Bachelor Thesis Marketing

High-involvement search behaviour

Name:	Luc Prijt
ANR:	374621
Version:	1.0

Subject Area:	Search behaviour consumers
Title:	The consequences of the changed consumer search behaviour for retailers of high-involvement products.
Date:	06-11-2010
Supervisor:	Drs. A.M. (Annemieke) van Gool MBA

Management Summary

The search behaviour of consumers is changing drastically through the rise of internet as information source in the consumer decision process (Ratchford, Talukdar, & Lee, 2007). From the existing literature the information about the search behaviour of high-involvement products is scattered because it is only done for low-involvement products (Schröder & Zaharia, 2008) or for only one specific high-involvement product (Ratchford et al., 2007). While search behaviour is from major importance for retailers of high involvement products since the consumer is making a *fully planned* purchase when they are in the consumer decision process for a high-involvement product (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1995).

The problem to be solved in this thesis is what the search behaviour (online and offline) is in each phase of the consumer decision process for purchasing high-involvement products and how a retailer could anticipate on this. To find a solution for this problem a literature study has been done to discover what exactly high-involvement products are and what the consumer decision process is for these products. Thereafter the online and offline search behaviour is discussed per stage of the consumer decision process. Finally the aspects were described how retailers of high-involvement products could anticipate on this consumer behaviour.

Durable and infrequently bought products that are perceived as a possible high risk could be indicated generally as high-involvement products (Zaichkowsky, 1985; Kapferer & Laurent, 1985). Because of these aspects consumers will go through every stage of the consumer decision process (Engel et al., 1995). Consumers who will use different channels in the process for information search and the actual purchase are so-called *research shoppers*. The most important research-shopping pattern is *internet search (online)* ⇒ *store purchase (offline)* (Verhoef, Neslin, & Vroomen, 2007). To anticipate on this changed search behaviour retailers should operate as a multichannel retailer (Zhang, 2009). Retailers should both online and offline take advantages of the strengths consumers assign to the channels. The retailer should offline use the benefits that the products are physically present and the availability of <u>knowledgeable</u> salespeople (Verhoef et al., 2007; Sharma & Krishnan, 2002). Retailers should provide convenient information online so consumers could easily find a lot of information and compare different products (Verhoef et al., 2007). Withal multichannel shoppers and consumers for high involvement products have both hedonic and utilitarian shopping motives; both online and offline (Kwon & Jain, 2009). To serve these consumers well retailers should offer online and offline an experience and convenient information.

Index

Chapter 1: Problem Statement

1.1 Problem background

The rise of internet usage leads to the consumer becoming better informed. Before a consumer purchases a product, he is more likely to search for additional information to make the best decision. Internet sources seem to replace the most traditional sources for consumers. For example, in the car industry, the manufacturer and dealer websites are currently the most important sources for information instead of the traditional sources such as store visits and catalogues. (Ratchford, Talukdar, & Lee, 2007).

"The research-shopper phenomenon is the tendency of customers to use one channel for search and another for purchase" (Verhoef, Neslin, & Vroomen, 2007 p. 129.) The question remains how a consumer behaves when he is in the decision process for purchasing a high-involvement product and how a retailer should anticipate to these research shoppers. Do consumers only want to gain inspiration in-store and purchase the product somewhere else? Or do they search for information and inspiration online and in magazines and then purchase it in-store? Several relationships have been discovered between online shopping and in-store shopping: Mokhtarian (2004) discovered for example that e-shopping could replace store visits but could also generate store visits that otherwise would never happen. The fact is, when a consumer purchases a product online he does not visit a store for the actual purchase. However on the other hand people have through the internet an enormous source of information about physical stores. This could lead that consumers visit more distant stores or plan new store visits (Mokhtarian, 2004).

Traditional retailers are the bricks-and-mortar, single channelled retailers (Sharma & Krishnan, 2002). Much research has been done about how a traditional retailer could expand the sales with an online shop (Bretthauer, Mahar, & Venakataramanan, 2010) or how a single channel e-tailer should operate on the internet (Hernández, Jiménez, & Martín, 2009). But the current information about the search behaviour (online and offline) of consumers purchasing high-involvement products is scattered. It is not clear how a traditional (physical) retailer could anticipate on this changing consumer behaviour of research-shoppers.

1.2 Problem statement

Schröder & Zaharia (2008) discovered five shopping motives for low-involvement products both possible in-store and online: convenience orientation, recreational orientation, delivery-related risk aversion, independence orientation and product- and payment related. Schröder & Zaharia (2008) did only research to one source of information; webshop of the retailer. However for a retailer of high-involvement products it is necessary to know when, where and for what a consumer is looking in each phase of the consumer decision process including all possible sources of information. That is why the following problem statement is formulated:

What is the search behaviour, both online and offline, in each phase of the consumer decision process for purchasing high-involvement products and how could a retailer anticipate to this?

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated to answer the problem statement:

- What are high-involvement products?
- What is the consumer decision process for high-involvement products?
- What is the online and offline search behaviour of a consumer per phase of the consumer decision process of purchasing a high-involvement product?
- How could a retailer of high-involvement products anticipate on the search behaviour of consumers purchasing a high-involvement product?

1.4 Academic relevance

In recent years research into search behaviour of consumers, and especially about the rise of internet usage, has been done. Most of this research only concerns how a retailer could expand his activities with an online shop (Bretthauer et al. 2010) or what the relationship is between the online and offline shop of a retailer. For example, according to Verhagen & van Dolen (2009) the online purchase intention of consumer is influenced by both online and offline store perceptions. But little research has been done about how a retailer of high-involvement products should combine his activities (offline & online) to anticipate in the best way on the changed search behaviour of the consumer. Taking into account that especially for high-involvement products the internet sources are substituting most traditional sources for acquiring information (Ratchford et al. 2007).

The need for this research is also underlined by the Marketing Science Institute (Marketing Science Institute, 2008). One of the top priorities they determined is: "Understanding the Consumer/Customer Behaviour". This means that there is little known about this topic and there is a high demand of the market. According to the Marketing Science Institute (2008) companies need to understand the decision-making processes especially because of the growth of the use of online sources.

Comparable research has already been done about the shopping motives that are possible both online and offline for a German retailer (Schröder & Zaharia, 2008). The most important results of this research were that five theory-based motives have been discovered and secondly this research has shown "that the majority of customers use the same channel for information and purchasing purposes" (Schröder & Zaharia, 2008, p. 462). But these researchers only researched one source of information (the webshop of the retailer) although a consumer will search for information at several places in the decision process for purchasing high-involvement products, both online (Verhoef et al. 2007) and offline (Ratchford et al. 2007). In addition to this, the research of Schröder & Zaharia (2008) was about a retailer selling low-involvement products. Therefore this thesis has the objective of filling the gap for high-involvement products including the aspects of online & offline search behaviour within the retailer's marketing channels but also within other possible sources.

1.5 Managerial relevance

For traditional retailers it is important to know more about the search behaviour of the consumer. According to Verhoef et al. (2007) *Internet search* ⇒ *Store Purchase* is the most used way of research shopping. The use of internet is growing rapidly and through this people are getting more experienced and will search longer on the internet for information. Online sources are increasingly replacing the traditional sources (Klein & Ford, 2003). It is therefore unimportant for a retailer to know if he should have a website, but it is important what he should present online and what they should present offline to serve the consumer in the best possible way. The online content provided to consumers must be accurate, informative, updated and <u>relevant</u> to consumers' requirements (Hernández et al. 2009) and must not give consumers an information overload (Lee & Lee, 2004).

The findings of this thesis will help traditional retailers to anticipate on the changing buying process of the consumer. For a retailer it will be clear what he should express where, which will make the chance of free riders minimal. "When consumers use one retailer's channel only to obtain information and evaluate products and switch to another supplier to place their business, they benefit from a resource to which they did not contribute and thus they are engaging in free riding" (Baal & Dach, 2005, p. 76).

1.5.1 Structure of the thesis

The first chapter of the thesis contains the introduction. The problem background, problem statement and the relevance of the thesis are respectively discussed in the introduction. Within chapter 2 till 5, the literature study will come forward; on the basis of the research questions the relevant theory will be discussed. The sub categories, as shown in the conceptual model (appendix 1), will be the sections that will be discussed per chapter. In the final chapter the conclusions, discussions and recommendations will be presented.

Chapter 2: High-involvement products

When people (plan to) buy a product they have a certain level of involvement during this process. Given the fact that people have different levels of involvement, they also have a different behaviour in their consumer decision process. For this reason a difference is made in this chapter between high- and low-involvement products. Most of the research about high-involvement products has been done between 1970 and 1990. Later research about consumer involvement always falls back on this research. For this reason the research of Lastovicka & Gardner (1978), Zaichkowsky (1985), Kapferer & Laurent (1985) and Barber & Venkatraman (1986) will be discussed in the next sections.

