

A STUDY OF MALAYSIAN CONSUMERS' CHANNEL SWITCHING BEHAVIOR
USING AN EXTENDED DECOMPOSED THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR

ABDOLRAZAGH MADAH

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DEDICATION

To my beloved mother and father

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With Deepest Gratitude,

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ABSTRACT

The study of multichannel shopping behaviour and channel switching behaviour is becoming more important from both business and consumer perspectives. The Internet is increasingly managed in relation to other channels and customers are becoming increasingly sophisticated in their use of multiple channels. Businesses and retailers need to understand the factors that affect consumers' channel switching or channel choice behaviour in order to determine effective individual channel strategies and resource allocation. The purpose of this study is to examine the channel switching behaviour of Malaysian consumers between online and offline channels using the Decomposed Theory of Planned Behaviour (DTPB) with the new dimension of descriptive norm (DN) in addition to attitude, subjective norm (SN), and perceived behavioural control (PBC) to explain the phenomenon. The decomposition approach adopted by the model provides a more comprehensive set of antecedents that can better describe the intention to adopt a certain technology (i.e., Internet channel), hence, improving the practical contributions of this research. Partial Least Squares (PLS) based Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique was used to analyze the data. The study was based on convenience sampling method, with the survey instrument administered to the Malaysian consumers from the regions of Klang Valley and Penang. A total of 497 completed surveys were obtained. The respondents had to meet the criteria of shopping online and/or brick and mortar store prior to participating in the survey. Findings show that DTPB was successful in predicting consumer channel switching behaviour. In addition, the main constructs including attitude, SN and DN significantly affected consumers' channel switching intention in both Internet and brick and mortar store channels. PBC was the only construct that did not predict intention. This study provides multichannel retailers with a better understanding of the factors that affect consumer channel switching behavior. The factors influencing channel switching help to explain some barriers of the multichannel retailing development.

ABSTRAK

Kajian tingkah laku membeli-belah pelbagai saluran dan tingkah laku mengubah saluran menjadi semakin penting dari sudut pandang peniaga dan pengguna. Internet juga menjadi semakin penting berbanding dengan saluran-saluran lain dan pengguna menjadi semakin canggih dalam menggunakan saluran membeli-belah. Peniaga dan pemborong perlu memahami faktor-faktor yang memberi kesan kepada penukaran saluran atau tingkah laku pilihan saluran pengguna dalam menentukan strategi-strategi saluran individual dan pengagihan sumber yang berkesan. Tujuan kajian ini ialah mengkaji tingkah laku penukaran saluran di kalangan pengguna-pengguna Malaysia di antara saluran atas talian dan luar talian menggunakan *Decomposed Theory of Planned Behaviour* (DTPB) dengan dimensi baru iaitu norma deskriptif (DN) sebagai tambahan kepada sikap, norma subjektif (SN), dan kawalan persepsi tingkah laku (PBC) untuk menjelaskan fenomena ini. Kaedah dekomposisi yang digunakan oleh model tersebut memberikan satu set faktor penyebab yang lebih komprehensif, yang boleh menghuraikan dengan lebih baik hasrat untuk menggunakan sesuatu teknologi (contohnya, saluran Internet), dan dengan itu, memperbaiki lagi sumbangan praktikal kajian ini. *Partial Least Squares* (PLS) berdasarkan teknik Pemodelan Persamaan Berstruktur (SEM) telah digunakan untuk menganalisa data. Kajian ini berasaskan kepada kaedah persampelan mudah, dengan instrumen tinjauan diagih-agihkan kepada pengguna-pengguna Malaysia dari kawasan Lembah Kelang dan Pulau Pinang. Sejumlah 497 borang tinjauan yang lengkap telah diperolehi. Responden perlu memenuhi kriteria membeli-belah atas talian dan/atau membeli-belah di kedai sebelum mengambil bahagian dalam tinjauan tersebut. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa DTPB berjaya meramal tingkah laku penukaran saluran membeli-belah pengguna. Tambahan lagi, konstruk-construct utama termasuk sikap, SN dan DN memberi kesan yang signifikan ke atas hasrat pengguna menukar saluran membeli-belah melalui saluran Internet dan kedai biasa. PBC adalah satu-satunya konstruk yang tidak meramal hasrat pengguna. Kajian ini memberi pemborong pelbagai saluran dengan pemahaman yang lebih baik tentang faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi tingkah laku pengguna untuk menukar saluran. Faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi penukaran saluran dapat membantu menjelaskan beberapa halangan dalam pembangunan saluran runcit yang pelbagai.

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LIST OF SYMBOLS

AVE	-	Average Variance Explained
BI	-	Behavioral Intention
CR	-	Composite Reliability
α	-	Cronbach's alpha
DTPB	-	Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior
DN	-	Descriptive Norm
E-Commerce	-	Electronic Commerce
FDI	-	Foreign Direct Investment
f^2	-	Effect Size
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	-	Gross National Income
H	-	Hypothesis
IT	-	Information Technology
IDT	-	Innovation Diffusion Theory
NB	-	Normative Belief
PLS	-	Partial Least Squares
β	-	Path Weight
PBC	-	Perceived Behavioral Control
PEOU	-	Perceived Ease of Use
PU	-	Perceived Usefulness
PPP	-	Purchasing Power Product
Q^2	-	Predictive Relevance
R^2	-	R-squared
SEM	-	Structural Equation Modeling
SN	-	Subjective Norm
TAM	-	Technology Acceptance Model
TPB	-	Theory of Planned Behavior
TRA	-	Theory of Reasoned Action
UPM	-	Universiti Putra Malaysia

