Showrooming phenomenon

A grounded theory investigation of the showrooming phenomenon via a customer’s lens

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AUTHOR: Boyang Shi & Jinwan Liu
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Problem: Showrooming phenomenon refers to the customer behavior of physically experiencing the product in a physical store before purchasing it from online stores. It is becoming increasingly prevalent today and has attracted the interest of academia. However, the majority of the existing studies explored this phenomenon from the perspective of retailers. The concern for different retailers’ gain and loss in showrooming process caused debate on how to define and interpret this phenomenon. Moreover, there are few existing studies that investigating this behavior from the consumers’ lens. There seems to be a need for research focused on the customers’ showrooming experience and understand this phenomenon from their lens.

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to explore what is showrooming phenomenon from customer’s perspective through investigating customers' personal showrooming experience in order to shed more light on the positive side of showrooming.

Method: Based on a social constructionism philosophy, this qualitative study utilizes a grounded theory strategy. In order to gather data through grounded theory method, in-depth interviews and a grounded analysis have been conducted. The analysis is conducted in three steps. First, in initial coding, codes and concepts are identified. Second, in axial coding, concepts are grouped into categories. Finally, in selective coding, categories are connected and grouped based on the intrinsic relationship between different categories. Also, the paradigm is built in these final step.

Conclusions: This study builds the paradigm model of showrooming phenomenon through exploring the experiences of showrooms. In the paradigm, the different conditions in the process are identified, including the core phenomenon, causal condition, contextual condition, intervening condition, action, consequences. Through building the model, this study explores the incentives and consequences of showrooms, the different influential factors during showrooming process, and the interpretations and perceptions from customer’s perspective.
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1. Introduction

This thesis explores the showrooming phenomenon from the perspective of customer behavior. To do so this chapter discusses the background of digitalization trend, briefly introduces the main topic by familiarizing the reader with the current studies about showrooming phenomenon. Further, this chapter states the problem and primary debate in the research field and finally proposes our research purpose.

1.1. Background

1.1.1. Multichannel retailing environment

The digital landscape presents a continuous trend toward expansion in the last few years in the whole world. In Europe, according to European E-commerce Report 2017, the internet penetration in Europe has continuously increased from 68% in 2011 to 81% in 2016. There is the same trend in China, according to the 40th China Statistical Report on Internet Development, the internet penetration in China has continuously increased from 39.9% in 2011 to 54.3% in 2017. Under the background of high-degree digitization, online retailing develops rapidly. The deal volume of online retailing of China has increased 39.1% from 2015 to 2016. There are 68.5% internet users in China choose online shopping to be one consumption pattern in their daily life.

Although online retailing is being in an exuberant development, physical retailing stores still hold dominant status. According to eMarketer (2017), retailing sales in physical stores still possess 90% in worldwide. Besides online and offline retailing, mobile retailing is also growing rapidly because of the smartphone penetration. Different retailing modes exist in the retail industry. However, they are usually used by consumers in a combining form instead of mutually independent. The consumers who shop with different methods and channels (i.e. online, mobile and physical store) spend more than twice those who only make purchases in traditional offline stores (Deloitte, 2014). Nowadays, shopping is not only about online versus offline or one channel versus another. According to Deloitte report, consumers are “channel agnostic”, bouncing between online and offline throughout their one purchasing and pre-purchase research process. To adapt to this fact, retailers across the globe adopt the multichannel retailing strategy to satisfy growing customer demand on multi-channel combination to fulfil their specific purposes.

Multichannel retailing is a popular marketing strategy by using multiple channels to sell similar products through different platforms for increasing the number of interaction touch points between customers and sellers. The blurred bound between online and offline is in an inevitable trend, one typical operation is brick-and-click retailing mode. It is not surprising to find brick-and-mortar retailers open their shopping websites or open online stores on platforms such as Amazon or eBay. But not only that, many online retailers show a strategical move to physical stores, like Warby Parker and Bonobos. Founded in 2010,
the pitch of Warby Parker was simple: Don’t buy expensive designer eyeglasses in stores; buy cheaper ones on the internet. Bonobos was a menswear e-retailer that specializes in custom-fit pants and never intended to have brick-and-mortar stores at first. These two pure online retailers opened their physical stores in 2013 and 2014 respectively and discovered that there’s no substitute for the in-store experience. Supported by Andy Dunn, the co-founder and chief executive of Bonobos, “We said we would never be offline, and then, wait a second, we hit a big turning point. We realized offline really works (The New York Time, 2014).” Even two online retailing giants, Amazon and Alibaba, both begin to penetrate offline retailing field. Amazon acquired upscale grocery chain Whole Foods. Not only that, Amazon opened physical bookstores across the US and entered cashier-less stores industry such as Amazon Go. Jack Ma, the CEO of Alibaba, announced a retail strategy called “new retail”. It refers to combine online and offline retail business. So far, Alibaba has opened several grocery stores, named Hema Fresh Market, and partnering with pop-up stores across China.

“Brick and click” is an inevitable trend in the current retailing field and this context offers customers opportunities to be extremely demanding towards the different purchase phases. In the current market, it is easy for customers to switch channels during purchase process due to the multiplicity of channels (Van Bruggen et al., 2010). For example, in the pre-purchase phase, customers could collect as much information as possible about the products that they plan to buy through multiple channels. They gather descriptive secondary product information through online channels such as text description, images and comments from other buyers, while they gather direct primary product information through offline channels such as physical touch, personal try-on and direct feel of the retailer. Then customers mix the information collected from different channels and finally finish their purchasing.

1.1.2. Showrooming behavior

The multichannel retailing environment fostered a prevalent phenomenon today called “Showrooming”. It could be described as customers gather product information from offline stores before they do purchase online. Kalyanam and Tsay (2013) defined “showrooming” as a shopping behavior that consumers use the presentation and services provided by a brick-and-mortar store but finishing purchase through an online channel. Showrooming phenomenon is widespread and exists in many retail sectors, such as fashion, electrical goods, automobile, and home and garden (PR Newswire, 2012). Showrooming has become a popular shopping behavior globally, 68% of US Internet users indicate that they showroom at least occasionally (Statista, 2016). In one PWC report about how China retailers to deal with the blurred boundary between online and offline retailing, PWC investigate showrooming behavior and find that 86% internet users in China and 68% in the globe have showrooming behavior. The Top 3 reasons behind this phenomenon are (1) Desire of lower price (2) Desire to have product touch (3) Convenient home delivery service (see Fig. 1-1).
Showrooming phenomenon is proliferating currently, the academic research about this phenomenon has begun in recent years. Nonetheless, there are several insights related to showrooming could be sketched out in three clusters from previous studies. The first cluster, majority research focuses on the nature of showrooming through empirical or conceptual studies which mainly involves free riding behavior, research shopping and cross-channel shopping. One common belief among researchers about showrooming is there are two phases, offline experience and online transaction (van Baal & Dach, 2005; Sourabh & Kunal, 2017) (see Fig. 1-2). Majority of current studies about showrooming belongs to this cluster or guided by it. The second cluster, some researchers concern about how to strategize and fight back the threat of showrooming, especially from the perspective of brick-and-mortar retailers. Because of the nature of showrooming from the first cluster, various researchers express their concern about the prevalence of showrooming. They label it as a “growing” problem for brick-and-mortar stores (Bhattacharjya et al., 2016, p. 660), since they believe showrooming snatched the sales from traditional retailers to online retailers (A. Zimmerman, 2012). The role of online retailer in the context of showrooming turns into a “free rider” who gains the profit from the sales effort of traditional retailer (Shounak Basak et al., 2017). To cope with this threat, strategies are proposed such as price matching guarantee, charging showrooming behavior, and cross-channel selling for diminishing the price comparison (Rapp et al., 2015). These strategies are on the basis of a common belief that the trigger behind showrooming is the price. The third cluster, some studies focus on the key drivers of showrooming from consumers’ lens, which generally center on the need of direct experience with the product, gain more information or interaction with the salesperson. The third cluster represents a remarkable changing in the showrooming research area since it is an innovative angle that focus on the customer experience-oriented trigger rather than price. The purposes of these studies are still to propose strategies to prevent showrooming for brick-and-mortar retailers. For example, Sourabh and Kunal (2017, p. 414) indicate that “helpfulness of the sales staff” drives customers to physical stores. Thus it becomes advantageous for the brick-and-mortar stores as compared to online counterparts.
1.2. Problem Statement

Current studies about showrooming phenomenon widely conceive it as behavior from the retailer's perspective, especially revolve around gain and loss. Thus, showrooming is widely believed as a threat and a shockwave to brick-and-mortar retailers. As one of the main stakeholders of showrooming, brick-and-mortar retailers are usually seen as "sufferer". While online retailers, the other stakeholder, are usually be regarded as "free-rider" and "benefited party". Guided by this common view, some current studies focus on how to strategize and rescue brick-and-mortar retailers, the sufferer, from the prevalence of showrooming phenomenon, and then try to avoid and reject it. However, the academic attention in showrooming is not comprehensive (Kate & Lloyd, 2017). Considering the gain and loss of retailers, researchers define showrooming base on whether showroomers change retailer while switching channels. Some researchers think if a customer experience the product in a physical store then purchase it from the online store of the same retailer, there is no showrooming behavior. Some others arguably clarify that there are two situations in showrooming. One is “competitive showrooming”, which is defined as customer search for products offline in retailer A but finishing purchase online from retailer B. The other situation is “retentive showrooming”, which refers to check the product in retailer A's physical store and buy it from retailer A’s web-store (see Fig. 1-3). This over-segmentation of consequences of showrooming has led to the absence of unified and specific formula to define what showrooming is and what is not. However, from customer perspective, the consequence of showrooming is the value they gain from the purchase instead of where they purchase. In addition, consumers could not be objectively separated from the investigation as they were intricately linked to the showrooming experience (Sit et al., 2018, P164).
Moreover, regarding the multichannel and omnichannel retailing prevalence, the barrier between online and offline will be more blurred, and the mutual penetration between two channels will be more extensive. Specifically, brick-and-click is the trend by reason that the benefit of complementary strengths of the offline and online channels is prominent. Supported by a Citi Research analysts, “Five years from now, we won’t be debating whether ‘e-retailers’ are taking share from ‘brick & mortar retailers’, because they are all the same (The Atlantic News, 2016).” Given this reality, the competition between a single offline retailer and a pure online retailer — which is the focus issue of some current studies about showrooming — will gradually fade away because of the multichannel and omnichannel retailing strategy prevalence in the future. Moreover, from a long-term vision, understanding showrooming phenomenon from the lens of customer, exploring the driver of consumers to showroom during shopping, the consequences of this behavior for consumers, and the factors during showrooming process that cause effects on consumers' decision are vital both in theoretical contribution and draw implications for retailers.

In general, the existing studies of showrooming have typically investigated it from a negative perspective. Most of the existing studies conceived it as a threat to retailers. This negative focus on showrooming dominated the current research since they were through the lens of retailers, which emphasize on gain and loss of retailers during showroomers' cross-channels browsing and switching. There is a lack of consideration of showrooming via other perspectives, such as customer perspective, and hence caused the limited investigation into this consumption behavior from a positive point of view.

1.3. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to explore what is showrooming phenomenon from customer’s perspective through investigating customers' personal showrooming experience in order to shed more light on the positive side of showrooming.
2. Theoretical Frame of Reference

This chapter outlines the existing the relevant studies of our topic. First, it will elaborate the concept of multichannel retailing which is the incubation environment of showrooming phenomenon. Then it will introduce the notion of showrooming, familiarize readers with enumerating concepts proposed by different researchers and finally, point out the direction of this thesis.

2.1. Multichannel Retailing Penetration

“It is a transformative time in retail”, Deloitte wrote in its Global Powers of Retailing 2018 Report. Customers’ behavior is rapidly changing with the development of technology and large internet penetration, and there is no doubt the consumer is clearly in the driver’s seat of this retailing transformation.

The Multichannel retailing strategy is broadly used by retailers in recent years. Offline retailer Wal-Mart opened their online websites to supplement their brick-and-mortar stores and vice versa the online retailing giant such as Amazon opened their physical bookstore and acquired Whole Foods as part of its attack on the offline supermarket industry. Multichannel retailing is defined as a distribution strategy to fulfil customers’ demand of using more than one selling channel or medium during their shopping process, such as online store, television and physical store (Stone et al., 2002). Levy and Weitz (2009) define multichannel retailing as the series of activities concerned selling products or providing services to consumers through more than one channel. Their definition interprets multichannel retailing from strategical sales distribution multiplicity perspective. Many researchers believe a hybrid combination of an offline channel and an online channel, especially the brick-and-click mode, serves customer demands more effectively than using a single channel (Herhausen et al., 2015; Chopra, 2016) and Darrell K. Rigby (2011) predicts the form of multichannel complementation will be the future trend of retailing.

However, in subsequent studies, the multichannel retailing discussion has broadened to encompass not only the multiplicity of product distribution channel but also the channels that consumers use to experience the product and collect product information. One supporting theory suggests that, “channel multiplicity” involves consumers’ access to – and use of – multiple sources of experience and information, mainly driven by customers’ increasing demands and expectations of seamless transitions from experience and information provision to transaction fulfillment to post-purchase service provision, across these multiple channel providers (Van Bruggen et al., 2010, p. 331). This is initiative multiple channel behavior of cutomers. Many multichannel retailing studies have also confirmed on consumers using different channels at different stages of the buying process (Schröder and Zaharia, 2008). The multiplicity of channels has made it easy for consumers to switch channels in the single purchase process (Van Bruggen et al., 2010). One critical phenomenon of this upsurge of multichannel retailing is showrooming (Zhang et al., 2010, p. 410). This phenomenon is prevalent in today’s retail landscape (Jason K. Sit et al., 2018),
as Accenture Seamless Retail Study finds that 73% of shoppers have showroomed in the past six months (Prasad, 2016).

2.2. What is Showrooming?

2.2.1. Definition of Showrooming

Under the background of multichannel retailing upsurge, the blurred bound between online and offline stimulates the showrooming phenomenon. Sevitt and Samuel (2013, p. 26) define showrooming as a form of consumer multi-channel shopping behavior and is a phenomenon whereby shoppers intentionally visit one channel to examine and research merchandise before purchasing it from a different channel (Daunt & Harris, 2017, p. 167). More specifically, showrooming phenomenon is defined as consumers gathering information about a product from the offline retailer and then purchasing the product online (Bell et al., 2014). According to Richter (2014), showrooming refers to the practice of experiencing products in traditional retail stores or any other offline expositions and later purchasing the products online. Verhoef et al. (2015) have defined showrooming as “a particular form of shopping in which a shopper first experiences the product offline and subsequently purchases online” (Arora et al., 2017, p. 411). And Shounak Basak et al. (2017, p. 34) define showrooming as consumers experience and gather information about a product from the offline retailer and then purchasing the product online.

It is worth noting that in some existing studies about showrooming, the researchers set a more detailed limitation about showrooming standing at the retailer’s standpoint. They suggest showrooming as consumers examining the desired product in the physical store of a retailer and then buying it on another retailer’s web-store, usually a competitor (Teixeira & Gupta, 2015). Considering from retailer’s gain and loss, Kate L. Daunt (2017) also defines showrooming as a shopping behavior by customers who intentionally benefit from the information and services of one retailer in one channel before subsequently purchasing from a different retailer in another channel, which ultimately lead to a value co-destruction (Daunt & Harris, 2017, p. 166-167).

