3(1); E4), which is to do a final inspection in the store to confirm the choice of the product. The interviewee (E7) has this attitude on the online channel: *“(...) I went to the site, I searched...there could be other colours, models.... I look ...”*. So, the interviews revealed that this behaviour could be carried out in the pre-purchase stage in both webrooming and showrooming, both on the online and offline channels. Concerning the type of touchpoint that the customer uses, in the offline channel, we identify a Brand-Owned touchpoint (Zara physical store). After the customer takes the initiative to photograph the label and then search online, we come up with two types of touchpoints. If the initiative to take the photo and search online appears as a type of Customer-Owned touchpoint, in which the customer takes the initiative to explore these touchpoints with no control of the firm, there is also a Brand-Owned touchpoint

type when the customer searches on the official website of the brand. In the same action of pre-purchase, we have two types of touchpoints.

Similar to that confirmed in webrooming, also in showrooming on the pre-purchase stage is verified the presence of Brand-Owned touchpoints in all interviews (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6 Touchpoints in showrooming (pre-purchase stage)

Pre-purchase stage		
	Online	Offline
E1	----	B.O
E2	B.O; S/E	C.O
E6	S/E	B.O
E7	B.O	B.O

Source: own elaboration

- Purchase stage -

The purchase in showrooming includes behaviours such as choice, ordering and payment. Showrooming is characterised by the search being done offline and the purchase online. In showrooming, the purchase stage privileges the online channel. Two types of touchpoints types were found: Brand-Owned and Customer-Owned.

The research shopping behaviour in (E1) is the simpler one, where from the offline channel in the pre-purchase stage, the customer moves to an online one, purchasing in the official page of the store, using a Brand-Owned touchpoint: "(...) *I ended up buying online ... because we were quarantined and couldn't go to the store. And in the meantime, the pants were with an online discount...*". The customer was conditioned because of Covid-19 pandemic boosted the purchase on the online channel, benefiting from a discount. The

interviewee (**E7**) at this stage of the customer journey also uses the offline channel of the store to proceed with its purchase (Brand-Owned touchpoint): *"(...) decided it was those two items I had seen in store, then I ended up buying them"*.

In the interview (**E2**), the customer purchases a smartphone in the online channel. To do so, he uses Fnac's official website, including using a gift check to reduce the final purchase amount (Brand-Owned touchpoints): *"(...) like a little card with a certain value that you can then put online and shot down that value."* However, on Fnac's official page, the consumer made the purchase in the marketplace area that the site offers. So, the customer uses a Brand-Owned touchpoint (Fnac official page), but also a Partner-Owned touchpoint (marketplace), where other companies, based on Fnac's platform, sell their products: *"Fnac had a good thing that is... they have other sellers on the site. (...) and then I made the online purchase because it was more into account."* In this way, there is an add-on between two types of touchpoints that benefit the customer with a more attractive price.

In the interview (**E6**), shoes purchase where the online and offline channels are used in an undifferentiated way, promoting an omnichannel experience. The customer, being in the physical store, intends to buy shoes. However, the product that exists in-store does not present the best conditions. The alternative is the online purchase: *"(...) the shoes in the store had already been tried, already had some use marks (...) Then I ended up buying online because the product had been sealed, had never been used and so I opted this way."* This attitude emerges as a Customer-Owned touchpoint because the consumer takes action and decides to proceed with this type of purchase. Having no product in the physical store, the option offered to the customer is to buy the product online in the physical store, with no need to do it later: *"(...) I bought it online right in the store, I made the payment right away. (...) this time I remember I bought in the store ... and online"*. This touchpoint is a Brand-Owned type, providing an undifferentiation between the online and offline channel, characteristic of the omnichannel.

During purchase, the customer's choice of payment method is a Customer-Owned touchpoint. The payment method observed a range between MBWAY (**E1**), ATM card when doing the online purchase in the physical store (**E6**), and the credit card (**E2**; **E7**).

- Post-purchase stage -

All interviewees in showrooming reported experiences that occurred in the post-purchase stage. Analysing the interviewees who reported experiences at this stage, the following is noted (table 4.7):

Table 4.7 Channels and Touchpoints in the post-purchase stage in showrooming

Post-purchase stage		
	Online	Offline
E1	B.O	----
E2	----	C.O; P.O; S/E
E6	B.O	B.O
E7	B.O	B.O

Source: own elaboration

Based on interviews (**E1**), the use of the online channel in this stage is associated with Brand-Owned touchpoint type: *"It went really well... they send an email with the tracking of my order, I can go tracking and then the order arrives.... of course, this time it took longer because of COVID...."*. The use of a Brand-Owned touchpoint type can be common to the use of online and offline channels. In the interview (**E6**), the Brand-Owned touchpoint in the online channel is manifested by sending a message to the customer's mobile phone with the confirmation of the shipment and arrival of the product to the store: *"We received a message saying that the product is already shipped and we received a message saying that the product has arrived. (...) I have my online account at Zara (...) they always send me a message to my phone."*. The use of a Brand-Owned touchpoint in the offline channel occurs when the customer recollects the product in the store: *"I picked it up from the store."*. Also, in the interview (**E7**), this touchpoint type is

common to online and offline channels. The option to pick up the product on the physical store (Brand-Owned touchpoint) establishes contact with the offline channel. The use of a Brand-Owned touchpoint in the online channel online occurs when the customer receives a post-purchase e-mail from the store: "(...) *I received an email (...) They sent a little resume of what I had bought, and also they did a lot of publicity to the new collection.*"

In the interview (E2), the customer in the post-purchase stage uses the offline channel. Effectively the customer opts for requesting the deliverance of the smartphone in to a close person's address: "*I asked for sent the smartphone to my father's work address because he was there all the time (...) I was studying at the time. I wasn't always at home.*" The customer's decision for the delivery to be made this way classified it as a Customer-Owned touchpoint. However, the role of the delivery company has to be noted. There is a role played by the distribution channel involving a Partner-Owned touchpoint type in this situation. A third touchpoint type is detected in the offline channel in the interview (E2). Social/External touchpoint type is also used: "*When someone talks to me about buying a mobile phone, I always say "look, look at Fnac's website because sometimes they have more affordable prices by other sellers (marketplace) (...)"*". The "word-of-mouth" also appears in showrooming.

4.3.2 Research Shopping Drivers in Showrooming

Next, the investigation analyses the research shopping drivers that explain the "research shopping phenomenon" among Generation Z in showrooming. This analysis permits finding out the reasons why consumers search on one channel and buy on another channel. Table (4.7) demonstrate the findings of the investigation.

Table 4.8 Research Shopping Drivers in Showrooming

Research Shopping Drivers	Interviews
Cross-Channel Synergy	(E1); (E2); (E6); (E7)

Source: Own elaboration

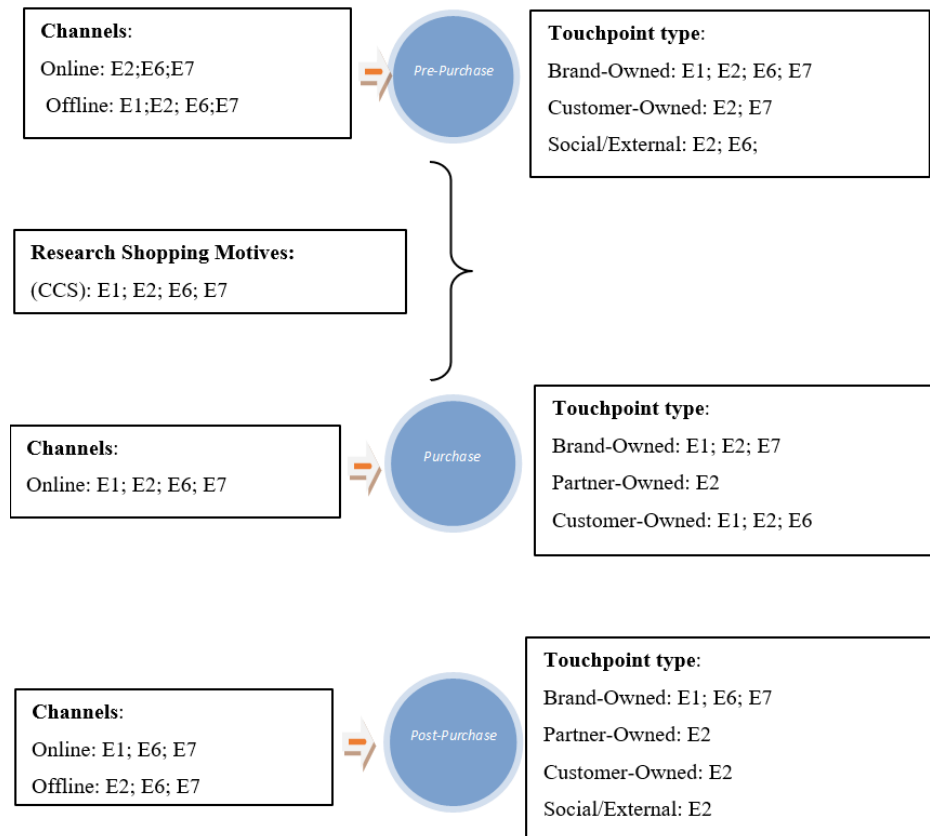
The analyses of the reasons that result in a research shopping attitude in webrooming are less heterogeneous than those observed in webrooming behaviour. All respondents presented as reasons for the research shopping behaviour a "cross-channel synergy" driver, where searching in one channel enhances the experience of buying in a different channel. Two different types of reasons can be observed in the interviews made.