UTM	-	Universiti Teknologi Malaysia
UM	-	University of Malaya
WOM	-	Word Of Mouth
WWW	-	World Wide Web

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Multichannel strategy is becoming more significant and crucial for both businesses and consumers. Multichannel strategies have enhanced, particularly due to the growing significance of the Internet channel (Wolk and Skiera, 2009). The Internet as a new channel plays a progressive role in relation to other channels with a rapidly increasing number of Internet users (Noble, Griffith, and Weinberger, 2005). Online shopping is growing rapidly, and traditional offline retailers are competing with e-retailers (Sanderson, 2000). This challenge has caused brick and mortar store retailers to start online businesses as well (Kim and Park, 2005). Besides, retaining consumers in the Internet channel is essential for success in the e-tailing market (Park and Stoel, 2005) and multichannel strategy is one of the best ways to maintain consumers (Lawson, 2001).

The number of Internet users has been increasing annually in Malaysia (Syed, Bakar, Ismail, and Ahsan, 2008). The arrival of the commercial use of the Internet and its World Wide Web (WWW) since 1993 has defined the new e-commerce (Zwass, 1996). The emergence of the Internet and the WWW as a medium for commercial transactions has thrust e-commerce into the spotlight, making it the main focus of the international community (Harn, Khatibi, and Ismail, 2006). The Internet and WWW have made it easier, simpler, cheaper, and easily accessible for businesses of all sizes and consumers prefer to interact and conduct commercial transactions electronically compared to the traditional approach (Margherio, 1998). The number of Internet users in Malaysia was 17,723,000 in 2012. Meanwhile, the increase of Internet users from 2000 to 2010 was 356.8 percent (“Asia Internet Usage,” 2014). This proves the remarkable growth rate of Malaysian Internet users.

Shopping via the Internet is a common occurrence in western countries, but it can be very challenging for Malaysia. Online shopping is something new in Malaysia and the transactions are very limited. Syed *et al.* (2008) noted that the growing utilization of the Internet by the younger generation in Malaysia offers an emerging opportunity for online retailers. If online retailers know the factors influencing young Malaysian consumers' shopping behavior, and the relationship between these factors and the type of online shoppers, they can further develop their marketing strategies to convert potential customers into active ones. Thus, given the large number of Internet users in Malaysia, it is necessary to find out the factors that shape Malaysian online shopping behaviors and to develop more studies in this area (Haque and Khatibi, 2005). Therefore, the Internet as a new retailing channel in Malaysia plays an important role in the multichannel environment, and this needs further consideration from retailers. Likewise, marketers and retailers need to find out what is important for customers in selecting a channel/multichannel in order to settle on a suitable channel strategy and to manage resource allocation. From a marketing point of view, synchronizing multiple channels deeply enhances the difficulty of a marketing strategy and it would have an effect on consumers' multichannel behavior (Noble *et al.*, 2005; Verhoef, Neslin, and Vroomen, 2005).

Multichannel retailing strategies offer several advantages to retailers and companies with two or more channels to direct their services or/and products to the consumers (Lawson, 2001). It would also be more interesting and valuable for customers to choose from more than one channel to seek for information and to purchase their products. Multichannel retailers generally make more revenue than a single retailing channel ("Doubleclick," 2004). Marketing executives and retailers have found that the multichannel environment provides an opportunity for them to grasp a larger number of clients (Payne and Frow, 2004) and also to create better relationships with their customers by providing better information, service or products (Rangaswamy and Bruggen, 2005). The multichannel retailing environment also provides more choices for customers to search for information and to purchase their products not only from one firm that provides multichannel but also from different channels operated by varieties of firms (Goldsmith and Flynn, 2005). Hence, the multichannel retail environment creates the opportunity for customers to freely and conveniently decide how, where and when to search and/or purchase products (Jensen, Jakus, English, and Menard, 2004).

Simultaneous utilization of a variety of channels has gradually become more important, which increases the requirement for a multiple channel strategy for customers

(Albesa, 2007). Albesa (2007) declared that retailers and companies should search for a multiple channel design that offers “channel advantages”, due to the fact that each channel provides some degree of differences in benefits, but at the same time, it also has complications and limitations. For this reason, employing only one channel limits the performance in the marketplace to what that channel is proficient in doing predominantly well. In addition, multichannel offers some benefits for consumers (Johnson and Greco, 2003; Albesa, 2007). For instance, there is an opportunity for consumers to choose only one organization to seek for information, buy goods as well as return unwanted products by selecting one of the following channels: Internet, television, catalogs, brick-and-mortar stores, salespersons, and telephone sales (Kumar and Venkatesan, 2005). Moreover, multichannel consumers normally shop more frequently and thus retailers can increase their profitability (Rangaswamy and Bruggen, 2005; Kumar and Venkatesan, 2005; Dholakia, Zhao, and Dholakia, 2005). Kumar and Venkatesan (2005) indicated that multichannel customers are more loyal and satisfied with a brand in the long run. On the other hand, there are some challenges for retailers and researchers in the multichannel environment. One of the main challenges for researchers in the multichannel environment is the perception of consumer behavior in the multichannel domain (Neslin, Grewal, Leghorn, Shankar, Teerling, Thomas, and Verhoef, 2006). Retailers need to understand how consumers select, use, and switch among channels, as well as the influence of their selection on overall shopping patterns (Neslin *et al.*, 2006).