Some researchers proposed that showrooming behavior should contain two situations (see Fig. 1-3). One is mostly studied by current studies, which called channel competitive showrooming. Competitive showrooming, defined by Sonja et al. (2017), that is searching for products in Retailer A’s physical store but purchasing from Retailer B’s online store. Zheyn et al. (2017) also mention there is a channel-competition situation of showrooming which is inspecting a product at a seller’s physical store before buying the same product from a different seller’s online store. The other one situation is consumers search on Retailer A’s store and purchase online from Retailer A (Sonja et al., 2017, p. 42), which shows trust and loyalty towards retailer during channel changing process. This proposition is built on the cross-channel study by Van Baal and Dach (2005, p. 76-77). They suggest that the set of behavioral patterns of cross-channel shoppers allows for two possibilities: one is finalizing the purchase with the initial retailer (and thus being retained across channels), and the other one is changing retailers when switching channels (thus engaging
in cross-channel free riding). Zheyin et al. (2017, p. 584) proposed a similar term called pseudo-showrooming which they defined as the consumer behavior of inspecting a product at a seller’s physical store before buying a related but different product at the same seller’s online store. In Zheyin et al. (2017) study, they take both the retailer change and the product change during the channel change period into consideration. Because they assume that when pure-online sellers open their physical stores, they typically design the stores as showrooms, which do not carry many products that shoppers can take home but are primarily places for customers to try products and get advice.

Different interpretations of showrooming in existing studies are due to the perspective of retailers. Specifically, their focus on whether the initial retailer suffers a loss of profit lead to the current situation that there is no unified academic definition of showrooming so far.

2.2.2. Theory related to Showrooming

Although the term “showrooming” got the attention from retailing industry and scholars only recently, the related similar concepts and phenomenon has already been studied long ago. Free-riding behavior in retailing is first discussed by Telser (1960) which means that using services provided by a full-service retailer before buying from a retailer with lower price and Telser proved free-riding behavior could impact the profits of the manufacturer. Telser’s study about free-riding behavior consistsents with the attributes of channel competitive showrooming, which a consumer collects product information and experience the service provided by the salesperson in a brick-and-mortar store, then finish his transaction through another online retailer because of the lower price. Kalyanam and Tsay (2013) present “showrooming” as one of the dimensions of cross-channel free-riding behavior. Shin (2007) confirms that this behavior can benefit the free-riding online retailer rather than the retailer who provides retail services in terms of sales effort. The loss of the retailer who provides in-store service is the reason why showrooming is commonly known as a “disaster” to pure offline retailers. Moreover, the online retailer is known as the benefited party with zero cost. Wu, R. G. and Whinston (2004) also analyzed a phenomenon that consumers get information from a product provider but free-ride on it through purchasing on the seller with a lower price, aimed to prove the influence of price trigger, which is commonly considered as the main cause of competitive showrooming. In a word, showrooming is a special of free-riding on some service to satisfy their utilities leads to economic value for one of the parties but might be economically costly for some others (Kate and Lloyd, 2017; Basak et al., 2017, p. 36)

Free-riding theory is commonly used in showrooming studies. It is the fundamental that guides many subsequent studies about showrooming to start from a negative perspective at retailer’s gain and loss standpoint.
2.2.3. Research on Showrooming

The showrooming phenomenon is a consumer behavior which is prevalent in today's retailing landscape, but only a handful of studies have examined this consumer behavior critically. These studies could be sketched out into three clusters.

The first cluster, the nature of showrooming through empirical or conceptual studies which mainly involves cross-channel free-riding and research shopping. In the experimental design operated by Huang et al. (2009), they verify free-riding as an inherent attribute of showrooming and that it was more prominent for experience goods than search goods. Kucuk et al. (2010), suggest that free-riding is a key trait of showrooming driven primarily by the attributes of price and customer service. Verhoef et al. (2007) and Neslin et al. (2014) propose research shopping is a defining feature of showrooming through conceptual study and proposed three influential motives, a) attribute-based decision making, b) lack of channel lock-in and c) cross-channel synergy (Sit et al., 2018, p.164). Because of the dominant position of these cluster studies, which affirm the cross-channel free-riding attribute of showrooming, the negative reputation of showrooming is widespread. Kate and Lloyd (2017, p.167) call showrooming “a form of service abuse beyond normative shopping search behavior”. In their study, they suggest showrooming phenomenon is a value co-destruction process. Value co-destruction refers to “an interactional process between service systems that results in the decline in at least one of the service systems’ well-being (which, given the nature of a service system, can be individual or organizational well-being)” (Plé and Cáceres, 2010). Kate and Lloyd (2017, p.167) research suggests that showrooming is an example of co-destructive behavior because showrooming results in decline in the wellbeing of the organization’s from which the showoomer took value from but with whom they did not engage in a financial transaction. In such cases, the consumer gains value but the interaction between firm and consumer is not mutually beneficial. In one CBC News report (2016), they express the common worrying about the consequences of showrooming as “showrooming is cutting into brick-and-mortar retailers’ profits and could spell the end of these physical shops”.

The second cluster, comprising mainly empirical studies, devotes focus on how to strategize for brick-and-mortar retailers in order to reduce the negative impacts of showrooming and maintain and increase their profits. These strategies primarily focus on the price competition between online and offline channels. Consumers want to buy the best goods with the least amount of money, especially for the price-sensitive customers (Hamilton & Chernev 2010). Thus, the channel, which provides the lower price, is more likely to be chosen by consumers. The price difference plays an important role in multichannel retailing. Chunhua Wu et al. (2015) empirically test the effect of Best Buy’s price-matching policy on the competition between Best Buy and Amazon and found that the price changes differently among different product categories. For non-showrooming products, both Best Buy and Amazon put up the prices; for showrooming products, two retailers both lower their prices and Amazon cutting prices more aggressively. Then Chunhua Wu et al. (2015) propose a theoretical model that whether the effectiveness of price-matching policy depends on the additional value the consumer gain from physical store experiences and price-matching cannot guarantee increase the profit of brick-and-mortar retailers. Their finding is consistent with the previous study of Mehra et al. (2013),
price matching commitment does not improve brick-and-mortar retailers’ profits when consumers engage in showroaming. However, Mehra et al. (2013) also suggest that making product matching harder between the brick-and-mortar store and the online retailer and charging customers for showroaming are two more effective strategies. Besides the studies about price strategy on the basis of different product categories, Basak et al. (2017, p.43-44) determine optimal pricing strategies for the traditional and the online retailer and the sales effort expended by the traditional retailer based on the interplay of price setting power, market potential and the impact of showroaming. They suggest that the comparative price setting power can be used to counter the ill-effects of showroaming. The research from Sonja et al. (2017, p.40) presents that (1) consumer perceptions that on average, better quality and price are available online are positively related to showroaming, (2) perceptions of larger price dispersion online is positively associated with showroaming. This study confirms that online price dispersion increases showroaming potentially and accentuates the price wars currently underway among online retailers. The price competition among online retailers is intense.

The third cluster, beyond the attention on price factor, there are also some studies focusing on the impact from non-price factors on customer demand. They commonly start their research from the customer’s perspective. The non-price factors consist of “in-store face-to-face interaction” and “uncertainty caused by remote online-purchasing”. In Iyer’s (1998) study, they investigated how manufacturer and the retailers coordinately work on non-price factors, for example, the product information and service provided. Rapp et al. (2015) also suggest that the “helpfulness of the sales staff” could attract consumers to walk into brick-and-mortar stores, and this is great competitiveness for brick-and-mortar retailers to end the buying process in store. Salesperson in brick-and-mortar stores should “strategically focus on relationship building with the showroaming customers for driving them towards in-store purchases” (Arora et al., 2017, p.424). Sourabh et al. (2017) also formulate strategies for defending showroaming phenomenon. In their study, they suggest that consumers walk into a brick-and-mortar store to collect better information about the product they want to buy before online purchasing. Physical information collection and physical experience of the services from in-store salesperson stimulate their confidence and reduce their uncertainty in final online buying. The sequence order between two phases of showroaming could be used as an opportunity by brick-and-mortar stores for closing the sale of the products (Arora et al., 2017, p.424). Sonja et al. (2017) demonstrate the negative association between in-store salesperson and showroaming phenomenon frequency. They also suggest brick-and-mortar stores should ensure in-store salespersons should be available, rather than cutting the number of the salespeople to reduce the operating costs to do price competition with online retailers. Francisco et al. (2017) point that the impossibility to touch the product they want to buy personally is an essential factor for their online purchasing decision. In another word, the uncertainty from the remote product information-collecting form, such as from descriptive texts, product pictures and online comments from other buyers, lower their confidence in online buying. Thus, the authors propose that online retailers should make more efforts on creating more descriptive graphical information about their products through using videos or 3D models. Arguably, Alba et al. (1997) point that information overloading could create confusion for consumers. We could propose that too much or too little of online product information both could
increase consumers’ uncertainty, thus, for brick-and-mortar retailers, this is a great opportunity to close the buying process during consumers’ physical data-collecting process.

2.3. Summary of Existing Studies

The previous studies have already made a great contribution in existing showrooming literature by providing quantitative studies, conceptual analysis or empirical studies. These could be sketched out and clustered into three groups. First, what showrooming phenomenon is and what are the inherent features of showrooming. Because the profit loss reality of brick-and-mortar retailers caused by showrooming, early research classified showrooming phenomenon as a form of free-riding behavior. Specifically, the focus of their studies is channel competition showrooming, which is defined by Sonja et al. (2017) that is searching offline in Retailer A but purchasing online from Retailer B. This classification highlights the free-riding attribute of showrooming and guides many later studies focusing on this negative side, especially at the brick-and-mortar retailers’ standpoint. However, in the long term, the large penetration of brick-and-click retailing mode could reduce this negative effect. Second, how to strategize to fight back showrooming behavior to stop the loss of brick-and-mortar retailers. These researchers believe the desire of lower price drives consumers’ showrooming intention, especially their channel changing towards a lower-price online retailer movement. Thus, they put efforts on finding price strategy to counter online retailers, such as creating more comparative price-setting power and charging consumers’ showrooming behavior. Third, how to make non-price strategies to prevent showrooming. One typical strategy is the “helpfulness of the sales staff”, which means brick-and-mortar retailers should ensure the availability of in-store salesperson and put efforts on relationship building between consumers and salespersons.

Although the previous studies have already made many contributions to showrooming knowledge, they are not comprehensive because of the ignorance of the showrooming experience in customer perspective. The dominant negative viewpoint is commonly identified by scholars from retailer’s viewpoint, especially from the loss of brick-and-mortar stores. However, there might be more than one reality and varied consumers' interpretations of the showrooming experience (Sit et al., 2018, p.167). Thus, this study opts for exploring what is showrooming from customer’s perspective, such as their decision-making process and feelings during their own showrooming experience. When focal facets move to customer side, the research could collectively provide an understanding of the behaviors and feelings of showroomers during their shopping process. Further, in turn, it will help identify the touch points that can be penetrated and managed to benefit the retailer.
2.4. Research Questions

The current studies provided us with a general understanding of the research status in this field and helped us to put our study into context. Also, because of the disunity and the incomprehensive understanding of customer showrooming behavior, we decided to aim at conducting a deep exploring of this phenomenon from customer’s perspective, focusing on this behavior itself in order to avoid preconceptions and remain open-minded to what appears during customer showrooming experience. Therefore, we generate our three research questions:

RQ1: What decision activities do showroomers do during showrooming process?

RQ2: What factors affect consumers' behavior during showrooming process?

RQ3: What are the interpretations of showrooming phenomenon from customer's perspective based on their own experience?
3. Method

This chapter aims to discuss the study’s philosophy, introduce the research method and analysis technique chosen to fulfill our research purpose and answer our research questions. In addition, it addresses concerns regarding the trustworthiness of this thesis and the research ethics.

3.1. Research approach

Since the present research aims to explore what is showrooming phenomenon from customer’s perspective and investigate customers’ personal showrooming experience in order to shed more light on the positive side of showrooming. There might be more than one reality and varied interpretations according to consumers’ experience (Sit et al., 2018, p.167). Therefore, this thesis adopted a social constructionism research philosophy, which is especially suitable for the research situations that researchers believe according to their experiences, different individuals develop meanings subjectively which directed toward certain objects or things. In social constructionism worldview, these meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researchers to look for the complexity of views and make a comprehensive understanding of certain objects or things. In general, the goal of social constructionism research is to rely as much as possible on the participants’ views of the experience and situation being studied (Lincoln, Y. S. et al., 2011; Mertens, D., 2010; Crotty, M., 1998). Applied to this study, we chose to investigate showrooming phenomenon through a deep understanding of different interviewees’ showrooming experiences and generate theory contribution of showrooming behavior from the perspective of consumers based on their varied experience.

Specifically, a qualitative approach was taken by our study because of the explorative research purpose. Qualitative approach begins with assumptions and the primary assumption is that although the physical world exists apart from perception, reality itself is social, emerging in the language used to refer to individuals’ subjective experience in and perception of that world. Individual perception of reality is processed and partial and subjective, and research is an investigation of the process by which reality is interpreted by individuals—both by subject respondents and by researchers (William G. Feeler, 2012). To study the research problems, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes (Creswell, 2007, p.37). The data includes the language and statements of the subjects in the form of descriptions and narratives, along with researcher notes and memos about the circumstances, respondent tone of voice, and theoretical implications (William G. Feeler, 2012). Considering about our research purpose that we plan to explore people’s experience, find patterns and build theory through their description words about their own experience and what they say about their feelings and perceptions during showrooming process. We chose to use qualitative research is appropriate because of its inductive and exploratory attributes. Patton (2015) also suggest that qualitative research relates to thorough depictions of situations, detailed descriptions of people, events and interactions, observed behavior as well as people’s testimonies about their experiences, feelings, believes and
thoughts. In this paper, we focused on varied showroming experiences of different individuals and this was exactly one pivotal role in our study.

Furthermore, the qualitative approach is particularly suited for the exploration of an area of study where research is nascent or lacking or where much of the research work has been derived from concepts and theory from another area. That is, the qualitative researcher is looking for emergent knowledge rather than “tightly prefigured” ideas (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p.2). A qualitative approach could be used to develop theories when partial or inadequate theories exist for certain populations, and samples or existing theories do not adequately capture the complexity of the problem the researchers are examining (Creswell, 2007, p.40). This interpretation has an overlap with our research purpose since the antecedent studies about showroming are inadequate regarding the lack of consideration from a costumer’s lens. In the case of this research, we gathered descriptions of different showroming experiences from our participants and capture their feelings and emotions during their story-telling process, and then generate theory that contribute to the comprehensiveness of showroming knowledge. Therefore, qualitative was well suited to help us focus on gaining insights into the showroming phenomenon in customers’ eyes.

3.2. Research Method

3.2.1. Straussian grounded theory method

Grounded theory method is initially defined by Glaser and Strauss in 1967 as “the discovery of theory from data”. Further, in 1990, Strauss and Corbin purposed a more detailed definition said that grounded theory research is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. In our study, we utilized grounded theory method to guide our research because the purpose is to investigate showroming from the perspective of customers' experience. Different individuals’ experiences and views were the data that we analyzed. We explored elements that showromers feel, focus and react towards during their showroming, and generated pattern and theory according to the empirical data we collected. According to Kathy Charmaz (2014), the usage of grounded theory method could build a tight connection between researchers and their gathered data and get rid of those pre-assumptions. Moreover, Creswell (2007, p.66) also suggests some criteria to judge whether grounded theory method is best suited to the research purpose, one situation is mentioned as “theories may be present, but they are incomplete because they do not address potentially valuable variables of interest to the researcher.” Creswell’s suggestion precisely matches the current research situation of showroming behavior and our research purpose, the understanding of showroming was present but the neglected showroming interpretations from customer lens, the interest to researchers, was not been addressed.

