

Influence of Communication Channel and Information Form on Consumers' Purchase Behaviour

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Abstract: Along with the popularity of the omni-channel strategy and new communication technology, companies can communicate with consumers using different forms of information (listed or narrative), both online and offline. However, the effectiveness and mechanism of information forms on consumer behaviour remain unclear. This study investigates the different effects of information forms on consumers' purchase behaviour, both online and offline. Two surveys and four laboratory experiments were conducted to investigate whether and why consumers would react differently to information forms within different communication channels. The empirical results indicated that, for highly involved consumers, online listed information was more effective than narrative information, while the opposite was true in offline situations. However, for consumers with low involvement, listed information was more effective than narrative information both online and offline. The results showed that the influence of information forms was mediated by consumers' perceived information quality. Our findings extend the current understanding of how information affects consumers' behaviours and provide practical suggestions for marketers' omni-channel operations.

Keywords: listed information; narrative information; online and offline communication; perceived information quality; purchase decision

1 INTRODUCTION

With the rapid development of e-commerce in recent years, companies are increasingly using the omni-channel strategy [1-3]. When communicating with consumers online or offline, many approaches are used. Some companies attempt to describe their products in detail and list as much basic information as possible (e.g. size, material, and product origin). In contrast, other companies attempt to communicate with a storytelling style; they introduce situations where consumers could use their products and share experiences from other consumers.

Previous research has confirmed the importance of information in consumers' purchase decisions and identified different consumer reactions to a variety of information forms [4-9]. However, the results remain vague. Some studies claim that consumers favour a storytelling style [10-13], whereas other research works support the benefits of listed information [14-18].

In addition, scholars have identified that online and offline information forms typically show quite different characteristics. Online information is primarily in the form of texts, pictures, and videos [19-21], while offline information is mainly delivered through face-to-face communication and consumer experience [22-25]

Therefore, in an omni-channel situation, the information form (listed or narrative) and communication channel (online or offline) may interact to induce different effects on consumers. However, most existing studies have been conducted offline, and the results remain inconsistent. Thus, it is important to identify methods to resolve the dispute and investigate the effects of different forms of information across channels. To fill this gap and improve the efficiency of consumer communication, this study developed two surveys and four experiments to answer the following two questions:

- Which information form, listed or narrative, works better for online or offline communication?
- What is the psychological mechanism underlying the influence of information forms on consumers' purchase decisions?

Our study contributes to the literature by combining information forms with different communication channels. Further, we examine the mechanism of the influence of information forms on consumers' willingness to purchase (WTP). It is important for scholars to note that consumers experience various information processing procedures when they choose different types of products online and offline. Companies selling products through omni-channels can benefit from these findings.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Information Form and Consumers' WTP

Based on Mattila's [4] research, information forms can be divided into narrative and listed information. Narrative information is defined as stories, accounts, tales, or descriptions [26-28]. Narratives use language or other media to reproduce events that occur in a specific time and space [8, 29]. The listed information, also known as objective information, is a direct description of fact-based product features and advantages without any roles or plots [30].

Wells (1989) was the first to apply the information form to advertising studies [31]. He found that narrative information (stories) and listed information (objectives) could influence consumers in different ways. Stories are more successful in reminding consumers of their previous experiences, whereas the success of listed information derives from the credible facts it provides. Following these studies, many scholars have discussed the impact of the information form on consumers' WTP, and two opposite academic views have been generated.

According to the first view, narrative information can stimulate a more positive evaluation and a higher increase in purchase intentions compared to listed information [5, 7, 10]. Scholars in psychology [32], communication [33], and marketing [34] have recognised the powerful influence of narratives, which evoke the emotional experience of consumers through storytelling [12, 13]. Kim [11] summarises the effects of narrative information as better

memory and advertising attitude, hedonic value, emotional response, and purchase intention.

The second view supports the benefits of listed information as it elicits more supportive arguments and positive attitudes toward the product than emotional cues [14-16]. Especially in online shopping, listed information encourages higher perceived information quality and leads to a sharp increase in expected value choices [17, 18].