Furthermore, it is possible that multiple channels’ retailers meet the desires of customers’ flexibility for what, how, where, and when to shop. Hence, the challenge is to recognize when, how and where consumers utilize the stores, Internet, TV or catalogs and how consumers consider migrating among channels and among retailers (Albesa, 2007). The growth rate of the Internet channel has outpaced the ones using brick and mortar store channels (Weitz, 2010), which has made it progressively more attractive for consumers to gather information from non-stored channels (e.g., Internet) and make product purchases either through the store-based retail channel or non-stored channels (Balasubramanian, Raghunathan, and Mahajan, 2005; Van and Dach, 2005). Hence, consumers can gather information by using the Internet and buying the product at a store (Jensen *et al.*, 2003; Balasubramanian *et al.*, 2005). Besides, consumers who purchase online are more likely to purchase through multichannel (Kumar and Venkatesan, 2005). Encountering a new format of channel (i.e., Internet), consumers would evaluate their current store choice decisions by comparing the current and new channel formats in dimensions such as ease of shopping, convenience, price, product variety, quality, and new services. Consumers may decide to stay or switch according to their value assessment of the new formats.

There might be other reasons for switching stores in each purchase incidence. Some might switch when they cannot find certain items or a whole product assortment that they are searching for in the same store; some might be searching for the lowest price or promotional items from different stores, and some others might buy regular purchases from one store and fill-ins from another store (Popkowski-Leszczyc and Timmermans, 1997). Majority of consumers use more than one store based channel's format for shopping, however they allocate a majority of their purchases in only one store or store format type (Popkowski-Leszczyc, Sinha, and Sahgal, 2004). Increasing trials and switching to new retail formats raise the importance of investigating the factors influencing store choice and switching. Therefore, this study aims to discover the factors that affect consumer behavior on switching channels.

Several academics (Balabanis and Diamantopoulos, 2004; Gehrt and Yan, 2004; Balabanis, Diamantopoulos, Mueller, and Melewar, 2001) have explored the potential of integrating the consumer behavior literature with what is known about retail channel changing to progress the understanding of what and why consumers use the Internet channel. Findings and the results of Keen, Wetzels, Ruyter, and Feinberg (2004) recommend that much can be learned about the factors affecting retail change through a better understanding of consumer behavior during the buying decision process. In particular, they propose improving the understanding of the underlying motivations that affect consumer purchase behavior. Additionally, Van and Dach (2005), Shim, Eastlick, Lotz, and Warrington (2001), Gehrt and Yan (2004) and Kohli, Devaraj, and Mahmood (2004) have reiterated the need to discover when and why consumers change to alternative retail channels during the buying decision process, since the reasons why consumers select a certain retail channel to conduct their search and estimation of products and then migrate to another retail channel to conclude their purchase is still not completely understood.

The purpose of the current research is to study Malaysian consumers' channel switching behavior. Mathwick, Malhotra, and Rigdon (2002) stated that many of the consumers prefer to buy a general type of product from a retail channel first, and then buy particular merchandise. The focus on a retail channel and/or general product rather than on a specific product or industry will enhance the understanding of multichannel retailing (Noble *et al.*, 2005). As such, the aim of this research is to study channel switching behavior in general; therefore, in order to enhance our knowledge of channel switching and multichannel retailing, consumers were not directed to respond in relation to specific products but rather at a general level. The researcher applies the decomposed theory of

planned behavior (DTPB) (Taylor and Todd, 1995a) with an additional predictor (i.e., descriptive norm) (Rivis and Sheeran, 2003; Berg, Jonsson, and Conner, 2000; Conner and Armitage, 1998) to examine consumers' channel migrating behavior with regards to two channels (i.e., Internet and brick and mortar stores) in Malaysia. The DTPB is an expansion of the theory of planned behavior (TPB) and TPB (Ajzen, 1991) is an expansion of the theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). TBP was created to forecast and describe the behavior of humans in definite contexts (Ajzen, 1991). In this study, the context is channel-migrating behavior while shopping and utilizing any of the two channels (i.e., Internet and brick-and-mortar stores) is the retailing instrument. TPB assumes that an individual's behavioral intention is the direct antecedent of the actual behavior. Behavioral intention (BI) involves three components including behavioral attitude, subjective norm (SN), and perceived behavioral control (PBC). This study will discuss further about TRA, TPB and DTPB in chapter two. TBP supposes that an individual's attitudes and beliefs, along with SN and control factors, will lead to an intention to perform a definite behavior (i.e., whether to migrate channels or otherwise). Lastly, considering the fact that this research concentrates on the Malaysian consumer behavior as well as the Internet as a new channel, hence, we have provided some basic and important information about the new media in Malaysia and have offered an overview of the Malaysian consumer's behavior, as described in chapters one and two of this study.

According to previous studies, it has been found that consumers prefer to purchase their products/services through multichannel because of the advantages of the multichannel such as overcoming the difficulty of finding certain items or the whole product assortment that they are searching for in the same store, decreased cost, saves time, higher availability of information, and ease of shopping (Neslin *et al.*, 2006; Konus, Verhoef, and Neslin, 2005; Choi and Park, 2006; Kim and Park, 2005; Pookulangara, Hawley, and Xiao, 2011). In the multichannel environment, there is still a lack of knowledge on consumers' channel switching among the Internet and brick and mortar store channels (Pookulangara and Natesan, 2010). Besides, most of previous studies have focused on the channels side instead of the consumers' side (Pookulangara and Natesan, 2010; Kumar and Venkatesan, 2005). Hence, there needs to be a study on consumers' channel switching behavior and to focus on the consumers' side in the multichannel environment. In addition, Choi and Park (2006) and Pookulangara *et al.* (2011) noted that there is a lack of studies regarding important predictors of consumers' beliefs, attitudes, and intentions for online and traditional stores shopping in the context of multiple channels and channel switching.