When looking into grounded theory method, there are two types emerge, which respectively are Straussian grounded theory and Classic grounded theory. Glaser’s approach is known as classic grounded-theory research and “Straussian grounded theory” was named after Strauss. In this paper, the reason for utilizing Straussian grounded theory was that Strauss’s grounded theory approach is willing to admit the use of literature review. On the contrary, Glaser leads the classic grounded theory that is omitting literature review.
Glaser is stubborn of avoiding literary reviews because he insists that the absence of literature review could prevent the process of theory generation from the effect of preconceived ideas. Nonetheless, Strauss and Corbin (1990) acknowledged that an initial literature review may be needed and can be used without precluding the researcher’s open approach to data collection and theory generating. Supported by Bryant (2004), cautioned researchers against neglecting or forgoing a literature review, quoting Fetterman’s observation that the researcher should have “an open mind, not an empty head” (Bryant, 2017, p. 220). The approach that later came to be known as Straussian grounded-theory research (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) called for the usage of a literature review. Strauss and Corbin recommended inclusion of a literature review because it could stimulate theoretical sensitivity, raise questions and provide a guide to the theoretical sampling process. In the case of this paper, the pre-existing knowledge of showrooming helped the authors to identify the research direction and the starting point for data collection. However, the knowledge in existing studies was set aside until validated by the formulation of the emerging theory. Therefore, this paper chose to include a literature review about previous studies in order to present the current research status about showrooming phenomenon to the readers and help them to better understand the neglected showrooming interpretation from customer's perspective. Thus, The Straussian grounded-theory method was in usage in this research.

During the discussion about research method selection of this paper, one alternative of current research method was phenomenology research. This method focuses on learning about different individuals' common or shared experiences of a phenomenon, especially understanding these common experiences in order to develop a deeper understanding about the features of the phenomenon and to further develop practical guidance (Creswell, 2007). This research strategy partially accorded with our thesis, since we planned to investigate the neglected perspective of showrooming phenomenon through customers who have experienced this phenomenon and contribute to the comprehensive understanding of showrooming. However, phenomenology research method was not adequately suitable for our final purpose, which aimed at understanding showrooming and generating an abstract analytical pattern in this behavior from the lens of customers since compared to grounded theory method, the research statement of phenomenology research is more like a detailed description of what commonalities among different participants experienced. The descriptive findings of phenomenology research are most certainly valuable. However, they do not provide a conceptual abstraction, whereas grounded theory method must offer a conceptually abstract explanation for a latent pattern of behavior (an issue or concern) in the social setting under study. It must explain, not merely describe (Judith, A. H., 2011).

Therefore, the research method utilized by this paper was Straussian grounded theory method which is moving beyond the detailed description of experience for different individuals with a theory generation step, along with the use of a literature review (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). However, this method also tends to produce large amounts of data to coding and to get theory saturate, like Judith (2011, p.288) suggests “the researchers of grounded theory method must pace themselves, exercising patience and accepting nothing until this inevitable emergence has transpired through the iterative process.” It is a time-consuming task and often difficult to manage, especially the part of simultaneous data
collection and data analysis. Moreover, the researcher’s agency in data construction and interpretation are considerably obscured since the grounded theory method fails to recognize the embeddedness of the researcher in the research (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007). Supported by Judith (2011), she claims that grounded theory method is a generative and emergent, it requires the researchers to enter the research field with no preconceived problem statement, interview protocols, or extensive review of the literature. Instead, the researcher should remain open to explore a substantive area and allowing the concerns of those actively engaged therein to guide the emergence of a core issue. Thus, it is important for the authors to set aside, as much as possible, theoretical ideas or notions so that the substantive theory can emerge.

3.2.2. Selections of respondents

According to Janice (2011), the key to developing any comprehensive and dynamic theory is the use of astute and efficient methods to select respondents. Generally, in qualitative research, the researchers select participants to interview who know the information (or have had or are having the experience) in which the researchers are interested. Excellent qualitative inquiry sampling is inherently “biased” (Morse, 2011), which means seeking the best examples of whatever it is that the qualitative research is studying. Furthered by Janice (2011), as a particularly important factor, the intrinsic “bias” in qualitative research means that the use of random sample selection may impede and invalidate investigations, because they may not always be the ‘suitable cases.’ In other words, if we select random sampling initially, the factors that the authors interested in for this study would be distributed in the data and be covered up by massive irrelevant data.

Since this paper is guided by grounded theory method, whose data collection and data analysis are concurrent and cannot be separated, the excellence of obtained data is essential to the whole research. Endeavour in careful respondent selection, the selections scheme of this paper changed dynamically with the development of the research, and the selection methods are summarized as followed:

In the first stage, we utilized a pre-test step to identify the suitable cases of our research. Since the research purpose is to investigate showrooming experience from customer’s perspective, we identified the potential participants, who have had showrooming experience, through pre-test message.

Respondents were selected according to availability and whether they have gone through showrooming. We sent a pre-test message through WeChat to 350 contacts totally in both researchers’ contact list with the attention to target showroomers, the potential respondents who have the history of showrooming experience in the past three months. The potential respondents were all Chinese. This delimitation was based on the consideration of: First, the background of authors are both in Chinese, the interviewees’ experiences could be better understood based on the same cultural background. Second, the e-commerce in China is well developed. Considering the characteristic of showrooming that contains both online and offline channels, interviewees with a Chinese background might provide more appropriate data. Further, in the message we interpreted the jargon “showrooming” into
“walking into a physical store to experience the product you want to buy, then you finish your transaction online”, in ordered to guarantee every message receiver could understand what we were investigating and what topic they were going to be interviewed. The pre-test message is shown as followed:

Hi,

Here is a message from two Digital Business students of JÖNKÖPING UNIVERSITY.

In order to collect the data for our current research about showrooming behavior exploration, we need your answer to conduct our research and your answer will be a great help.

Jargon explanation: Showrooming behavior means “you walk into a physical store to experience the product that you want to buy, then you purchase it online”.

Question: Have you ever had showrooming behavior in the past three months? (If yes, please reply “Y”/if no, please reply “N”)

Thank you for your answer and your help to our research!

We need your answer!

Then we sent a following message to ask the “yes” respondents whether they wanted to participate our interview. After identified the list of the person who agree to be interviewed, we began our data collection process. The invitation message is shown below:

Hi,

First of all, thank you for your replying!

In order to have a detailed understanding of your showrooming experience, here is an invitation to invite you join our research interview. It will spend about 50~60 minutes, the place and the time of interview depend on your convenience.

In the next stage, we applied purposeful selection method. Purposeful selection method is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information rich participants related to the researched phenomenon. Applied to this thesis, we sought and targeted the participants who have gone through the showrooming phenomenon in order to identify a showrooming trajectory. Respondents who have gone through this experience are invited to be interviewed as the representation of showrooming typology about detailed questions. In this stage, we enable confirmation of the general showrooming trajectory through the rich descriptions from different individuals’ showrooming experience.
After that, we used theoretical selection to re-interview these respondents with targeted questions about their responses from previous stage. The data collected from this stage could help us to optimize and verify the concepts and sub-categories that we generated. In addition, we also asked participants’ opinion about the linkage between different sub-categories, hence, their answers provided us inspirations to create our theory paradigm.

3.2.3. Data collection: Semi-structured interview

Data collection in grounded theory is not time discrete but is woven in with data analysis until the researcher has determined a point of saturation (Egan, 2002, p.283). On the other hand, in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of what customers experience during the showrooming process, we need to investigate the experience of each showroomer, and the main and most appropriate method to achieve this is the in-depth qualitative interview (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015, p.129). Therefore, we collected data continuously along with analysis through interviews with showroomers located in the second selection phase and moreover, the interviews in the present research were designed to semi-structured.

Although both unstructured and semi-structured interviews were suitable for exploratory research from a theoretical standpoint (Creswell, 2007), we still preferred semi-structured than the unstructured interview. Based on our research purpose and research questions, the information we wanted to gain consist two parts. First, through listening to the “stories” of interviewees, we gained a comprehensive understanding from the perspective of showroomers’ experience. Second, based on our research purpose, we wanted to explore the decision activities and the factors, which had effected showrooming behavior, during their showrooming process. Thus, there are some certain directions in our interview that can be guided by semi-structured interviews guideline. For instance, our interview questions were designed into three general stages, pre-chase stage, purchase stage, and post purchase stage.

According to theory saturation principle, there were totally 10 showroomers responded to and participated in our interview. Each interview lasted between 40 and 60 minutes, covered a range of questions around interviewee’s personal showrooming experience. The priority of our interview option was face-to-face interview, since it could provide an interview environment to directly feel and observe their tone, facial expression and body language. Participants selected the place they prefer to be interviewed. In addition, besides the face-to-face interview, we also conducted remote interviewing through Skype and WeChat. However, although compared to a face-to-face interview, these mediated interviews lack the immediate contextualization, depth and non-verbal communication of a face-to-face interview (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015, p.135-136), considering the restriction of region that some interviewees could be only accessed through the internet, remote interviewing was still necessary. In ordered to cover the shortage of remote interview, we encouraged our participants to join the interview through video chat. Also, participants were encouraged to talk spontaneously, and follow-up questions were used to facilitate further discussion of prominent topics (Gardner & Abraham, 2007, p.189).
3.2.4. Data analysis: Grounded theory analysis

Since this research is guided by grounded theory method, we utilized grounded theory analysis to deal with the qualitative data collected by semi-structured interviews. According to Chamberlain (2013, p.3 of Chapter 4), grounded theory analysis involves the creation and application of conceptual codes to chunks of text that encapsulate the common themes or categories therein in a more abstract form to enable tentative analytical generalization beyond the research setting under study. Supported by Miles and Huberman (1994) and Gibbs (2007), grounded theory analysis contains the grouping of text data: words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs from a range of textual sources. These data are coded to a properly labelled conceptual bin. And the end goal of grounded theory analysis is to see how the concept bins created are thematically interrelated to one another in conceptual categories that hang together in an explanatory analytical framework which helps us to answer our research question (Chamberlain, 2013). Considering of the early stages of this research in showrooming phenomenon, especially the overlook of the perspective of customer on showrooming phenomenon, we prefer to build theory from categories that are ‘grounded’ in the data rather than imposing external structure on their data in the form of concepts or predefined ideas (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015, p.92-93). Therefore, to generate new insights, we adopted grounded theory analysis.

The fundamental of grounded theory raise the rigor of applying a strict coding approach for evaluating and diagnosing the cycle of data collection and analysis (Baskerville & Pries-Heje, 1999; Chien et al., 2018, p.228). This analysis method use the constant comparative between different collected data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Willig, 2001). Applying to this paper, we mainly followed the guidelines provided by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998), which includes a traditional three-stage coding process (initial coding & axial coding & selective coding).

**Phase I - Initial (or “open”) coding:**

This is the first step that break long and complex descriptive text into and similarly manageable conceptualized events which are classified into the same dimension and then assigning conceptual labels to topics, which are refined through repeated inspection (Gardner & Abraham, 2007, p.189). Initial coding and identifying of initial codes and concepts is analytic, and that process is supplemented by iterative comparison and contrast, which facilitates the possibility of re-grouping initial codes into more conducive concepts and, ultimately, categories (William G. Feeler, 2012). In this paper, we operated line-by-line initial coding and comparing of incidents to each other. Line-by-line coding generates codes with emergent fit to the substantive area. Therefore, it could ensure saturating categories and minimizing missing categories and guarantee the relevance. The ideal result of initial coding phase is to generate a rich, dense theory with the authors’ feeling that they did not leave out anything. (Glaser & Holton, 2004).

Initial coding entails a close examination of the data, breaking it down into parts, making comparisons, and questioning (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p.163). The indicators, then, are both identified bits of data collected and data that results from the process of breaking down the data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p.163). Based on each transcript from interviews, we began with a process of breaking down the long text, identifying and collecting initial
codes—that is, words, phrases, statements from the data, or observations. For instance, many interviewees identified the abstract concept of feeling uncertainty as an important component of showrooming experience. Most interviewees talked about size, texture in hand feel and color in naked eyes, which are important initial codes, and much more concrete than the concept of feeling uncertainty. An analysis of feeling uncertainty into parts reveals other initial codes that might result in a possibility for feeling uncertainty, such as unknown of the retailer. Thus, we asked interviewees whether they had tried to search and collect information about a retailer, whether a retailer had been available through its online official website, and whether a retailer had had physical stores to visit to increase customer familiarity.

Inspired by the structure of code list suggested by Macqueen et al. (1998) that code list should consist of six components, including the code name/label, definition, concept, inclusion criteria, exclusion criteria, and examples (DeCuir-Gunby & Marshall, 2011, p.138). In this phase, we chose to structure our initial codes list using three components: code name, concept and example. In this initial coding list, we used “-ing” terms to name codes such as checking, chasing, caring and feeling. Since these action codes showed what is happening and what people are doing. These codes moved us away from the pre-direction of our research topic, and if they address structure, they reveal how it is experienced through action. We tried to make the action in the initial codes visible by looking at the data as action. Using action codes helped us remain specific and not take theoretical leaps of fancy. In addition, action codes helped us to compare data from different people about similar processes, data from the same individuals at different times during the trajectory of their showrooming experience, new data with a provisional category, and a category with other categories (Charmaz, 2006).

Finally, after a consistence emerged between two authors’ independent codes and no new terms and incidents emerged in the following interviews, we suggested that data-collection phase could cease because of the theory saturation.

**Phase II - Axial coding:**

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), in axial coding, we put data collected in initial open coding phase together again in new ways after initial open coding to make connections between categories (Chamberlain, J. M., 2013). Creswell (2007, p.160) describes the axial coding that it emerges in which the researcher identifies one open coding category to focus on (“core” phenomenon), and then goes back to the data and create categories around this core phenomenon.

In the case of this research, in order to discover patterns among sections and dimensions and conceptualize them into categories, we conducted highly iterative focused re-coding to go back and check against the original data, screened the concepts generated from initial open coding process, compared incidents in order to identify particular properties. After the connection and relationship are recognized, we examined the relationships between conceptual labels and the categories generated from the initial coding phase and finally grouped the emerging categories into a visual model-coding paradigm.
The coding paradigm (as known as the logic diagram), in which according to Creswell (2007), the researcher identifies a central phenomenon and explore categories connected between and around the core phenomenon. They consist of causal conditions (i.e. in this research, categories of conditions that cause showrooming phenomenon), strategies (i.e. the actions or interactions of showroomers during showrooming process), contextual and intervening conditions (i.e. the narrow and broad conditions that influence showroomers), and consequences (i.e. the outcomes of the actions in showrooming process for showroomers).

**Phase III - Selective coding:**
Selective coding is the last phase of grounded theory analysis. According to Creswell (2007, p.65), in the selective coding process, the researchers generate the paradigm and develops propositions that interrelate the categories in the paradigm or assembles a story that describes the interrelationship of categories. In this phase, the inspection of the data generated an understanding of how categories are interrelated. Applied to our research, we integrated codes by identifying concepts and subcategories to explicate the showrooming experience via customer’s lens. Through examining how categories are related to showrooming phenomenon, we systematically linked the categories and formed the paradigm of showrooming behavior.