1) One of the reasons emerging from the study arises from consumers' economic benefits to achieve with a research shopping behaviour. In the interview (E1) the customer, due to the restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the customer could not return to the store to buy the sports pants. Buy it on the internet, after restrictions were implemented preventing the possibility of going to the physical store, resulting in a better deal: *"I didn't buy it at the time and maybe a week or two we were quarantined and couldn't buy it at the store. (...) One day I opened the newsletter and saw that the pants were with a discount and I took advantage and bought it online."* In the interview (E2), the research shopping behaviour has to do with the possibility to obtain a better deal in the online channel, through the official page of the store that allows the customer to accede to a marketplace: *"(...) At first I knew I could get a cheaper deal online and went to the store just to see... I did not intend to buy immediately."* The intention is to use the offline channel (physical store) to touch the product and obtain an economic benefit in the online channel.

2) Another reason observed has to do with the smart-shopper feelings provided by the "cross-channel synergy". Interview (E6) shows an example where the motivation for the research shopping behaviour is based on the customer's perception. The respondent believes that purchasing in the online channel allows him to make a better purchase decision than a purchase in the offline channel: *"... the shoes in the store had already been tried, already had some marks (...) I ended up buying online because the product had been sealed, had never been used (...)"*. Another example is the one in the interview (E7). Related to the Covid-19 pandemic, the consumer, afraid of buying a blouse and pants in store, decides to make the purchase on the online channel. There is a smart shopping feeling from the perspective of the consumer, enabling him to buy with safety in the online channel instead of the offline channel: *"... afraid to try, and not being able*

to try on the clothes... I didn't want to be too around the clothes... so I saw, I took a picture of the label, I pointed out the reference, I came home, and I went to the site (...)"

Figure 4.9 Channels, touchpoints and research shopping motivation in showrooming



Source: The author

4.4 Influence of Covid-19 pandemic in Research-Shopper Phenomenon

As a consequence of a pandemic, consumers are shopping in ways that deviate from their typical shopping habits (Pantano, Pizzi, Scarpi & Dennis, 2020). This issue resulted in some situations in research shopping behaviours. The combination of limited accessibility to stores and consumers' increased health concerns created the need to assume this behaviour.

In the interview (E1), the customer mentions how having to stay in confinement made it assume a showrooming behaviour: *"I didn't take it at the time [the customer was in the store] and after maybe one to two weeks we were quarantined and couldn't buy it at the store."* The customer then had to use two channels and touchpoints to finalise the purchase. It also mentions how the pandemic influenced the post-purchase stage by leading to delays in delivery: Describing a showrooming situation, the interviewee (E7) assumes a behaviour of concern for its health, seeking the necessary comfort to make the purchase, by choosing not to buy in the physical store but in the online store instead. The impact that the pandemic generates on the consumer, and that could prevent or hinder a purchase, was overtaken by the consumer by the possibility of going to the online channel and purchasing the product in complete safety. It also demonstrates how the possibility that is offered by multichannel and omnichannel is important to businesses as well as to consumers.

Not only did consumers have had to adapt to the new circumstances that the pandemic has brought, but stores have also sought to adapt, seeking to respect the rules established concerning public health and seeking to captivate customers. The interview (E6), which reports a webrooming experience, shows how the store opted for a certain strategy that ultimately benefited the customer in economic terms: *"This was at the time they opened the stores after the quarantine, and in addition, they were with a 10% promotion in purchases, for example, in the first 20 minutes that you entered the store. It was supposed to rush the guys out of the store."*

As consumers became increasingly comfortable with online shopping and discovered its benefits, it is predicted that many consumers will continue these shopping habits post-pandemic (Baykal, 2020). The interview (E3) gives us a perception of this situation: *"Yes, now I think I'm more online, I've already had a lot more stuff come online without even going to the store. (...) now, because of all this I've also avoided going much to stores ... because of the pandemic and before I was not very adept of online because I was afraid of how it was going to get. (...)"* The pandemic served as a motive to increase confidence in online shopping. As a guarantee of safety in the post-purchase stage, the importance of the offline channel is mentioned as important to make an online purchase: *"(...) I will immediately see on the page of the stores how is the return process ... if they do, if they don't... (...)*. It is noticeable that for the customer, the existence of a physical store, where

to go if there is a problem in the post-purchase phase, is decisive in purchasing the online channel.

The sample used in the research concluded that COVID-19 has impacted the customers' shopping preferences. The concerns about their health and safety make the purchase online preferable for some of the interviewees. This factor impacted the way channels and customers use touchpoints.

4.5 Discussion of Results

Through an inductive qualitative research approach, an understanding of Generation Z regarding channels, touchpoints and research shopping drivers in webrooming and showrooming was achieved. Based on the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews done to webroomers and showroomers, the analysis of each behaviour during the pre-purchase, the purchase and the post-purchase stage was made (Appendix VI & VII).

The investigation contributes to the omnichannel literature, as it concludes that customers journeys are complex and individualistic when considering channels and touchpoints available to the customers. The concept of "research shopping" can result in a variety of combinations that moves between the *online* and *offline* context, where the most common form of interaction is that of Internet→Physical Store (Verhoef et al., 2007; Fernández et al., 2018; Flavián et al., 2020). Effectively what the research carried out demonstrates is a prevalence of reports of webrooming experiences among the interviewed. All elements reported at least one webrooming experience, with the case of an interviewee who reported two experiences as integrating the concept of webrooming. Internet search is widely mentioned in searching for information, and on the other hand, the physical store demonstrates preference when buying (Powels et al., 2011).

The idea of using the online and offline channels alternately during the customer journey (Frasquet et al., 2015; Harris et al., 2018; Flavián et al., 2020) was deepened in our research. This attitude results in a complex journey where channels and contact points are used interchangeably between them (Harris et al., 2018; Orús et al. 2019; Patten et al.,

2020). In particular, the investigation found that the “research shopping phenomenon” not only rests on the notion of switching from one channel in the pre-purchase stage to another for the purchase (Verhoef et al., 2007). The investigation made it possible to explore the real consumer path from the pre-purchase stage to the post-purchase stage, trying to understand the various channels and touchpoints that the customer travelled through and the reasons for embracing the research shopping phenomenon.

Regarding the touchpoints most predominant in the interviews, the Brand-Owned was the most present in webrooming and showrooming (except the post-purchase stage in webrooming). These results are consistent with Rudkowsky et al. (2020) findings. Following this chapter, we will discuss the results in each stage of the customer journey.

4.5.1 Pre-purchase activity

Looking at the pre-purchase stage in webrooming it is noted that there are different ways for consumers to move through online and offline channels: 1) using only the online channel (more in line with the definition of webrooming) (1 occurrence); 2) alternation in two phases between the online and offline channels (5 occurrences); 3) transition between the online and offline channels in four phases, where the last channel used is the offline (2 occurrences); 4) transition between the offline and online channels in four phases, where the last channel used is the online (1 occurrence).

In the pre-purchase stage in showrooming the non-linearity between the use of channels is also present. Besides the (1) simple use of the offline channel (1 occurrence), (2) the use of the online and offline channel (2 occurrences) and (3) the use of the offline and online channel (1 occurrence) is also present.

The investigation concludes that the non-linearity between online and offline channels occurs more often and in different ways in the pre-purchase stage. The customer can move between them up to four different phases in webrooming and three different ways in showrooming. These results confirm the possibility of combining channels and touchpoints in the search for information as referred by Verhoef et al. (2007), Lemon & Verhoef (2016), Orús et al. (2019), demonstrating our investigation of how these

combinations can occur at the pre-purchase stage. Contrary to other studies that simply referred to webrooming as the search of information made online (Flavián et al., 2016, 2019; Fernández et al., 2018; Kang, 2018) and showrooming as the one made in the offline channel (Neslin et al., 2014; Flavián et al., 2016; Kokho Sit et al., 2017; Fernández et al., 2018; Kang, 2018) this investigation demonstrated, in addition to the non-linearity and greater complexity in the use of the different channels, that the last channel used before purchase may not be online – in webrooming – and the offline – in showrooming.