1.2 General Information of Malaysia

The majority of Malaysians are Malay. Malays are among the largest indigenous people in South East Asia, who live in the Malay Archipelago, a region with a mostly Malay population (Kamaruddin and Kamaruddin, 2009). A Malay is born into a culture and religion simultaneously, and consequently, one who rejects Islam is no longer legally considered Malay (Kamaruddin and Kamaruddin, 2009). Chinese and Indians are the others two major Malaysian ethnic groups. Therefore, it is important to note that a Malaysian is someone who has a Malaysian passport and citizenship albeit of different cultures, religions, ethnicity, etc.

1.2.1 Demography

The population in Malaysia was approximately 29,628,392 in 2013 (“The World Factbook,” 2014), which means Malaysia is the 44th most populated country in the world. As it is shown in Table 1.1, Malaysia’s population is increasing. These statistics show that from 2003 to 2013, the population has increased every year. From all of the years listed, the percentage has been steadily changing to more than 1. The Bumiputera (a Malaysian word to describe the Malay race and other indigenous people) makes up the majority of the population with 67.4%; Chinese, Indian and other races are made up by 24.6%, 7.3%, and 0.7%, respectively (Taburan Penduduk dan Ciri-ciri Asas Demografi, 2010). 29.4% of Malaysia’s population is in the age range of 0-14. The majority of Malaysians are 15-64 years old (65.5%) and only 5.1% of Malaysians are over 65 years old (“The World Factbook,” 2014). Thus, it can be noted that one of the best segmentation for retailers and marketers is young consumers in Malaysia. Islam is the dominant religion in Malaysia with 61.3%, and it is followed by Buddhism at 19.8%, Christianity at 9.2%, Hinduism at 6.3%, Confucianism, Taoism, other traditional Chinese religions at 1.3%, no religion at 0.7%, and other or no information at 1.4% (Taburan Penduduk dan Ciri-ciri Asas Demografi, 2010).

Table 1.1: Malaysia population

Year	Population	World Ranking	Percentage Change in Population
2003	23,092,940	46	
2004	23,522,482	46	1.83 %
2005	23,953,136	46	1.8 %
2006	24,385,858	46	1.78 %
2007	24,821,286	46	1.76 %
2008	25,274,132	46	1.82 %
2009	25,715,819	46	1.72 %
2010	28,274,729	43	9.95 %
2011	28,728,610	43	1.78%
2012	29,179,950	43	1.72%
2013	29,628,392	44	1.51%

Source: "The World Factbook," 2014

1.2.2 New Media in Malaysia

In Malaysia, since the introduction of the first Internet Service Provider JARING back in 1990 and later TMNET in 1996, the growth of Internet usage in Malaysia has been gradually rising. From a mere 90 Internet users in 1992, the Internet craze to get connected had increased to a vigorous 50,176 in 1996, 100,103 at the end of 1997 and later to a staggering 2 million in March 2002 (Harn, Khatibi, and Ismail, 2006); it had risen to approximately 20 million Malaysians using the Internet (67 percent of Malaysians) in 2014 ("Asia Internet Usage," 2014). Therefore, it proves that the Internet has become a part of people's lives in Malaysia.

Table 1.2: Social networking in Asian countries

Country	Percent Reach of Social Networking	Average Minutes Per visitors	Average Visits Per Visitors
Singapore	74.3	175.6	19.1
South Korea	68.0	277.8	15.1
Malaysia	66.6	181.2	14.2
Hong Kong	62.8	127.7	13.7
India	60.3	110.4	10.4
Japan	50.9	72.8	9.9

Source: (Lim, 2009)

Table 1.2 demonstrates that social networks (e.g., Facebook, Myspace, Youtube and Twitter) are one of the most well known media in Malaysia. Social networks had penetrated 66.6% in Malaysia by December 2008, which is third in Asia after Singapore (74.3%) and South Korea (68%) (Lim, 2009). Hong Kong is the fourth (62.8%); India with 60.3 percent is the fifth Asian country in the use of social networks and Japan is the sixth Asian country in using social networks. Even in terms of average minutes per visitor spent on social networks, Malaysia is ranked second after South Korea, and all of this information shows that the Internet is penetrating Malaysia quickly. Nowadays, most of the marketers create a page, attract users and advertise through social networks. Likewise, among social networking tools, Facebook has attracted more users than all the others. See Table 1.3.

Table 1.3: Top 10 most popular social networks in Malaysia

Number	Social Network	Alexa Traffic Rank in Malaysia, 2013	Google Ad Planner's Unique Visitors from Malaysia, 2013
1	Facebook	1	13,085,000
2	YouTube	4	Not Available
3	Twitter	12	6,300,000
4	Tagged	44	4,500,000
5	Flickr	70	3,700,000
6	MySpace	313	2,900,000
7	Photobucket	129	2,600,000
8	Metacafe	613	1,800,000
9	Ning	694	950,000
10	Friendster	1346	800,000

Sources: (Lim, 2009; "Alexa - Top Sites in Malaysia," 2014)

Table 1.3 shows that social network is very popular in Malaysia and it is used more and more by youngsters. Facebook is the most well known social network instrument that had more than 13,085,000 users in 2013. Youtube is the second and Twitter, with more than 6,300,000 users is ranked third. Based on the given information, it can be claimed that social networks and Internet are well known among Malaysians. In addition, based on previous studies, it can be inferred that the number of Internet users in Malaysia is increasing every year (Syed *et al.*, 2008; Salehi, Saeidinia, Manafi, Behdarvandi, Shakoori, and Aghaei, 2011).

