

LouisSaveinDupuisJournalofMultidisciplinaryResearch2024,3:  
203-210Doi.: 10.21839/lrdjmr.2024.v3.157

Research Article

## A Review of the Literature on Omnichannel Retailing

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### Abstract:

The wide range of new technology applications may be the reason for the quick changes in consumer behaviour models and retailing practices. Thus, it is important to investigate these intriguing change mechanisms from a variety of angles and employ a range of techniques. This study synthesizes the findings of earlier studies in a literature review and provides some implications for future research and practice regarding retailing evolution, especially focusing on the shift from multichannel to omnichannel retailing. In order to investigate contemporary business and consumer practices, interdisciplinary research methods have been used in marketing and electronic/mobile commerce. This literature review provides an integrated perspective of the existing research insights by demonstrating a time-series consistency between multichannel and omnichannel concepts. In order to highlight the important issues in this topic that are derived from various disciplines and to discuss the practical implications for future research, this study specifically aims to explore and highlight pertinent terminology definitions and concepts.

**Keywords:** *omnichannel marketing, omnichannel retailing, omnichannel shopping, and literature review.*

### Introduction

Consumers' shopping habits have evolved along with technology, giving rise to some intriguing research questions in the context of the channel. Up until now, customers have engaged with retail channels using a variety of devices, including smartphones, tablets, laptops, desktop computers, and televisions, in online stores to look up product details and prices. In some cases, they have even made purchases in physical stores.

Based on multichannel concepts from the World Wide Web, these retailing phenomena can be interpreted as having "omnichannel" characteristics. The word "omni" was coined by academics and business professionals. But according to Parker and Hand (2009) and Ortis and Casoli (2009), "omnichannel" shoppers use all the channels at once, evolving from multichannel consumers. "An integration of sales experience that melds the advantages of physical stores with the information and rich experience

of online shopping" is how Rigby (2011, p. 65–76) originally defined omnichannel retailing. This phrase refers to both the integrated and contemporaneous use of these channels for the purposes of our study. Omni retailing, as defined by Levy et al. (2013), is "a coordinated multichannel offering that provides a seamless experience when using all of the retailers shopping channels," meaning that customers use all channels and enjoy seamless integration. "Omni" principles have been used in a variety of fields and research areas, including e-commerce. Additionally, businesses may pinpoint precise locations for their target customers thanks to technologies like mobile applications (apps) that provide location-based services. Retailers can use the data to instantly post coupons and ads for their target audiences (Andrews et al., 2016, pp.15-24; Verhoef et al., 2017, pp.1-8).

The main goals of this study are to examine the body of existing research on these new topics and offer some recommendations for

future lines of inquiry. This study specifically focusses on the distinctions between omnichannel and multichannel retailing. This essay aims to concentrate on the omnichannel retailing phenomenon by using methodical academic research channels. In order to investigate omnichannel commerce for particular objectives and generate future research implications about methodology, findings, conclusions, and management, this study also illustrates current theoretical definitions.

Given that consumers can access seamless shopping experiences through a combination of offline and online channels, the literature on omnichannel retailing encompasses a number of topics. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the literature from a variety of research fields, including mobile commerce, e-commerce, multichannel retailing, and customer relationship management. Only important sources that can be investigated further can be cited in this study due to space constraints.

### Literature Review

Drawing from earlier research by Mosquera et al. (2017, pp. 166–185), this study presented a thorough literature assessment on omnichannel retailing. In order to find high-quality marketing publications on retailing or management information systems (including e-commerce and mobile-commerce), we used a number of databases, including ABI-INFORM, Web of Science, and others, along with the keywords omnichannel retailing, omnichannel shopping, and omnichannel marketing. The goal of our investigation was to identify some important developments or ramifications of omnichannel retailing theory and practice.

*The conceptual analysis on this subject is presented in the following sections.*

The pertinent literature on multichannel retailing can be broadly distilled into a set of ideas. According to this survey, channel switching, customer experience, coordination, integration, and synergy are the ideas that are most pertinent to the notion of omnichannel. Previous research showed that the "click and mortar" concept was the ancestor of the omnichannel concept. In particular, "cyber-enhanced retailing," as proposed by Otto and Chung (2000, p.185-191), refers to the use of e-

commerce strategies in conjunction with traditional retailing to improve the value of the shopping experience for customers. Burke (2002, p.411-432) also addressed this customer experience. Burke (2002, p. 411-432) used a survey with 128 different variables to examine the buying experience and found that consumers prefer to buy from both online and physical retailers. Burke (2002, p. 411-432) found that consumers prefer shopping features that help them shop across multiple channels, such as searching online before making a purchase in a physical store or shopping online and picking up their order in a physical store. As a result, he recommended that retailers combine these channels to help customers move between them in a transparent manner. According to Shankar et al. (2011, p. 29–42), offering "the same information in the same style across the channels" might result in a smooth purchasing experience that increases consumer satisfaction and retention. Conversely, a collection of practices that enable retailers to sell goods or services over many channels is known as multichannel retailing (Levy and Weitz, 2009; Lin, 2012, p. 1865-1882). Furthermore, merchants can use advanced analytics and key technology to improve customer interactions and customer experience, which will raise customer satisfaction, loyalty, and even customer lifetime value, according to Nash et al. (2013, p. 32–39).