In webrooming, the use of the offline channel as the last one before purchase is justified by the uncertainty about a product characteristic (shoe size), the need for the assistance of a seller or seizing the opportunity to “have a look” when in the store. In the investigation, the use of the online channel in showrooming before the purchase occurs when the customer performs first a search in the physical store (offline channels), and when goes to the online channel (official page of the brand) to do the purchase ends up looking for other colours and models before concluding this. Those situations described above confirm the situation of non-linearity between channels in webrooming and showrooming verified in the interviews made.

Another conclusion pointed out in the study is that in webrooming when the last channel used is offline, and in showrooming is online, can be implied a Customer-Owned touchpoint type. Those are specific situations where the customer takes the initiative to explore touchpoints with no firm control. In webrooming, after going to the physical store to buy the product still "gives a look to the store" (offline channel). In the case reported in showrooming, when buying on the store's website, the customer still looks at other products in the online channel.

4.5.2 Purchase activity

Regarding the purchase stage in webrooming, where the purchase is made offline, it is vital to highlight the importance that the seller plays. Being a type of Brand-Owned touchpoint, the role of the seller in the description of some interviewees is very important to the purchase (3 interviews). Contrary to Rapp et al. (2015), the results achieved in the

investigation demonstrates that salesperson also has an important role in webrooming, not only in showrooming.

In showrooming the purchase is made online. The preference for buying in official pages of the brand is noted in two interviews (Brand-Owned touchpoints). One of the interviewed refers to using a Partner-Owned touchpoint by using the marketplace available on the official Fnac website (Brand-Owned). Seeking the most competitive price chooses to buy in the available marketplace. In this way, the two touchpoints' types maintain a close bond between them. It is impossible to access the marketplace (Partner-Owned) without accessing the brand's official website (Brand-Owned).

Another shopping experience reported in showrooming reflects an evident dissipation of online and offline barriers. The customer heading to the physical store is confronted with a product that was not in the best condition. The consumer then decides to purchase online in the physical store itself, makes the payment immediately with an ATM card, and proceeds after to the pick-up in the store. This dissipation of limitations between the offline and online channels is proper to an omnichannel system and limits the risk of a free-ride behaviour (Goraya et al., 2020)

4.5.3 Post-purchase activity

The post-purchase stage in webrooming is referred to in five interviews where the use of online or offline channels isolated has two references. Both channels are referred by one of the interviewed when it shared opinions about the product with friends (offline channel) and received a newsletter from the store (online channel). It is noted the low presence of Brand-Owned touchpoints at this stage of the consumer journey in the interviews made, demonstrating the low presence of brands and companies in the after-sales. Exception made to two situations: (1) the store kept the product until the consumer was picking it up (offline channel), or (2) when the store sent a post-purchase email to the customer (online channel). A touchpoint noted in the post-purchase stage in webrooming is the Social/External type, both in online and offline channels. Examples include sending product photos to someone on the smartphone (online channel) or sharing opinions with friends (offline channel).

All interviews in showrooming refer to activities in the post-purchase stage. The activities have to do with the delivery process. Mainly the customers prefer to pick up products in the physical store (Brand-Owned touchpoint), arguing the ease of exchange of the product if necessary. The possibility of tracking the product is also mentioned. Contrary to Kokho Sit et al. (2018), the Social/External touchpoint is unlikely to be used. Only one of the interviews mentioned a situation of WOM.

4.5.4 Research-Shopping Drivers in Generation Z

The most represented research shopping drivers in webrooming are the "Attribute-Based Decision-Making" (seven interviews). The notion that some channels are more orientated for search and others are more leaned to purchase is the most perceived mechanism by the customer to justify the reason for having a research shopping attitude. Some reasons are presented in the investigation to justify the research on the internet, but to buy in the physical store: 1) the need to test the product in the store; 2) the need to touch the product; 3) more advantageous to buy on the store, because of the possibility to clarify any doubts with the seller; or 4) the online channel is more useful to gather information regarding the purchase.

The "Cross-Channel Synergy" is also present in some justifications for "research shopping" in webrooming. The reasons are as followed: 1) the online research drives the customer to the physical store, where he ends up buying a model that does not exist online, or simply 2) the attainment of a better deal in the store.

"Lack of Channel Lock-In" also emerges in some explanations for the "research-shopping phenomenon" in webrooming. The reasons have to do with 1) the online store does not allow online shopping, or 2) the preference to buy offline, once it is easier to return the product if needed.

In showrooming with regard to the reasons for research shopping behaviour, the interviewees unanimously presented "Cross-Channel Synergy" motifs. In addition to the possibility of obtaining economic benefits, from a psychological perspective, the "research shopping" behaviour provided to the customer a smart-shopper feeling, being

in line with Flavián et al. (2020) conclusions. “Cross-channel Synergy” mainly refers to positive synergistic effects between search and purchase in different channels. However, the negative “Cross-Channel Synergy” is less obvious and occurs when searching in one channel makes purchasing in another channel less desirable (Verhoef et al., 2007). In the case of one interview, the “Cross-Channel Synergy” has an appearance of negative one, when the customer searches in the offline channel, but knowing in advance that will not buy there, because she is convinced she will find it cheaper online.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Main findings of the study

This research aims to investigate how the Generation Z consumer moves across the different channels and touchpoints in showrooming and webrooming through the customer journey. Thus, the following objectives were defined: 1) which channels are used by Generation Z in showrooming and webrooming through the customer journey; 2) which types of touchpoints are used in showrooming and webrooming by Generation Z through the customer journey and 3) what factors can explain the phenomenon of "research shopping" in showrooming and webrooming in Generation Z.

A qualitative approach was made, and eight interviewees were done with consumers who fit the investigation's purposes. A thematic analysis was performed in a deductive process accordingly with the theoretical models presented in the literature. Two main categories were developed in the research, and related conclusions emerged: webrooming and showrooming.

The most common form of interaction described by the interviewed is webrooming behaviour. The results obtained with this investigation are consistent with other findings reported in the literature (Verhoef et al., 2007; Fernández et al., 2018; Flavián et al., 2020).

1) Regarding channels used by Generation Z in webrooming and showrooming, the investigation concluded that there is a diversity of how these channels are used during the customer journey. How online and offline channels are used by each consumer make the customer journey unique. This nonlinearity does not coincide with the simplest definitions of webrooming (search online and purchase offline) and showrooming (search offline and buy offline). They are effectively personalized, non-linear uses and may acquire more complex uses, as the investigation reveals. This complexity is checked especially in the pre-purchase phase, both in webrooming and showrooming. Effectively the search for information implies the use of channels more often. However, the use of channels and touchpoints emerge without a logical order. The dynamics and complexity of the customer's movements, who can constantly alternate between channels and

touchpoints, make the customer journey take different forms each time they advance towards a transaction.

2) About the types of touchpoints used in showrooming and webrooming by Generation Z through the customer journey, the Brand-Owned is the most present in webrooming and showrooming, appearing in all stages of the customer journey. The use of official pages in the online channel, or the search in the physical stores of brands for searching information, as well as the purchase in the physical stores of the brands or in the official pages are attitudes verified by consumers of Generation Z. This attitude reflects the importance that brands have for this generation, preferring more personalized services and investing their money where a brand's personality is (Baykal, 2021). This is also noted in the importance of the seller in webrooming. Customers value the opinion transmitted by the seller. However, in the post-purchase phase, the less presence of Brand-Owned touchpoints is noted, showing a low rate of contact with the customers by the brand or firm after the purchase.

The Customer-Owned touchpoint type is also present in a particular way that is interesting to refer to. In webrooming, the customer, in some cases, after entering the physical store to make the purchase ends up "taking a look" at the products that exist there. The same can happen in showrooming, where before doing the online purchase, it ends up "taking a look" at other products. Here customers actions are part of the overall customer experience.

3) Concerning the reasons for research shopping behaviour in showrooming, the interviewees unanimously presented "Cross-Channel Synergy" as motifs for searching in one channel and purchase in another one. The motives are of two types: economic order (obtaining economic benefits) or from a psychological perspective (smart-shopper feeling). In webrooming the "research shopping phenomenon" has a wider variety of motives. However, they are mainly of the "Attribute-Based Decision-Making" type, where the customer presents as reasons for the research shopping behaviour the need to touch the product or to test it, the importance of the seller to clarify any doubts about the product or simply the perception that the online channel is more useful for research.