The result of this phase is to produce the conceptual density in order to lift the theory above description and enable it to be integrated into abstract conceptual theory through theoretical propositions (Glaser, 2001). In the case of this research, we suggested the theoretical completeness about showrooming phenomenon from customer’s perspective was achieved when many interrelated categories were saturated.

3.3. Memo Writing

Memo writing is a crucial step in the initial coding process. In the initial phase of analysis, memo writing stimulates initial coding process and facilitates subcategory and category generation. In addition, memo writing is likely to provide researchers an early insight into what is actually happening within the data (Charmaz, 2006). Initial memos were kept by using a journal to summaries interviews and make initial connections between units of action across cases. Memo writing is an efficient way to document the observations and flash thinking during on-site interviews. It could help to log initial thoughts for later research actions.

During our initial coding process around the concept of perceived risk, it occurred to the authors that perceived risk is a more complicated state rather than only towards product itself. And, in some cases, the author noted, interviewees gave an expression that their perceived risk existed during their whole purchasing process, from product information collection to product delivery. Several interviews spoke of perceived risk and noted that they had focus different uncertainty during different purchasing phases. Here is an example of the memo one author wrote early in the initial coding process:
Feeling uncertainty — it is generally considered as a psychologic phenomenon happened in the pre-purchase phase, such as uncertainty about product quality and retailer reliability. They sound continuously worried through their whole purchasing process. And at different purchasing phases, they have different concerns. Feeling uncertainty is complicated. Some seem put more focus on worrying about product quality, but some may prefer to worry about the retailer familiarity and reputation or the damage during the express delivery. But that goes beyond feeling uncertainty. Is there a better term to integrate worried feeling from different phases into one term? What about perceived risk? Perceived risk is mentioned by some interviewees and seems closer. Or should worried feeling from different purchasing phases divide into different terms to generate a more appropriate concept?

3.4. Validation

Generally, validation refers to check the accuracy of study findings through the usage of a certain procedure (Gibbs, 2007). In qualitative research, Creswell (2007) suggests that validation is an attempt to assess the "accuracy" of the findings, as best described by the researcher and the participants. Creswell (2007) and Angen (2000) use the term "validation” to emphasize the validating process, especially in qualitative research, instead of the “trustworthiness” and “authenticity”. More specifically, Jeasik and Allen (2006) advance two types of validation in qualitative research, one is transactional validation and the other one is transformational validation. Transactional validation is interpreted as focusing on the interactive process between the researcher, the researched and collected data that is aimed at achieving a higher level of accuracy and consensus using revisiting facts, feelings, experiences, and values collected and interpreted (J easik and Allen, 2006). And transformational validation is defined as a progressive, emancipatory process leading toward social change that is to be achieved by the research endeavor itself. The qualitative research which uses transformational validation focuses on changing the existing social condition. Since this study aims at utilizing grounded theory research strategy to explore showrooming phenomenon from the perspective of customers’ experience, we considered the transactional validation is more appropriate. In addition, the usage of transactional validation is varied based on the extent that the researchers think the research obtain a level of certainty. This interpretation is overlapping with the theory saturate rule of grounded theory research, which means researchers recur the same data collection technique until there is no more new categories appear.

Applied to this paper, member checking and prolonged engagement were utilized as two validation strategies. Lincoln and Guba (1985) consider member checking strategy is the most critical technique for establishing credibility. Jeasik and Allen (2006) suggest member checking strategy is writ large in qualitative research, especially in transactional validation. Prolonged engagement includes building trust with participants, learning the culture, and checking for misinformation that stems from distortions introduced by the researcher or informants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Cresswell, 2007, p.207). For building trust and making participants feel being respected, during data collection process, we emailed them about the interview topic and questions, and we also informed them the interview would be recorded by interviewer’s smartphone one week before the interview.
beginning in order to give them time to decide whether to join this research interview. Furthermore, the interviews’ time, place and mode (face-to-face or Skype) are chosen by interviewees in order to conduct the interviews and keep the interviewees in a good and comfortable condition. The written note of each interview was shared with the interviewee to make sure the consistency between their opinion and interviewer’s note. During data analysis process, we shared our coding scripts with participants so that they could judge the accuracy and credibility of each coding phase. Moreover, we took participants preliminary analyses consisting of description or categories. To do so could help us find out their views of these written analyses as well as what was missing.

3.5. Reliability

Generally, reliability referred to as when a researcher’s approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects (Mohajan, 2017, p.11). More specifically, reliability often refers to the stability of responses to multiple coders of data sets in qualitative research and reliability can be addressed in qualitative research in several ways (Creswell, 2007, p.209-210). Researchers can check the reliability by duplicating their research efforts under various conditions and check the similarities and differences in readings, interpretations, responses to, or uses of given data, for example, by using several researchers (Mouter & Noordegraaf, 2012, p.1). The purpose of this paper is exploring the elements that showroomers feel, focus and react towards during showrooming experience and discover pattern and theory from the empirical data. The research strategy applied is grounded theory research, the focus on reliability here will be on inter-coder agreement based on the use of multiple coders to analyze transcript data.

Because of the usage of grounded theory analysis method, once we collected the qualitative data, the open coding process started. In the open coding stage, two authors separately and independently listened to the records of interview sentence by sentence, meanwhile two researchers generated and assigned codes and concepts. After that, we developed a preliminary code book of the major codes which contained different concepts of each code, and the text segments that we assigned to each code. Inspired by Creswell (2007), we used inter-coder agreement to ensure the reliability. Specifically, we compared whether we assigned the same or similar code words to the data collected. We calculated the percentage of agreement between two researchers’ code lists. By continually revised the code list and conducted an assessment of data that we all coded again and again to determine if we used the same or different codes or the same or different concepts. Draw on the previous grounded theory analysis experience, we received 80% agreement of coding (Creswell, 2007, p.211), which means establishing 80% agreement of two coders of data sets in this study could be considered as stable.
3.6. Ethical consideration

“Regardless of the approach to qualitative inquiry, a qualitative researcher faces many ethical issues that surface during data collection in the field and analysis and dissemination of qualitative reports” (Creswell, 2007, p.141). Having the principle in mind that we should not only focus on the quality of the research we were conducting but also consider the rightness or wrongness of our actions. We need to make sure the ethical criteria in our research.

After sending out the pre-test message and locating the interview targets, to ensure the autonomy of respondents, we first contacted them and explained our goal again before asking them to participate in the interview. To ensure informed consent, we explained the research we intended to conduct and the topic we were interested in. Most of the respondents showed the interest of our topic and expressed that they were fine with the topic and willing to share their experience.

Since we were studying an individual behavior in participants’ daily life, some of our questions were more or less related to their privacy. Therefore, we sent our questions to respondents one week before the interview to let them decide what questions they were unwilling to answers, not participants expressed they were uncomfortable with a question. Also, when actually conducting interview, we did not play the role of researchers. Instead we put our position on the equal level with them and treat everyone with courtesy and friendliness. We gave the respondents the full right to choose where and when they wanted to conduct the interview (especially when the face-to-face meeting is unrealizable) to avoid interrupting their working and daily life as much as possible.

In addition, to ensure the confidentiality of respondents, we informed them and asked their permission to record the conversation before we started the interview. We promised to keep the records on our own and only use it for academic purposes. In addition, we assigned numbers to respondents instead of using their real name when collecting information. Therefore, the anonymity of the informants is protected, and the respondents can speak freely during the interview.
4. Empirical Findings

This chapter reports the empirical findings of the conversations with ten participants who have showrooming experience. Since the data collection and analysis process in grounded theory are concurrently conducted, this chapter will focus on presenting and describing each category emerged from interviews. The findings are also divided into different categories.

The research purpose of this paper is to explore showrooming phenomenon from the perspective of customers through investigating customers' personal showrooming experience. In other words, we want to explore the elements that different people feel, focus and react towards during their showrooming experience. We utilized grounded theory method to build this research. Specifically, semi-structured interview and grounded theory analysis were utilized as data collection and data analysis methods respectively. The following part of this chapter highlights the results from three coding phases (initial coding, axial coding and selective coding).

4.1. Pre-testing

After sending out totally 350 pre-test messages, we totally collected 245 replies. Among them, 153 were “yes”, and 92 were “no”. The proportions of “yes” and “no” were shown below. Although this was a qualitative research and took grounded theory method, the numerical data appeared during qualitative data collection was also valuable. The proportion of “yes” reply is 62.4%, and the proportion of “no” reply is 37.6%.

| Question: Have you ever had showrooming behavior in the past three months? |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| “Yes”                       | “No”                       |
| 62.4%                       | 37.6%                      |

*Table 4-1: The proportion of the answers to the pre-test question*

4.1.1. Interviewed participants

According to theory saturation principle, ultimately there were 10 interviews conducted through the semi-structured interview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudo name</th>
<th>Shared Showrooming experience (in past three months)</th>
<th>Category of the product purchased</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>2 times</td>
<td>Electronic appliances, Clothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3 times</td>
<td>Electronic appliances, Clothes, Fashion items</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2. Initial coding

In the first phase of grounded theory research, we generated an extensive list of initial codes through an iterative coding process and modifications based on the codes comparison between two authors. We used descriptive concepts to represent initial codes in order to further group them into sub-categories and categories. In total, 44 concepts were identified. The concept list was extracted and shown in Table 4-3 in order to reveal a smooth analysis logic with the latter two code generating phases.

Concept list
1. Participant chases lower price when making one’s own purchasing decision.
2. Participant has trouble of transporting the product by oneself, due to the product attributes.
3. The specific attribute of product (cosmetics for example) makes participant generate high demand of direct/person product try-out.
4. Participant feels uncertainty about the quality of the product when considering purchase it in other retailers’ web-store.
5. Participant wants to avoid wasting money from buying inappropriate or dissatisfied product by checking the product first.
6. Participant feels unfamiliar with the unfamiliar new online stores.
7. The product demands of participant is unique and can be fulfilled only in some specific web-stores.
8. The inventory of the product is short-handed to fulfill the demand of participant.
9. Participant feel insufficient about descriptive information on web-store during product searching process.
10. Participant is misled by the advertising pictures on web-stores.
11. The information provided by test and pictures of a product are unmatched.
12. Although online shopping becomes increasingly widespread, traditional brick-and-mortar stores still hold their place in consumers’ mind.
13. Nowadays, participant conducts online shopping frequently.
14. Participant has preference of brick-and-click retailers.
15. Participant feel reliable about a retailer because of the existence of its physical store.
16. Physical stores provide participant an impression that changing and refunding products is convenient to achieve.
17. Physical stores provide participant an impression that complaint is convenient to achieve.
18. Participant chases cost performance most when they choosing a product.
19. Participant is concerned about the changing and refunding policy when making the purchase decision.
20. Participant has the concern of how to make complaint.
21. Participant physically “meet” the products in offline stores then eventually purchase the products in online stores.
22. Participant goes to physical store and examine the product with a certain purpose.
23. Participant goes to physical store and experience the product without a certain purpose, usually for fun and passing time.
24. Participant notices the size of physical store during showroming.
25. Participant notices the layout of products in the physical store during showroming.
26. Participant notices the store environment in the physical store during showroming.
27. Participant notices the appearance and manner of salesperson in physical store during showroming.
28. Participant notices the salesperson service in the physical store during showroming.
29. Participant brows online comments on web-stores during showroming to help for choosing product.
30. Participant notices other consumers’ opinion during physical store experience during showroming.
31. Participant checks the product performance in physical store during showroming.
32. Participant looks for the missing product information by going to the physical store during showroming.
33. Participant experiences the size and texture of product in physical store during showroming.
34. Participant experiences the color of product in physical store during showroming.
35. Participant compares the payment mechanism of different web-stores during showroming.
36. Participant considers delivery service provided by the retailer when choosing where to purchase the product.
37. Participant eventually bought goods from the online stores which from the same brick-and-mortar retailer.
38. Participant recommends the retailer to friends
39. Participant repetitively buy products from the retailer.
40. Participant eventually bought goods from the online stores which from a different brick-and-mortar retailer.
41. Participant expresses positive attitude towards showroming, as a consumption pattern.
42. Participant states that showroming reduced the probability of buying wrong.
43. Participant is attracted by an e-retailers based on the trust on the e-retailer.
44. Participant is attracted by an e-retailers based on the preference or loyalty on the e-retailer.

Table 4-3: List of concepts generated from initial coding
4.3. Axial coding

In total, concepts were grouped into 22 subcategories and 10 categories (see Table 4-4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sub-category</th>
<th>Concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Personal factors</strong></td>
<td>1. Customers’ desire for lower price</td>
<td>Concept 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Customers’ demand of transportation</td>
<td>Concept 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Customers’ demand of physical experience</td>
<td>Concept 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Customers’ perceived risk</td>
<td>Concept 4, 5, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Products inventory</td>
<td>Concept 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Channel characteristics</td>
<td>Concept 9, 10, 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. External factors</strong></td>
<td>7. Consumer lifestyle</td>
<td>Concept 12, 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Consumer perception</td>
<td>Concept 14, 15, 16, 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Consumer value</td>
<td>Concept 18, 19, 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Consumption habit</strong></td>
<td>10. The general pattern of customers’ showrooming behavior</td>
<td>Concept 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. Experience with purposes</td>
<td>Concept 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. Experience without purposes</td>
<td>Concept 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13. Changing retailers while switching channels</td>
<td>Concept 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14. Switching channels without changing retailers</td>
<td>Concept 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Definition</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Intentional &amp; Unintentional showrooming</strong></td>
<td>10. The general pattern of customers’ showrooming behavior</td>
<td>Concept 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14. Switching channels without changing retailers</td>
<td>Concept 37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.1. Personal factors

Personal factors mainly included different desires of customers in their pre-purchasing phase. The first desire of showroomers was the lower price, which was easily understood as finding a less expensive product online. The response from interviewee B, interviewee D and interviewee J representatively demonstrated how consumer's perceived average gain in price positively associated with their probability to showrooming behavior. When talked about “why do you have showrooming behavior?” In other words, what were the triggers behind their showrooming behavior? Interviewee B responded that “Like the coat I bought last week, I planned to buy a coat in spring because there is always a seasonal big off in ZARA, but the sale of the coat in that ZARA store was only 10% off [A rising tone...]. So, I tried to search online, and I found the same coat is on sale, and it is 25% off. I decidedly purchase it.” After a short silence, interviewee B said, “...everybody favors lower price, it is nature.” Same as interviewee B, interviewee D’s recent showrooming experience was about purchasing a vacuum cleaner. “For my showrooming experience, the vacuum cleaner that I checked in the Electrical shop near my home is exactly what I want, the size, the color...it’s perfect. However [A increasing tone...], the price is sick! It’s so expensive that I will never buy it even though I like it.” Finally, interviewee D found the online store of that vacuum cleaner, and the price there was nearly half of the price in that physical store, and he bought it in that online store “without any hesitation”. In addition, responded from interviewee J was more direct and typical, “I usually buy some mom & baby products online, because the same products in shopping mall are really costly. [Silence...] I am not mean I have a bad financial situation, I just feel a little bit unwillingness towards the price
in the shopping mall, you know, the price makes me feel the store is robbing me [ A rising tone...]. But online stores, like Taobao and JD, they have some different sales activities at different festivals, such as Mother’s Day and International Children's Day, those are good times for me to hoard [Laughing...] milk powder, infant toys and other baby stuff.”