***There are no sources in the current document.***

However, Steinfield et al. (2002, p. 93–119) highlighted that integrating many channels seamlessly is a significant and challenging challenge with relation to channel integration, synergy, and coordination. Bendoly (2005, p. 313–327) explained how businesses need to simultaneously manage their online and offline channels to guarantee smooth and transparent channel integration and boost client loyalty.

Next, Sousa and Voss (2006, p. 356-371) defined "integration quality" as "the ability to provide customers with a seamless service experience across multiple channels" and contended that it is a crucial component of multichannel service quality. The two parts of integration quality are integrated interactions and channel-service configuration. According to Chatterjee (2006, p. 31–56), cross-channel businesses can increase their profitability by

coordinating their offline and online strategies rather than operating them separately. However, Joo and Park (2008, p. 49–61) discovered that when consumers shop at home (through TV, catalogues, and the Internet), they choose distinct channels and there is no cross-channel synergy between these channels. This implies that businesses should make clear the purpose and significance of each channel and link them in the right way. Additionally, Kwon and Lennon (2009, p. 557–564) emphasised how crucial it is for corporate image management to be congruent and integrate seamlessly in multichannel situations. The trust of customers is then necessary to ensure smooth transitions from offline to online or vice versa, according to Hahn and Kim (2009, p.126–141). In order to evaluate the benefits of smooth multichannel integration, Yang et al. (2011, p. 1688-1696) introduced the concept of perceived entitativity, which is the degree to which a collection of distinct entities is regarded as belonging to a group. Trezz (2015) provided strategic principles for using several channels in their detailed analysis of omnichannel research, however the omnichannel concept was not yet completely developed. According to Beck and Rygl (2015), p. 170-178, the terms multichannel, cross-channel, omnichannel, and channel integration are frequently used interchangeably and coexist, which implies that they frequently lack differentiation.

The most crucial topics in the omnichannel context are customer decision-making, channel migration/switching, and buying loyalty. Van Dijk et al., for instance, found that buyers actively examine the optimal purchasing option by evaluating the information that is available from many sources (2005, p. 1–5). Similar to this, Van Baal and Dach (2005, p. 75–85) described free-riding behaviour as when customers in a multichannel setting utilise one retailer's channel only to research and evaluate products before moving on to another channel to complete their purchase. Additionally, this study discovered that merchants took advantage of this shift in consumer behaviour to offer distinctive cross-channel advantages and leverage channel integration tactics to maintain positive customer relations. Additionally, Sands et al. (2010, p. 397–410) suggested that in order to boost in-store consumption, internet channels may be

utilised to encourage customer involvement in offline channels. Customers that are price conscious will place an online order and pick it up in-store, according to Chatterjee (2010, p. 431-448). Schramm-Klein et al. (2011, p.501–511) discovered that in a smooth multichannel setting, customers can have high levels of purchasing loyalty. Later, Zhang and Oh (2013, p. 205-212) used the findings of Chatterjees (2010, p. 431-448) to develop a related concept known as "showrooming" and provided a few variables that may affect this phenomena.

Furthermore, we are certain that the shop environment in multichannel retailing is still important to talk about. Verhagen and Dolen (2009, p.77–82) discovered that the store image is one element of the store atmosphere in multichannel commerce. Online and offline integration has an impact on a store's image. Retailers can use online discounts to encourage offline purchases. Additionally, Vrechopoulos (2010, p. 518–537) presented some perspectives on this: a paradigm shift in multichannel retailing occurred as a result of the implementation of new technology in the shop, which allowed for changes in the store atmosphere. As a possible avenue for further research, Heitz-Spahn (2013, p.570–578) noted that cross-channel free-riding behaviour may have had some impact on m-commerce, mobile applications, and new retail patterns. Last but not least, Liu et al. (2018) made an effort to expand the definition of multichannel retailing to encompass not only retailer operations but also consumer purchasing patterns within a multichannel setting, which is an additional possible area of study.

### **Mobile Retailing and Information Communication Technology (ICT) Literature**

This study on the idea of omnichannel retailing is based on some underlying knowledge from a prior literature review. For instance, customers are referred to as "omni shoppers" if they are able to use multiple channels at once. Intriguingly, Kourouthanassis et al. (2001, p.264–273) offered a framework that encompassed RFID, ICT, and mobile commerce in an attempt to combine all upstream providers and acquired channels to offer creative, moving services. From the standpoint of user experience, smart technology, such smart shopping carts,

could be used to enhance the experience after 2007. By transferring e-store contents into an electronic kiosk within the shop, Anderson and Nordmark (2008) found that it is possible to connect virtual and physical channels while increasing sales revenue. . Lastly, Van Ittersum et al. (2013, p. 21–36) came to the conclusion that using new technologies like tablets can enhance the shopping experience and increase the likelihood that customers will make another purchase when they are on a tight budget.