Currently, there is a lack of research that can resolve the dispute between narratives and listed information. Our study proposes that consumer involvement and communication channels are bridges that explain the different effects of narrative and listed information. Drawing on prior theoretical research, we formulated the following hypothesis:

H1: The form of information affects consumers' WTP.

2.2 Mediating Role of Perceived Information Quality between Information Form and WTP

In the field of consumer research, the perceived information quality represents a consumer's reaction to the characteristics of acquired information versus information requirements [35, 36], including the integrity, relevance, timeliness, and comprehensibility of information [37, 38].

The various information forms may induce consumers' different emotional or cognitive reflections and accordingly bring different perceived qualities. Narrative information can increase consumers' emotional responses and deepen their understanding of the information conveyed [10]. Specifically, some research has indicated that narrative information leads to higher reflection on the information [10], mitigates cognitive biases [39], and ultimately influences behavioural intent. Meanwhile, listed information is more objective, leading consumers to assign higher integrity and credibility to a product [40]. Especially in the online shopping arena, consumers prefer to learn more about fact-based product features [36, 41]. Product-related attribute information characterised by a list, such as camera information, plays a key role in influencing consumers' overall perceptions of online information quality [43].

In addition, scholars have pointed out that the information associated with the product plays an important role in consumers' decision [44], and a high perceived information quality will increase consumers' WTP [45-48]. Based on these prior studies, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: The perceived information quality will mediate the relationship between information forms and WTP.

2.3 Moderating Role of Communication Channels

With the development of omni-channel operations, an increasing number of researchers have discussed consumer communication both online and offline and found that the information was delivered in different ways [49, 50]. The key difference between online and offline communication is the degree of personal contact, which ranges from very intense face-to-face offline communication to nonpersonal contact online [51]. In online communication, consumers obtain information mainly from texts, pictures, and short videos presented by online sellers [19, 20]. Meanwhile,

when shopping offline, consumers often obtain information through their intuitive experience and communication with a salesperson [24].

Therefore, online and offline consumers pay attention to different information forms, and the communication channels interact with the information form to influence consumers' purchase decisions. When shopping offline, consumers are more aware of the shopping experience, ability to touch products, personalised services, barrier-free exchanges, and fast delivery [52]. Face-to-face communication with the salesperson can enhance the exchange of thoughts and emotions between merchants and consumers and increase the WTP in-store [23, 53]. Therefore, offline consumers pay more attention to their experiences and story-based narrative information. Meanwhile, online shoppers believe that online shopping has greater benefits [54-56] and prefer more product attribute information (i.e. listed information) [57]. Previous research has shown that online shopping was driven primarily by utilitarian motivation [58-60]. These utility-focused consumers make purchase decisions based on the rational needs associated with specific goals and seek an efficient, rational, and thoughtful online shopping experience [58, 61-63]. Based on previous research, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: Communication channels moderate the influence of information forms on consumers' WTP.

3 METHODOLOGY

Two surveys and four experiments were conducted to investigate whether and why consumers would react differently to different forms of information within different communication channels.

The first survey aimed to discover the general effects of information forms on real practice. The survey was conducted on taobao.com, one of China's largest online retailers. We identified six types of products: two low-involvement products (gum and shower gel), two middle-involvement products (liquid foundation and moisturiser), and two high-involvement products (eye protection lamps and high-tech trolley cases). For each product type, a pair of comparable sellers was selected, ensuring that the products were sold at a similar price and that sellers had similar rankings (based on data shared by taobao.com) in the areas of work experience, sales performance, popularity, credibility, and other standards. The only difference was the information form (listed vs. narrative) used by each seller to promote their products. The sales performance of the paired sellers was then compared.

The second survey aimed to detect consumers' favourite methods for obtaining information when shopping online or offline. This survey was conducted online. A total of 55 participants (84% female) were required to evaluate five sentences (Appendix A) that described ways of obtaining information online or offline. The evaluations were made on a seven-point scale (1 = not at all; 7 = very much).

Based on these two surveys, we conducted four experiments to test the influence of information forms on consumer behaviour within online or offline channels. All the participants in the experiment were recruited from a university. They were selected for the following reasons.

First, the university students had similar incomes. Therefore, we excluded the confounding effect of income. Second, given that consumers' attitudes and preferences vary with their generation [64], it is important to control the age of participants to avoid the confounding effect of a generation gap.