2.1 Zaichkowsky

According to Zaichkowsky (1985) involvement means: "a person's perceived relevance of the object based upon inherent needs, values and interests" (Zaichkowsky, 1985, p. 342). Zaichkowsky developed in 1985 a system, the Personal Involvement Inventory (PII), to measure the level of involvement of a consumer. This research showed that each consumer could experience a product differently. A consumer could be low involved with a certain product and another consumer could be high involved with the exact same product. For example a person could be highly involved with wine; he wants to know more about wine, reads books and thinks that wine "adds a lot to the appropriate meals" (Zaichkowsky, 1985, p. 345). And for another person wine could only mean something to get drunk.

To divide low- and high-involvement products, four behavioural aspects of high-involvement products could be formulated from Zaichkowsky's (1985) research: (a) active search for information about brands, (b) large comparison among product attributes, (c) perception of dissimilarity among different brands, and (d) special preference for a particular brand.

2.2 Kapferer and Laurent

Kapferer and Laurent (1985) did research about the consumer's involvement profile. They conducted research for 10 types of involvement on 22 product categories. These types are explained by four facets of involvement: risk importance, pleasure, sign and interest. The highest type of involvement, *total involvement*, scores high on each single facet (appendix 2). This is also underlined by Barber and Venkatraman (1986) claiming that people are highly involved "when the act of purchase or consumption is seen by the decision maker as having high personal importance or relevance" (Barber & Venkatraman, 1986, p. 318). Kapferer and

Laurent (1985) concluded that people should always use more than one indicator to explain involvement. Just one indicator is not enough, involvement is a multidimensional concept and they concluded that high- and low-involvement are just two extreme cases. Between those two types Kapferer and Laurent (1985) have classified eight less extreme types of involvement (appendix 3). According to this subdivision every product category scores high on a few involvement types. For example the television product category scores high on the following types of involvement: (a) *need for expertise*, (b) *undramatized risk* and (c) *conformist purchase.* Notable is that all three types have a high level of risk importance but people with (b) and (c) have a low level of interest for this category. Undramatized risk scores low on the facets sign and pleasure as well. Therefore Kapferer and Laurent (1985) concluded that involvement could not be considered or not be measured as an *unidimensional construct.*

2.3 Hierarchies of effect

As shown in figure 1 Lastovicka and Gardner (1978) used the alternative hierarchies of effect from Ray et al. (1973) to show the different levels of involvement. Lastovicka and Gardner (1978) have classified high-involvement to the standard *Learning hierarchy* (Ray et al., 1973), cognitive + affective + conative, and low-involvement to the *low-involvement hierarchy,* cognitive + conative + affective. According to Lastovicka and Gardner (1978) high priced and high risk products are typical for the learning

Low-involvement	High-involvement
Affective	Conative
(feel)	(do)
⇑	⇑
Conative	Affective
(do)	(feel)
⇑	⇑
Cognitive	Cognitive
(learn)	(learn)

Figure 1: Alternative Hierarchies of Effect (Source: Lastovicka & Gardner, 1978, p. 78 based on Ray et al., 1973)

hierarchy. Whereas repetitive brand choice of inexpensive, low risk products are typical for the low-involvement hierarchy. Figure 1 represents that, generally, consumers in low-involvement situations *do* (conative) before they *feel* (interest, evaluation, attitude, feeling, conviction and yielding). For high-involvement situations people want to know everything about the product (cognitive and affective) before they actually buy a product (conative). Biswas and Sherrel (1993) discovered that a consumer who is low-involved has less knowledge about the products and prices he is looking for.
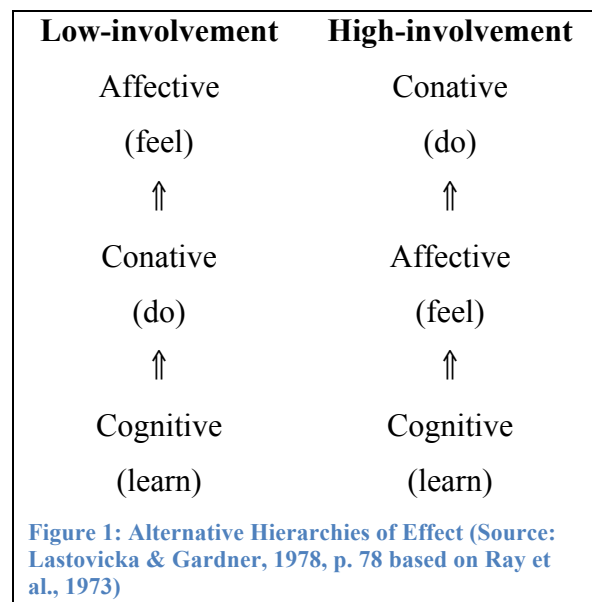
2.4 Discussion

Involvement has been an important research topic for a long time and a lot of research has been done in the past 30 years. Still, from the available literature, it is impossible to ascribe a single product to a type of involvement for every situation. For any product people could be high involved or low involved (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Although Lastovicka and Gardner (1978) have shown that there is a difference in buying behaviour for the different types of involvement. Therefore it is important to divide a product in general in the low- or high-involvement group.

Kapferer and Laurent (1985) divided involvement in ten types of involvement where product categories could be placed in different types of involvement. But the most researchers divided involvement only in high- and low-involvement, which seems to be the best option. In this way there is some freedom of movement in these concepts and it is possible to give a general judgement to a product between high- and low-involvement. It is not possible to ascribe certain products to only the high-involvement type but according to the previous research the following aspects should be met in de consumer decision process to define a product as high-involvement:

- **Active search for information**(Zaichkowsky, 1985)
- **High possible risk perception** (Kapferer & Laurent, 1986; Barber & Venkatraman, 1986)
- **Large comparison among product attributes** (Zaichkowsky, 1985)
- **Perception of dissimilarity among different brands** (Zaichkowsky, 1985)
- **Special preference for a particular brand** (Zaichkowsky, 1985)

2.5 Conclusion

In general it can be said that durable goods with a relatively high price (high risk) can always be assigned to the high-involvement type of products. Examples of durable goods are: Cars, Washing Machines, Furniture and Vacuum cleaners. In case of these kind of products people are interested in the product, perceive a high pleasure value and have the feeling that a *mispurchase* would be a real problem (Kapferer & Laurent, 1986). They have a high possible risk perception and will therefore actively search for information. To anticipate on this active search for information it is important to know what a consumer is searching for and when. For this reason the consumer decision process will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Consumer decision process

In the consumer decision process of purchasing a product people go through different stages. In each stage they have particular search behaviour to gather information. The following chapter will first describe the consumer decision process and thereafter which information consumers need during this process.

3.1 Phases of the consumer decision process

Engel, Blackwell & Miniard (1995) have build a model (figure 2) to describe the consumer decision process. In this model Engel et al. (1995) divided the consumer decision process into six different stages. **Need recognition** is the first stage in this process. People have a desired state and an actual state. When the difference between these states meets a certain level, where a person wants to achieve the desired state instead of the actual state he has recognised a need.

According to Engel et al. (1995) the second stage of the consumer decision process contains the **search for information**. In this stage a motivated consumer is searching actively for information. This could be *internal search* where consumers are checking their own memory about the subject. On the other hand consumers could gather information from the marketplace, two forms of this *external search* are possible. Pre-purchase search takes place when someone wants to actually buy something and ongoing search is a continuous process of gathering information without the direct purchase needs. The motive of prepurchase search is to make a better purchase decision. But for ongoing search the motives are to be prepared and well-known for future purchase and it can be experienced as fun and recreational (Bloch et al., 1986). Once all the requested information is exposed, the consumer must **process** this information. In the best case the information made aware by the consumer, understood and accepted, after which it will be remembered. (Engel et al. 1995)

Figure 2: Phases of the consumer decision process (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1995)

The third stage is **pre-purchase alternative evaluation** (Engel et al. 1995). This stage can be described as the process of evaluating different alternatives and selecting alternatives to meet the consumer needs. This stage has much overlap with the search stage. The consumer will judge the alternatives for attributes and dimensions, which are important in his situation. Possible criteria for a consumer to evaluate could be price, brand and warranty of a product (Engel et al. 1995). The following stage is **purchase** (Engel et al. 1995) in which the consumer will make a choice if he will buy a product, when he will buy a product, which product exactly he will buy, where he will buy this product and how he is going to pay this product. If all previous stages till this stage are completed and the product and brand are chosen in advance, there is a *fully planned purchase* (Engel et al. 1995).