1.3 Problem Statement

The number of online consumers is increasing rapidly (Slack, Rowley, and Coles, 2008). Mitchell, Ybarra, and Finkelhor (2007) stated that more than 85% of Internet users around the globe have made a minimum of one purchase online; the author continued that the segment of the world's population that had purchased online rose by about 40% within only two years. In addition, it is expected that the number of Internet users will increase to 90% by 2015 (Chatterjee, 2010). It shows that technology is developing quickly, with a vast change anticipated in the retailing format (Slack *et al.*, 2008; Chatterjee, 2010). Therefore, in these indecisive periods, it is necessary for retailers and marketing executives to find out how customers respond to these changes and what their purposes are in this regard. Besides, consumers would like to switch their shopping behavior and purchase through the Internet, and buy whatever they want, efficiently and rapidly (Verhoef *et al.*, 2005). This will cause a crucial risk to the store based industry and this phenomenon is moving traditional retailers to apply a multichannel strategy (Morgenson, 1993).

It has been proven that consumers possess complex shopping behaviors in such an emerging multichannel environment (Alba, Weitz, Janiszewski, Lutz, Sawyer, and Wood, 1997; Balasubramanian *et al.*, 2005) and this behavior is influenced by the customers' perception towards traditional and virtual outlets or storefronts (Stone, Hobbs, and Khaleeli, 2002). In other words, customers' cross-channel behavior may occur at various steps of buying. To the retailer, it may be a kind of detriment once consumers use another channel. This multichannel emergence has been a challenging issue for retailers (Stone *et al.*, 2002; Yang, Park, and Park, 2007). A crucial point here is that the retailer might lose the customer in the process of shopping (Nunes and Cespedes, 2003). Hence,

the management of a multichannel customer is of great importance to the retailers when it comes to integrating the effects of multichannel. Previous studies (e.g., Jones and Biasiotto, 1999; Breitenbach and VanDoren, 1998; Hoffman and Novak, 1996; Berthon, Leyland, and Watson, 1996; Reynolds, 1997; Peterson, Balasubramanian, and Bronnenberg, 1997; Murphy, 1998) have only investigated the benefits and significance of how to create and manage a multichannel, but very few researches have addressed the approaches and methods of improving the multichannel from the customers' perspective (Burke, 1997; Kumar and Venkatesan, 2005). Thus, this study focuses on the consumers' side to realize the circumstances under which customers might switch.

The concept of multichannel consumer behavior and consumer channel switching has been an important discussion made by some of the researchers (Choi and Park, 2006; Sullivan and Thomas, 2004; Verhoef and Donkers, 2005). In spite of the growing attention which has been paid to multichannel oriented topics, studies on multichannel retailing and channel switching behavior are still considered to be at its early stages. As Neslin *et al.* (2006) and Slack *et al.* (2008) have stated, previous researches on multichannel based topics chiefly concentrated on attaining knowledge regarding the elements of customers' choice of channel. Very few studies have investigated customer channel migration in terms of multichannel retailing and the factors that affect consumers' channel behavior among different channels in a multichannel environment (Ansari, Mela, and Neslin, 2008). A study done by Choi and Park (2006) has also shown that there is lack of knowledge concerning important predictors in terms of consumers' beliefs, attitudes, and intentions for online as well as traditional stores shopping on the basis of multiple channels and channel switching. Ansari *et al.* (2008) noted that, "few academic studies have been devoted to systematically investigating the drivers and consequences of multichannel consumer behavior". Pookulangara *et al.* (2011) indicated that the study on consumer channel switching intention is still not sufficient and needs more research. Hence, the present study investigates potential elements related to customer channel migration behavior.

In addition, convincing and attracting Malaysian consumers to use the Internet as their retailing channel instead of traditional channels, is still a challenging task for web retailers in Malaysia (Haque and Khatibi, 2005; Salehi *et al.*, 2011). The development of the Internet technology in Malaysia has massive opportunities due to its increasing benefits, decreased costs of product and service delivery, and expanding geographical boundaries in bringing buyers and sellers together (Syed *et al.*, 2008; Haque and Khatibi, 2005). There is no doubt that in the 21st century, Malaysia has entered a new era of

globalization. The growth of Internet usage is encouraging some changes in the customer purchasing process and it has become one of the most significant communication channels in the world (Casalo, Flavian, and Guinaliu, 2007).