The second desire of showroomers was transportation. This was a very personal trigger, but some interviewees mentioned it as a reason for their showrooming behavior, and we couldn’t ignore it. The transportation desire had two situations, initiative and passive. The respond from interviewee A and interviewee B typically demonstrated how their desire for transportation affect their showrooming behavior. Interviewee B said that she was wearing high-heeled shoes, which makes her feet tired and painful, so she “does not want to carry a lot of bags.” And Interviewee B also mentioned that “I can buy it online, and the express will deliver the clothes to my door, why I carry them myself?” This was an initiative desire of transportation service. The other respond from interviewee A was an example of the passive situation. Interviewee A bought a TV from an online store. “I can’t transport a television back home by myself, even though I have a car, it is too heavy,” interviewee A said, “And the electronic appliance transportation need professional persons, they know how to move the television without any damages or scratches.”

The third desire was the physical experience. It included different aspects according to different customers. It was complicated, but the mainly aspects indicated in our interviews were: size, color and function. Interviewee A, interviewee B and interviewee E representatively demonstrated their desire for physical experience greatly affected their probability of showrooming behavior. The showrooming experience of interviewee B is purchasing a coat. She stated she tried the different color of that coat and tried the coats both in M size and L size in store, like she said “it is totally necessary to have a direct try-on when I am going to buy clothes, shoes or any other fashion items. Size is one big reason, I don’t have a model body shape, so I need to try every clothes that I want to buy. Beyond that, the texture is also important, especially if you want to buy underwear. You need to check whether it is comfortable and whether it will make your skin allergic. In a word, try-on before you buy.” The respond from interviewee B also reflected her desire of physically experiencing the product. “Based on my showrooming experience, my purchasing is a TV. You can’t learn a TV in detail through the online introduction, like the screen resolution of television or the condition of connecting to Xbox 360 and the gaming visual effects [Silence...], I mean, you must check the product by yourself, by your own eyes. Nobody wants to spend money to no avail.” Similar viewpoints provided by interviewee E, whose showrooming experience was her consumption process of iPhone 8. “When I bought my iPhone 8, I went to the Apple store in a shopping mall near my home in order to check the color. Before going to the store, I can’t decide which color to buy between rose gold and black through Apple web-store. After seeing the color personally, I decided to buy a rose gold iPhone 8. Personal and direct experience with the product is necessary [Nod subconsciously...].”

The fourth item in personal factor was customer’s perceived risk. In our interviews, interviewees frequently expressed a phrase – “feeling uncertainty”. Their uncertainty was generally caused by intangibility from internet and unfamiliarity. This kind of uncertainty
was mentioned by all 10 interviewees, although their showrooming experience was about different products. One representative respond was from interviewee E, whose showrooming experience is purchasing iPhone 8, “Buying some high-value products, for example, my experience of buying iPhone 8 involved risks in purchasing, so I would like to both searching online and going to a physical store in order to make a better decision.” Another responds from interviewee I also expressed her perspective about uncertainty, “When I go to the physical store, I examined the products and collected enough product knowledge and information, and then I can purchase it online. It is necessary because as a customer, we always feel uncertainty about something during our purchasing process. What I do is to spend money with minimum worry.”

4.3.2. External factors

External factors category mainly refers to a passive and external trigger of showrooming behavior. It included product inventory and channel characteristic sub-categories.

Regarding product inventory, the showroomers whose showrooming behavior caused by this sub-category usually were not intentional to do showrooming. On the contrary, they just wanted to purchase in the store directly at first. One example was from interviewee H. She said “I took a fancy of a pair of canvas shoes from Warrior, I tried it in store and wanted to buy a pair in size 38.5. The salesperson told me there is no inventory in their store. Then I searched their online store, find my size and purchase it.” Another similar experience was from interviewee E, who also has a showrooming experience of purchasing a special T-shirt from Uniqlo, “I was crazy about the crossover edition T-shirt made by Uniqlo who cooperate with Weekly SHONEN JUMP comic magazine, especially the Naruto theme edition. I went to Uniqlo on the first day they begin to sell the T-shirts. Guess what? They were almost sell out [A rising tone...]! I found one T-shirt that I want to buy, but it is an XS size, and I can’t wear. I was so shocked and took my phone out immediately to search Uniqlo online store. It was lucky that I found one and the size is appropriate, I bought it in half second [Laugh...].” The product inventory category was an external reason for customers’ showrooming behavior. In other words, the product inventory or the sales status pushed customers to do showrooming.

Regarding channel characteristics, it was also an external trigger of showrooming. However, channel characteristics echoed the perceived risk sub-category described in the personal factors category paragraph. It referred to the shortages of the channel caused by channel features, especially online channels in this research, drove customers to do showrooming. For example, the attributes of online advertising and product introduction on the webpage were indirect, mainly were text and picture forms. This increased the probability of misleading propaganda. Interviewee A showed his viewpoint like this, “Never believe the advertising picture when you buy clothes [Affirmative tone...]! I bought a shirt which is made of cotton & linen when I saw the advertising picture, which shows a model wearing this shirt, I was totally fell in love with it and click to purchase without any hesitation. When the shirt delivered to my home, I opened the package and tried the shirt on. You know what, it is totally a different looking compared to the model [Frown...]. I felt I was cheated by advertisements and I swear I will never buy clothes without try-on.”
opinions from interviewee B, she thought all the product information, especially the product information of clothes, were totally insufficient. Interviewee B said “I can’t know the size through reading the descriptive text, like size M, what is that? I can’t know the texture, like Cashmere-like Acrylic Yarns, what is that? I can’t even know the color. The advertisers always use photoshop to beauty the advertising picture, there is always a color difference.” The response from interviewee A and interviewee B typically demonstrated how they feel about online advertising and then this feeling positively affected the probability of showrooming behavior.

4.3.3. Consumption habit

Consumption habit contained factors that indirectly caused their showrooming behavior. The first aspect of consumption habit of consumers was their lifestyle today. Nowadays, online shopping is very common in consumers' daily life. For example, when asked about: “how is your shopping habit?” Interviewee B said that: “…Basically every month, yeah…… Well, probably once or twice a month (online shopping) at least, and sometimes more…… But, actually I don’t often buy new stuff, you know, and if you count the times of buying food, group purchasing service etc., that would be more. Oh! And movie tickets, as well, so yeah, I would say shopping online is quite common in my life…” In addition, for some interviewees, the frequency of them conducting online shopping was pretty high. Interviewee D mentioned that: “…Well at home (China), basically I will buy stuff online every week…… approximately two or three times a week, yeah……Snakes mostly, hum, and occasionally I will buy clothes and trousers…… oh yes and camera lens…” Also, interviewee F mentioned that: “Usually, 80% of my shopping happened on the internet, it is quite common in my life……The frequency of me shopping online is pretty high I would say, probably 4 to 5 times a week……(what do you buy?)Basically, I will buy everything online, outfits, snacks, some gadgets and living goods.”

On the other hand, even though online shopping becomes increasingly widespread, traditional brick-and-mortar stores still hold their place in consumers’ mind. According to our interviewees, visiting shopping mall and stores was one of their daily recreations. During the interview, interviewee E mentioned that: “I usually hang out with my sisters to visit shopping malls when we are free from work, it is pretty interesting that there are lots of interesting stuff in the shopping mall. It is a good place to spend the weekend (smiling)…… And sometime, when I found something that I really like, I may then search it online and buy it.” Similarly, interviewee H mentioned that: “…and from my opinion, as a women, it is not just only because 'I want to buy something’ so that I visit shopping malls, but also may be…like for example, I may hang out with my friend and go to the shopping mall, have some fun, relax (laughing)…”. And she further added that: “…They (my friends) may like to go shopping, for fun, but they don’t have to buy anything…”

In addition to being a place for recreation, consumers’ inherent perception of physical stores also as a factor that influences their behavior while shopping according to our interviewees. First of all, almost all of the interviewees showed a preference about brick-and-click retailers that contain both online and offline channel. As interviewee A said: “…Well, defiantly I like those (retailer) with both online and offline store……this is about
creditworthiness, for example, Amazon and Taobao (Alibaba), they have already earned a good reputation, I trust them. But for some new web-sites, I am not familiar with them. But if they have a physical store, you know at least where to find them, to refund or exchange the product...... It is more convenient, I just took up the stuff and went to the store...... while in Sweden, returning the product to web-store is very troublesome...” Also, interviewee H mentioned a brick and click retailer could provide her more convenient shopping experience: “...hum (thinking)......I prefer multichannel retailers, well according to my habit, usually I would hesitate in store when I saw something interested, and I didn’t buy it. But when I want to buy it later, it would be more convenient if they (the retailer) have an online store.”

Moreover, during interviews, interviewees mentioned that they felt a sense of reliable about the multichannel retailers just because of the existence of its physical store. When asked about what was the perception of a retailer, interviewee A mentioned that: “...Of course, it’s different (different from the perception of a pure online store) if they have a physical store, at least you know where to find them when you want to return or make a complaint ...” Meanwhile, the after-sales service provided by the physical store made interviewees feel more reliable about a multichannel retailer rather than a pure e-retailer. For example, interviewee G mentioned that: “Definitely it would make me feel more reliable if an online retailer also has its physical store......the physical store is a kind of guarantee, like if I need maintaining or changing or refunding, I could go to the physical store directly. But if it is a pure e-retailer, it would be troublesome because I can only communicate with the seller online and I have to send the stuff back...”

Last but not least, interviewees said they would care more than price when they buy something. Interviewee B mentioned that: “... it’s not objective to simply compare prices. I think a more objective way is to compare the performance...” As well as interviewee A, when asked about what factor affects him most when he want to buy something, he mentioned that: “...for me I think the performance of the product in more important than the price......yes, the performance is more important, and this is why I need multilateral comparison and consideration before I buy something.” Also, as mentioned above, interviewees showed concerned about the after-sales service, especially product exchange and refund service. We believed, these interviewees’ preferences showed their value proposition and indirectly cause them to do showrooming while shopping.

4.3.4. Definition

During interviews, when asked about “do you know about the showrooming phenomenon?” some interviewees said they had heard about this phenomenon before. Also, some said that they had seen this behavior from the people around. Like interviewee G said: “...Well I know this behavior, I have had this behavior (showrooming), and I also know some people around me have had this behavior......I used to read about an article online that discuss this behavior...” But none of the interviewees knew the precise definition of showrooming. Interviewee G said: “If I define this behavior, I would say it is a behavior that consumer want to gain more information and fulfil some specific needs.” However, according to the experience of interviewees, a general pattern of customers’ showrooming behavior
emerged, that is a showroomer physically “meet” the products in a physical store then eventually purchase the products in an online store. We used the word “meet” because some interviewees intentionally visited the physical store and exam the product. Whereas others were in a different scenario, like we mentioned above, they visited the physical store without a specific purpose and just for recreation. Therefore, based on the initial purpose of showroomer, we proposed showrooming has two situations: intentional showrooming and unintentional showrooming.

4.3.5. Intentional & unintentional showrooming

Based on the experience of interviewees, some were intentionally to visit the physical store to fulfil their needs such as searching for more tangible information of the product, or examining the product, so on and so forth. As interviewee A said: “... Once I wanted to buy a TV online, I went to the store and checked the TV first...... because I need to check if the TV is as good as it described online. Also, I think the description of that TV on the web-store was not explicit enough...... so I need to actually check it out by myself...” Also, interviewee G said that: “...it was the first time I wanted to buy something for myself, something that only belongs to me. I chose to buy a camera, but I knew nothing about camera back then, so after I identified several cameras I wanted to buy, I went to the physical store first to try the feel and weight of different cameras, took a close look at the appearance.......”

On the contrary, some interviewee expressed that they did not intentionally visit the physical store, rather they visited the physical store with no specific target to buy but for fun and recreation. When recalling the experience of showrooming, interviewee C mentioned that: “... It was a special cage for my pet rabbit...... Actually I didn’t buy it immediately, the truth is, I just occasionally visit that pet shop, for example, to play with their rabbits, check the thickness of small cushions for rabbit, pinch the granular rabbit food, etc. But most of the time I didn’t buy anything......It was then when I found I need to buy something for my rabbit, food, for example. I would buy it on their (retailer) web-store. Because at that time I was not convenient to actually go to the store, you know, I need to work, and I can’t visit that pet shop frequently since it is far from my home and workplace so, yeah, buying online is more convenient.” Similarly, the experience of interviewee E also showed an unintentional visiting of a physical store during showrooming, she said that: “...once me and my friends were in a shopping mall that nearby my home, you know the kind of malls with many famous brands but rarely offers discounts [smiling...]. I had a crush on a TOREAD bag. It looks pretty beautiful, and I felt I like it, but it was a little bit expensive, so I just took a picture of that bag and was going to wait until it’s on sale. After all, I didn’t really need that bag at that time. And then when I tried to search it online and there really has that bag! [A look of surprise] With a lower price because it was on sale! ...”

4.3.6. Competitive & retentive showrooming

However, as we mentioned earlier in this thesis, based on the different showroomers’ choices of retailers, two different situations emerged, i.e. competitive showrooming, in which consumer finish purchase on a competitor’s web-store; retentive showrooming, in which consumer finish purchase on the initial retailer’s web-store. In the confiscation with
interviewees, most of the competitive showrooming cases of interviewees were relative to department stores or shopping malls. Like the experience of buying camera shared by interviewee G, he said that: “...Well, that is a general store with lots of camera brands.....I tried several cameras and decided which one I like. Then I went back online because I wanted to take a look at the comments on the web-store before I make the decision.....I bought it on Jingdong (a famous online retailer in China) actually. [Smiling]” Similarly, interviewee H provided another scenario by sharing one of her showrooming experience, she said that: “It was two or three months ago, I found the Adidas pants when I was browsing Amazon. But I didn’t decide to buy it immediately, because in consideration of ... well first is because I was afraid that the size might not fit me. Then I also wanted to know more about...like the material, how does it feel? So I went to Outlets with my friends to see if I could actually try it......I finally bought it on Amazon because I have Amazon prime, so that I could get my pants within two days...”

Regarding the retentive showrooming situation, interviewee F shared his experience about how he buys his wallet: “...The most recent experience was in Hong Kong, I’ve been dying to buy a wallet recently, so I went to the official website, compared the price and style of several wallets. Then I felt that I need to go to the physical store and take a look at the wallet myself......because it is pretty expensive, it is an LV wallet (a shy smile). So I went to the store and tried it, felt the texture about the wallet, and so on.” When asked about where he bought the wallet, he added that: “Actually, at that time, the price of the shop was the same as the price on the Internet. But I still bought it on the official website of LV because I did not want to carry anything with me that day, and it’s sent pretty quickly. I could get it the next day. So I just bought it online and asked them to send it to me.” Another example the interviewee shared with us was about Sephora shared by interviewee B: “...recently I wanted to buy perfume, well perfume is something you cannot just search it online, right? I felt that I have to try it out, so I went to Sephora. After I tried that perfume I thought it is not bad. The smell is the same as I expected. But I was still a little hesitant because it is expensive thus I wanted to consider carefully......I decided to buy it these days, I am going to buy it on Sephora’s web-store so that I could use my membership.”