After a consumer has bought a product, the consumer decision process has not yet been ended and the stage of **consumption and post-consumption alternative evaluation** (Engel et al. 1995) will take place. In this stage the main question for the consumer will be if the expectations are met. The last stage in the consumer decision process is **divestment** (Engel et al. 1995). In this stage a consumer could discard the product, recycle the product or sell it on the second-hand market. This consumer decision process model is widely used in much research (Levy & Weitz, 2009; Grant, Clarke, & Kyriazis, 2010; Nunes & Cespedes, 2003).

3.2 Needs for knowledge of consumers
According to Burke (2002) shoppers have different needs in the consumer decision process for high- and low-involvement products. Convenience and speed of shopping are important attributes for shoppers of low-involvement / frequently purchased products, such as groceries. However, when people will shop for high-involvement products service and product information are of a major importance. People want to know all the product specifications and are looking for knowledgeable sales assistants helping to make the best choice (Burke, 2002).

3.2.1 Shopping Motives
Babin, Darden, & Griffin (1994) have presented two shopping motives; the *utilitarian* motive and the *hedonic* motive. People who shop with an utilitarian motive are searching for value for money. The right product for the right price is the main goal. Consumers with hedonic shopping motives focus mainly on intangible aspects; the experience and the emotion are important (Babin et al., 1994). People will have a preference for one of the two motives and it is not that people use only one of the two motives. According to Voss, Spangenberg & Grohmann (2003) high-involvement products (automobiles and television sets) are balanced

in the hedonistic and utilitarian composition. This means that hedonic and utilitarian motives are both important in the consumer decision process for high-involvement products.

3.2.2 Consumer decision process activities

Grant et al. (2010) have set up figure 3 (page 14) where they show what people search for, when they are in the consumer decision process for a high-involvement product. Grant et al. (2010) divided the consumer decision in three stages that are comparable with stage 3, 4 and 5 of the consumer decision process of Engel et al. (1995); (1) *information search activity, (2) option evaluation activity* and (3) *purchase point activity.*

Within the first activity (1), people *search* for general information about different products and the organization(s) they are dealing with. A consumer begins with an overview of all product offerings and will research some products globally on the variants and compare it with other products. Mostly, a consumer will already have a slight preference for one product in this stage. In the second stage (2) a consumer will conduct a deeper research into one product. The things a consumer will look for, while he is *evaluating the options,* are: product variants, product warranties, testimonials of other consumers, component details and a consumer will finally look for a place where he could buy this product. In this stage a consumer could also compare two products but the focus is on one product. In the third and last stage (3), the consumer will actually purchase the product. The choice of the product (variance) has already been made in the previous stages and the main issue in this stage is price (Grant et al., 2010).
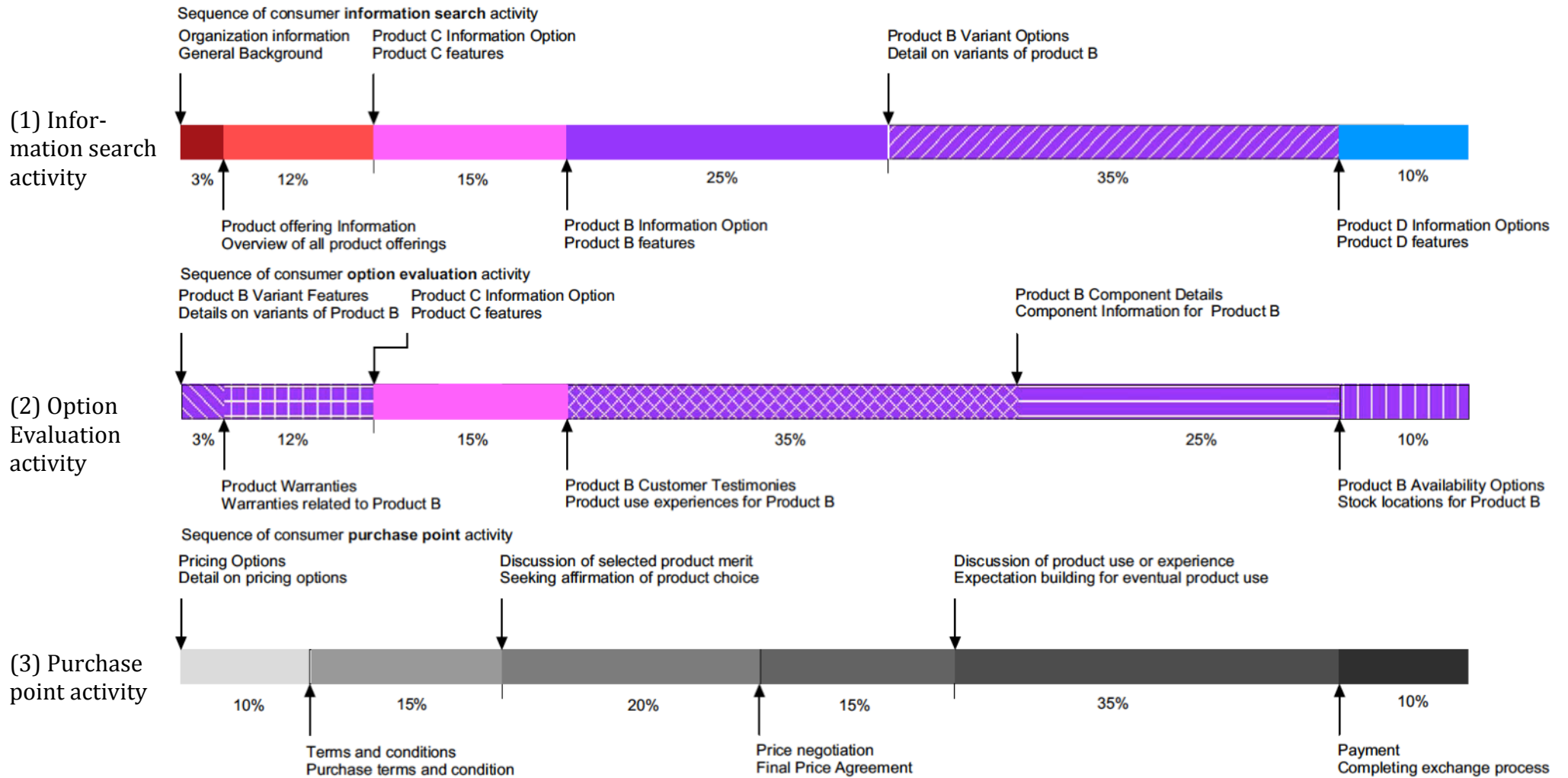
Figure 3: Illustrative examples of differing activity pattern within stages
Source: Grant et al., 2010 p. 54

3.3 Discussion

From the presented research projects there seem to be no contradictions in the consumer decision process, they are all additional to each other (Levy & Weitz, 2009; Grant et al., 2010; Nunes & Cespedes, 2003; Engel et al., 1995). All researchers based their findings on the generally used consumer decision model of Engel (1995). When research goes deeper on the consumer decision process and it is linked with consumer search behaviour, most researchers stop after the purchase phase. This is done because the after sales phases are a different kind of profession. That is why only the phases till the actual purchase will be discussed in the next sections. With ongoing search only hedonic motives are involved; people will do it for fun and ongoing search does not make part of the consumer decision process (Bloch et al., 1986; Engel et al., 1995).

When a consumer is in the consumer decision process for a high-involvement product he or she wants to take care that the possible risk is as low as possible (Kapferer & Laurent, 1985; Barber & Venkatraman, 1986; Biswas & Sherrel, 1993) by searching actively for information (Zaichkowsky, 1985). This is founded by Burke (2002) who demonstrated that shoppers for high-involvement products are looking for product information to make the best decision. Therefore the purchase of a high-involvement product is fully planned (Lastovicka & Gardner, 1978; Engel et al., 1995)**.**

Though utilitarian and hedonic shopping motives are both important when consumers are in the consumer decision process for high-involvement products (Babin et al., 1994; Burke, 2002; Voss et al., 2003). This means people are searching for tangible aspects (utilitarian motives) such as product variants, product warranties, testimonials, component details and prices (Grant et al., 2010). But on the other hand the shopping trip has to be a fun experience (hedonic motives). To make the best decision consumers will compare different products with each other (Grant et al., 2010) and if needed they would like to address a knowledgeable salesperson for help (Burke, 2002).