Experiment 1 aimed to test the main influence of the information form on consumers' WTP. A single-factor (information form: listed vs. narrative) between-subjects lab experiment was designed. The participants were asked to rate their WTP after reading introductory information about a mobile phone. After excluding three samples because of incomplete information, 87 participants (78.2% female), the final sample size, were assigned randomly to two groups and asked to read the introductory information (listed vs. narrative) about a mobile phone, which we created (Appendix B), and then rate their WTP on a seven-point scale (Appendix C). The participants' WTP was measured using the factor score of the purchase intention measurement scale, which was initially used by Spears and Singh [65]. The scale includes five items (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.919$), and the participants evaluate the sentences on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree).

Experiment 2 aimed to explore the reasons for participants' different responses to listed and narrative information, test the moderating effect of communication channels, and mediate the effects of the perceived information quality. Experiment 2 involved a two-factor (information form: listed vs. narrative) * (communication channels: online vs. offline) between-subjects design. A total of 173 participants (65.3% female) participated in the experiment. Participants were randomly assigned to four groups. For the two online groups, we simulated one online shopping page selling the mobile phone. Participants were asked to browse the page and read the description on their own phones. The description of the product was the same as that in Experiment 1. Participants were required to read the narrative/listed information and then rate their WTP on a seven-point scale. For the two offline groups, we simulated an offline store environment with a researcher acting as a salesperson who introduced the mobile phone to participants. The description of the product was duplicated from Experiment 1 and delivered to the participants through face-to-face interaction. To decrease confounding factors, we arranged the same salesperson for both the narrative and listed groups. Participants were required to listen to an introduction of the product with narrative/listed form and then rate their WTP on a seven-point scale. All participants must evaluate their perceived information quality measured by a six-item scale (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.920$) (Appendix D), which was adapted from perceived quality scales originally proposed by McKinney et al. (2002) [66] and Zheng et al. (2013) [67].

Experiment 3 was conducted using a lower-involvement product to increase the validity of the proposed mechanism. A pre-test was conducted to identify products that were noticeably different in terms of consumer involvement. A total of 60 participants were invited to join the pre-test and were required to rate their involvement in six products: mineral water, school bags, shampoos, sports shoes, watches, and mobile phones. All six are products frequently used by university students.

Consumer involvement was measured using a five-item scale (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.830$) (Appendix E), which was originally developed by Zaichkowsky (1985) [69]. From the results of the pre-test, we selected mineral water (M water = 2.49) as the low-involvement product, compared to mobile phones as the high-involvement product (M mobile phone = 5.60). Experiment 3 was also conducted using a two-factor (information form: listed vs. narrative) * (communication channels: online vs. offline) between-subjects design. We excluded one sample owing to incomplete information, and 173 participants (65.3% female), the final sample size, were recruited. The participants were randomly assigned to four groups. They were required to read introductory information about the mineral water we created (Appendix F), evaluate their perceived information quality and rate their WTP.

Experiment 4 was conducted to identify the combined effects of information forms and communication channels. The experiment used a single factor (information form combined with the communication channels: offline narrative + online listed, offline narrative + online narrative, offline listed + online listed, and offline listed + online narrative) between-subjects design. Two samples were excluded because of incomplete information, and 128 participants (75% female), the final sample size, were recruited. First, participants were asked to imagine themselves shopping offline and meeting a shop assistant introducing a type of mobile phone. The description of the product was duplicated from Experiment 1 and was presented to the participants through person-to-person introductions. Participants were then instructed to check more information online. They scanned a quick response code linked to online information regarding the product. After reading the text online, the participants were required to rate their WTP on a seven-point scale.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Different Information Forms Used in Practice

Based on the data from the first survey, we compared the performance of the paired sellers using different information forms (listed vs. narrative). The results (Tab. 1) indicate that the sales gaps of gum ($SL = 2863$, $SN = 2378$), shower gel ($SL = 1117$, $SN = 1345$), and liquid foundations ($SL = 13$, $SN = 33$) were relatively low for the different information forms. However, the sales gaps between the listed group and narrative group information forms of moisturisers ($SL = 720$, $SN = 2327$), eye-protection lamps ($SL = 45\ 000$; $SN = 35\ 000$), and high-tech trolley cases ($SL = 103$; $SN = 23$) were comparatively high.