5.2 Theoretical implications

Although there is recent literature about webrooming and showrooming (Fernández et al., 2018; Schneider & Zilke, 2020; Aw, 2020; Goraya et al., 2020) little attention have been paid to how consumers use different channels, and no attention has been given to how Generation Z is doing it (Priporas et al., 2017; Thangavel et al., 2019) and how specific channels combinations are made during the customer's journey. Flavian et al. (2020) alert to a situation where real-world experiences may involve several interactions between offline and online channels, and points out the importance of future studies investigate the channel combinations not only as a unidirectional sequence (from online to offline, or from offline to online), but also the possibilities of varied channel combinations.

Based on the four categories of touchpoints developed by Lemon and Verhoef (2016), the investigation seeks to understand how Generation Z moves between online and offline channels and the touchpoints they use along the customer journey. Guided by this framework, the study identifies channels and touchpoints in each stage of the customer journey, showing their interactions and the several possibilities of channel combinations. Additional to these findings, the need to comprehend the motives for research shopping behaviour in generation Z inclined the investigation to resort to the four drivers presented by Verhoef et al. (2007).

The present study makes a relevant contribution to the literature in understanding the “research shopping phenomenon” in their most common expressions – webrooming and showrooming - in Generation Z.

5.3 Managerial implications

Along with the theoretical contributions outlined above, the findings yielded by this study can be of value and relevant to managers working in the retail industry, giving important insights for retailers that pretend to give attention to Generation Z consumers.

Like every generation, Generation Z has particular behaviours (Priporas et al., 2017), accompanied by the constant change in the retail world. Findings in the present

investigation contribute to the business by providing exploratory insights on connecting and understanding the new generation of customers who will shape the retail world sooner rather than later. Brands and firms need to understand where the investment in channels and touchpoints should be made to engage Generation Z customers. Retailers need to ensure all channels and touchpoints that their targets prefer using along the customer journey.

In the investigation it is noted that Generation Z still appreciate the physical store as it can offer a sensory experience that online stores cannot challenge, either by the possibility of testing and touch the products or for security reasons in the purchase phase. An additional interesting aspect was to note that consumers, yet in a few cases, used online and physical stores uniformly in cases where the retailer operates through both channels. For example, not finding a product offline for purchase means buy it online. Besides, the geographical proximity of a retail store was found to make the retailer more approachable for some consumers and could be a reason for choosing a brand or firm. Although physical stores are increasingly decreasing, they still have an essential role in retailing because of the rising importance of customer in-store experience (Baykal, 2021).

In webrooming, the low rate of Brand-Owned touchpoints in the post-purchase phase indicates a lap in the contact between firms, brands and the customer after the purchase. It is of utmost importance for CRM (Customer Relationships Management) practices, particularly regarding customer loyalty and monitoring. More attention should be paid to this question.

Finally, the need for retailers to concentrate their efforts and investments in both online and offline touchpoints to increase their potential, building an omnichannel perspective for their businesses. Online websites and the physical store are the “branded touchpoints” that reached customers.

As suggested before, the practical implications discussed above can help multichannel retail firms make strategic decisions about resource allocation, channel attribution, and omnichannel customer experience. The next subchapter discusses the main limitations of the current study and outline lucrative paths for other researchers to explore in the future.

5.4 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This investigation has a qualitative approach associated. The small number of participants composing the sample could constraint the generalisation of findings to the population. Furthermore, the research was limited to the interviews' behaviours, the channels and touchpoints carried out by the interviewees, and the motives they presented as reasons for research shopper behaviour. Therefore, the data recollected is specific to these interviews and do not pretend to be statistically representative. Future research should consider expanding the number of interviews.

Since differences may exist among product types, the study could also focus on specific product categories instead of not differentiating them. Future studies should consider the effect of product characteristics in webrooming and showrooming.

The study exclusively considers individuals belonging to Generation Z with different customer journeys (webrooming and showrooming). Future research should compare Generation Z to other Generations. The most likely would be Millennials. Comparing consumer behaviour patterns between the two generations allows identifying similarities and differences between them, ensuring a certain degree of external validity with a broader range of customers covered.

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7. APPENDICES

Appendix I: Research question and purpose overview

Main Research Question	How the Generation Z consumer moves across the different channels and touchpoints in showrooming and webrooming through the customer journey;
Research Question 1	Which channels are used by Generation Z consumers in showrooming and webrooming through the customer journey;
Research Question 2	Which types of touchpoints are used in showrooming and webrooming by Generation Z through the customer journey;
Research Question 3	Factors that can explain the phenomenon of "research shopping" in showrooming and webrooming in Generation Z;

Appendix II: Informed consent protocol



Protocolo de consentimento informado - Entrevista Semi-estruturada

Eu, _____ aceito participar de livre vontade no estudo da autoria de Vasco Afonso (Aluno da Faculdade de Economia da Universidade do Algarve), orientado pela Professora Doutora Manuela Guerreiro e pela Professora Doutora Bernardete Sequeira (Professoras Associadas da Faculdade de Economia da Universidade do Algarve), no âmbito da dissertação de Mestrado em Gestão de Marketing.

Foram-me explicados e compreendo os objetivos principais deste estudo intitulado *“Research-shopper phenomenon: Combinations of channels and touchpoints on the customer journey in Generation Z”*. Entendi e aceito responder a uma entrevista que explora questões sobre as minhas experiências durante a minha jornada de consumo inseridas no âmbito deste estudo. A entrevista terá gravação áudio.

Compreendo que a minha participação neste estudo é voluntária, podendo desistir a qualquer momento, sem que essa decisão se reflita em qualquer prejuízo para mim.

Ao participar neste trabalho, estou a colaborar para o desenvolvimento da investigação na área do Marketing, não sendo, contudo, acordado qualquer benefício direto ou indireto pela minha colaboração.

Entendo, ainda, que toda a informação obtida neste estudo será estritamente confidencial e que a minha identidade nunca será revelada em qualquer relatório ou publicação, ou a qualquer pessoa não relacionada diretamente com este estudo, a menos que eu o autorize por escrito.

Nome _____

Assinatura _____

Data ___/___/___

Appendix III: Interview Guide

- Age
- Gender
- Occupation
- Education
- Location

1) Tell me about the last time you bought something online/offline or offline/online? Walk us through the process. (The interviewed could relate both experiences).

Follow-up questions for the main question:

- **Pre-purchase stage -**

- How did you start your search?
- What type of product?
- Why did you start searching this way? What criteria did you use?
- What channels did you use when you did your search? Why these channels?
- Describe me the several moments that you establish a connection with a brand/company during the pre-purchase stage (touchpoints).
- What type of touchpoint was? (Brand owned, partner owned, customer owned, social/external)
- Why did you choose/discard this channel? (research-shopping drivers)
- Which devices did you use?

- **Purchase stage -**

- Describe why you choose to buy this way? What criteria did you use?
- Describe what you do when you buy it?
- What channels did you use when you did your payment? Why this channel?
- Describe me the several moments that you establish a connection with a brand/company during the purchase stage (touchpoints).
- What type of touchpoint was? (Brand owned, partner owned, customer owned, social/external)
- Why did you choose/discard this channel? (research-shopping drivers)
- Which devices did you use?

- **Post-purchase stage -**
 - Describe the period between the purchase of the product and when you start using it for the first time?
 - Describe me the several moments that you establish a connection with a brand/company during the post-purchase stage (touchpoints).
 - What type of touchpoint was? (Brand owned, partner owned, customer owned, social/external)
 - Why did you choose/discard this channel? (research-shopping drivers)
 - Which devices did you use?
 - How were the expectations met when using the product/service?

- **Exit question-**
 - Anything you would like to add?

If interesting information appears during the interview ask:

- 1) You mention.....Can you elaborate on this?
- 2) Why was it like that?
- 3) How did that make you feel?
- 4) What did that make you do?