Salehi *et al.* (2011) reported that in order to enhance online shopping in Malaysia, understanding consumer online shopping behavior and factors influencing this behavior when shopping online should be given priority. They also indicated that the majority of Malaysians especially young people were using the Internet for non-shopping activities such as searching for information, entertainment, playing games and communication with others. Therefore, the acceptance of the Internet channel among Malaysian consumers is not as advanced compared to their counterparts in other countries. The question is why? In addition, what are the factors that influence their acceptance? The other challenge is to understand how and when Malaysian consumers use the Internet, and what drives their propensity to switch between retailers and between channels. There are some barriers, which have contributed to the unwillingness of the Malaysian people to shop online, like being afraid of their personal information being stolen by others (Salehi, 2012). Despite the potential among Malaysian consumers, there is still a lack of understanding towards online shopping. Meanwhile, Haque and Khatibi (2005), Harn *et al.* (2006), and Mumtaz, Islam, Ariffan, Ku, and Karim (2011) have stated that studies regarding consumer behavior using behavioral models (e.g., TRA, TPB or DTPB) in online shopping in the Malaysian environment are still limited and they also claimed that the Internet is still considered as a new medium between retailers and consumers in Malaysia.

Yuliharsi, Aminul Islam, and Daud (2011) reported that many researchers in Malaysia have used the technology acceptance model (TAM) for their studies in consumer behavior on whether they select online shopping or otherwise. Delafrooz, Paim, Haron, Sidin, and Khatibi (2009) also applied the TAM in their study to examine the factors affecting students' attitude toward online shopping in Malaysia. They then, recommended further studies to examine the effect of factors on attitude toward online shopping behavior in Malaysia and to use other behavioral models. The TRA (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) and the TPB (Ajzen, 1991) are the most well known behavioral theories. Previous researchers (Kim, Kim, and Kumar, 2003; Shim and Drake, 1990; Yoh, Damhorst, Sapp, and Laczniak, 2003) have applied these theories to examine online consumer shopping behavior in a single channel environment. It is also crucial to examine the variables of TRA and TPB (behavioral attitude, norms, behavioral controls, and intention) in a multichannel environment. In addition, Gehrt and Yan (2004) indicated that very few researchers have studied consumers' multiple channel choice/channel switching behavior

using behavioral factors and a majority of earlier studies has concentrated on examining variables in a single channel environment. Therefore, it means that very few current online customer behavior studies have theory building or testing as their primary objective. For that reason, it is now possible to develop academic knowledge in this field by taking a broader view that builds upon general theories linked to channel switching. This is a rational and suitable development in a problem-oriented field like marketing (Lehmann, 1999). This research addresses this gap by developing and testing an online/offline consumer behavioral model.

Based on the given information, extended knowledge is needed on consumers' channel switching behavior using behavioral models (i.e., DTPB model with DN as an additional predictor) (Choi and Park, 2006; Kim and Park, 2005; Pookulangara *et al.*, 2011). The DTBP (Taylor and Todd, 1995a) which is regarded as an extension of the TPB (Ajzen, 1991), is required given the main model's limitations in dealing with behaviors over which clients and people have incomplete volitional control (Ajzen, 1991). TBP is applied to anticipate and describe human behavior in particular contexts (Ajzen, 1991). In this case, the context is the behavior of channel switching while shopping by using any combination of the two channels (i.e., Internet and brick-and-mortar stores) as the retailing medium. The pivotal element within this theory is about one's intention to accomplish a performance of a given behavior under volitional control. The assumption of the DTBP is such that one's attitudes and beliefs, controlling drivers, along with subjective and descriptive norms will result in an intention to conduct a particular behavior (i.e., whether to switch channels or not).

Moreover, researchers are interested to find out the attitude, SN and PBC differences among consumers who prefer the Internet or store channels (Gupta, Su, and Walter, 2004; Pookulangara *et al.*, 2011). Gupta *et al.* (2004) designed some questions in this regard including: are there attitude, SN, PBC, and perceptual differences between the consumers attracted to purchase online and those attracted to brick and mortar stores, and if so, what are these differences? Understanding the effect of such differences on consumers' channel selection should be valuable in developing channel and marketing strategies (Gupta *et al.*, 2004). It means if consumers selecting the Internet channel are different based on these attitude, norms and perceived controls differences from consumers who prefer brick and mortar store channel, so, the marketing and channel strategies should be designed based on the profiles of the target consumers. However, many online marketing decisions regarding product assortment, pricing and promotional strategies focus only on what are observed in the online environment, without knowing the

exact causal explanation for the consumer's channel choice behavior (Gupta *et al.*, 2004). As a result, to fill this research gap, this study tries to examine what kinds of consumers are more likely to be attracted by the Internet channel instead of brick and mortar store (and vice versa) and their attitude, norms and behavioral controls differences.

Furthermore, Conner and Armitage (1998) claimed that most of the studies on TPB have discovered that SN is not sufficient in predicting consumers' intention behavior. One of the basic problems with SN as a predictor of TPB is its traditional conceptualization as a social pressure to conform to the expectations of others (Schofield, Pattison, Hill, and Borland, 2001; Ravis and Sheeran, 2003). Instead of the SN of facing social pressures, in line with early studies on social pressure (Kelley, 1947; Deutsch and Gerard, 1955), SN might also be derived from individuals adopting behaviors of others as well as an individual's perceptions and a descriptive influence. Additionally, by adding DN to the TPB model, model forecasting might be developed above those predicted by the TPB model with three variables including attitude, SN, and PBC (Ravis and Sheeran, 2003; Berg *et al.*, 2000). Hence, the study would add DN to evaluate the effect of DN on consumers' channel switching behavior.

