



Does social exclusion influence multiple channel use? The interconnections with community, happiness, and well-being



Charles Dennis^{a,*}, Eleftherios Alamanos^b, Savvas Papagiannidis^{b,1}, Michael Bourlakis^{c,2}

^a Middlesex University, UK

^b Newcastle University, UK

^c Cranfield School of Management, UK

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 1 June 2014

Received in revised form 1 February 2015

Accepted 1 August 2015

Available online 8 September 2015

Keywords:

Multi-channel shopping

Cell phone shopping

Social exclusion

Mobility

Financial stress

Happiness and wellbeing

ABSTRACT

This paper examines how social exclusion affects consumer use of multiple shopping channels (traditional stores, online by computer and mobile retailing by cell phone) and how these choices affect consumers' happiness and wellbeing. The findings from an online survey ($n = 1368$) in the United States indicate that socially-excluded people spend more time shopping by all three channels, with the most significant being the cell phone. The latter channel is also more significant for younger respondents and for those who report a mobility/disability issue. Time spent on traditional store shopping and shopping by cell phone both have significant positive effects on happiness and wellbeing. Shopping by cell phone significantly ameliorates the negative effects of social exclusion on happiness and wellbeing for consumers with mobility/disability issues. The paper also includes practical implications for retail marketing managers' and policy makers' communication strategies.

© 2015 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Inc. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

For decades, retailers and researchers have been aware that shopping is not just about obtaining tangible products but also enjoyment and socializing (Tauber, 1972), which can positively contribute to customers' well-being. Within the context of the network economy in which technological advances have made shopping via a number of different online channels possible, societal challenges may impact customers' access to retail channels, which in turn can facilitate or inhibit the benefits customers receive. The objective of this paper is to study how social exclusion affects the use of multiple shopping channels (traditional store, web-based via the user's computer and mobile/cellphone) and how shopping behavior affects consumer happiness and well-being, elaborating on the premise that people who are socially excluded may have lower happiness and well-being. Therefore, the three shopping channels can cater to shoppers with different needs (e.g., socially excluded), and a comparison of these three channels reveals differences between various

consumer groupings. The current article follows Rutledge, Skandalia, Dayan, and Dolan (2014) in considering happiness and well-being to be a single, conceptually one-dimensional construct, as perceived well-being strongly relates to an individual's level of happiness. Technology and electronic retailing may offer alternative means for alleviating underlying obstacles, partly offsetting the negative impact of social exclusion. For example, using a computer or cellphone could make shopping easier for those with mobility/disability issues (referred to as disability hereafter for conciseness), yet may also have the opposite effect of isolating individuals. Those in financial distress may prefer a cheaper channel. This work explores these conflicting ideas, examining the relative importance of the three channels and offering insights for academics and practitioners. Hence, this study elicits the distinctive role of the separate channels. Findings could be of interest considering the emergence of omnichannel retailing, where consumers switch from one channel to another when buying products and engage in related activities (e.g., placing orders, product deliveries) using fully integrated, cross-channel systems (Cunnane, 2012).

2. Theoretical foundations and hypotheses development

2.1. Social exclusion

Researchers report social exclusion in terms of widely different dimensions. Atkinson (1998) notes four elements: (1) multiple

* Correspondence to: C. Dennis, Department of Marketing and Tourism, The Business School, Middlesex University, London NW4 4BT, UK. Tel.: +44 208 411 4463.

E-mail addresses: c.dennis@mdx.ac.uk (C. Dennis),

Eleftherios.Alamanos@newcastle.ac.uk (E. Alamanos), savvas.papagiannidis@ncl.ac.uk (S. Papagiannidis), m.bourlakis@cranfield.ac.uk (M. Bourlakis).

¹ David Goldman Professor of Innovation and Enterprise, Newcastle University Business School, 5 Barrack Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4SE, UK. Tel.: +44 191 208 1598.

² Tel.: +44 123 475 1122.

deprivation: more than being financially poor or unemployed, this element includes not having a community or the ability to interact socially; (2) relativity: measured for people excluded from society at a specific place and time; (3) agency: where people or agents experience either voluntary or involuntary exclusion; and (4) dynamics: where people could become unemployed, experience financial pressure, or have fewer opportunities to prosper in the future. Burchardt, Le Grand, and Piachaud (1999), p. 229 incorporate the first three elements in their definition of social exclusion: “an individual is socially-excluded if (a) he or she is geographically resident in a society, (b) he or she cannot participate in the normal activities of citizens in that society, and (c) he or she would like to participate but is prevented from doing so by factors beyond his or her control.”

In the preceding definition, “geographically resident” suggests “how the physical distancing of certain individuals, groups and communities from social and cultural facilities compounds their isolation and exclusion” (Williams & Hubbard, 2001, p. 268). Similarly, “normal” activities represent areas where people can involve themselves, such as consumption, production, political engagement, and social interaction (Burchardt et al., 1999). The present study adopts Burchardt et al.'s (1999) definition of social exclusion with respect to a lack of participation in social support, companionship, and access to goods and services (but not political exclusion, which is beyond the scope of the study). In essence, this work concerns exclusion from socially valued activities (Huxley et al., 2012). This focus highlights conceptual boundaries and necessarily eschews other understandings of social exclusion, such as person-to-person lack of inclusion, by being ignored, rejected, not wanted, or liked (Lee & Shrum, 2012).

2.2. Causes of social exclusion and their effects on shopping and well-being

Causes of social exclusion that affect social support, companionship, and access to goods and services include disability (Stanley, Hensher, Stanley, & Vella-Brodrick, 2011); financial distress (Prawitz et al., 2006); age (Teller, Gittenberger, & Schnedlitz, 2013); and area of residence (Wrigley, Guy, & Lowe, 2002). These issues have a range of negative effects on happiness and well-being (Prawitz et al., 2006), constituting the basis of this study.