Appendix IV: Webrooming customer journey

		Webrooming			
		Customer Journey Stage	Pre-Purchase	Purchase	Post-Purchase
E1	Product type: Sandals	Channel (sequence of use)	<u>Online -Offline</u>	<u>Offline</u>	<u>Online</u>
		Touchpoint	Official Page; Farfetch; other Marketplaces; Physical Store	Seller; Payment Option (money)	Using smartphone, send a photo of the product to a friend
		Type of Touchpoint	<u>Brand-owned; Partner-Owned</u>	<u>Brand-owned; Customer Owned</u>	<u>Social/External</u>
		Research Shopping Driver	“...e como eu não tinha a certeza do meu tamanho acabei por ir à loja física para experimentar. Acabei por comprar lá e curiosamente não encontrei nenhum modelo que eu tinha pensado, ou seja, dos que tinha visto no site.” <u>Cross-channel synergy; Attribute-based decisions-making.</u>		

E2	Product type: Pants	Channel (sequence of use)	<u>Online-Offline</u>	<u>Offline</u>	-----
		Touchpoint	Official Pages: Zara, Bershka, Pull & Bear, Lefties, Lefties physical Store	Payment Option (multibank card)	-----
		Type of Touchpoint	<u>Brand-Owned; Customer Owned</u>	<u>Customer Owned</u>	-----
		Research Shopping Driver	<p>“...na altura o site da Lefties não tinha a parte de compra online. Agora já tem.” <u>Lack of channel lock-in.</u></p> <p>“Mas de qualquer maneira eu queria à loja experimentá-las.” <u>Attribute-based decisions-making.</u></p>		
E3 (1)	Product type: Shoes	Channel (sequence of use)	<u>Online-Offline-Online-Offline</u>	<u>Offline</u>	<u>Online</u>
		Touchpoint	Stradivarius App; Parfois Official Page; H&M Official page, Stradivarius store;	Payment Option (multibank card)	- Send a photo of the product to boyfriend; - Show the product in the App to friends
		Type of Touchpoint	<u>Brand-Owned; Customer Owned</u>	<u>Customer-Owned</u>	<u>Social/External</u>
		Research Shopping Driver	<p>“Eu acho que foi mais a minha indecisão, porque normalmente quando, pronto, eu ...porque queria ver mesmo ao vivo, como é que era porque muitas vezes não é bem aquilo que eu acho que é. Ainda por cima em sapatos. É sempre uma coisa mais complicada para mim e então quis, pronto, tirar as teimas e ver aquilo.” <u>Attribute-based decisions-making.</u></p> <p>“Depois então, quando fui outra vez à loja e estava em promoção era aqueles. Já ia para aqueles, então foi aqueles.” <u>Cross-channel synergy</u></p>		

E3 (2)	Product type: Computer	Channel (sequence of use)	<u>Online - Offline</u>	<u>Offline</u>	-----
		Touchpoint	Worten official page; Seller	Seller; Payment Option (credit card)	-----
		Type of Touchpoint	<u>Brand Owned</u>	<u>Brand-Owned; Customer-Owned</u>	-----
		Research Shopping Driver	<p>“...precisávamos de esclarecimentos e então fomos logo à loja e o empregado ajudou-nos. Acho que essa foi a ...foi mesmo o que nos levou a ir logo à loja e ser em loja, porque, pronto, é mais prático e é um objeto que...não...pronto, apesar de já ser tudo muito completo online, acho que a experiência do empregado e de que perceba ali das coisas é muito mais fácil. E as dúvidas que temos acho que são muito de cada pessoa.” <u>Attribute-based decisions-making.</u></p>		

E4	Product type: Television	Channel (sequence of use)	<u>Online-Offline</u>	<u>Offline</u>	<u>Offline</u>
		Touchpoint	Fnac official page; Worten official page; Radio Popular official page; Fnac physical Store; Radio Popular physical Store; Seller	Seller; Payment Option (multibank card)	- Sharing opinion with friends - Option for own transportation
		Type of Touchpoint	<u>Brand-Owned; Customer Owned</u>	<u>Brand-Owned; Customer-Owned</u>	<u>Social/External; Customer- Owned</u>
		Research Shopping Driver	<p>“...eu próprio não me sentia à vontade de comprar uma coisa em que eu não sabia qual era o aspeto real. Se por exemplo cabia no sítio que eu tinha destinado para a meter, se as próprias cores (...) eu prefiro ver fisicamente...é um processo diferente (...) Mais vale ir mesmo ao sítio...até porque eu não me sinto completamente à vontade fazendo uma compra cega. Eu acabo nunca por saber o que é que estou a comprar. E não é ser desconfiado, é simplesmente não estar à vontade com isso.” <u>Attribute-based decisions-making</u></p>		

E5	Product type: Esparilles	Channel (sequence of use)	<u>Online-Offline (alternation at least five times)</u>	<u>Offline</u>	<u>Offline</u>
		Touchpoint	Paez official page: Paez physical store, Seller	Seller; Payment Option (multibank card)	Seller
		Type of Touchpoint	<u>Brand-Owned;</u>	<u>Brand-Owned; Customer-Owned</u>	<u>Brand-Owned</u>
		Research Shopping Driver	<p>“Eu prefiro sempre ir primeiro à Internet ver o produto e pesquisar quais são as alternativas para não estar a perder tempo na loja e quando quero comprar um produto em específico que sei que não é aconselhável comprar na Internet, por exemplo os sapatos, os modelos variam muito e os tamanhos, prefiro comprar em loja física.”</p> <p><u>Attribute-based decisions-making</u></p> <p>“Neste caso em concreto porque caso seja necessário trocar, as trocas online são mais complicadas do que as trocas físicas. Se eu encomendasse por este site Paez, teria de ir até Espanha trocar ou trocar online mesmo. E isso torna o processo um bocadinho mais complicado. Por isso preferi optar por ir à loja física para facilitar o processo de troca caso seja necessário.” <u>Lack of channel lock-in</u></p>		

E6	Product type: Sneakers	Channel (sequence of use)	<u>Online</u>	<u>Offline</u>	-----
		Touchpoint	Adidas official page	Adidas physical store; Payment Option (multibank card)	-----
		Type of Touchpoint	<u>Brand-Owned</u>	<u>Brand-Owned; Customer-Owned</u>	-----
		Research Shopping Driver	<p>Comprei logo porque era ali no...foi num loja que é Outlet... Mar Shopping, e eles estavam com desconto a partir de 70 EUR. Então acabei por comprar logo. (.....) Isto foi na altura em que abriram as lojas a seguir à quarentena e além disso eles estavam com uma promoção de 10% em compras, por exemplo, nos primeiros 20 minutos que entravas na loja. Era para apressar a malta a sair da loja. E então tive os 20 % mais os 10 %..., portanto 30% no total da compra. <u>Cross-Channel Synergy</u></p>		

E7	Product type: Upright Vacuum Cleaner	Channel (sequence of use)	<u>Offline - Online - Offline-Online</u>	<u>Offline</u>	<u>Offline-Online</u>
		Touchpoint	Friends' opinion; Worten official page; Fnac official page; Radio Popular official page; Photograph the product characteristics label with the smartphone; Seller (Worten); Physical stores (Worten Fnac, Home & Cook); Search online for specific product.	Seller; Payment Option (multibank card)	-Share opinions with friends; - Loyalty card - Newsletter to e-mail
		Type of Touchpoint	<u>Brand-Owned; Customer-Owner; Social/external</u>	<u>Brand-Owned; Customer-Owned</u>	<u>Social/external; Brand-Owned</u>
		Research Shopping Driver	<p>"Preferi por causa do peso do aspirador, por causa das costas. Porque eu tenho passado um bocado mal das costas então decidi dentro destes 3 ou 4 que eu tinha visto, caso houvesse em loja, vê-los em loja, tentar pegar neles para ter uma noção depois do esforço que teria que fazer. (...) ...ver se dava jeito de agarrar, se o manipulo era confortável e tudo mais. <u>Cross-Channel Synergy; Attribute-based decisions-making</u></p>		

E8	Product type: Computer	Channel (sequence of use)	<u>Online-Offline-Online-Offline</u>	<u>Offline</u>	-----
		Touchpoint	Worten official page; Fnac official page; Apple official page; Physical stores (Worten, Fnac); El Corte Inglés official page; Seller.	Seller; Payment Option (multibank card); Keeps the receipt in database	-----
		Type of Touchpoint	<u>Brand-Owned; Customer-Owned</u>	<u>Brand-Owned; Customer-Owned</u>	-----
		Research Shopping Driver	<p>“...os computadores são caros e então tudo o que é valores elevados eu tenho um pouco de receio de comprar na internet. E então eu pesquisava a Internet como um apoio à minha compra na loja física. Porque se eu tivesse algum problema depois com o computador, comprando na Internet já acabava por haver ai um entrave. Há outros produtos que se pode comprar na Internet que não há entrave, mas tudo o que seja assim digital eu tenho um bocado de receio, tenho um bocado de medo de comprar. E depois é o valor...é um valor elevado, não ia estar a Também estava com receio. Mas a Internet acabou por me apoiar nessa compra.” <u>Attribute-based decisions-making.</u></p>		