The results confirm that sellers adopt different information forms to promote the same product. Additionally, the effect of different information forms varies with the product type. In particular, for high-involvement products, the listed information is used more; for middle-involvement products, the narrative information is more common, while for the low-involvement products, the results are mixed.

4.2 Different Types of Information Obtained Across Channels

Based on the second survey, we compared consumers' favourite methods of obtaining information between the online and offline channels. The results show that consumers tend to browse text for product information ($M = 5.826, SD = 1.018$), rather than consulting online

customer services ($M = 4.674, SD = 1.351, t = 4.635, p < 0.000$) when shopping online. However, when shopping at offline stores, consumers prefer both consulting shop assistants ($M = 4.93, SD = 1.218$) and searching for information through a website ($M = 4.74, SD = 1.357, t = 0.705, p > 0.484$).

Table 1 Effect of information form on sales performance

Involvement	Products	Information forms	Sales per month
low-involved	gum	Listed	2863
		Narrative	2378
	shower gel	Listed	1117
		Narrative	1345
middle-involved	liquid foundation	Listed	13
		Narrative	33
	moisturiser	Listed	720
		Narrative	2327
High-involved	high-tech trolley case	Listed	103
		Narrative	23
	eye-protection lamp	Listed	45 000
		Narrative	35 000

The results indicate that consumers prefer different ways of obtaining information when shopping online and offline. This result supports our prediction that consumers' responses to information about the same product vary according to their shopping situation. Therefore, it is meaningful to investigate the effect of the information form on purchase decisions using different methods (Study 2). Further, it is important to examine the interaction effect of offline and online information because consumers consult sales assistants and check information online when shopping at offline stores (Study 4).

4.3 Influence of Information Form on Consumers' WTP

Based on the data collected in Experiment 1, an independent sample t-test showed that information forms can significantly affect the WTP. Participants reported a significantly higher WTP in the listed information group ($M = 0.25, SD = 1.00$) than that in the narrative information group ($M = -0.28, SD = 0.93; t = 2.546, p < 0.013$).

The results indicate that consumers show a bias toward different forms of information. Importantly, contrary to what conventional wisdom might predict, we showed that listed information was more likely to motivate consumers' WTP than narrative information. Study 1 provides initial support for the main effect of information form on consumers' purchase decisions. However, this study does not consider the impact of information forms on WTP under different communication channels (online or offline). For in-depth research, Study 2 was designed to examine the effect of the information form when consumers shop online or offline.

4.4 Influence Mechanism of Information Form on Consumers

We predicted that the perceived information quality would vary with the change in the information form, which sequentially influences consumers' WTP. Specifically, if consumers perceive that information is not worth trusting, their WTP decreases, and vice versa. Communication

channels are another important factor. We predicted that consumers would respond differently to the same information form through online and offline channels.

4.4.1 Moderating Effect of Communication Channels

Using the data collected in Experiment 2, a univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed a significant effect of communication channels on the WTP for mobile phones ($F = 6.391, p = 0.012$), a two-way interaction effect between information forms and communication channels ($F = 4.166, p = 0.043$), and a non-significant main effect of information form ($F = 1.822, p = 0.179$). It is worth noting that participants reported significantly higher WTP from online shopping ($M = 0.190, SD = 0.97$) than the WTP reported from offline shopping ($M = -0.19, SD = 1.00; t = 2.553, p = 0.012$). Meanwhile, participants reported higher WTP from the listed information ($M = 0.431, SD = 0.969$) than from narrative information when they shopped online ($M = -0.081, SD = 0.902; t = 2.544, p = 0.013$), but showed slightly higher WTP from the narrative information ($M = -0.155, SD = 1.028$) than from the listed information when they shopped offline ($M = -0.259, SD = 0.966; t = -0.462, p = 0.645$). Further details are provided in Fig. 1.