Disability often excludes people from the benefits of shopping and socializing (Jones, Rovner, Crews, & Danielson, 2009), leading to lower happiness and well-being (Diener, Lucas, & Scollon, 2006). Lower well-being may also be the result of not being able to maintain a key household role, such as responsibility for grocery shopping (Elms & Tinson, 2012). Online shopping may help ameliorate negative effects by offering disabled consumers a wider range of products or the opportunity to participate in different communities in order to make more informed decisions (Annett-Hitchcock & Xu, 2015). Hence, online shopping could positively contribute to happiness and well-being and provide opportunities for shoppers with disabilities (Childers & Kaufman-Scarborough, 2009). Nevertheless, these shoppers may face numerous challenges depending on their disability. For example, Schaefer (2003, p. 224) notes that “a blind person who uses screen-reader software to shop online may not be disabled until he or she encounters graphics that are not embedded with textual explanations.”

Financial distress can reduce consumers' shopping spending by restricting resources (Darko, Eggett, & Richards, 2013), contribute to social exclusion, and negatively affect well-being (Prawitz et al., 2006). Unfortunately, the digital divide and lack of Internet access may negatively affect the ability of financially distressed people to take advantage of online channels (Cresci, Yarandi, & Morrell, 2010).

Age and mobility issues often exclude older people from the benefits of shopping and socializing (Jones et al., 2009). However, online shopping may be less useful, because old age can deter acceptance of technology (Dabholkar & Bagozzi, 2002) and older people are less likely to use a cellphone to get online (Duggan & Smith, 2013). In comparison,

young adults regard the social and fun aspects of shopping as important (Lueg, Ponder, Beatty, & Capella, 2006).

Area of residence might restrict shoppers' access to stores, such that they tend to suffer from reduced well-being (Larson, Story, & Nelson, 2009). Rural residents tend to have limited choices of retail outlets (Schuetz, Kolko, & Meltzer, 2012) and suffer from poorer well-being (Eberhardt & Pamuk, 2004). Rural residents travel farther to reach stores and may improve their access to goods and services by shopping online by computer and cellphone, alleviating social exclusion more for rural residents than for urban ones, assuming that reliable coverage exists.

Prior studies address the negative relationships between access to transport and traditional retail stores (Wrigley et al., 2002) and well-being (Larson et al., 2009). However, urban residents may face similar difficulties (Pucher & Renne, 2005). Given that social exclusion may influence many factors related to retailing, the nature of the exclusion may affect the adoption and use of a channel. For instance, mobility issues may exclude disabled people from the benefits of traditional shopping and socializing (Jones et al., 2009). Specifically, a store's lack of facilities for disabled shoppers could inhibit motivations to visit the store (Baker, Gentry, & Rittenburg, 2005). Consumers with physical disabilities may have to employ specific strategies to shop in-store (Elms & Tinson, 2012). Various countries have introduced legislation to address these issues (e.g. United States, see Baker & Kaufman-Scarborough, 2001; Kaufman-Scarborough, 1999; United Kingdom, see Baker, Holland, & Kaufman-Scarborough, 2007). However, further initiatives may be necessary to accommodate various disabilities (see Baker & Kaufman-Scarborough, 2001; Schaefer, 2003). Companies, policy makers, and various stakeholders tend to follow a one-size-fits-all approach (Baker, Stephens, & Hill, 2001), yet all people with disabilities are not the same (e.g., visual impairment, see Baker, 2006; Childers & Kaufman-Scarborough, 2009; Kaufman-Scarborough & Childers, 2009). Financial distress (Taylor, Jenkins, & Sacker, 2011), age (Jones et al., 2009), and rural residence (Larson et al., 2009) may also prevent consumers from participating and can have negative effects on happiness and well-being. Therefore, if customers face access or mobility challenges, they may turn to online channels to counteract them (MacInnis & Price, 1987).

The use of cellphones to access the Internet is growing rapidly; some 57% of U.S. adults use this device (the main route online for 33% of them) (Duggan & Smith, 2013). Cellphone shopping is now a distinct online channel, offering features such as mobility, reachability (Wei, Marthandan, Chong, Ooi, & Arumugam, 2009), and shopping value through the touchscreen interface (Basel & Gips, 2014). Cellphone shopping may now join computer online shopping as a route for alleviating underlying obstacles of social exclusion, especially for consumers with accessibility issues. Individuals can shop via their cellphone using Internet-connected devices with built-in browsers or by using smartphones that may support the bespoke retail apps.

These arguments suggest that the more socially excluded consumers are, the more time (and probably money) they spend on shopping by each of the three channels. In contrast, some conditions may moderate or reverse this relationship (e.g., financially distressed consumers have less money to spend; older shoppers may shop less online; old, disabled, and rural shoppers may be less likely to go out to traditional stores).

Despite studies analyzing various facets of multichannel shopping behavior, including consumer drivers of channel choice (Schoenbachler & Gordon, 2002), multichannel shopper segments (Konus, Verhoef, & Neslin, 2008), the role of specific channels, and their interrelationships with consumer choice (Frag, Schwanen, Dijst, & Faber, 2007), to the authors' knowledge, the role of social exclusion in multichannel consumer behavior has yet to be examined.

Controlling for confounding factors such as income, this study operationalized spending as the proportion of total shopping spending on each of the three channels, so the sum of the proportions cannot be greater than 100% for all three channels. Bearing in mind the mobility, reachability, and shopping value of the touchscreen interface, cellphone

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/10492711>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/10492711>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)