Appendix V: Showrooming customer journey

		Showrooming			
		Customer Journey Stage	Pre-Purchase	Purchase	Post-Purchase
E1	Product type: Sport Pants	Channel (sequence of use)	<u>Offline</u>	<u>Online</u>	<u>Online</u>
		Touchpoint	Women'Secret physical store;	Women'Secret official page; Payment Option (MBWay)	Tracking online before deliver at home.
		Type of Touchpoint	<u>Brand-Owned</u>	<u>Brand-Owned; Customer-Owned</u>	<u>Brand-Owned</u>
		Research Shopping Driver	"...eu vi lá as calças de desporto e como tinha falta pensei...olha, tenho de cá vir cá daqui a algum tempo para vir buscar as calças. Não levei no momento e passado talvez uma ou duas semanas ficamos de quarentena e não pude comprar na loja. (...) e como eles estão constantemente a enviar-me newsletters com descontos houve um dia que eu fui...que eu abri a newsletter e vi que, realmente, estas calças estavam com desconto e aproveitei e comprei." <u>Cross-Channel Synergy</u>		

E2	Product type: Smartphone	Channel (sequence of use)	<u>Online-Offline</u>	<u>Online</u>	<u>Offline</u>
		Touchpoint	Apple official page; Youtube; Internet articles; Fnac official page; Fnac physical store	Fnac Marketplace; Payment Option (credit card)	- Home delivered - Comment with friends
		Type of Touchpoint	<u>Brand-Owned; Social/External; Customer-Owned</u>	<u>Brand-Owned; Partner Owned; Customer-Owned</u>	<u>Customer-Owned; Social/External; Partner-Owned</u>
		Research Shopping Driver	“...à partida sabia que conseguia arranjar online mais barato e foi precisamente à loja só para ver...não foi logo com intenção de comprar.” <u>Cross-Channel Synergy</u>		

E6	Product type: Shoes	Channel (sequence of use)	<u>Online-Offline</u>	<u>Online</u>	<u>Online-Offline</u>
		Touchpoint	Instagram and Facebook fashion pages; Foreva physical store; Aldo physical store; Zara Physical store	Payment Option (multibank card). Online purchase made in the physical store.	Text message to smartphone; recollect the product in store
		Type of Touchpoint	<u>Social/External; Brand-Owned</u>	<u>Customer-Owned; Brand-Owned</u>	<u>Brand-Owned;</u>
		Research Shopping Driver	“...os sapatos na loja já tinham sido experimentados, já tinham algumas marcas...ahhh...e depois fez com que comprasse online. (...) Depois acabei por comprar online porque o produto vinha selado, nunca tinha sido utilizado e então optei por essa escolha.” <u>Cross-Channel Synergy</u>		

E7	Product type: Blouse and pants	Channel (sequence of use)	<u>Offline-Online</u>	<u>Online</u>	<u>Offline-Online</u>
		Touchpoint	Zara physical store; Zara oficial page;	Zara official page; Payment Option (credit card).	Recollect the product in store; E-mail from the retailer (thanking for the purchase and alerting to a new collection)
		Type of Touchpoint	<u>Brand-Owned; Customer-Owned</u>	<u>Brand-Owned; Customer-Owned</u>	<u>Brand-Owned</u>
		Research Shopping Driver	<p>“vi uma blusa e umas calças que tinha gostado, mas precisamente com medo, pronto, de experimentar e não podemos experimentar e tudo mais...não queria estar muito ali de volta da roupa...então vi, tirei uma fotografia à etiqueta, apontei a referência, cheguei a casa, fui ao site (...) já conheço os modelos e já tenho peças que eu sei que é o qual é o meu tamanho e não corro o risco de errar. Portanto, já sabia que o meu tamanho era aquele, foi mesmo só chegar ao site.” <u>Cross-Channel Synergy</u></p>		

Appendix VI: Showrooming categorization

Categories	Subcategories			Registration Unit	Interview
	Stage	Channel	Type of Touchpoint		
Showrooming	Pre-purchase	Online	(BO)	“Sim, fui ver na página da FNAC... (...) e noutros sites mais para ver em termos de preço.	E2
				“Pronto, foi um iPhone e eu pesquisei mesmo no site da Apple, comparar modelos.”	E2
				“(…) fui ao site (...), procurei- podia haver outras cores, outros modelos -procurei, decidi que era mesmo aqueles dois itens que tinha visto em loja...”	E7
			(PO)	-----	-----
			(CO)	“(…) então vi, tirei uma fotografia à etiqueta, aponte a referência, cheguei a casa, fui ao site (...)”,	E7
			(S/E)	“...e depois de Youtubers, artigos na internet..., mas sim...muitos vídeos no Youtube.”	E2
		“Dessa vez fui à procura de uns sapatos que eu já tinha visto mais ou menos na Internet. Às vezes aparece naquelas páginas com a história das roupas...os outfit’s formais, casuais...e já tinha visto uns sapatos do género que eu queria comprar.”		E6	
		“Instagram, no Facebook...que aparece aqueles...que é mesmo orientado para essa parte. Para a parte do estilo, das roupas e eu como ia começar a trabalhar (...) precisava de começar a comprar sapatos, fatos...coisas para trabalhar. E por acaso já ia com algumas ideias quando fui à loja física.”		E6	
		Offline	(BO)	” É a Woman Secret e tem algumas peças nas lojas e eu vi lá as calças de desporto e como tinha falta pensei...olha, tenho de vir cá daqui a algum tempo para vir buscar as calças.”	E1
				“Por exemplo, os sapatos que eu comprei foi na Zara.... tinha procurado na Foreva, tinha procurado na Aldo...acho que foram estas que eu fui.”	E6

				“...quando as coisas começaram a abrir fui à Zara, vi uma blusa e umas calças que tinha gostado, mas precisamente com medo, pronto, de experimentar e não podemos experimentar e tudo mais...não queria estar muito ali de volta da roupa.”	E7	
			(PO)	-----	-----	
			(CO)	“Para ver como é que é...porque ...” Também” ...eu via vídeos de pessoas a mexerem nele, mas é diferente ser eu própria a tirar as minhas ilações...”	E2	
			(S/E)	-----	-----	
	Purchase	Online	(BO)		“...e acabei por comprar depois online ...ahh...porque ficamos de quarentena e não podia ir á loja. E, entretanto, as calças ficaram com desconto online...que não havia na loja...”	E1
					“...estão constantemente a enviar-me newsletters com descontos houve um dia que eu fui ... que eu abri a newsletter e vi que, realmente, estas calças estavam com desconto e aproveitei...”	E1
					“Tipo aqueles cheques-prenda de Natal, que se oferece ...tipo um cartãozinho com determinado valor que depois dá para meter online e abateu esse valor.”	E2
					“No caso dos sapatos lembro-me que comprei online logo na loja, fiz logo o pagamento. Se comprar em casa também dá pois eles têm ou com cartão de crédito ou com cartão de débito. Também dá com PayPal...já fiz com Paypal. Mas dessa vez lembro-me que comprei na loja ... e online. Fiz logo o pagamento na loja.”	E6
					“...decidi que era mesmo aqueles dois itens que tinha visto em loja, depois acabei por comprar online.”	E7
			(PO)		“Eu pesquisei em todas as páginas, porque queria também ver onde é que era mais barato. Os preços eram praticamente todos iguais. Mas a Fnac tinha uma coisa muito boa que é.....eles tipo têm outros vendedores no site, não é só tipo...!????”	E2
					“...e depois fiz a compra online porque me ficava mais em conta.”	E2
					“Foi MBWay.”	E1

			(CO)	“Cartão de crédito”	E2
				“Porque pronto, neste caso eram uns sapatos e os sapatos na loja já tinham sido experimentados, já tinham algumas marcas (...) Depois acabei por comprar online porque o produto vinha selado, nunca tinha sido utilizado e então optei por essa escolha. “	E6
				“Foi em cartão multibanco. Eles têm essa hipótese. Comprando online...se comprar online na loja dá para fazer, pago logo com cartão. (...)”	E6
				“Cartão de crédito”	E7
		(S/E)	-----	-----	
		Offline	(BO)	-----	-----
			(PO)	-----	-----
			(CO)	-----	-----
	(S/E)		-----	-----	
	Post-Purchase	Online	(BO)	“Correu super bem...eles enviam um e-mail com o <i>tracking</i> da minha encomenda, eu posso ir acompanhando e depois a encomenda chega ...claro que desta vez demorou mais tempo por causa do COVID...”	E1
				“Recebemos mensagem a dizer que o produto já está enviado e recebemos mensagem a dizer que o produto já chegou.”	E6
				“...eu tenho a minha conta online, na Zara e por aí eles mandam para o e-mail e mandam-me uma mensagem. Mas há que só associe o e-mail, há que associe as duas coisas. Eu tenho o número associado e eles mandam-me sempre mensagem para o telemóvel.”	E6
“... penso que recebi um email (...) Mandaram ali um pequeno apanhado do que eu tinha comprado e também lá está...fizeram um bocado de publicidade à nova coleção.”				E7	