4.3.7. Retailers’ factors

No matter what kinds of showrooming behavior, there were some factors that affect showroomers during showrooming process. In the conversation with interviewees, we found that some factors were caused by the retailer. The first and most obvious factor was the product provided by the retailer. Except some product characteristics such as quality, texture, color, size, interviewee A additionally mentioned that: “...well I chose that webstore is because... you know the type of the TV I want to buy ... maybe it’s too old, or maybe it’s too new. I was not sure, but I cannot found it in other web-stores. Maybe I can find other web-stores selling that TV, but I didn’t want to waste time looking for it. Besides, I had checked it in the physical store, so I knew it. But if I changed to another retailer’s web-store, I thought I would probably still feel uncertainty about the quality.” In fact, according to the stories shared by interviewees, most of them preferred to finish purchase on the official web-store or the online flagship store of specific brands. It was because of their demand for the brand's unique products.
In addition, interviewees also mentioned that they noticed the environment of the physical store and it did have effects on them. For example, interviewee F recalled that: “...like when I bought the shoes that time after I tried the shoes in the store, I actually decided to buy them because I was satisfied with them. While regarding the wallet, after I searched on the web-store......it’s a little bit expensive you know [Awkward smiling]. I didn’t think a wallet can be worth that much money. Anyway, I visiting the LV store to check the wallet with the idea that I don't necessarily buy it. But I have to say, except trying out the wallet made me feel the wallet is good, the environment of the store also promoted my desire to buy......I really doubted that how can a wallet worth that much money before, but the good environment of the store and the service of the sale person made me feel that, ok it worth!”

Moreover, during his recall of buying a vacuum cleaner, interviewee D mentioned that: “You know the cluttered environment, it makes me feel that they (the retailer) are perfunctory to me. For example, there is a store called NetOnNet, I cannot accept the environment there. It is just like a warehouse. Everything is put on the shelf, you take what you want. I think it is pretty messy. I don’t like it at all.” Also, interviewee B mentioned that: “...when I was in the Apple store, I appreciated the store’s environment, how they lay out the product, the bright color and meanwhile it has spacious space for customers. I like the environment there, it makes me willing to try more products in the store, computers, IPad, so on so forth...”

Meanwhile, interviewees also mentioned about some services provided by the physical store, specifically the sales person’s service. Interviewees recalled that they noticed the sales person in the physical stores, their manner and dressing, and how these factors further affected interviewees’ feelings and mood. Interviewee D said during the interview that: “...I would say the attitude of the clerks in that shop firmed my determination to go shopping online. I had a very poor experience......but to be honest, if he is enthusiastic to me and provide me with a good service, I would consider to buy the product from him. Even if I need to spend one or two hundred.” He further added that: “...I like those clerks, for example, they won’t bother me when I don’t need them, but when I have questions, they can answer me in time.” In addition, interviewee A mentioned that: “...the salesmen there are too amateur...Yes, I am serious. I mean what he told me was crap... I want to know how many FPS is that TV, I supposed that he should know this kind of information but actually he doesn’t. I just read the specification for me...” However, as mentioned earlier, interviewee F recalled the effect of the physical store environment and sales person’s service: “...I think the environment and the clerks in the store increased my desire to buy that wallet. That lady (clerk), I think she knew I was going to buy it online, but she still gave me good service. Therefore I later felt that I spent more than just buying this wallet, and buying its service and after-sales service...”

4.3.8. Social interactions

Social interactions regard to the social factors that affect interviewees during showrooming, such as the other consumers’ comments on web-stores. Interviewee G mentioned that: “...I further went to check the comments of the camera online after I tried it in the store, as a
comprehensive consideration.....I think it is pretty important. I can exam the quality in the store. I can try the weight, I can feel if this camera is suitable for me, but if I want to know what issue will occur about the camera after using for some time for example; I would like to understand the problem from the other buyers’ comments on the web-store.” Interviewee G also expressed that: “...I went to check the camera in the store and also searched its online comments......I think they complement each other. Some intuitive experiences require me to go to a physical store, while other information like the usage conditions can only be obtained through online comments.”

Moreover, in addition to the salesperson, some interviewees mentioned that other consumers in the physical store also might affect them during showroming process. Interviewee D mentioned that: “I felt reliable about this store when I saw a lot of people in it......well, yes it can be a bit crowded, but I think it also means that there's something good in this shop [laughing].” Also, interviewee C told us that: “I will communicate with other pet owners in the store, they sometimes give me some advice and recommend me some good pet products to me.”

However, the customers’ trust and loyalty on a retailers may also affect their decision. As interviewee D mentioned: “I bought it on Jingdong.com, because it has a good reputation in selling electric appliance. I trust it. I think, in China, when people consider to buy electric appliance online, the fist website appeared in their mind would be Jingdong.” Similarly, as interviewee F mentioned: “I think the experience in the LV store did affect my choice. I became a fan of them (LV), of course I will choose to buy on their official website. And I believe the product provided on the web-site must be as good as it in the store.”

4.3.9. Purchase value maximizing

Purchase value maximizing category mainly refers to what showromers do during their showroming experience to increase the value of one single purchase. When asked about what they did during showroming experience, the response were primarily around three aspects-product experience, price comparison and service comparison.

The first action of showromers was product experience, which was easily known as the interaction between customer and product. In other words, it was easily understood as how consumers check the product through experiencing, and then interact with the retailer during their in-store process.

One example was from interviewee C, whose showroming experience was purchasing pet supplies for her rabbit, “When I walked into the pet rabbit product store, I was usually attracted by the pet rabbits that the retailer selling, they are alive, fluffy and adorable. Regarding the pet rabbit food, I mean the rabbit hay, through observing whether the color is right in order to check the hay is in nice condition or mouldy. I can’t touch the hay because of the packing bag, but there is usually a sample of the hay on sale, I can learn more about the hay quality through touching and smelling.” Similar viewpoint from interviewee D who is showroming for a vacuum cleaner. At first, interviewee D searched
the vacuum cleaner information online with no target brand and target model. However, “the vacuum cleaner information shown online in texts and pictures can’t give me a clear understanding, and some descriptive terms are difficult to me, like output power, does it really matter? So, I went to the media mart near my accommodation, and I tried four different vacuum cleaners in-store.” Interviewee D emphasized the advantage of in-store vacuum cleaner checking. “The best advantage is you can try the power-on working mode of different vacuum cleaners and find the one you’re most comfortable with. This is important to the person like me, who can’t understand the different descriptive terms without direct experience.” In addition, the response from interviewee H who’s most showrooming behavior was cosmetic items purchasing also demonstrated the importance of in-store product experience. “For me, I never buy lipstick, foundation and eyeshadow without trying on my own face. I think it is very common for cosmetic buyers. You have to test the color and the texture by your own face. It is a ‘must’ [Emphasizing tone...], it is a responsible behavior for your face.”

The second action during showrooming was price comparison. It echoed the desire of lower price described in the personal factors part. Based on the data we collected from interviews, there were two sets of price comparison behavior, the first one was between offline price and online price, and the latter one was about the online price between different web-stores. One example was from interviewee B, whose showrooming experience is about purchasing a coat, she bought the coat online because of the price comparison between in-store price and online price. The 25% discount offered by online store attracted her to purchase. A similar example was from interviewee A, who do showrooming for a TV, after comparing the in-store price and the price offered online, he decided to purchase online. However, the response from interviewee J was worth thinking about. “When I purchased mom & baby supplies for me and my boy online, I compare price among different webstores. But [Emphasis tone...] it doesn’t mean the lowest price is the best choice. On the contrary, regarding mom & baby supplies, a too-low price means fake and unsafe to me.” The same opinion was also expressed from interviewee C, “From my experience, when I compare the different prices offered by different webstores, the very-low price webstores won’t be my ‘candidates’.”

The third action during showrooming was service comparison. Service comparison refers to the purchase value increasing process. It refers to different types of value-added services, such as refund and exchange policies, warranty service, delivery service and different payment mechanisms. When interviewee B who also bought iPhone 8 talked about her purchasing experience, she told us the process of comparing different payment mechanism provided by different webstores and offline Apple store. “The price of iPhone 8 is no big difference between different stores, no matter online or offline. However, the payment mechanism is different. In offline Apple store, I found if I purchase on instalment, there are only 3-month instalment and 12-month instalment to choose and the interest is stable. In Apple webstore, I found there are more choices for instalment periods, such as 3-month/6-month/9-month/12-month. Especially the instalment interest is different if you pay by different credit cards from different banks. Then I chose to pay by the credit card from China Merchants Bank in a 6-month instalment, that mechanism is appropriate for me.” In addition to the payment mechanism, interviewee A said the webstore he bought the TV
provided a free home delivery service. The moving staff moved the wardrobe to the exact place where he wanted to put that wardrobe with no damage and assemble the wardrobe inside quickly and professionally. And for the interviewee D, who do showrooming for a vacuum cleaner, he stated that he specifically asked about the refund and exchange policies and warranty service. “After knowing there are 7-day free refund and exchange policy and 1-year free warranty service provided by that online store, I rested assured and then I bought.” Same opinion from interviewee E, who bought a TV in his showrooming experience. “Especially for electric appliance purchasing, refund and exchange policy and warranty service are both essential to check before buying. The home maintenance service is so great and so convenient!”

4.3.10. Customers’ awareness

Customers’ awareness category included two sub-categories. One sub-category was awareness of retailers. It refers to customers’ feeling and knowledge of the retailers, which they have showrooming with. The other one sub-category was awareness of showrooming as a consuming pattern. It refers to the feelings and viewpoints about their own showrooming experience.

Regarding the awareness of retailers, interviewee D and interviewee G, whose showrooming experience were both about electric appliances, stated that a brick-and-click selling mode for electric appliances was thoughtful to customers. Interviewee D said “I test the product in their physical store personally to find the one that I’m most comfortable with. Then I purchase the same mode product through their webstore in order to enjoy different services, like free delivery service.” There was one response from interviewee G caught our attention, he said the retailers who run both online and offline is more reliable because “it seems like their business is doing very well and have a nice profit status… [silence…] … at least, they will not declare bankruptcy and disappear in one night.” A similar opinion was from interviewee B “if this retailer has both online and offline, for me as a buyer, I would feel safer. Since I know the physical store is in that shopping mall, it is there in that room.” Interviewee C said “After several purchases in that pet supplies store by showrooming, I don’t go to the store to check the product anymore. Especially the product I have bought many times, such as pet rabbit food. I purchase in their webstore directly.” When asked about why there is no more showrooming experience with this store anymore, interviewee C answered “I don’t mean no showrooming anymore. Just the products that I have bought several times. Because you have already known this product quality and the retailer. But if I want to buy another product, like pet rabbit hutch, I will still have showrooming.” A similar experience from interviewee B, “I usually buy Estee Lauder skin-care products in Sephora, I think I have bought more than three times. In my latest purchasing, I didn’t go to any Sephora stores, just buy it through Sephora webstore.” Interviewee B said after several showrooming experiences with Sephora, she began to trust it.

The other sub-category was the awareness of showrooming as a consuming pattern. When asked about “how do you think about your showrooming experience?” Almost all interviewees express a positive comment on their own showrooming experience.
Interviewee F said, “It decreases the probability of impulsive buying.” Interviewee G thought showrooming improved the quality of his purchasing. Interviewee G said, “It improves the efficiency of every single purchasing behavior, I mean the money is spent effectively. I get exactly what I want, both in good quality and appropriate price.” Supported by interviewee J, whose showrooming was mainly about purchasing mom & baby supplies, she thought showrooming would be the most prevalent consumption pattern, because “more and more new retailers and new products appear every day, more and more retailing modes appear every day…the current market is more complicated and fast changing… showroaming is really a good choice to protect ourselves as buyers.” Interviewee F thought showrooming would be his future consuming pattern since he thought showrooming was “customers’ wisdom.” In addition, interviewee D expressed a neutral point about showrooming, “showroaming is a little bit time-consuming because you spend time on going to store and searching online.” However, interviewee D also said, “Although it is time-consuming, showroaming decreases the probability of buying the wrong stuff.” Interviewee D stated, compared to showrooming, he preferred to selective showrooming depending on the product value. “If the product I want to buy is expensive, I will definitely have showroaming. But if the product value is low, I don’t want to spend time on in-store checking. It is unnecessary.”
5. Analysis

This chapter presents the analysis in the selective coding phase in grounded theory. Specifically, this chapter focus on the interrelationship between different categories generated from the data, how to aggregate them according to the interrelationship and shape the paradigm model of showrooming.

Selective coding is the last phase of grounded theory analysis. According to Creswell (2007, p.65), in selective coding process, the research takes the model and develops propositions (or hypotheses) that interrelate the categories in the model or assembles a story that describes the interrelationship of categories in the model. In case of this research, through examining how categories were related to showrooming phenomenon, we systematically linked the categories and formed the paradigm model of customer showrooming behavior (see Fig. 5-1).

![Diagram of Paradigm Model]

**Figure 5-1: Paradigm model of customers’ showrooming phenomenon.**
In detail, the causal condition of showrooming includes personal factors and external factors. The contextual condition refers to the consumption habit of consumers. The action condition could be summarized as purchase value maximizing. Intervening condition involves retailer’s factors and social factors. Consequence condition refers to consumer’s awareness (see Fig. 5-1).

5.1. Causal condition

Two categories belong to causal condition were emerged from the data collected through semi-structured interviews, which ultimately lead to certain phenomenological experiences related to showrooming. The causal conditions were: (i) personal factor (ii) external factor. The concepts and examples of these two categories had already been described in the empirical finding part. It refers to why showroomers choose to check the product they want to purchase in a physical store, then, finish transaction through online payment.

In general, personal factor mainly included the reasons of customers’ showrooming behavior from their own. It was a problem recognition process in showrooming process, which relates to the emerging need to the showroom. Accordingly, we asked interviewees to describe the probable reasons inducing them to have showrooming. Their responses involve three categories: preference of lower price, desire of physical experience, customers’ perceived risk and desire of shopping enjoyment.

Regarding lower price preference, this was a nature of buyer no matter which kind consuming pattern was taken. In the case of showrooming, physical in-store price drove customers to search for the alternative retailers through cross-channel. “... It is too expensive to purchase even though it is what I need...” from interviewee E reflected the price eliminated her purchase intention in that physical store. Beyond that, price also could be a leading cause of a bad impression of one physical store. For instance, interviewee J described her feeling towards the price from a physical store “... the price let me feel like the retailer is robbing me...” from interviewee J. The word “robbing” and the rising tone in which she says proved the negative feeling, and this negative impression was still lasting. However, price judgement doesn’t mean the lowest price is the best choice of showroomers. Many interviewees expressed their worry and distrust towards an unusually-low price.

Regarding desire of physical experience and customer’s perceived risk, there was a connection between them. Desire of physical experience could be easily understood as checking the product personally. Perceived risk was viewed as a subjective expectation of loss (Laroche et al., 2004). Regard to online purchasing, intangible product information and retailer information had influential on perceived risk. It increased evaluation difficulty of the product and the retailer. The intangibility was believed to increase perceived risk levels. The lack of specific attributes increases the variability of the possible outcomes of a purchasing; thereby increasing customer’s perceived risk. Perceived risk drove the desire of physical experience with product, and vice versa the desire of physical experience with product embodied perceived risk. “Feel uncertainty” was frequently mentioned in interviews. Showroomers used direct experience with the product they plan to buy to
eliminate their various psychological uncertainty about the product. Not only restricted to direct experience, showroomers would also conduct information search activities online and offline concurrently, instead of sequentially. Especially in the pre-purchasing stage, the interviewees claimed to use “cross-checking information” to minimizing their uncertainties. They stated that they frequently seek for information through visiting the retailer's mobile application, website and web browsers, for instance, the product prices and descriptions, delivery and payment options, the retailer’s reputation and the feedback, comments, reviews of other customers. However, nothing could be more convincible than experience personally.