3.4 Conclusion

Generally, for high-involvement products all six stages of the consumer decision process of Engel et al (1995) are passed through. Within this fully planned purchase (Engel et al., (1995) two important shopping motives are playing a role for high-involvement products (Voss et al., 2003). In case of high-involvement products, consumers want to know much information about the evaluated products to lower the risk as much as possible (utilitarian motives) (Burke, 2002; Grant et al., 2010; Babin et al., 1994). On the other hand people also want to have a fun experience when they are shopping for high-involvement products (hedonic motives) (Babin et al., 1994; Voss et al., 2003; Burke, 2002). Now it is made clear what the consumer is looking for in the consumer decision process. In the next chapter this search behaviour will be split up in offline and online search behaviour. Furthermore it will be discussed what the search behaviour is per phase of the consumer decision process.

Chapter 4: Online & offline search behaviour

Internet has become an important source for information in the consumer decision process and is substituting some important traditional sources (Klein & Ford, 2003). Therefore the will elaborated in the next chapter on search behaviour in the consumer decision process split up in online and offline sources. Afterwards the search behaviour will be described linked to the stages of the consumer decision process.

4.1 Search behaviour per source

In research into the causes of research shoppers, Verhoef et al. (2007) did also research into the attributes which people search for in the consumer decision process divided in three channels; *store (offline source), internet (online source) and catalogue (offline source)*. The catalogue channel could be described broadly as written information for search and / or to buy products. Verhoef et al. (2007) came up with 15 factors (appendix 4), which people graded for each channel.
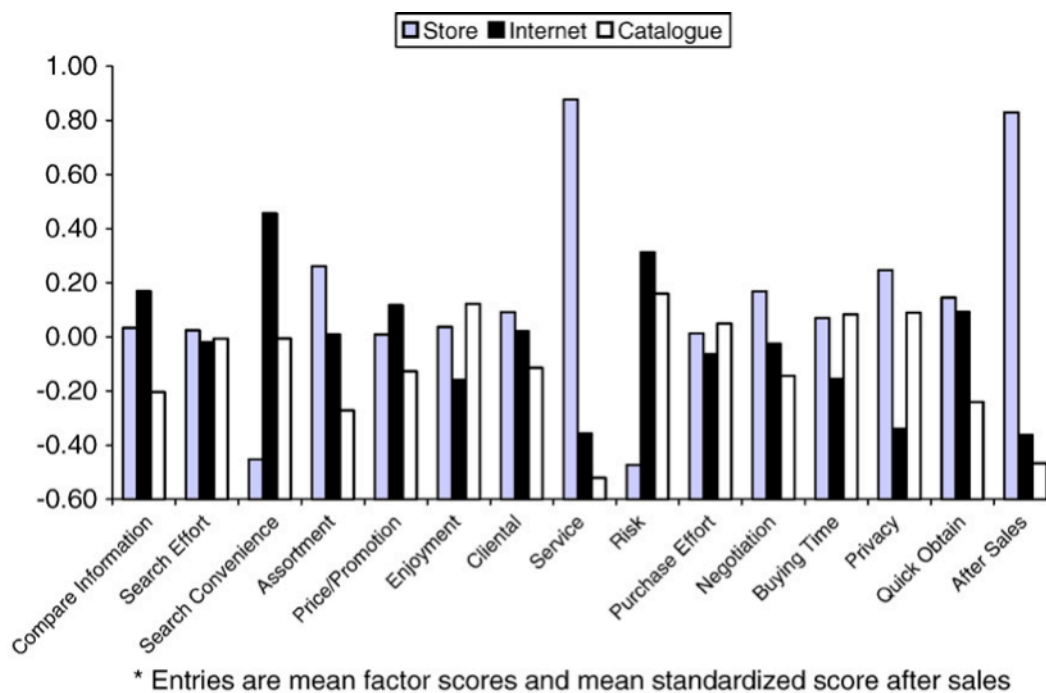
Figure 4: "Customer perceptions of channels along attributes. Entries are mean factor scores and mean standardized score after sales." (Verhoef, Neslin, & Vroomen, 2007, p. 139)

In figure 4 the scores are given for each channel (Verhoef et al., 2007, p. 139). Stores have a good image because people rated them very high on service and very low on risk perception. The respondents even perceive that stores have a better and larger assortment with products of good quality. Nevertheless people find it hard to compare products and prices in stores. The other offline channel, catalogues, is generally valued average but people rated service very

low. To compare prices and products (information) people rated the internet as the best possible channel. Catalogues are rated average on all aspects, only after sales and service are rated very low for catalogues (Verhoef et al., 2007).

Ratchford et al. (2007) conducted research to the use of information sources when consumers are in the consumer decision process of purchasing a car. They found that the use of internet has led to a decrease of the time spent with dealers (figure 5). Nevertheless the total time on search has been

	With internet	Without internet	Change due to internet
Dealer	10.48	11.86	-1.38
Negotiation	1.56	1.89	-.22
Test Drives	1.56	1.64	-.08
Friends / relative	1.93	1.62	.31
Third-party print	2.17	2.86	-.68
Ads / brochures	1.77	1.51	.26
Internet	3.38	.00	3.38
Total	19.73	17.85	1.89

Figure 5: "Average hours of search (2002 sample)" (Ratchford, Talukdar, & Lee, 2007, p. 118)

increased (Klein & Ford, 2003; Ratchford et al., 2007) which has led to an increase of search with friends and relatives and through ads and brochures. In the last years internet has become an important source for information and figure 3 shows that it is the most important source of all but contact with the dealer (Ratchford et al., 2007; Klein & Ford, 2003). The most time is still spent with dealers. According to Sharma and Krishnan (2002) the most important advantages of stores in contrast with internet sources are the possibility to see and feel the actual product and get support of salespeople.

4.1.1 Research shopping pattern

The research shopper phenomenon means that a consumer "uses one channel for search and another for purchase" (Verhoef et al., 2007, p. 129). The research was conducted under 396 Dutch consumers and almost 76% of them were research shoppers. Figure 6 shows the different patterns consumers follow when they use multiple channels in their consumer decision

Research shopping pattern	Actual research shopping %
Internet ⇒ Store	50.3
Internet ⇒ Catalog	1.4
Catalog ⇒ Store	33.7
Catalog ⇒ Internet	6.6
Store ⇒ Catalog	2.1
Store ⇒ Internet	5.9

Figure 6: Research shopping patterns (Verhoef et al., 2007, p. 142).

process. *Internet search (online) ⇒ store purchase (offline)* is the most used research-shopping pattern. This is mainly due to the fact that both channels are strong in the information needed by consumers in that phase of the consumer decision process. In the information stage people can get their information the easiest by using internet sources. For

service, personal advice and assistance during purchase, people will mostly go to a store to purchase a product. Nevertheless the majority of the research shoppers uses *internet ⇒ store* as research shopping pattern, 33.7% is still using *catalogue search (offline) ⇒ store purchase (offline)* as research shopping pattern (Verhoef et al., 2007).

4.2 Search behaviour per phase

Research, of Groeppel-Klein et al. (1999), into the impact of shopping motives on store-assessment of a furniture store (high-involvement products), they formulated three clusters of store visitors. The first cluster of consumers is labelled as *stimulation seeking* and these people like to browse different furniture stores to look for new ideas. This cluster can be grouped as the people with hedonic shopping motives and are mainly in the first stage of the consumer decision process; need recognition (Groeppel-Klein, Thelen, & Antretter, 1999).

The second cluster consists of people who are price-orientated and the third cluster consists of people who desire advice. Both these clusters consist of people who are further in the consumer decision process. They are in the (pre-) purchase stage because they both have actual buying intention and are looking for advice or a good offer (Groeppel-Klein et al., 1999). People in these clusters have especially utilitarian shopping motives. Nunes and Cespedes (2003) also came to the conclusion that a high-involvement shopper will not search for information with an expert until the pre-purchase stage (figure 7). People will first conduct self-research to look for what they want and what is available on the market. However, they will call on an expert to help them make their final decision.

Recognize need	Search for information	Pre-purchase alternative evaluation	Purchase	Consumption and post-consumption alternative evaluation
- Are often driven by life goals and long-time interests. - Are sometimes motivated by event or influence	- Evaluate search versus needs. - Consider numerous product attributes	Seek expert advice	Thoughtfully select time and location	Conduct little immediate re-evaluation

Figure 7: Actions of high-involvement shoppers per stage of the typical purchasing process. Source: Four kinds of Buyers (Nunes & Cespedes, 2003, p. 101).

4.2.1 One channel per phase

Consumers do search for information in many different sources. Although people use different channels for gathering information in the consumer decision process, they use only one channel per stage in the process. Consumers generally seek information only online or only offline per stage. For example, they will search for information on websites of retailers and on independent websites. (Klein & Ford, 2003).