In addition, price is known as a component of facilitating conditions, which affects PBC (Triandis, 1977). Price and cost of products cause consumers to compare channels while looking for product information. For instance, they will use the Internet and catalogs to search for information and then compare the prices of each channel in order to decrease financial risk. It is important to evaluate if the "low price" as a shopping cause is prominent for consumers of other multichannel retailers with diverse market approaches (Schroder and Zaharia, 2008). Only a few empirical researches have studied how buyers recognize price promotions in stores and Internet channels and how their perceptions affect channel migration (Oh and Kwon, 2009). Such a limitation of accurately understanding how consumers react to price promotions in a different way in store and Internet channels cause considerable challenges to retailers in their effort to build cross-channel synergies (Oh and Kwon, 2009). Also, there is a lack of empirical research that explores whether the price, which may also function as a reference point to the status quo bias effects, has an impact on decreasing or increasing customers' tendency to engage in channel migration (Oh and Kwon, 2009). The impact of the price on PBC will be identified in this study using a quantitative research method.

The second component of facilitating conditions is information, which also affects PBC (Triandis, 1977). Many studies in marketing have examined consumer

searching behavior with respect to information channel usage and its effect on PBC (e.g., Kidwell and Jewell, 2003; Sparks and Shepherd, 1992; Manstead and Eekelen, 1998; Beatty and Smith, 1987). Many of these studies have sought to correlate information channel usage with consumer characteristics (Westbrook and Fornell, 1979; Newman and Staelin, 1973; Kiel and Layton, 1981). However, the problem or challenge is that there are very few consistent findings with respect to consumer characteristics and the use of Internet and retail stores (Newman, 1977; Strebler, Tülin, and Joffre, 2004). Researchers have stated that empirical studies on multiple channel users' information exploration and shopping behavior utilizing different retailing channels are very sparse and it has to be more clarified (Neslin *et al.*, 2006; Kim and Lee, 2008). Moreover, self-efficacy is the other component of PBC (Taylor and Todd, 1995a). Self-efficacy is often known as the main determinant of channel choice and channel migration, but there is a lack of study on this concept (Slack *et al.*, 2008). Hence, this study will examine the effect of information and self-efficacy on PBC with regard to the two channels (i.e., Internet and brick and mortar stores).

Lastly, Pookulangara and Natesan (2010) stated that the Internet could be extended to embrace racial groups and various age groups. Pookulangara *et al.* (2011) also noted that the similarity between catalog/Internet and brick and mortar is less than the similarities between the Internet and catalogs. Thus, they added that there is a lack of studies on these two channels (i.e., Internet and brick and mortar stores). They recommended future studies to investigate consumers' channel-migrating behavior for each channel separately, such as between catalogs and brick and mortar stores or between brick and mortar stores and Internet instead of all of three channels together (i.e., Internet, Brick and mortar stores and catalog). Therefore, in exploring the drivers of channel switching behavior, the DTPB model was used as a behavioral model to describe the influence of its variables which include relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, attitudes, SN, PBC, which is influenced by self efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1982), and facilitating conditions (information, price) (Triandis, 1977) with an additional predictor, which is the DN (Conner and Armitage, 1998; Trafimow and Finlay, 1996), on the dependent variable (consumer channel switching behavior) based on the two given channels in this study (i.e., Internet and bricks and mortars stores).

1.4 Research Questions

The framework for this research is based on the DTPB (Taylor and Todd, 1995a). This study intends to answer the following research questions.

- 1) Do relative advantage, compatibility and complexity influence attitude towards channel switching intention?
- 2) Does normative belief (NB) influence SN toward channel switching intention?
- 3) Do resource facilitating (i.e., information and price) and self-efficacy influence PBC toward consumer channel switching intention?
- 4) Do attitude, SN, PBC, and DN influence consumers' channel switching intention?
- 5) Does PBC influence channel switching behavior?
- 6) What is the influence of channel switching intention with an additional predictor (i.e., DN) on consumer channel switching behavior?

1.5 Research Objectives

The study has the following objectives:

- 1) To determine the influence of relative advantage, compatibility, and complexity on attitude toward consumer channel switching intention.
- 2) To examine the influence of NB on SN toward channel switching intention.
- 3) To identify the influence of resource facilitating (i.e., information and price) and self-efficacy on PBC toward consumer channel switching intention.
- 4) To evaluate the influence of attitude, SN, PBC and DN on channel switching intention.
- 5) To identify the influence of PBC on channel switching behavior.
- 6) To identify the influence of channel switching intention with an additional predictor (i.e., DN) on consumers' channel migrating behavior.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study presents an investigation of consumers' channel switching behavior with regards to two channels (i.e., Internet and brick and mortar stores) in Malaysia. In view of this, an imperative theoretical contribution of this research is to study and develop

the understanding of Malaysian consumers' channel switching behavior by applying the DTPB with an additional predictor (i.e., DN). Academically, this study extends the application of the DTPB model to consumers' channel switching behavior in Malaysia. This research is also important because the study on consumers' channel switching behavior is still new and needs further investigation (Kim and Park, 2005; Choi and Park, 2006; Pookulangara *et al.*, 2011). On the other hand, the numbers of multichannel consumers are rising, hence, it is necessary to study consumer channel switching behavior with regards to Internet and/or brick and mortar store channels (Pookulangara *et al.*, 2011).