Regarding shopping enjoyment, this implies a trend of customer demand upgrading. During our interviews, some showroomers expressed emotional reasons of their showrooming behavior. For instance, “…I don’t want to take heavy shopping bags…tired…”, “…it is so complicated to move and assemble by my own…” Although the emotion-related reason was not frequently mentioned by interviewees, it still caught our attention during data analysis. Instead of considering purchase as a simple exchange between money and product, customers started to think how to enjoy their purchasing process.

In general, personal factors in causal condition demonstrated a pattern of the leading cause of showrooming – seeking for the combination of an appropriate price and minimized perceived risk through personal checking along with a subconscious expectation of enjoyable shopping process.

In the case of this research, external factors mainly refer to the reasons of showrooming, which are out of customers’ control. Two representative response from interviewee E and interviewee H respectively were “…the salesperson told me there is no inventory in their store…” and “…I found they were almost sold out [A rising tone...]!” These occurrences of showrooming were occasional. In other words, the probability of showrooming is influenced by the forces outside customers. However, since the research perspective and the interview object both were customers, we could not ensure what was the main cause of “sold out” scene in physical stores. Real high demand merchandises or it was just a marketing strategy, like hungry marketing. Since the omnichannel retailing is becoming a prevalent and major trend in retailing, almost all retailers consider both offline and online even more channels to connect customers. At this moment, it is more important to attract and guide customers to realize the existence of other channels and be familiar with other channels. Hungry marketing is a common strategy for retailers to transfer customers from one channel to another channel. Under this circumstance, the showrooming behavior could be suggested as an outcome forced by omnichannel retailing development.
5.2. Contextual condition

In the contextual conditions, the researchers summarized the situations or problems that influence the researched phenomenon. In this research, contextual condition regards to the aggregation of factors that facilitated customer to conduct showrooiming behavior indirectly rather than the factors that directly drive the behavior, such as motivation. The contextual condition mainly regards to the factors in context or environment that breed consumers’ showrooming behavior. In today’s digital era, the application of digital technology gave birth to the multichannel retail environment. Under this context, consumers have formed their habit of shopping and consumption under the impact of digitalization. In other words, the present consumption habit of consumer can be seen as the representation of the effect of digitalization. And the intention of consumers doing showrooming is generated under their habits of shopping today. Thus we used “consumption habit” as the representation of the aggregation of these “contextual factors”. Specifically, in the conversation with interviewees, the authors recognized that consumption habit should contain three sub-categories: Consumer lifestyle, Consumer perception, and Consumer values proposition.

Regarding consumer lifestyle, in this research, generally, it refers to the way that how do interviewees shopping today. Based on the emergence and development of information technology, digital technology and mobile technology, consumers nowadays are able to flexibly switch channel in order to pursue maximizing their own interests. On the one hand, the popularization of online and mobile shopping channel make consumer getting used to shopping through the internet or mobile platform, according to interviewees, they expressed that the frequency of their shopping online is at least once or twice per month, some even up to four or five times a week. Online shopping is quite common in their life, they will buy anything online, food, clothes, even purchase for service. Online shopping has become part of everyday life. Further, the variety of convenience and benefits provided by the online channel such as low price, convenient transportation made online channel gain its unique advantage.

However, even though online shopping becomes increasingly widespread, traditional physical stores still hold a place in consumers’ mind. On the one hand, according to some interviewees, the shopping center was one of their entertainment venues. Especially for female interviewees, visiting shopping mall and stores was a daily recreation. They liked to experience in physical stores even without specific purchase objects. Some showrooming behaviors took place in this process.

On the other hand, interviewees also showed some degree of dependence on physical stores during our interviews. They expressed that the existence of a physical store, in a way, provided them a reliable image of the retailer. Although online e-commerce has mushroomed in recent year and provided consumer convenience that offline channel cannot provide, some specific shortcomings followed at the same time. The virtuality of online shopping is easy to make consumer lack trust to a web-store. For example, we earlier mentioned about the consumers’ uncertainty about the quality of merchandise and the service provided by online stores which further increase the perceived risk of consumers. The risk of online shopping increases the need for trust in an online context (Toufaily et
al., 2013, p.539-540), and the virtuality of products and the unfamiliarity with certain retailers raise the question of commitment regarding the offer (e.g. actual delivery of the product, the correspondence of the product to the description). While in comparison, interviewees felt reliable about physical stores. They thought physical store was more reliable since the physical presence of a bricks and mortar storefront might prompt consumers to categorize the retailer as a member of the physical purchase environment, which led to a belief that the firm can be held accountable (Benedickus et al., 2010; Carlson et al., 2011, p.529). Also, they thought the physical presence of a retailer provides a variety of guarantee, for instance, the guarantee of convenient after-sales service. When interviewees concerning the product changing and product refunding services, most of our interviewees believed that physical stores could provide a reliable product changing and refunding services. And when product quality issues arose, or they were unsatisfied with the product, it was more convenient to go to a physical store, rather than contact the web-store to change or refund the product.

Thus, considering the different characteristics of online and offline channels, it is not difficult to understand why most of the interviewees in this research expressed that they had a preference of brick-and-click mortar, and would like to buy product from the retailer who has both online and offline channel. Especially when considering which web-store to choose, they preferred the one that has it physical store at the same time. In the conversation with interviewees, they actively used different channels to maximize their benefit.

Nowadays, consumer’s value proposition is changing. Their shopping philosophy is changing from simply chasing a lower price to chasing the cost performance of the product. Although price is still a necessary factor of making purchase decision, most of the interviewees thought other factors such as quality was also essential that they considered even more important than price. Based on this value proposition, interviewees intended to make full use of the characteristics of different channels to compare and consider carefully before decided to buy. This intention further indirectly caused their showrooming behavior.

To sum up, in the conversations with interviewees, today’s their value proposition made it difficult for them to make purchasing decision easily. Instead, they would like to consider and compare carefully. Further, their lifestyle pushes them to take full advantage of two shopping channel (online & offline). Thus, these factors together formed interviewees’ consumption habit today and affected them to proactively switch the channel to pursue the best deal during their shopping process, and this behavior was showrooming.
5.3. Phenomenon

According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), the phenomenon condition is the central event and idea that controlled by participants through a set of interaction strategies. It is also what the data reflect. In this research, the central phenomenon is showrooming, and the phenomenon in the paradigm model consist three categories according to the data collected from interviews, those are: (i) Definition, (ii) Intentional & Unintentional showrooming, (iii) Competitive & Retentive showrooming. The main argument between current definitions of showrooming in the research field is whether the showroomer changing retailers while switching channels. On the other hand, although showrooming phenomenon is well known by retailers, consumers don't have a clear idea about the specific definition of showrooming.

However, in this research we tend to focus on how interviewees understand this phenomenon and their showrooming experience. In the conversation with them, this research identified a general concept of showrooming understood by interviewees. For them, it is a behavior that consumer switch channel during shopping to fulfill some specific needs. While for this phenomenon, interviewees regard it as a smart, economical, and efficient consumption concept which will become the new lifestyle in the future.

According to the experience of interviewees, the general pattern of customers’ showrooming behavior is that they physically “meet” the products in offline stores then eventually purchase the products in online stores. This common pattern is consisting with the definition of showrooming generated by the study of Verhoef et al. (2015), showrooming regards “a particular form of shopping in which a shopper first experiences the product offline and subsequently purchases online” (Arora et al., 2017, p.410). Combined with the understanding and intention of interviewees on their showrooming behavior, we could define showrooming phenomenon as a phenomenon that consumer switch from offline channel to online channel during shopping process to maximize their interest.

Based on the experience of interviewees, this research proposes that showrooming can be divided into two different forms according to the different shopping scenarios. In the multichannel shopping environment, consumer todays’ shopping process is diverse. Like we mentioned earlier, interviewees stated that they usually go shopping as entertainment. The desire of buying something is generated during their experience with product in physical stores. Also, the intention of doing showrooming is generated after the generation of purchase objects. We defined this showrooming situation as “unintentional showrooming” since the intention of showrooming is not generated before interviewees’ visiting physical stores. Also, at the same time, interviewees were not intentionally visiting the physical stores. In this situation, showrooming intention is mostly generated based on the interviewees’ desire of seeking lower price and other benefits, online comments and others opinion, and convenient transportation service.

On the contrary, we defined another scenario of showrooming as “intentional showrooming”. In this scenario, interviewees stated that they visit physical store for a certain purpose or a target object. The showrooming intention is generated before the
generation of purchase objects. Under this situation, according to the data collected, there are multiple reasons that cause showrooming behavior. The reasons include the uncertainty towards the online retailer and the product it provides, the insufficient information provided by the online retailer, the desire of acquire physical interaction with products, even the interviewees’ perception that physical stores are more reliable than online stores. The situation that customers go to physical store and examine the product for a certain purpose is also in line with the definition of showrooming proposed by Sevitt and Samuel (2013). They defined showrooming is “a form of consumer multi-channel shopping behavior and is a phenomenon whereby shoppers intentionally visit one channel to examine and research merchandise before purchasing it from a different channel.” (Daunt & Harris, 2017, p.167).

The classification divides showrooming behavior into “intentional” and “unintentional” showrooming is based on the consumer’s lens. However, from the perspective of retailer, we purpose that in this research showrooming can be divided into “competitive” showrooming and “retentive” showrooming based on the different retailers selected by showroomers to finish purchasing with. Competitive showrooming refers to the situation that showroomer change retailer while they are switching channel. Whereas retentive showrooming refers to the situation that showroomers switch between the same retailer’s channels. However, in the conversation with interviewees, there are multiple factors that affect their decision. For those retailers who only have the offline channel, consumers are taken away by those online retailers because the favorable price and convenient transportation they provide. Some retailers, such as Sephora, Best Buy, Gome (a Chinese retailer brand), etc. They have become multichannel retailers with both online and offline channels. For them, in the context of showrooming, competition fairly happens between different retailers’ online stores. For online stores, price is no longer the main advantage. In the conversation with interviewees, they were attracted by the service provided by web-stores, for instance, some promotions, free and fast transportation, and benefit of membership. Also, another factor that attracts them to a specific web-store is the interviewees’ trust and loyalty to a retailer. For example, interviewee G talked about the reason why he finally buys his camera on Jing Dong is that he trusts the quality of the product provided by this famous e-retailer in China.

All in all, from the perspective of consumers, according to the different timing that they generate the intention to engage in a different channel, showrooming could be divided into “intentional showrooming” and “unintentional showrooming”. Whereas from the perspective of retailer, showrooming could be divided into competitive showrooming and retentive showrooming based on the selection of consumers. Showrooming would cause damage when showroomer finally choose competitors during switching channels. In either way, the function of physical stores for showroomers is turned into more like a showroom, consumer visit a physical store to see, feel, and experience.
5.4. Intervening condition

The intervening condition refers to the factors that influence consumers during showrooming process. Different from those in contextual condition, the effect of these factors on showroomers is stronger than the contextual condition do. According to the interviewees, what they experience will further influence their actions. In general, two aspects were emerged based on the showrooming experience shared by our interviewees. First, the factors of the retailer itself, for example, products, in-store environment and the services provided by retailers. Second is the factors of other social actors. Specifically, it refers to other consumers in this study. In addition, consumers’ trust and loyalty on retailer also recognized as social factors since it represents the relationship between customers and retailers.

Indeed, if the retailer has its own products that are special supplies, it will become a unique advantage that prevents consumers from being taken away by competitors. Retailers can maintain their consumers’ loyalty by providing their own brand merchandises since if customers have demand for these merchandises, their demand can be only fulfilled by this retailer. Either, consumers will give priority to fulfill their demands in these commodity brand owners, for example, like what interviewee D mentioned, he will prioritize to buy a product in the brand owner because he feels that the product is genuine.

In addition, in the conversation with interviewees, they mentioned about the impressions of the in-store environment and service while visiting the store. The service here refers in particular to the sales staff service directly experienced by interviewees in store. A good in-store environment and service do not directly affect consumer’s decision. Instead, it will make effects on their mood and feeling. An interviewee mentioned that a likeable environment such as Apple store would increase her desire to experience more products. Similarly, according to another interviewee a good environment and sales staff service in LV make him feel that the product is worthy even if it is quite expensive. Consumers nowadays are not just buying product. Instead, they are buying the value of product, and the value can be added by other factors such as in-store environment, sales staff service and after-sales service, etc.

Also, interviewees mentioned that a poor experience of the environment and sales person caused damage to their impression about the retailer. A terrible layout or a messy environment made interviewees feel that the retailer is not good enough to its customers. On the other hand, based on their opinion, the demands of interviewees on salesperson are complex. They want the salesperson to be professional and enthusiastic, at the same time they also hope that the sales staff do not always bother them. For them, a good sales staff is the one that can provide sufficient and useful information when they need but to stay away and leave them private space when they do not need. And also, be honest. Like one of our interviewees mentioned that he felt good about the sales person because of the honesty and thoughtfulness.

Regarding the effect of other consumers, it consists two aspects: the comments and opinions posted online, and the interaction in offline. Interviewees mentioned that they would search for online comments for reference. The experience and use condition shared
by other buyers could be more real than the product description, and it can provide information that cannot be gained immediately by showroomers. Whereas the interaction with other consumers, although few, but some interviewees still mentioned that a very prosperous shop with a lot of customers in it makes them feel reliable about the quality of the products provided by this retailer. And some interaction with other consumers, such as in the pet shop or coffee store will influence their emotions. Again, this kind of factor doesn’t directly influence the decision of consumers, but instead, it will help to facilitate to build a relationship between consumer and retailer.

Moreover, the trust and loyalty of customer are also affecting them during showrooming process. Some of our interviewees mentioned about how their trust and loyalty affected them when they choose web-store. In China, Jingdong is the e-retailer with a good reputation in selling electric appliances. Interviewees who bought electric appliances mentioned that they chose Jingdong and ignored other retailer since they trust it. Some of the interviewees have loyalty on Jingdong, therefore when they considered webstores, Jingdong became their first choice. The customers trust and loyalty are intervening factors which strongly affect customer behavior during showrooming process.

5.5. Actions

In the presence of the context and intervening conditions interpreted above, three overarching actions lead to the development of one core category in action condition: purchase value maximization. Purchase value maximization refers to a process of value trade-off. It includes the action of product touch, action of price comparison, and action of value-added service comparison. Most specific actions during showrooming process described by interviewees were different depend on different purchased product category. However, the focus mentioned by our interviewees could be clustered into three aspects: product/retailer, price, and added value service.

Regarding the product touch, it refers to in-store product checking and direct experience process. Typical response from interviewees like “...I need to test it...”, “... I must have a try-on...”, “...try it...”, “... check the color of iPhone 8 by my own eyes...”, “... I want to feel the texture...” These actions echo the desire of product experience driven by customer’s perceived risk. Interviewees can obtain detailed overall impressions of the product by touching a product, they experienced the product material attributes such as texture, color, temperature, and size. This concept implies that the product touching before purchase can decrease psychological perceived risk, especially product knowledge uncertainty, and facilitate consumers to narrow down the choice of purchase. Like interviewee B expressed “... so I went to the store and tried different colors and sizes of that coat to find the best-suited one...” Through product touch and in-store checking, customers narrow down the choice of purchase and identify the most appropriate one.