Xu et al. (2008, p. 393–402) found that "augmented reality (AR)" in applications related to mobile devices enhances the in-store shopping experience based on mobile commerce viewpoints. Additionally, Jan-Willem et al. (2010, p.697–704) recommended that in order to improve the shopping experience for customers and obtain a competitive edge, businesses could offer pertinent technologies like Wi-Fi and QR codes. Additionally, Hui et al. (2013, p.11-16) showed that consumers' unplanned spending increased when their trip distance increased because of mobile promotions. However, similar to the ICT literature, this study looked at a number of articles about topics connected to omnichannel. For example, Ganesh (2004, p. 140–146) emphasised the value of Internet services in delivering a smooth cross-channel buying experience, which led to the enhancement and upkeep of client relationships. Additionally, Oh and Teo (2006) demonstrated that customers who received high-quality service liked DIY/self-service alternatives in physical locations and preferred convenient cross-channel buying. . Next, different viewpoints on multichannel retailing were highlighted by Ahearne and Rapp (2010, p.111–120), who discussed how social media and user-generated content (UGC) might help salespeople expand into new markets. In conclusion, Huang et al. (2016, p. 265-278) discovered that a tiny portion of online purchases switched to mobile apps due to convenience.

### **Omnichannel Retailing Literature**

Regarding the comments above, we think omnichannel retailing is worth investigating. It was Rigby (2011, pp. 65–76) who coined the word "omnichannel" for usage in academic writing. But it was Bodhani who coined the phrase "omni retailing" (2012, p.46-49). Levy et

al. (2013) then provided the definition of omni retailing. Bodhani used augmented reality (AR) to link with omnichannel retailing (2013, p. 46–49). To satisfy customer preferences and increase customer loyalty, organisations should implement omnichannel strategies, according to Aubrey and Judge (2012, p. 31–39). Omnichannel concepts and tactics were proposed by Brynjolfsson et al. (2013, p. 1–7). This study will examine the distinctions between multichannel and omnichannel, which were specifically attempted to be clarified by Bhalla (2014, p.365–372). Additionally, Tambo's book chapter "Omni-channel Retail Information Systems" (2015, p.874-882) addresses the multidisciplinary character of omnichannel commerce.

According to Beck and Rygl (2015, p. 170-178), omnichannel retailing has grown in popularity since consumers may now purchase across channels at any time and from any location, and social media, cell phones, and tablets have become important elements influencing sales. Due to omni-channel retailing and omni-type consumption, businesses are working to integrate sales and service channels like physical stores, websites, televisions, phones, mobile devices, and kiosks, among others, in order to enhance operational performance. Because it emphasises various interaction touchpoints and adopts a larger perspective of channels, omnichannel retailing is therefore viewed as a progression of multichannel retailing (Verhoef et al., 2015, p.174-181). According to Yrjölä et al. (2018, p. 259–276), omnichannel retailing is a way to gain an edge by developing stronger relationships with customers, taking advantage of new markets, and appealing to the variety of customers' shopping preferences in order to provide a smooth cross-channel experience.

### **Conclusion**

#### ***Implications for Future Research and Practice***

It is clear and crucial that multichannel shopping has increasingly given way to omnichannel retailing. New in-store technology applications and omnichannel platforms demonstrate the steady increase in the diffusion of innovation in the framework of omni shopping retailing. Current scholarly investigations have endeavoured to examine this

matter through both theoretical and empirical approaches.

In order to illustrate important omnichannel retailing phenomenon investigations, the main goal of this study is to compile and create a unified approach. Future studies ought to focus on new retailing goals that have managerial ramifications. For a smooth customer experience, this study recommends that future research carefully examine how ICT applications impact crucial multichannel concepts like channel migration/switching, free riding, and loyalty. Multidisciplinary marketing, e-commerce, and ICT-related characteristics all have an impact on omnichannel retailing.

Exploratory research was the initial step in our study to identify trends in customer behaviour. Conclusions on the following significant topics may be made thanks to this study: (a) the impact of omnichannel retail on customers; (b) customer relationship management in an omnichannel retailing setting; and (c) loyalty and free-riding behaviour in an omnichannel environment.

In conclusion, using omnichannel retailing techniques to influence customers and businesses can be made possible by using new technologies. As a result, this study offers useful insights into the following areas: (a) consumer adoption and application technology in omnichannel settings, which is pertinent to retailer operations; (b) consumer behaviour patterns and preferences; (c) integrating omnichannel concepts into retailers' strategic marketing; and (d) establishing smooth channel integration through the use of online and offline data.

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