This research helps retailers to understand the behavioral factors that affect Malaysian consumers' behavior to change channels from the Internet to brick and mortar stores and vice versa. Madlberger (2006) illustrated that it is a significant issue for retailers to understand the behavior of consumers in various channels. Besides, today's consumers have more access to the amount of information through various channels, so it will help them to make better purchase decisions (Williams and Larson, 2004). Consumers might easily migrate to the new channels based on the channels' advantages (Pulliam, 1999). Thus, it is essential for retailers to attain more information and knowledge about consumers' channel migrating behavior and to develop their channel based on the obtained knowledge (Madlberger, 2006; Myers, Pickersgill, and Van Metre, 2004). Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard (1986) pointed out that retailers and producers try to predict customers' needs. Retailers need correct and valid information about their consumers' trends in various market segments, before they research about consumers online or in brick and mortar store channels. It is also crucial for retailers to clarify whether consumers prefer to select Internet as their channel or brick and mortar stores. Hence, the other significance of the current study is to know these issues, which allow retailers to target consumers effectively and to better understand customers' intentions related to Internet and brick and mortar store shopping.

In addition, as already noted, this study examines consumers' channel migrating behavior based on the DTPB model with DN as an additional predictor of TPB. This approach offers an important outcome to multiple channel retailers in planning their channel strategy. The current research describes consumers' channel switching intention and also distinguishes variables that forecast consumers' channel migrating behavior with regards to two channels (i.e., Internet and brick and mortar stores) in Malaysia.

1.7 Scope and Contribution of the Study

This research was conducted among the Malaysian population from the regions of Klang Valley and Penang. The contribution of this study is reflected in two main fields: academic contribution and contribution to practice. From the viewpoint of the TPB, this study extends the DTPB by adding an additional predictor (i.e., DN) as a factor that affects an individual's intention and to improve the DTPB model. Since a few studies in the field of multichannel retailing have used the DTPB, the present study will construct a theoretical framework based on the DTPB. Indirectly, the current research examines the robustness of the theory in its capability to measure adoption intentions within different sampling frames. Finally, the study has utilized a well known theory (i.e., DTPB) and therefore, contributed to our understanding of factors that are relevant to the acceptance of consumers' channel switching behavior in Malaysia.

The decomposed TPB was used to study consumers' channel migrating behavior by considering two channels (traditional stores and especially the Internet as a new technology). The decomposition approach in this research has the advantage of offering more practical contributions than a unidimensional approach because the decomposition approach is focused on recognizing particular factors that affect the consumer's channel switching intention. The findings of this study will also assist retailers in developing Internet marketing strategies that are more effective. Besides, by the implications provided in the current study, retailers can come up with useful multichannel strategies and engage in developing meaningful approaches to multichannel retailing management.

Many multichannel consumers in these two channels (i.e., Internet and brick and mortar stores) from developing countries might share the same exposure, experience or go through the same phase of progress in their channel switching behavior endeavors as consumers' in Malaysia. Since, consumers in other developing countries may share the same issues faced by the Malaysian consumers, it is expected that the findings from this research will help retailers and marketing executives in other developing countries in understanding consumers' channel migrating behavior by considering the Internet and brick and mortar store channels in the current study as well.

1.8 Operational Definitions

For the purpose of this study, a number of specific terms are used and are defined as follows:

Online shopping: Online shopping is the process of buying products, or services, from the Internet or using any similar public electronic network (Jusoh and Ling, 2012).

Brick and mortar store: Brick and mortar store refers to businesses that have a physical (rather than virtual or online) presence; in other words, stores (built of physical material such as brick and mortar) are where consumers can enter physically to see, touch, and purchase products (Choi and Park, 2006).

Multichannel retailing strategy: Multichannel retailing is defined as a distribution strategy to serve customers across various channels (Stone *et al.*, 2002).

Multichannel shoppers: Multichannel shoppers are those who regularly shop through more than a single channel (Kumar and Venkatesan, 2005).

Consumers' channel switching: When retailers add a new channel (e.g., Internet) to their previous channel (e.g., store) and the newly available channel gives satisfaction, customers will adopt it and make a switch to the new channel of the company (e.g., from store to the Internet channel), thus becoming channel switching consumers (Vanheems and Kelly, 2014).

1.9 Organization of the Study

This research is divided into five chapters. Each chapter provides its aims in transferring the primary study of the topic until the end consequences. Chapter one thoroughly indicates and explains the rationale for focusing on the topic of this research. This chapter focuses also on Malaysia and evaluates some of Malaysia's factors, which directly or indirectly affect Malaysians' consumer behavior. This chapter concentrates on the external factors of Malaysia that are necessary to be mentioned.

The second chapter will provide an overview of consumer behavior in Malaysia. This section explores consumer channel migrating behavior, multi channel consumer behavior, the impact of relative advantage, compatibility and complexity, NB (i.e., friends, family and co-workers), information, price, self-efficacy, attitude, SN, PBC, and DN on Malaysian consumers' channel switching intention as well as channel migrating behavior by using the DTPB. This chapter also describes the research framework and hypotheses.

The third chapter is meant to describe the research methodology. This chapter demonstrates the research frameworks and describes the exogenous variables (independent variable) and endogenous variables (dependent variables). In addition, it explains the research method, the sampling of this research, the instrument development and finally the methods that will be used to analyze the data.

The discussion in chapter four will be mainly on data analysis and findings. Chapter four aims to find the connections between the exogenous and endogenous variables. The PLS-based SEM technique will be used to analyze the data and test the model. This chapter is divided into two parts: the measurement model (to analyze factors and test validity and reliability of the constructs) and the structural model (to test the hypotheses).

Finally, chapter five gives the overview of this study. The main objective of this chapter is to clarify the discussion on the findings. In addition, this chapter explains the implications and recommendations of the research. The chapter ends with the limitations, further research, and the conclusion section.

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