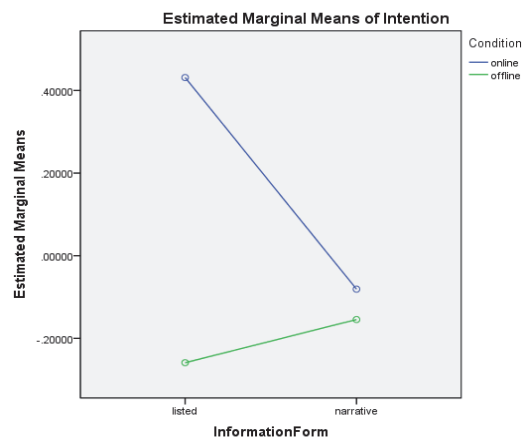


Figure 1 Interaction effect of information forms and communication channels on WTP for mobile phones

Through the above data analysis, we find that communication channels are an important factor influencing consumers' WTP for mobile phones and online WTP is significantly higher than offline WTP. Online listed information is more likely to stimulate consumers' WTP than narrative information, whereas the opposite is true for offline purchasing.

4.4.2 Mediating Effect of Information Quality

Based on Model 5 of Hayes [68], we conducted a bootstrap analysis to examine whether the perceived information quality mediates the moderation effect of communication channels on information forms and WTP for mobile phones. This yielded a significant indirect effect of the perceived information quality of information form on WTP (*indirect effect* = -0.568 , 95% *CI* (-0.8094 , -0.3652), excluding zero). There is also a significant direct effect (*direct effect* = 0.4484 , 95% *CI* (0.0912 , 0.8054 , $p = 0.014$) excluded zero) between the information form and WTP in the offline communication, while the direct effect (95% *CI* (-0.2053 , 0.5203 , $p = 0.393$) included zero) is not significant online. This implies that perceived quality of information plays a full mediating role between information form and WTP in online communication and a partial mediating role in offline communication.

The results indicate that online participants pay more attention to the quality of information perception, which, in turn, increases their WTP. In addition to the perceived information quality, offline consumers have complementary intermediaries to include in the model. These results have important implications for marketing managers. Online communication should be concerned with information design and should focus on using listed information to increase consumers' purchase intentions. Offline communication should focus on how sales staff's narrative information is expressed to reach a deal and complete purchase transactions.

4.5 Role of Consumer Involvement

To increase the validity of our research, we tested the proposed mechanism using a low-involvement product. We predicted that the main effect of information form, as well as the interaction effect between information form and communication channel, on WTP would continue to exist for low-involvement products.

4.5.1 Effect of Information Form on WTP for Low Involvement Products

Based on the data collected in Experiment 3, an independent sample t-test showed that the effect of the information form on WTP was significant ($t = 2.013$, $p = 0.046$). Participants reported a significantly higher WTP in the listed information group ($M = 0.169$, $SD = 1.066$) than that in the narrative information group ($M = -0.136$, $SD = 0.927$). The conclusions of the first two experiments were verified using the low-involvement product.

4.5.2 Moderating Effect of Communication Channels for Low Involvement Products

A univariate ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of information form ($F = 3.35$, $p = 0.069$) on consumers' WTP toward mineral water, a non-significant main effect of communication channels ($F = 0.710$, $p = 0.401$), and a two-way interaction effect between information form and communication channels ($F = 0.002$, $p = 0.962$). (See Fig. 2 for further details.)

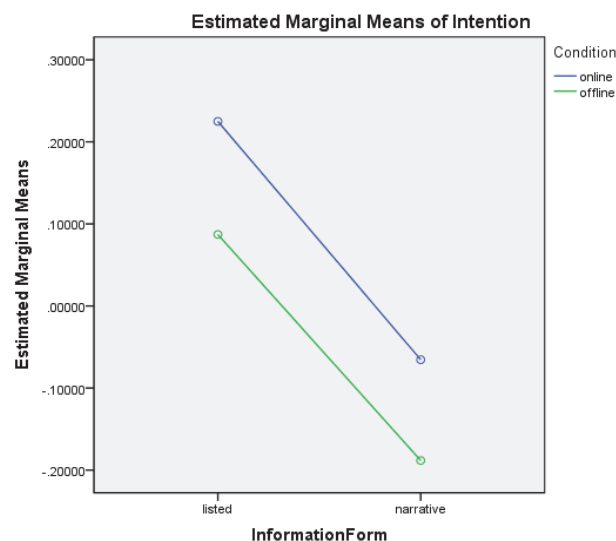


Figure 2 Interaction effect of information form and communication channels on WTP for mineral water