4.3 Influence of social norms (gender / age / social class)

An important factor in the consumer decision process is *family*. Many purchases, especially for high-involvement products, are made by considering the needs of the whole family (Levy & Weitz, 2009). Mostly there is someone in the family or relationship who is the driving force. But it depends on the product who this person actually is. When people are buying furniture the female tends to be more concerned about the process (Yoon & Cho, 2009) and for automobiles it tends to be the male (Klein & Ford, 2003).

According to Burke (2002) younger people have more hedonic motives than older people. Older people are more focussed on detailed product information. There is no significant difference in attitude found by Burke (2002) between older and younger people for shopping in traditional stores or online. Men are more interested in technological features while women are searching value for money (Burke, 2002). Klein and Ford (2003) discovered, in their study of pre-purchase search for cars, a significant negative relationship between consumers' income and their total search hours. When a consumers' income increases, the total search time for cars decreases. Klein and Ford (2003) also found a positive relation between education and search hours but could not find statistical support. In addition, Klein and Ford (2003) also found a significant negative relationship between age and search time. Thus, the older the people are, the less time they will spend in the search stage of the consumer decision process.

4.4 Discussion

From literature three major sources of information could be distinguished; internet (online), catalogues (offline) and stores (offline) (Verhoef et al., 2007; Ratchford et al., 2007). Even though the internet use is growing rapidly as source for information, the consumer still intensively uses the offline sources (Ratchford et al., 2007; Klein & Ford, 2003).

The total time spent on search in the consumer decision process has increased (Ratchford et al., 2007) in addition to which *internet search (online)* ⇒ *store purchase (offline)* is the most

important research-shopping pattern (Verhoef et al., 2007). According to Groeppel-Klein et al. (1999) people will visit stores for high-involvement products when they are in the *need recognition*, *pre-purchase* and *purchase stages*. This is in harmony with Verhoef et al. (2007) who concluded that the information stage is mainly done by internet or catalogues and that the actual purchase will take place in-store. But it has to be taken into account that consumers in the consumer decision process of high-involvement products will only use one channel per phase (Klein & Ford, 2003). This is in contrast with low-involvement products where people use the same channel for information search and the actual purchase (Schröder & Zaharia, 2008). Nevertheless the shopping motives for low-involvement products (Schröder & Zaharia, 2008) are comparable with them for high-involvement products. However within the consumer decision process for low-involvement products there is generally only one shopping motive used and for high-involvement multiple motives are used through the process.

It is hard to generalize all high-involvement products for discussing the influence of social norms on the search behaviour. The driving force in the consumer decision process is dependent on the product (category) (Yoon & Cho, 2009). But it is remarkable that age and income have both a negative effect on total time spent on search (Klein & Ford, 2003). Using internet whilst searching is not only done by younger people, older people are using online and offline sources to a great extent as well (Burke, 2002).

4.5 Conclusion

It is obvious that consumers currently use different channels when they are in the consumer decision process; so-called multichannel customer behaviour (Schröder & Zaharia, 2008). Globally it can be said that the possible channels could be classified per stage of the consumer decision process as shown in figure 8.

1. Need recognition	2. Search for information & information processing	3. Pre-purchase alternative evaluation	4. Purchase
In-store	Internet	Internet / In-store	In-store

Figure 8: Used channel per stage of the consumer decision process (Groeppel-Klein, Thelen, & Antretter, 1999; Nunes & Cespedes, 2003; Verhoef, Neslin, & Vroomen, 2007)

It is not important for consumers if the retailer is a multi channel retailer or not. If the retailer has no internet source for the consumer then the consumer will look for information on the competitor's website or on an independent website (Ratchford et al., 2007; Klein & Ford, 2003). Which could lead to the fact that a consumer will purchase the product with a competitor (online or offline).

People still see advantages for purchasing products in a store (Verhoef et al., 2007) but then the retailer should take advantage of these aspects. But retailers also have to provide the consumer with the information they need in the different channels. In this way they could bind a customer to the store through the whole consumer decision process. Therefore the aspects a retailer should take into consideration, both online and offline will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Anticipation retailers on search behaviour

The consumer has become a multi channel consumer (Schröder & Zaharia, 2008). The most important research-shopping pattern has become *internet search ⇒ store purchase.* Therefore it would be wise for traditional retailers to consider if their marketing activities should be expanded to multiple channels. The aspects for anticipating on the changed consumer search behaviour will be discussed in the following chapter for a retailer of high-involvement products.

5.1 Offline

Within the research to the research-shopper phenomenon, Verhoef et al. (2007) also presented two offline strategies companies could use to manage these research shoppers. The first strategy of Verhoef et al. (2007) is to change *the search or purchase attributes*. Verhoef et al. (2007) discovered that consumers are mainly choosing for *Internet ⇒ Store* as research-shopping pattern because they think that purchasing online is unattractive. Stores are much more appreciated on service, the physical attendance of the products and privacy than the channels internet and catalogues (Verhoef et al., 2007; Sharma & Krishnan, 2002; Burke, 2002). Therefore retailers should "add a real-time sales assistant to improve service, and adopt and publicize a transparent and strict privacy policy" (Verhoef et al., 2007, p. 142). In this way retailers could take advantages of their strengths the internet could never match.

The second strategy Verhoef et al. (2007) presented is to increase the channel lock-in. High degree of channel lock-in means that a consumer will stay in the same channel both for information and for the actual purchase. For retailers of high-involvement products this strategy could work in two manners. First option is that retailers provide a consumer the right information the first time this consumer visits the store. This way, a consumer has no need to look for more information on the internet. However it is difficult for consumers to compare products and prices in-store, so this option could be hard to achieve for a retailer (Verhoef, Neslin, & Vroomen, 2007). Corresponding to the first strategy of *changing the search or purchase attribute* a second option is to give a consumer an experience (for example by an expert), which he could never get online. In this way a retailer could provide the customers with a utilitarian shopping motive and also with a hedonic shopping motive (Voss et al., 2003). The consumers who use only a store channel have mostly a recreational orientation instead of the research-shoppers (Verhoef et al., 2007) who have a more

convenience orientation. To tempt consumers with a recreational orientation a retailer has to make an experience of the store visit (Schröder & Zaharia, 2008; Konuş, Verhoef, & Neslin, 2008; Venkatesan, Kumar, & Ravishanker, 2007).

Catalogues are still an important offline source of information even though this is often underestimated by the fast rising of internet usage (Ratchford et al., 2007). Nevertheless *catalogue search ⇒ store purchase* is the second-largest research-shopping pattern (Verhoef et al., 2007).

5.2 Online
The internet has become the most important source of information in the consumer decision process. To anticipate on the multichannel shopping behaviour of the consumer retailers could start activities on the internet anticipating on the needs of the consumer. By using different channels to make the retailer's products available to consumers is called *Multi Channel Marketing* (Kwon & Jain, 2009; Levy & Weitz, 2009). In this case the traditional store (bricks) is linked with the internet activities (clicks); the so-called *Bricks and Clicks format* (Zhang, 2009).

There are many advantages for both the retailer and the consumer, when using the internet as a marketing channel. Transaction costs are low and the distance to the store and the opening hours of the store are matters of minor importance (Sharma & Krishnan, 2002). For consumers it is also very easy to compare between different retailers (Ansari, Mela, & Neslin, 2008; Verhoef et al., 2007). The internet is not only a simple channel to sell products. According to Zhang (2009) internet activities are also very important for the offline sales because the internet influences more spending offline than online.

Multichannel shoppers have both utilitarian and hedonic shopping motives. These consumers will not only use multiple channels to save time, search for information and other utilitarian motives but they could do this for the experience and recreational reasons as well (hedonic motives) (Kwon & Jain, 2009; Konuş et al., 2008). According to Konuş et al. (2008) and Venkatesan et al. (2007) marketers should concern that both utilitarian and hedonic multichannel shoppers should be well-served. This mean that the different segments need different approaches. The utilitarian shoppers should be informed efficiently and for the hedonic shoppers there should be an experience created (online and offline) (Konuş et al.,

2008; Venkatesan et al., 2007). To serve these hedonic shoppers online, retailers could use for example interactive images (e.g. 3D models of the products, close up pictures and zoom-in functions). The use of these interactive tools will positively influence the consumers' perception of the online retail environment, their shopping enjoyment and their shopping involvement. This will lead to the situation that consumers are willing to stay longer on the website and have a higher intention to buy (Kim, Fiore, & Lee, 2007). Nevertheless prices and products should be the same between the different channels (Wolk & Ebling, 2010) otherwise "the multichannel enthusiasts segment may become confused and frustrated with the retailer" (Konuş et al., 2008, p. 410).