Regarding the price comparison, it refers to a price searching and comparison behavior. Customers weigh up the price offered by online and offline retailers. Like interviewee D stated “...there is a sales promotion in their webstore...” and interviewee J stated “... they have some different promotion activities at different festivals...” Customers prefer to
purchase the same product at a lower price. In addition, some interviewees mentioned their price searching and comparison action could occur while they were in-store checking the products. Since the development of internet and the prevalence of mobile application. Furthermore, compared to chasing lower price blindly, our interviewees showed a rational emotion towards price. A representative response is from interviewee C, “... unusual low-price means fake and unsafe for me...”

Regarding value-added service, it refers to customized oriented service. In the case of showrooming, value-added service mainly includes delivery service, payment mechanism and return and exchange policy. These services are focusing on optimizing the purchasing process and help customers to identify the most appropriate buying process. Interviewee A praised the free delivery and assemble service offered by webstore. Interviewee B found the most appropriate payment mechanism. For the showroomers who purchase the electronic appliance, like interviewee D and interviewee G, return and exchange policy and warranty policy are specially mentioned. Different product category and different buyer preference increase customer’s desire for customized services.

Integrated different actions aforementioned, this is a purchase value maximization process. Customers have an intention to enlarge the value received from one consumption behavior depending on different customers’ needs and expectations. There is an obvious trade-off consideration when customer determining their perceived value is monetary - how much money will they need to pay to receive the product? Beyond price, another evaluation is also essential - will the product fulfill the need of customer? With the trend of customer demand upgrading, a new factor is taken into account - what customized extras could the retailer provide to customers once they’ve paid for the product? In general, customer value maximization category demonstrates a pattern of the primary actions of showrooming – enlarging the customer value to a large extent through tripartite cross-channel evaluation, concurrent in-store product checking and online information searching along with value-added customized service searching.

5.6. Consequences

Consequence condition in the paradigm of showrooming refers to the post-purchase stage. It could be understood as consumers’ reflection on their showrooming experience and their viewpoints of showrooming as a consumption pattern. Thus, there are two types of awareness arise after showrooming experience. One is customer awareness of the product and the retailer, the other one is awareness of showrooming behavior.

Regarding the awareness of purchased product, the interviewees who took the retentive showrooming expressed their satisfaction towards their purchase experience. For instance, “...I got exactly what I want...in an appropriate price...” and “... I bought what I want...” Through in-store product touch action, customers find the product that can fulfill their needs and expectations. Then, through the same retailer’s webstore, customers get the product they have checked in a more appropriate way, such as purchasing in a good price, enjoying more convenience services and paying in an appropriate payment mechanism. They get the product they want in a self-customized way. According to the competitive
showroomers, whose in-store checking phase and online buying phase occur in different retailers, they worry about whether the product they bought is same to the checked one. But this worry could be offset by the gain in price and other extra services. Regarding the awareness of retailer, showrooming is a process that customers begin to interact with the retailers. Although the subjective intention is product checking, a good retailer could gain customer trust during this process. Especially the cross-channel retailers, they are easier to earn trustworthiness from customers. Since the physical existence and tangible product information increase their reliability and the online channel provides customers more consumption options, which finally lead to an ambidextrous consumption environment.

When asked how they review their showrooming experience as a consumption pattern, the interviewees in our study seemed to have a positive attitude. Our findings indicate that showrooming is recognized as a responsible shopping behavior. It improves the efficiency of consumption and decreases the probability of buying the wrong, which ultimately result in an invalid buying. Because of the cross-check steps, showrooming could reduce the frequency of impulsive buying. Furthermore, showrooming is also considered as an embodiment of customer right, since customer have enough options to choose the best-suited consumption way. It is impossible for retailers to design customized shopping pattern for every customer. However, enough options in each purchase phase could make customers feel the thoughtfulness and benevolence from retailers. And the positive experiences and impressions finally lead to repetitive showrooming behavior.

With the development of internet and mobile technology, showrooming becomes a consumption pattern of customers to balance perceived risk and perceived value. They decrease several of uncertainty through store-visiting, then increase own purchase value through extra self-customized services searching.
6. Conclusion and Discussion

In this final chapter, the authors first conclude the thesis by answering the research questions based on the findings and result of the analysis. Next, discussing the theoretical and practical contributions. Finally, the authors point out the limitations and provide suggestions for further research.

6.1. Conclusion

6.1.1. What decision activities do showroomers do during showrooming process?

The paradigm we generated in the analysis part demonstrates the main decision activities that showroomers do during their showrooming process. The causal condition reveals the problem recognition process of showroomers. In the case of showrooming, problem recognition mainly arises in two forms, one is the preference of lower price, and the other one is the high perceived risk about product which is caused by the varied uncertainty from online shopping intangibility. After that, two forms of problem recognition transform into the desire of lower price and the desire of in-store product experience. Besides, our research obtained an interesting indicator in showroomers’ pre-purchase phase that is the desire of shopping enjoyment. In our research, it appears as the need of shopping comfortableness. When weighing this indicator, it appears relatively more likely that it is a reflection of customer consumption upgrade. In general, our research presents the causal pattern of showrooming from customer's lens like seeking for the combination of an appropriate price and minimized perceived risk through in-store checking along with a subconscious expectation of enjoyable shopping process.

The action condition in our analysis paradigm reveals the evaluation and purchase process of showroomers. With a view of showrooming phenomenon, evaluation process could be understood as narrowing down the choice of purchase and searching for more information on price, physical attributes (Ashman et al., 2015; Sit et al., 2018, p.170) and other value-added services through cross-channel checking and comparison. Then, moving to the purchase phase, which refers to select the best choice among alternatives. In our research, the action condition reflects showroomer’s intention to maximize purchase value. Through the action of price comparison, action of production experience and action of extra services searching, showroomers identify the best deal. It reflects the fact that under the multichannel and omnichannel retailing prevalence circumstance, customers could break one purchase process into many segments and allocate different segments into different channels depending on their own availability and expectations. But no matter what self-customized shopping behavior is, the core objective is to maximize purchase value. Showrooming phenomenon is precisely representative of this customer self-customized consumption behavior.
6.1.2. What factors affect consumers’ behavior during showrooming process?

According to the paradigm we generated, the context condition and the intervening condition reveals the factors that have effects on showroomer’s behavior. Both of these two conditions reveal the indirect effects that facilitate showroomers to conduct showrooming behavior. The contextual condition mainly refers to the current digital-era background and the development of the internet, especially the rapid progress of the mobile application. This social and life environment helped shape consumers’ lifestyle, perceptions and value proposition. The fast-changing technology leads the pluralism and upgrading in current retailing field. On one hand, it promotes showroomers to showrooming whenever they want by providing enough options and chances for every segment during their consumption process to showrooming. On the other hand, it changed consumers’ perceptions and value proposition, promoted them to shape new consumption habit which facilitates customers to self-customize their own shopping pattern and finally increase the probability of showrooming.

Regarding the intervening condition, it mainly involves the factors that have influence on customer’s impression of retailer during showrooming process. A poor in-store experience may damage the retailer’s image, which to some extent, will increase the probability of showrooming. However, a good salesperson service could increase the customer’s favorability of the retailer. According to our interviewees, it may add some opportunities to keep customers in store, but more importantly, a good salesperson as well as a good shopping environment can provide a good experience to customer and add value to the product. The product value nowadays are not just the product itself. According to our interviewees, rather it is the aggregation of product, environment and service. Moreover, other services provided by retailers, including online services and offline services, also have influence on customer decision making, since the nature of showrooming is the customers’ seeking to maximizing purchase value.

Comparing to the loss of sales, it is more serious to give customer a bad impression. Beyond retailer’s factor, the interaction factor also has effects on showroomer’s feeling and mood. Some interviewees would notice the other customers in stores, even communicate with them, such as in pet shop. Although rare, these interactions may create a connection between customers and retailers, and this connection will further become a relationship. On the other hand, online comment as an important source of information for consumers, it is necessary during customers’ decision-making process, especially for those buying electronic appliances. It is also the way for showroomers to reduce their perceived risk. It reflects customers will do information searching as much as they can before buying because of the perceived risk.

In addition, the retailers’ image and customer loyalty also identified as factors that could affect customer during showrooming process. During the interview, interviewees mentioned that when they choosing web-stores, a good image of the online retailer might affect their decision. Customers might give priority to the e-retailers that have a good reputation, and sometimes, ignore to search for the web-store of the initial retailer. Similarly, if a customer is loyalty to one specific brand or retailer, they prefer to purchase...
on the webstores of these brand or retailers. This scenario was occurred some times in the experience of the interviewees.

All in all, these social factors as well as the retailer’s factor discussed above may not directly influence customers’ decision making, rather they will enhance the relationship between customer and retailer which will further create customer’s loyalty. And in turn, customers’ loyalty might affect their decision making when choosing webstores. Customers might even ignore to consider other retailers or web-stores based on their loyalty of retailers.

6.1.3. What are the interpretations of showrooming phenomenon from customer's perspective based on their own experience?

The central phenomenon condition reveals the central event that our data refers to and what our interviewees control through a series of actions. According to the shared experience of interviewees, this research clustered showrooming behavior into two sets, one set is intentional showrooming & unintentional showrooming, and the other set is competitive showrooming & retentive showrooming. The former set is from customer’s perspective and the latter set is from retailer’s perspective. Customer’s intentional showrooming behavior reveals the intangible product information increases the customer’s perceived risk and decreases their willingness to pay. Customer’s unintentional showrooming behavior reveals the tangible product information could increase customer’s willingness to pay. In both cases, showroomers will take full advantage of different channels to maximizing their interest. However, in the case of showrooming, this willingness to buy usually accompanied by price sensitivity.

From customer’s lens, the consequence condition of their showrooming behavior refers to the post-purchase phase. It could be understood as consumers’ reflection on their showrooming experience and their viewpoints of showrooming as a consumption pattern. Based on the data collected, our research suggests that showroomers usually express a satisfied attitude towards their showrooming experience. They express their willingness to consider showrooming as a consumption pattern in their daily life and do it repetitively. The most reasonable interpretation for the positive review of showrooming is the value maximization of every single purchase. Showroomers find the best appropriate deal trough cross-channel self-customized consumption method. Their perceived risk in the pre-purchase phase is balanced, even exceeded, by their perceived value after receiving the product.
6.2. Discussion

6.2.1. Contribution

Our findings contribute to the current literature on the general understanding of showrooming phenomenon from the customer’s perspective. We utilized a grounded theory research to learn about different showroomers’ experiences, especially focusing on their decision activities during the process and their opinions and feelings towards their own showrooming experience, into the analysis of this phenomenon. Put it this way, we could shed more light on the positive side of showrooming and uncover the showrooming pattern in customer’s eyes. These findings complement the still limited studies in the showrooming phenomenon field regarding the understanding from different perspective. More than that, these findings also provide new insights and clues for retailers to take a new look at showrooming, since a better understanding via customer perspective could help identify the moments that can be penetrated or managed to benefit the retailers. Besides, the paradigm established in this thesis may turn out to be an inspiration point of further studies that intend to explore showrooming phenomenon and generate strategies for retailers who suffered from showrooming. Furthermore, this theoretical paradigm of showrooming we generated may also be one representative study situation for the studies that aim at exploring the cross-channel consumption behavior of customer.

6.2.2. Implication for retailers

On the practical side, our research results provide valuable implications for retailers, no matter which kind retailer is. The results may inspire them to view showrooming with a positive and experiential perspective, then develop a deeper understanding of this consumption behavior and seek for the potential retail opportunities hidden in the whole showrooming process. Through generating and dividing factors, collected from participants’ showrooming experience telling, into different conditions, a story-telling paradigm of showrooming emerges. For the brick-and-mortar retailer, taking the advantage of physical existence to decrease showroomer’s perceived risk could be one opportunity to reduce loss. For online retailers, competing on price blindly is not a considered strategy. There is no one retailer could be the winner in a blind price war. It is worth mentioning that a too-low price is also likely to increase the probability of customer’s doubt towards product quality and retailer reliability. Thus, it is more practical for online retailer to consider about how to decrease the perceived risk caused by online channel attributes and how to increase the services to add value in every customer purchase.

Considering the reality of the prevalence of multichannel and omnichannel retailing, more and more retailers turn into the brick-and-click model. This trend may likely to increase the probability of showrooming phenomenon and intensify the competition between channels since the purchase alternatives become more. Under this background, our research results indicate that providing customer with a shopping environment, which has enough options to support self-customized shopping need. In other words, utilizing an ambidextrous retailing strategy to fulfill different needs and expectations of different
customers. Furthermore, from customer’s perspective, showromming behavior is a positive consumption pattern because it decreases their perceived risk and increases their perceived value, which results in a satisfying shopping experience. For the retailers who are against to showromming and try to wipe it out, it is better to rethink about showromming phenomenon and embrace it.

6.2.3. Limitations and further research

The present study contributes to the existing literature and studies of showromming phenomenon by exploring showrommers’ experience through the theory-building grounded theory method, via the customer lens and shed light on the positive side of showromming. However, the present study is not comprehensive and has a few limitations that provided directions for future research.

First of all, although they all have backgrounds of living and studying in different countries, the participants selected in this study are mainly Chinese. Further, the size of the sample used in the present study is comparatively small due to the exploratory consideration. Further research may consider the use of a larger and more diverse sample. Doing so will help to increase the generalizability of the results from a global perspective and provide a more comprehensive picture.

Second, the present study provided a general understanding about showromming from the perspective of customers through building a paradigm model of showromming process. The different influence factors during showromming process are less thoroughly explored. One may want to focus on how a specific factor affects consumers’ showromming behavior, for example, the environment and service provided by physical store, and the extent to which these factors influence customers’ behavior.

Third, from the practical point of view, the present study mainly focused on the lens of customer. Taking into account the complex situation and the initial stage of transformation of retailing industry, further research can focus on exploring specific cases through other exploratory methods, such as case or multi-cases study, to generate practical guidance for retailers about how to adapt and use showromming phenomenon to compete and service in the future marketplace.
List of Reference


56. Mouter, N., MSc and Noordegraaf, D.V., MSc Faculty of Technology, Policy and Management, Department of Transport and Logistics, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands © 2012 by N. Mouter and D.M. Vonk Noordegraaf and TRAIL Research School


## Appendix 1

Guideline for semi-structured Interviews

Amount of interviews: 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Explain showrooming to interviewees at the beginning: showrooming behavior is customers first visiting a physical store and experience the product then buying it from an online store.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Questions:</strong></td>
<td>1. Name, Gender, Age?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. What is your shopping habit in usual?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. How often do you shop online? What do you usually buy?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Have you ever heard about showrooming phenomenon? How do you understand it?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. Can you describe your latest showrooming experience?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. Can you describe your most memorable experience of showrooming?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-purchase phase</strong></td>
<td>7. What do you think that caused you to do showrooming?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. What did you do before you went to the physical store?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purchase phase</strong></td>
<td>9. What did you do during showrooming process?</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>10. How do you feel during showrooming process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. Do you think your feelings have an impact on your decision making? How does it work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewees perceptions</strong></td>
<td>12. Do people around you have showrooming behavior? What do you think of their showrooming behavior?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13. What role do you think physical stores play in the market at present?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>14. How do you feel about the current physical stores?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15. How do you feel about the current online stores?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post-purchase phase</strong></td>
<td>16. Can you tell me how do you think about your two showrooming experiences? How is your shopping experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>17. How do you see this behavior? How do you think it will affect you?</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Based on your showrooming experience, will you buy stuff from the same retailer again? Why (why not)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Based on your showrooming experience, will you recommend the same retailer to your friends who want to buy the same thing with you? Why (why not)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>