4.5.3 Mediating Effect of Information Quality for Low Involvement Products

Based on Model 5 of Hayes [68], we conducted a bootstrap analysis (with 5000 samples) to examine whether the perceived information quality mediates the moderation effect of communication channels on information forms and WTP for mineral water. This analysis yielded a significant indirect effect of the perceived information quality of information form on WTP (*indirect effect* = -0.221 , 95% *CI* (-0.4112 , -0.0889), excluding zero). However, the direct effect between the information form and WTP is non-significant, both online (95% *CI* (-0.4884 , 0.3803 , $p = 0.806$) included zero) and offline (95% *CI* (-0.5061 , 0.3216 , $p = 0.660$) included zero). This implies that, when purchasing a low-involvement product, the quality of information perception plays a fully mediating role between information form and consumers' WTP in both online and offline communication.

Through the above data analysis, we found that the information form is also crucial to consumers' WTP for low-involvement mineral water. Listed information is more effective than narrative information. However, the communication channels are not as important for mineral water as they are for mobile phones. Empirical results also show that the perceived information quality is an important factor that fully mediates the influence of information form on consumers' WTP both online and offline. The marketing implications of Study 3 are that, facing low-involvement mineral water, consumers focus mainly on the information form rather than the communication channels; listed information is more effective than narrative information

both online and offline. Therefore, marketing managers should list all the information clearly and objectively when promoting low-involvement products.

3.6 Combination Effect of Information Forms and Communication Channels

The previous experiments supported our assumption that consumers' responses to information varied with the information form and communication channels because of the different perceived information quality. However, in the real world, consumers typically prefer to search for information through offline and online channels. Accordingly, we conducted Experiment 4 to test the combined effects of information forms and communication channels.

Table 2 Grouping situation

	Online listed information	Online narrative information
Offline listed information	Group 1	Group 2
Offline narrative information	Group 3	Group 4

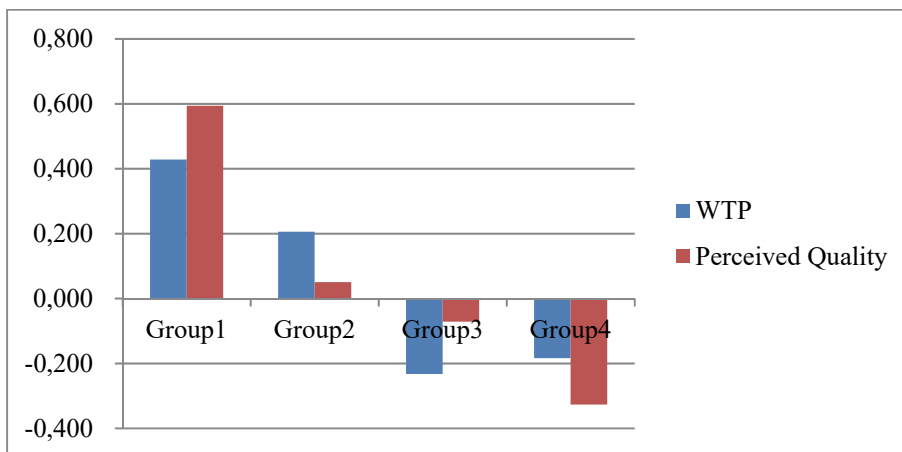


Figure 3 WTP and perceived quality of different groups

4.6.2 Mediating Effect of Information Quality

As communication channels are a multiple category variable, three stepwise regression models were developed to test the mediating effect of information quality between communication channels and WTP. The models and empirical results are presented in Tab. 3.