Verhoef et al (2007) invented the strategy for retailers to *decrease cross-channel synergy*. Verhoef et al. (2007) advice to prevent consumers from leaving your website because there is for example a store-locator on it. Companies should remove these kind of applications, so a consumer will stay on the website and improve the channel lock-in. Different research proved that multichannel enthusiasts consumers are more disloyal than store-focussed consumers (Ansari et al., 2008; Konuş et al., 2008). According to Konuş et al. (2008) multichannel enthusiast are generally not loyal to brands so for the long term this could work negatively for retailers.

5.3 Discussion

From literature it is found that there are opportunities both in offline and online activities for traditional retailers. Retailers should offline especially focus on their strengths they have with their physical store (Verhoef et al., 2007). According to Burke (2002) retailers should emphasize the services their salespeople can provide in the promotional activities. Furthermore salespeople need to support a customer with their knowledge and should not only be cashiers. In the third stage of the consumer decision process of high-involvement products, people will look for an expert to help them (Nunes & Cespedes, 2003). When retailers take advantage of their salespeople they could contrast the physical store sharply with online shops (Verhoef et al, 2007; Burke, 2002). The services salespeople are giving then could become the brand of the store (Sharma & Krishnan, 2002).

Retailers should take advantages of their strengths, which is why a traditional retailer of high-involvement products should increase the cross-channel synergy in stead of decreasing it (Verhoef et al., 2007). For high-involvement products is observed that consumers use

especially online sources for the pre-purchase phases and use the store for the actual purchase stage (Ratchford et al., 2007; Verhoef et al., 2007). This mean a retailer of high-involvement products should offer their products and services also online and become a *bricks and clicks retailer* (Zhang, 2009). A retailer could do this by providing a decent website with all the information a consumer is looking for, including information such as product variants, product warranties, product prices and background information (Grant et al., 2010). By also adding aspects to the website that are recreational for hedonic shoppers both types of multichannel shopper are served well (Konuş et al., 2008). Although multichannel shoppers are more disloyal it is wise for retailers to integrate a good bricks-and-clicks format (Ansari et al., 2008; Konuş et al., 2008). The consumer will search for information on the internet (Verhoef et al., 2007) therefore the retailer should take care that the consumers will stay in their channels.

Fully integrating multichannel marketing combined with online selling is, generally, not the best strategy for retailers of high-involvement products (Zhang, 2009). The consumer decision-making process (Engel et al., 1995) proved that consumers will look for expertise in-store in the (pre) purchase phase (Groeppel-Klein et al., 1999). A partial adoption of multichannel marketing is also sensible since the retailer is able to lead the consumer via the internet to the physical store (Zhang, 2009).

5.4 Conclusion

For retailers there are both online and offline opportunities to anticipate. The most important research-shopping pattern of consumers is *internet search* ⇒ *store purchase* (Verhoef et al., 2007) so it is recommended for retailers to become (or expand to) a multichannel retailer with online activities (Zhang, 2009; Ansari et al., 2008; Kwon & Jain, 2009). To anticipate best on the consumers using this shopping-pattern, retailers should use the strengths of both channels. In-store, retailers should add or take advantage of knowledgeable salespersons (Verhoef et al., 2007) and let the consumer see, feel and try the products (Sharma & Krishnan, 2002).

Multichannel shoppers have hedonic and utilitarian motives (Konuş et al., 2008; Kwon & Jain, 2009). That is why retailers of high-involvement products should offer on both channels qualitative information about the products focussed on the utilitarian motives and give consumers an experience focussed on the hedonic motives. Unfortunately consumers could become more disloyal when retailers apply the bricks-and-clicks format (Konuş et al., 2008).

However when a retailer will not apply this format, consumers will use the online channels of other companies so there is a smaller chance that they will visit the retailer's store. Nevertheless retailers have to keep in mind that catalogues are also still an important source for information (Ratchford et al., 2007). A retailer of high-involvement products should not underestimate this and it should be taken into account with the marketing activities.

The retailer is not only serving the consumer better in this way but is also reaching a larger market (Ansari et al., 2008). In the previous chapters the research questions are discussed by literature. The next chapter will expound the general conclusion and recommendations to answer the problem statement.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

To answer the central problem statement, the following chapter will present the conlusions and the recommendations. Thereafter the limitations of the previous literature study will be discussed and the suggestions for further research.

6.1 Conclusions

The major problem of this thesis is how a retailer of high-involvement products could anticipate on the changed search behaviour of consumers (Verhoef et al., 2007). It is not possible to assign certain products as high- or low-involvement products because each person will experience this differently (Zaichkowsky, 1985). In general consumers are highly involved with durable and valuable products, which are infrequently bought. Because for these products consumers will actively search for information, compare among product attributes, perceive a high possible risk and have a special preference for a brand (Zaichkowsky, 1985; Kapferer & Laurent, 1986; Barber & Venkatraman, 1986).

The consumer decision process for high involvement products consists of 6 stages a consumer will go through (Engel et al., 1995). People in this consumer decision process use to a large extent different channels for each stage (Verhoef et al., 2007; Schröder & Zaharia, 2008). These so-called research shoppers use one channel for information search and another channel for the actual purchase. The most important research-shopping pattern is *internet search (online)* ⇒ *store purchase (offline)* (Verhoef et al., 2007).

Research shoppers of high-involvement products have utilitarian and hedonic shopping motives; they easily want to find convenient information but they also want to be entertained online and offline (Konuş et al., 2008; Kwon & Jain, 2009). Considering the consumer decision process for high-involvement products people will *recognise their needs* mostly in-store. In the second stage people will search for information about the products they have in mind and to get familiar with these products. Hereafter people will *evaluate and compare* the different products. This could take place online or offline with the help of knowledgeable salespeople. The last stage is the *actual purchase* and for high-involvement products, mostly this stage takes place in-store (Nunes & Cespedes, 2003; Groeppel-Klein et al., 1999; Grant et al., 2010; Engel et al., 1995). A retailer should anticipate on this research-shopper by using offline and online (marketing) channels to provide the information a consumer need in each

phase. The actual use of internet activities is important for retailers so the amount of *free riders* will be minimized (Baal & Dach, 2005). Consumers will search for information on the internet (Verhoef et al., 2007; Ratchford et al., 2007) and if it a retailer is not providing both channels, people will use other sources on the internet for the required information. This could lead to the fact that consumers will more quickly choose to visit the store of the competitor. High channel lock-in (Verhoef et al., 2007) could only be established for low-involvement products since consumer use only one channels and one shopping motive (Schröder & Zaharia, 2008).

6.2 Recommendations

The most important thing for retailers is to become the expert in their profession both online and offline. The most people in the consumer decision process for high-involvement products will search for information on the internet (Ratchford et al., 2007; Klein & Ford, 2003; Verhoef et al., 2007). If a retailer is providing the most convenient information, people will see him as the expert what could lead to cross-pollination between the internet and the traditional (offline) store. Consumers are searching for convenient information (utilitarian motives) but they also have hedonic shopping motives online (Konuş et al., 2008; Kwon & Jain, 2009). This means that consumers also want to experience something online. Only a list of product specifications will not be enough, for example there should also be given background information and interactive pictures (Kim et al., 2007).

The actual purchase of high-involvement products is mostly done in-store (Verhoef et al., 2007) and for high-involvement products people will approach (knowledgeable) salespeople to help them make a choice between the products (Groeppel-Klein et al., 1999; Nunes & Cespedes, 2003; Ratchford et al., 2007). Through this it is very important to combine the internet activities with the store. Both the hedonic and utilitarian motives should also be satisfied in-store by giving straight convenient information and by giving a shopping experience so it is fun to visit the store (Burke, 2002; Sharma & Krishnan, 2002; Kwon & Jain, 2009).

Retailers should take advantages of the strengths of their physical stores appointed by consumers: physical attendance of the products and the service that is given (Sharma & Krishnan, 2002; Verhoef et al., 2007). Beside it retailers have to provide sufficient information online to give the information consumers want in the information stage of the

consumer decision process (Verhoef et al., 2007). Retailers of high-involvement products definitely have to use the internet as a marketing channel. But it depends on the product if they also have to sell their products online (Zhang, 2009). Because generally consumers who are in the consumer decision process for high-involvement products use the store for the actual purchase (Ratchford et al., 2007). Even though a retailer has to make sure that the provided information and prices are the same through all channels (Wolk & Ebling, 2010).

Nevertheless the internet is an important source of information for consumers. Brochures and catalogues are also of major importance so retailers should continue to provide these offline sources (Verhoef et al., 2007; Ratchford et al., 2007).