			(PO)	-----	-----		
			(CO)	-----	-----		
			(S/E)	-----	-----		
		Offline		(BO)		“Sendo online dá para trocar na loja...dá para fazer devolução também, porque as vezes, pronto, uma pessoa manda vir e pode não ser aquilo que se queria. “	E6
						“Fui buscar à loja. Eles têm essa hipótese de se pedir para casa...ahhh...acho que foi na altura da quarentena que por acaso isso teve grátis, mas por acaso, normalmente paga-se os portes. Na loja não. “	E6
						“Abriram, mostraram-me o produto e eu disse “Ok, está tudo bem” e levei.”	E6
						“Foi buscar em loja.”	E7
						“...caso haja algum problema não hesite. Traga o talão, a caixa e os itens e fazemos aqui a troca ou a devolução...o que for preciso.”	E7
					(PO)	“Mandei para a morada de trabalho do meu pai, porque ele estava lá sempre (...)”	E2
					(CO)	“Mandei para a morada de trabalho do meu pai, porque ele estava lá sempre e então podia receber porque eu na altura estava a estudar, não estava sempre em casa, a minha mãe também não, então não podia receber.”	E2
(S/E)	“Quando comentam comigo em comprar um telemóvel, nesse caso digo sempre “olha, vê o site da Fnac porque eles as vezes têm preços mais acessíveis por outros vendedores, exatamente o mesmo produto. Comigo correu bem, por isso vê bem, informa-te.”	E2					

Appendix VII: Webrooming categorization

Categories	Subcategories			Registration Unit	Interview
	Stage	Channel	Type of Touchpoint		
Webrooming	Pre-Purchase	Online	(BO)	“Então comecei a ver na internet, os diferentes modelos, fui a vários sites, ao site oficial (...)”	E1
				“...ia online, aos sites de...lojas de roupa ver os modelos que têm e se havia os meus tamanhos (...) De várias marcas. Na Zara, na Bershka, na Pull, na Lefties, (...) assim todas essas lojas não muito caras de roupa.	E2
				“Foi uns sapatos que eu pesquisei...e pesquisei logo na aplicação da Stradivarius, de uma loja... já tenho aplicação, fui vendo...fui vendo vários.”	E3 (1)
				“Andei na Parfois...exato...na Parfois (...) foi a H&M também (...) fui à página, fui online. Tudo online...”	E3 (1)
				“...foi com a ajuda do meu pai, que nós pesquisamos tudo online para ver o que eu pretendia, a memória...as características do computador (...) foi basicamente na Worten, porque como é a única aqui de Tavira nos queríamos comprar aqui e então baseamo-nos na Worten...”	E3 (2)
				“Comecei a ir ao site da FNAC, pesquisei no site da Worten, da Radio Popular...”	E4
				“...primeiro fui à parte online e depois fiz uma seleção de duas ou três entre as quais acho que foi duas na Radio Popular e uma na Fnac...”	E4
				“Dentro dos sites das lojas há normalmente aqueles filtros a dizer o que é que queremos e o que não queremos, de x a x polegadas, de x a x preço. “	E4
				“A minha mãe disse que tinha visto umas alpercatas na Internet que tinha gostado, queria encomendar e não havia no site. (...) Fui à Internet, ao site da marca. A Paez. Fui ao site da marca ver se havia, não havia disponível online, então decidi ir à loja física.”	E5
				“...foi na Adidas. Cheguei a ver online (...)”	E6

				“Então comecei a ver no site da Worten, da Fnac e da Radio Popular (...) E apareceram 3 ou 4 modelos que estavam em todos os sites... “	E7
				“Isto hoje em dia a gente vai ao Google e mete o que pretende e depois os sites aparecem. E depois apareceram os mais comuns, nomeadamente a Fnac, a Worten, a própria Apple...e depois ia pesquisando...”	E8
				“Eu comecei a pesquisar na Internet os computadores, depois fui à Worten...até houve um dia fui logo à Worten e à Fnac que existem as duas na Guia...depois acabei por ver...as vezes na loja eu também pesquisava online. (...) Lembro-me que também vi no El Corte Inglés, no site do Corte Inglés também tive a ver umas coisas...”	E8
			(PO)	“...vi outros sites tipo o Farfetch e outros marketplaces também.”	E1
			(CO)	“Confesso que tirei uma fotografia depois aquele...aquele cartãozinho que vem com as especificidades do aspirador para depois eventualmente procurar se não haveria mais barato noutra lado...”	E7
				Então eu às vezes mesmo na própria loja ia à Internet ver o que a Internet tinha para me vender.	E8
				“Depois voltei a ver online, voltei a pesquisar, a olhar ...”	E3 (1)
				“Tivemos a pesquisar na Internet durante 2 meses mais ou menos, porque não havia na Internet nem na loja. Ficamos a pesquisar e ia muitas vezes à loja para ver se havia, ia muitas vezes ao site...”	E5
			(S/E)	-----	-----
		Offline	(BO)	“(...) e depois sei que ainda fomos à loja, o empregado ajudou-nos porque esclareceu-nos algumas dúvidas que tínhamos, não compramos logo no momento, depois ainda falamos entre mim e o meu pai porque o meu pai percebe mais da parte informática e ele...pronto, não sei quê...depois voltamos à loja e foi aí que compramos. (...) Ainda me lembro que no início tínhamos visto uns quantos, chegamos à loja o empregado disse-me “Este e este para o que ela precisa se calhar é o melhor”	E3 (2)
				“Primeiro fui à Fnac ver aquela que ficou naquela conversa do “pronto, olha se as outras não forem grande coisa voltamos a esta”, mas depois acabei por ir à Radio Popular e realmente compensava muito mais.”	E4

			<p>“Mesmo sem nos comprometermos a comprar aquela, eles estavam dispostos a tirar a televisão de dentro da caixa, ligar, testar. Por acaso nesse aspeto ...nunca tinha feito uma compra física na Radio Popular, foi a primeira vez e fiquei positivamente surpreendido .”</p>	E4
			<p>“(...) desloquei-me à loja e não havia. Fizemos este processo umas 5 vezes (...)”</p>	E5
			<p>“Aconteceu também uma senhora, por exemplo da Worten ter um dos que eu tinha visto e dar-me um input dela. (...), na Home & Cook do Outlet porque a senhora também tinha o mesmo aspirador que eu tinha visto e este ainda tinha maior autonomia que os anteriores.”</p>	E7
			<p>“(...) e a senhora disse que haveria saldos de final de mês na quinta-feira, acabamos por só comprar na quinta-feira para aproveitar os saldos (...)”</p>	E7
			<p>“Fui à Worten , fui à Fnac ali da Guia e ...a Wortens fui a 2. Fui a duas Worten´s que eu sempre que depois passava junto dessas lojas tinha interesse em ir ver os computadores.”</p>	E8
		(PO)	-----	-----
			<p>“...e como eu não tinha a certeza do meu tamanho acabei por ir à loja física para experimentar (...) curiosamente não encontrei nenhum modelo que eu tinha pensado, ou seja, dos que tinha visto no site.</p>	E1
			<p>E até às vezes na própria loja, (...) eu estar a ver esse modelo, mas existem muitos modelos do mesmo computador, ou seja, com mais capacidade...com menos capacidade, em termos de placa gráfica, essas coisas todas...”</p>	E8
		(CO)	<p>“Já sabia mais ou menos o que é que queria, depois na loja também dei uma voltinha só para ver se havia alguma coisa que não havia no site.”</p>	E2
			<p>“(...) fui à loja, antes ainda vi umas roupas, depois fui à secção dos sapatos, que era o que me interessava...tinha visto aqueles sapatos que ainda estava a pensar nos outros, e peguei nos outros e vi...pensei... o que é que me ia dar mais jeito nesta altura porque o que também me fez decidir foi a altura do ano agora. Vamos entrar no Outono, então fui vendo pelos tons dos sapatos, que uns era demasiado Primavera/Verão, então fui às cores mais de Outono...então foi assim que decidi ...por acaso foi muito rápido.”</p>	E3 (1)
			<p>“Ficamos a pesquisar e ia muitas vezes à loja para ver se havia...”</p>	E5