Table 3 Results of the regression models

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Dependent variable	WTP	WTP	Quality
(Constant)	-0.184	0.049	-0.327
Group1	0.612**	-0.045	0.920***
Group2	0.390	0.121	0.377
Group3	-0.049	-0.231	0.255
Quality		0.714***	
	$R^2 = 0.069$ $F = 3.071^{**}$	$R^2 = 0.528$ $F = 34.466^{***}$	$R^2 = 0.098$ $F = 4.484^{***}$

***: significant at the 0.01; **: T-test is significant at the 0.05.

The empirical results show that Group 1 (listed information both offline and online) has significantly higher WTP and perceived quality than the other methods. When adding the perceived quality in Model 2, quality significantly affects the WTP, while all communication channels become

We divided the collected data in Experiment 4 into four groups according to the information forms and communication channels (Tab. 2).

4.6.1 WTP and Perceived Information Quality

An ANOVA indicated significant differences in WTP ($F = 3.071, p < 0.030$) and perceived information quality ($F = 4.484, p < 0.005$) between the different groups. The factor scores of WTP from the largest to the smallest are in the following order: Groups 1, 2, 4, and 3. The factor scores of the perceived information quality from the largest to the smallest are in the following order: Groups 1, 2, 3, and 4. (See Fig. 3 for further details.) The results show that the most effective communication channels are listed information, both offline and online, followed by offline listed and online narrative information. However, the offline narrative and online listed information methods and the online and offline narrative information methods are much lower in terms of perceived quality and purchase intention.

insignificant. This implies that perceived quality plays a fully mediating role between communication channels and WTP.

The fourth experiment combined information form and communication channels. The results of the data analysis indicate that listed information, both offline and online, is the most effective in impacting participants' WTP. Next in effectiveness is the offline listed information and online narrative information. Again, the fourth experiment confirmed the important mediating effect of the perceived quality of information. The experiment suggested many important pieces of advice for marketing specialists. Promoting high-involvement products, marketers should have the salesperson introduce listed information to consumers while also making use of a listed or narrative introduction online.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study indicate that the information form plays an important role in the communication process. Specifically, consumers' WTP varies with changes in information form, and the differences can be explained by the perceived information quality. Additionally, the

influence of the information form shifts with changes in the communication channels. Consumers show a higher WTP when they are provided with listed information online; in contrast, offline consumers are more willing to purchase when their communication comes through narrative information.

However, these conclusions are only applicable to high-involvement products as consumers always need extra information to make decisions on these products [70]. For low-involvement products, consumers always make purchase choices based on their previous experiences and habits [71], rather than being influenced by different information forms (Study 3). When the information form is a combination of offline and online channels, the most effective communication method is listed information both offline and online, followed by offline listed information and online narrative information (Study 4).

5.1 Academic Contribution

Our study contributes to the literature by combining information forms with communication channels and product types. Previous studies have confirmed the effect of information form on purchase intention, but few have considered the moderating role of communication channels. Our study explored the interaction effect between information forms and communication channels and found different influences of information forms through various communication channels. Further, our work explains the influence of information form on purchase intention based on the perceived quality of information. Our findings support potential future studies related to communication channels and information forms.

5.2 Marketing Implications

With the development of an omni-channel strategy, most brands must find a means of promoting their products through both online and offline channels. Marketers should note that consumers prefer listed information when shopping online. Therefore, marketers must be cautious about the narrative information they provide online, especially for high-involvement products. Meanwhile, marketers should offer more training to offline sellers regarding the narrative introduction of their products. Consumers prefer to learn about a seller's own feelings about and experiences with products when they are communicating offline. When we tested the relationship between price evaluation and WTP, we found that the perceived price value is not always correlated with WTP. Narrative information can increase the perceived price value of products; however, consumers require more objective information to make the final purchase decision. Marketers should focus on pricing rather than communication channels for low-involvement products. In summary, marketers must alter their information form according to both communication channel and product type.

5.3 Limitations

A total of 734 participants were recruited to participate in the surveys and experiments. However, all participants

were university students. The similarity among our participants avoids some confounding factors, but also limits the scope of the research. Meanwhile, as consumers' preferences vary with generation, the different responses to information form among generations were unexplored in this project and could be another interesting topic to discuss in the future. Further, our study only included two products: mobile phones and mineral water. Although the two selected products represent two involvement levels, examining more product categories is suggested for future research

5.4 Future Research

Our study suggests the need for future research on information processing and consumer behaviour. We confirm that the effect of the information form on purchase decisions varies with product type and communication channel. Further, we explain the effect of the perceived quality of information. We conclude that consumers pay more attention to the quality of information when shopping online than offline. The first survey offers practical support for our findings, but more studies are required to confirm our conclusions. In addition to the perceived quality of information, there are more perspectives to consider as explanations for the effect of information form on purchase decisions. It is important for researchers to continue studying and exploring the mechanism behind the journey from information forms to purchase decisions.