6.3 Limitations to the research

Although previous literature study was done focussed on retailers of high-involvement products each retailer still needs a different approach. All retailers are different and are operating in a different environment with different products. The recommendations are on the surface for high-involvement products and do not give a direct implementable list for every retailer. For example, one of the recommendations for retailers of high-involvement products is to become an expert and give consumers an experience in-store (Kwon & Jain, 2009). Every retailer should interpret this differently. For a retailer of automobiles an experience could mean a test drive on a racetrack and for a retailer of furniture this could mean to give the consumer a complete interior advice.

It is impossible to assign a couple of products as the high-involvement products (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Therefore only a couple of products which are certainly high-involvement products are used; automobiles, furniture and electronics (white goods). The most important sources of information that were discussed are the store (offline), catalogues (offline) and the internet (online). However, the recommendations are only done about the sources stores and internet because those are currently the most important sources (Verhoef et al., 2007); catalogues and other offline sources of information such as third-party magazines were leaved aside. These sources are still important for the pre-purchase stage of the consumer decision process but also in the *ongoing search*. Ongoing search was not studied deeply because it does not belong to the consumer decision process. (Bloch et al., 1986).

From the literature study is concluded that retailers of high-involvement products should provide their information via multiple channels. Though it is not examined how much information a retailer exactly should provide. This is important to know so retailers could they are not giving an information overload to their consumers (Lee & Lee, 2004). However the amount of information is also depending on the type of products.

It was not possible to generalize the influence of social norms to all high-involvement products. The influence of social norms is different for all products (categories).

6.4 Suggestions for further research

This study is based on existed research but to get a better founded study it is sensible to support it with an empirical study. In this study a representative amount of consumers should be followed to discover the behaviour per stage of the consumer decision process. In this way more detailed information could come up so it is better applicable for a retailer. To make this research implementable for a retailer this research should be focussed on one product category with one target group. In this way the recommendations will be practicable.

In this empirical study more information sources could be studied. Generally the sources store (offline), catalogues (offline) and the internet (online) are only studied. But also other offline sources such as third-party magazines could be investigated better. This kind of research was done for the automobiles sector (Klein & Ford, 2003; Ratchford et al., 2007) but this is just a small part of high-involvement products. Also the store visits and the internet as source should investigated more deeply. It is clear that people will use the internet as an information source but the next step is to investigate which websites they will visit. For retailers it would also be interesting to know how many stores consumers will visit, before they actual purchase the product.

The search behaviour of consumers in this study is not further investigated than the purchase stage of the consumer decision process. For retailers it would still be good to know what the consumer is searching for in these stages. For example, retailers of automobiles are for a large part depending on the maintenance of cars after the purchase. These retailers could get a great advantage of knowing the behaviour of consumers after the purchase. This also counts for other retailers so they are able to know how to bind the customer to the company.
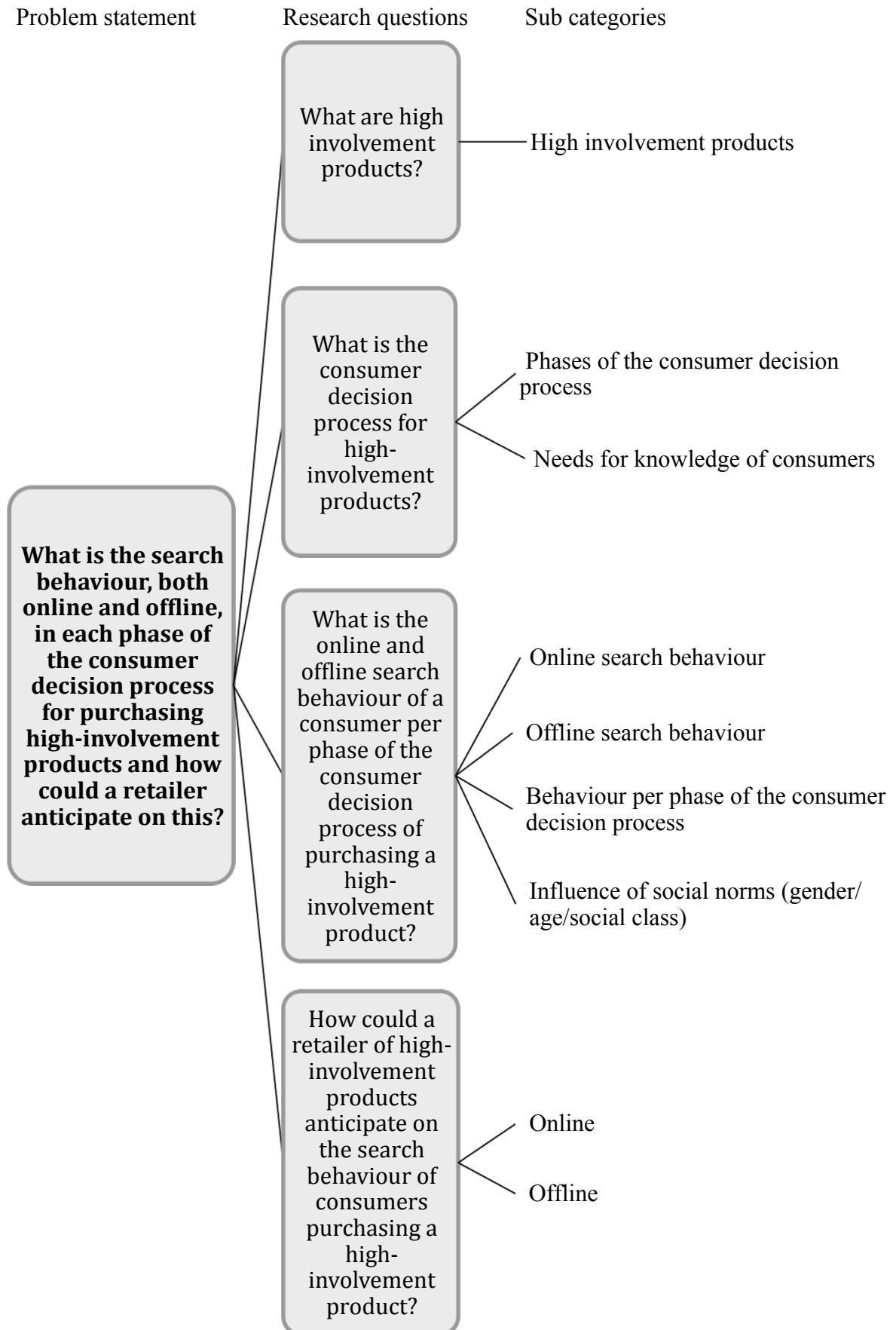
Reference list

Ansari, A., Mela, C. F., & Neslin, S. A. (2008). Customer Channel Migration. *Journal of Marketing Research , XLV* (February), 60-76.

Baal, S., & Dach, C. (2005). Free riding and customer retention across retailers' channels. *Journal of Interactive Marketing , 19* (2), 75-85.

Babin, B. J., Darden, W. R., & Griffin, M. (1994). Work and/or Fun: Measuring Hedonic and Utilitarian Shopping Value. *Journal of Consumer Research , 20* (4), 644 - 56.

Barber, M. B., & Venkatraman, M. (1986). The determinants of satisfaction for a high involvement product: three rival hypotheses and their implications in the health care context. *Advances in Consumer Research , 13* (1), 316 - 20.

Biswas, A., & Sherrel, D. L. (1993). The Influence of Product Knowledge and Brand Name on Internal Price Standards and Confidence. *Psychology & Marketing , 10* (1), 31 - 46.

Bloch, P. H., Sherell, D. L., & Ridgway, N. M. (1986). Consumer search: An Extended Framework. *The Journal of Consumer Research , 13* (1), 119 - 26.

Bretthauer, K. M., Mahar, S., & Venkataramanan, M. A. (2010). Inventory and distribution strategies for retail/e-tail organizations. *Computers & Industrial Engineering , 58*, 119 - 32.

Burke, R. R. (2002). Technology and the Customer Interface: What Consumers Want in the Physical and Virtual Store. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science , 30* (4), 411 - 32.

Engel, J. F., Blackwell, R. D., & Miniard, P. W. (1995). Consumer Decision Processes. In *Consumer Behavior* (Eight edition ed., pp. 137 - 67). Orlando, United States of America: The Dryden Press.

Grant, R., Clarke, R. J., & Kyriazis, E. (2010). Research needs for assessing online value creation in complex consumer purchase process behavior. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services , 17*, 53 - 60.

Groeppel-Klein, A., Thelen, E., & Antretter, C. (1999). The impact of shopping motives on store-assessment. *European Advances in Consumer Research , 4*, 63 - 72.