				“...depois o que aconteceu foi é que tive a oportunidade de ir á loja fisicamente ...ah...vi os sapatos..., mas não comprei logo porque ainda estava indecisa.”	E3 (1)	
				“Acabei depois por ver mais, porque lá está, não ia diretamente aquela cegamente sem olhar para mais nada. Acabei por dar uma voltinha.”	E4	
				“(...) vê-los em loja, tentar pegar neles para ter uma noção depois do esforço que teria que fazer.”	E7	
				“(...) e, entretanto, depois comecei a ir à loja também para ver as dimensões, o peso ...ou seja...para ver como era mesmo o computador. Só que o valor mantinha-se alto.”	E8	
			(S/E)	“Perguntei, pedi opiniões. Tenho uma amiga que há pouco tempo tinha comprado um vertical e perguntei a opinião dela em relação ao aspirador que ela tinha comprado. Tanto que também procurei esse para mim.”	E7	
	Purchase	Online	(BO)	-----	-----	
			(PO)	-----	-----	
			(CO)	-----	-----	
			(S/E)	-----	-----	
		Offline	(BO)		“Tive a senhora que trabalhava na loja que eu comecei por pedir os tamanhos 36 e 37 dos modelos que queria e ela trouxe.”	E1
					“Simplesmente perguntei se os modelos que estavam expostos eram os modelos todos que tinham na loja. Ela disse-me que sim e ai eu percebi...ok...o modelo que eu inicialmente queria não existe aqui. Neste caso acabou por ser uma vantagem porque eu tive acesso a um produto que já não está no online porque é antigo.”	E1
					“Foi no momento porque eles tinham em <i>stock</i> . Porque alguns eles não tinham também...pronto...esse foi também um fator que pronto...porque eu queria logo. Não queria esperar e então (...) Não tive que esperar. Porque havia alguns que, pronto...não era muito tempo, mas eu não queria. Queria o computador no momento.”	E3 (2)

			<p>“Eles ofereceram o sistema de seguro. Hoje me dia há muito o sistema de seguro para tudo e mais alguma coisa, mas também me disseram ...lá está.... Foi aqui que eu percebi que havia também uma opinião pessoal em jogo, que é ...profissionalmente eles ofereceram...” olhe, está aqui este seguro.”</p>	E4
			<p>“Foi aí que eu percebi que se calhar estava uma opinião pessoal à mistura. E muitas vezes isso não há online, não há aquela...olha... eu não faria...eu faria.... Eu também gosto muito da opinião da pessoa que está atrás do balcão (...)”</p>	E4
			<p>“(...) dissemos que era aquela que queríamos, foram buscar a caixa, nós fizemos a inscrição no sistema deles, pronto...lá a...todo o processo logístico e tudo mais. Antes de fazer o pagamento foi testada a televisão à nossa frente, tiraram da caixa, ligaram-na, foram às definições, foram fazer aquele processo de teste e tudo mais, meteram na caixa e só depois de haver uma confirmação escrita e que foi discriminada, escrita na fatura que tinha sido testada e tudo mais é que se procedeu ao pagamento.”</p>	E4
			<p>“(...) ia muitas vezes ao site e depois, entretanto, fiz a encomenda e fui buscar à loja (...) Fiz a encomenda diretamente com o vendedor e pedi para reservarem quando chegasse que eu depois iria levantar.”</p>	E5
			<p>“Por acaso comprei logo. Comprei logo porque era ali no...foi num loja que é Outlet, Mar Shopping, e eles estavam com desconto a partir de 70 EUR. Então acabei por comprar logo. (...) A partir de 70 EUR eles davam 20% adicional. Portanto os ténis custavam...já não me lembro...110 acho eu...levei mais qualquer coisa...a conta ficou em 80 e tal euros. Isto foi na altura em que abriram as lojas a seguir à quarentena e além disso eles estavam com uma promoção de 10% em compras, por exemplo, nos primeiros 20 minutos que entravas na loja. Era para apressar a malta a sair da loja. E então tive os 20 % mais os 10 %..., portanto 30% no total da compra.”</p>	E6
			<p>“(...) optei por comprar numa quarta loja, na Home & Cook do Outlet porque a senhora também tinha o mesmo aspirador que eu tinha visto e este ainda tinha maior autonomia que os anteriores.”</p>	E7
			<p>“(...) como fiz uma compra acima de x valor, que agora não me recordo ao certo, até me deram um cartão assim de fidelização que a partir de cada 25 euros em compras dão-me um carimbo, e ao fim de 6 compras, salvo erro, tenho um desconto ainda maior por cima do preço já de outlet.”</p>	E7
			<p>“(...) ainda fiz algumas perguntas ao funcionário da loja para me responder aquilo que eu já sabia. O rapaz percebia muito daquilo, eu sabia o que é que estava a perguntar, como também sabia as respostas. Mas para uma pessoa não chegar ali e largar o dinheiro e não haver ali uma conversa...eu queria também ouvir um bocadinho a</p>	E8

			opinião do senhor que acaba por saber mais do que eu ...e então foi assim. Depois fiz algumas perguntas mais técnicas, respondeu, veio ao encontro daquilo que eu já sabia e depois acabei por adquirir.”	
			“Worten, que é não precisas de guardar o talão. Ou seja, sendo depois tipo...tendo o cartão da Worten o teu talão fica guardado na base de dados deles. Ou seja, para alguma eventualidade, se houver algum problema que os talões hoje em dia, as garantias e isso tudo acabam por desaparecer em termos de tinta. E depois estava eu preocupado com isso, que eu tiro quase sempre fotografias aos talões, e o senhor disse através de como você é cliente fica aqui guardado.”	E8
		(PO)	-----	-----
		(CO)	“Paguei em dinheiro.”	E1
			“(...) fiz sozinha porque já sabia para o que é que ia. Depois se precisasse de ajuda com um tamanho pedia... por acaso houve e não houve problemas. Não precisei de ajuda para nada...foi super simples.”	E2
			Com cartão (...) Paguei e fui-me embora...”	E2
			“Como já ia também com a ideia outra vez tinha que decidir (...) e depois pronto.... Procedi à caixa...aguardei e paguei. (...) Foi com cartão multibanco.”	E3 (1)
			“Foi cartão Universo...aquele que é às prestações.”	E3 (2)
			“Foi feito em cartão. No terminal multibanco.”	E4
			“Foi em cartão. Normalmente é em cartão. Raras as vezes que eu pago as coisas em dinheiro.”	E5
			“Paguei em multibanco.”	E6
			“Paguei em cartão.”	E7
		“Em multibanco.”	E8	
		(S/E)	-----	-----

	Post-Purchase	Online	(BO)	“Não só pelo processo de compra em si, como os preços e ainda o eventual <i>follow up</i> que eles também mandam um pequeno email. (...) Era mesmo só a dizer que “esperamos que esteja satisfeita com a sua compra” ...pronto...depois fazem um bocado ali as promoções da semana...”	E7
			(PO)	-----	-----
			(CO)	-----	-----
			(S/E)	“Enviei só uma fotografia para um amigo.”	E1
		“(...) mandei uma foto. Enviei uma foto a dizer: “olha lá que giro...não sei quê...gosto mesmo!” Mandei foto ao namorado.”		E3 (1)	
		Offline	(BO)	“Até mesmo quando o produto chegou a reserva dura 24 horas e como eu já tinha ido muitas vezes à loja eles guardaram durante mais algum tempo. Por isso em termos de pós-venda/encomenda foi espetacular.”	E5
			(PO)	-----	-----
			(CO)	“(...) Depois do pagamento nós levamos para casa...a televisão também não é assim tão pesada e relativamente pequena...acabei por levar eu para casa. Mas também tinha a possibilidade de entrega em casa, pagava-se uma cota...por acaso não tenho ideia. Lá está...também não perguntei..., mas tinha a possibilidade de entrega em casa.”	E4
			(S/E)	“Sim, depois ...pronto...quando estive com elas também lhes mostrei...fui à aplicação porque...ahhh...não lhes mostrei a foto, fui mesmo à aplicação mostrar ...” olha...foi estes que eu comprei. O que acham?”	E3 (1)
				“Acabei por comentar com os amigos com que já tínhamos falado antes...antes mesmo de fazer a compra, acabei por comentar...” olha compramos, não sei quê...por acaso não é mau de todo. Por 150 EUR até trabalha bem. “	E4
“Mas comentei com vários amigos meus que o aspirador era bom, que era leve, tinha boa autonomia, que aspirava muito bem, não tinha problemas nenhuns ...sem problemas.”	E7				