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Appendix**Appendix A. Measurement of online/offline information obtaining approaches**

1. When shopping online, I always browse online text and images for product information.
2. When shopping online, I always ask online customer service for product information.
3. When shopping at stores, I always ask the salesperson for product information.
4. When shopping at stores, I always check the product information through in-store advertising and the product package.
5. When shopping at stores, I always check the product information through the online store or other online channels.

Appendix B. Description of mobile phone

Narrative information: Today, I am excited to recommend a new and must-have mobile phone that perfectly combines beauty and talent. At first glance, you will not ignore the dazzling all-steel curved screen design and streamlined contour cutting. It can be felt in the palm of your hand, and you can feel and appreciate its lightness. This phone has a delicate and meticulous workmanship, which perfectly explains the design concept of simplification. When you play, you will be amazed at the various advanced technologies that you have gathered. The fingerprint unlock button and face recognition unlock allow you to turn on your phone quickly without worrying about being stolen by someone else. Large storage and storage spaces allow you to store a variety of videos at will and also help you get the most out of your game at an impressive speed. In addition, this phone has a powerful camera function to capture the most fascinating moments between movements. What are you waiting for, a mobile phone with such a powerful function, the heart is not as good as an action!



Listed Information:

Product parameters:

Memory:4GB+64GB

Photo camera:800W+1300W

Fingerprint double unlock: (face recognition + fingerprint unlock)

Network full netcom All-in-One (4G)

Power:3000mAh

Screen – full screen:5.72" 2.5D radiance screen

Screen resolution:1440*720

Navigation support GPS

Memory expansion up to 256G (non-standard)

Color: meteoritered

Other: WeChat double open night shot mobile phone beauty camera, etc.

Appendix C. Measurement of willingness to buy

1. I am very interested in this product.
2. It is highly possible for me to buy this product.
3. I will consider buying this product when I need it in the future.
4. When I buy this type of products in the future, I will think of it first.
5. When friends and family need to buy this kind of products, I will probably recommend it to them.

Appendix D. Measurement of perceived information quality

1. I think the above description of the product is very credible.

2. I think the above description of the product is very accurate.
3. I think the above description of the product is very complete.
4. I think the above description of the product is very detailed.
5. I think the above description of the product can give me the information I need.
6. I think I have a comprehensive understanding of the product through the previous introduction.

Appendix E. Measurement of involvement

1. This type of products is very attractive to me.
2. Buying this type of products is very important to me.
3. When buying this type of products, it usually takes me a long time to make a purchase decision.
4. I think it is necessary to collect information or ask other people about this type of products.
5. I think the process of buying this type of products is very interesting.

Appendix F. Description of mineral water

Narrative Information: Recently, I purchased high-end mineral water imported from France, which perfectly explains the romance and elegance of France, as well as the pursuit of detail of the French people. The smart and exquisite bottle design makes people have love at first sight; the refreshing and smooth taste makes the taster have an unforgettable experience. This natural and rare mineral water is not only rich in calcium, sodium, barium, magnesium, and other minerals and trace elements but also belongs to the world's rare small molecular water. As a weakly alkaline water promoted by health experts, it not only cares for our body but also moisturises and maintains the skin. This is a model with more than one use. What are you waiting for, pick it up!



Listed Information:

Brand: Lek Valley
 Name: Lek Valley Mineral Water
 Place of Origin: France
 Classification: Drinking water
 Shelf life: two years
 Water source: rock water in Pampa, province d'Ejige, France
 Ingredients: (Unit:mg/L)
 Calcium: 44 Strontium: 0.7
 Magnesium: 33 Potassium: 3.8
 Sodium: 12 Sulfide: 35
 Chlorine: 14 Bicarbonate: 259
 Total dissolved solids: 260
 PH value: 7.7