Hernández, B., Jiménez, J., & Martín, J. M. (2009). Key website factors in e-business strategy. *International Journal of Information Management , 29*, 362-71.

Kapferer, J.-N., & Laurent, G. (1986). Consumer Involvement Profiles: A New Practical Approach to Consumer Involvement. *Journal of Advertising Research , 25* (6), pp. 48 - 56.

Kapferer, J.-N., & Laurent, G. (1985). Consumers' involvement profile: new empirical results. *Advances in Consumer Research , 12* (1), 290 - 95.

Kim, J., Fiore, A. M., & Lee, H.-H. (2007). Influences of online store perception, shopping enjoyment, and shopping involvement on consumer patronage behavior towards an online retailer. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services , 14*, 95 - 107.

Klein, L. R., & Ford, G. T. (2003). Consumer search for information in the digital age: an emperical study of prepurchase search for automobiles. *Journal of interactive marketing , 17* (3), 29 - 49.

Konuş, U., Verhoef, P. C., & Neslin, S. A. (2008). Multichannel Shopper Segments and Their Covariates. *Journal of Retailing , 84* (4), 398 - 413.

Kwon, K.-N., & Jain, D. (2009). Multichannel Shopping Through Nontraditional Retail Formats: Variety- Seeking Behavior With Hedonic and Utilitarian Motivations. *Journal of Marketing Channels , 16*, 149-68.

Lastovicka, J. L., & Gardner, D. M. (1978). Low involvement versus high involvement cognitive structures. *Advances in Consumer Research , 5*, 78-92.

Lee, B.-K., & Lee, W.-N. (2004). The Effect of Information Overload on Consumer Choice Quality in an On-Line Environment. *Psychology & Marketing , 21* (3), 159 - 83.

Levy, M., & Weitz, B. A. (2009). In *Retailing Management* (Seventh Edition ed.). New York, United States of America: McGraw-Hill.

Marketing Science Institute. (2008 March). *2008-2010 Research Priorities*. Retrieved 2010 30-March from Marketing Science Institute: http://www.msi.org/research/index.cfm?id=43

Mokhtarian, P. L. (2004). A conceptual analysis of the transportation impacts of B2C e-commerce. *Transportation , 31*, 257 - 84.

Nunes, P. F., & Cespedes, F. V. (2003 November). The Customer has Escaped. *Harvard Business Review* , pp. 96 - 105.

O'Cass, A. (2000). An assessment of consumers product, purchase decision, advertising and consumption involvement in fashion clothing. *Journal of Economic Psychology , 21*, 545 - 76.

Ratchford, B. T., Talukdar, D., & Lee, M.-S. (2007). The impact of the internet on consumers' use of information sources of automobiles: a re-inquiry. *Journal of consumer research , 34* (June), 111 - 19.

Ray, M. L., Sawyer, A. G., Rothschild, M. L., Heeler, R. M., Strong, E. C., & Reed, J. B. (1973). Marketing communication and the hierarchy-of-effects. In M. Ray, *New models for mass communication research* (pp. 146 - 75). Beverly Hills, United States of America: Sage Publications.

Schröder, H., & Zaharia, S. (2008). Linking multi-channel customer behavior with shopping motives: An empirical investigation of a German retailer. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services , 15*, 452-68.

Sharma, A., & Krishnan, R. (2002). Clicks Only, Clicks and Bricks, and Bricks Only: Are Retail Salespeople an Important Factor in Choice? *Journal of Marketing Management , 18*, 317 - 36.

Venkatesan, R., Kumar, V., & Ravishanker, N. (2007). Multichannel Shopping: Causes and Consequences. *Journal of Marketing , 71* (April), 114 - 32.

Verhagen, T., & van Dolen, W. (2009). Online purchase intentions: A multi-channel store image perspective. *Information & Management , 46*, 77 - 82.

Verhoef, P. C., Neslin, S. A., & Vroomen, B. (2007). Multichannel customer management: Understanding the research-shopper phenomenon. *International Journal of Research in Marketing , 24*, 129 - 48.

Voss, K. E., Spangenberg, E. R., & Grohmann, B. (2003). Measuring the Hedonic and Utilitarian Dimensions of Consumer Attitude. *Journal of Marketing Research , XL* (August), 310 - 20.

Wolk, A., & Ebling, C. (2010). Multi-channel price differentiation: An empirical investigation of existence and causes. *International Journal of Research in Marketing , Article in press*, 1 - 9.

Yoon, S.-Y., & Cho, J. Y. (2009). Understanding Furniture Decision Making Process and Design Preference using Web-Based VR Technology. *Annual Conference of IDEC* , 1 - 11.

Zaichkowsky, J. L. (1985). Measuring the Involvement Construct . *The Journal of Consumer Research , 12* (3), 341 - 52.

Zhang, X. (2009). Retailers' Multichannel and Price Advertising Strategies. *Marketing Science , Article in advance*, 1 - 15.

Appendix 1: Conceptual model

Problem statement   Research questions   Sub categories

What is the search behaviour, both online and offline, in each phase of the consumer decision process for purchasing high-involvement products and how could a retailer anticipate on this?

What are high involvement products?

— High involvement products

What is the consumer decision process for high-involvement products?

— Phases of the consumer decision process

— Needs for knowledge of consumers

What is the online and offline search behaviour of a consumer per phase of the consumer decision process of purchasing a high-involvement product?

— Online search behaviour

— Offline search behaviour

— Behaviour per phase of the consumer decision process

— Influence of social norms (gender/age/social class)

How could a retailer of high-involvement products anticipate on the search behaviour of consumers purchasing a high-involvement product?

— Online

— Offline

Appendix 2: Description of the 10 involvement types

Facets of involvement \ Name of type	Minimal involvement	Functional differentiation	Undramatized risk	Small pleasure	Conformist purchase	Riskless involvement	Functional involvement	Pleasure involvement	Need for expertise	Total involvement
Interest	24	14	65	76	91	113	121	135	137	144
Sign	39	59	65	77	130	142	73	67	93	164
Pleasure	38	40	64	92	123	111	47	131	141	144
Risk Importance	19	87	120	41	120	79	124	127	138	133

Note: - Entries are standardized indices (mean = 100, Standard Deviation = 50)

Source: (Kapferer & Laurent, Consumers' involvement profile: new empirical results, 1985, p. 294)

Appendix 3: Segmenting markets by involvement type

Product category \ Name of type	Minimal involvement	Functional differentiation	Undramatized risk	Small pleasure	Conformist purchase	Riskless involvement	Functional involvement	Pleasure involvement	Need for expertise	Total involvement
Batteries	43	24	15							
Pastas	29			22						
Mineral Water	19	11		25			15			
Detergent	28		19	11		15	17			
Dish Washing Liquid	31	10	10	11			18			
Hoses		12		34	12	10	10			
Shampoo			11	15		16	16			
Jam				43		21		10		
Yogurts			12	28		12		13	13	
Vacuum cleaner			29		16			13	22	
Television			23		23				34	
Facial Soap	13			22		11	15			11
Champagne		10			48					20
Coffee				17		14		15		22
Chocolate						14		16		14
Mattress				28	18			12	34	12
Perfumes					23	19				44
Bras					10	12	10	16		36
Dresses					17					52
Washing Machine							13		33	17

Notes: - Entries represent the percentage of respondents, interviewed on the product class, belonging to the involvement type.

  - Percentages below 10% have been omitted.

Source: (Kapferer & Laurent, Consumers' involvement profile: new empirical results, 1985, p. 294)

Appendix 4: Factors of research-shopping

Search attributes

1.	**Compare information**	Easiness to compare products and their prices
2.	**Search effort**	The time and effort it takes to search for information
3.	**Search Convenience**	Easiness in collecting information

Purchase attributes

4.	**Buying time**	How fast a product can be purchased
5.	**Privacy**	The perception that privacy is guarantied
6.	**Quick obtain**	How fast a product can be obtained after purchase
7.	**After sales**	The perception that after sales is good
8.	**Service**	Availability of personal advice and excellent assistance during purchase
9.	**Risk**	Difficulties to judge quality and or hassle with delivery or payment
10.	**Purchase effort**	The effort required for purchase
11.	**Negotiation**	Whether people can negotiate using the channel

Search-and-Purchase attributes

12.	**Assortment**	Whether the channel has available popular brands, newest types of products, large assortment and good quality products
13.	**Price / promotion**	Availability of low prices and attractive offers
14.	**Enjoyment**	Whether this channel is fun and comfortable to shop
15.	**Cliental**	Whether friends or relatives use this channel

Source: (Verhoef, Neslin, & Vroomen, 2007, p. 137)