



A Seamless Shopping Experience To Customers- Bridging The Gap Between Online And Offline Shopping Powered By Omni-Channel Retailing

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ABSTRACT

Digital platforms have significantly influenced and empowered consumer purchasing behaviour. Today's consumers connect with a variety of channels, including search engines, comparison sites, mobile browsers, applications, social media platforms, and physical storefronts. Due to rapid development of digitalization, companies are also heading towards such platforms so that they can give an easiest and the safest way for delivering services to customers. So, companies operate their business to create a seamless customer experience across all touch points and channels with which customers interact. Retailers who do not adapt to shifting consumer dynamics risk being left behind. As a result, businesses must understand consumer channel choice and the elements that influence consumer channel choice decisions. A typical path to purchase of a consumer today is non-linear as he or she straddles multiple touch points and channels at different stages in their buying journey. So present article is an attempt to study the significance of Omni-Channel and how companies take an advantage of this to reach their business at next level.

Keywords: Omni-Channel, Customer, Customer etc.

1. INTRODUCTION

Shopping has altered as a result of the availability of diverse retail formats, a variety of communication methods, available devices, and varied technology. The new shopping experience has prompted merchants to think creatively, modify their methods, and build a customer-driven model, giving rise to the notion of Omnichannel Retailing (de la Fu

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nre, 2019). Generally Omni-Channel work as a platform for making all channels together like traditional shops, e-commerce, mobile apps, and social media so that customer can access information through single platform regarding purchase (Piotrowicz & Cuthbertson, 2014).

Additionally, the concept of Omni channel commerce is at an all-time high in the current environment, due to the resent scenario of Epidemic because it gives you contact less delivery in terms of safety. Customers have developed into heavy online users, even if they still purchase in traditional brick-and-mortar stores on occasion. As a result, the advanced technology of Omni channel shopping may attract and retain more customers while also contributing to increased engagement, involvement, and

entertainment (Pantano & Viassone, 2015). As a result, a comprehensive literature assessment of technological improvements in omnichannel retailing sub-areas will be of interest.

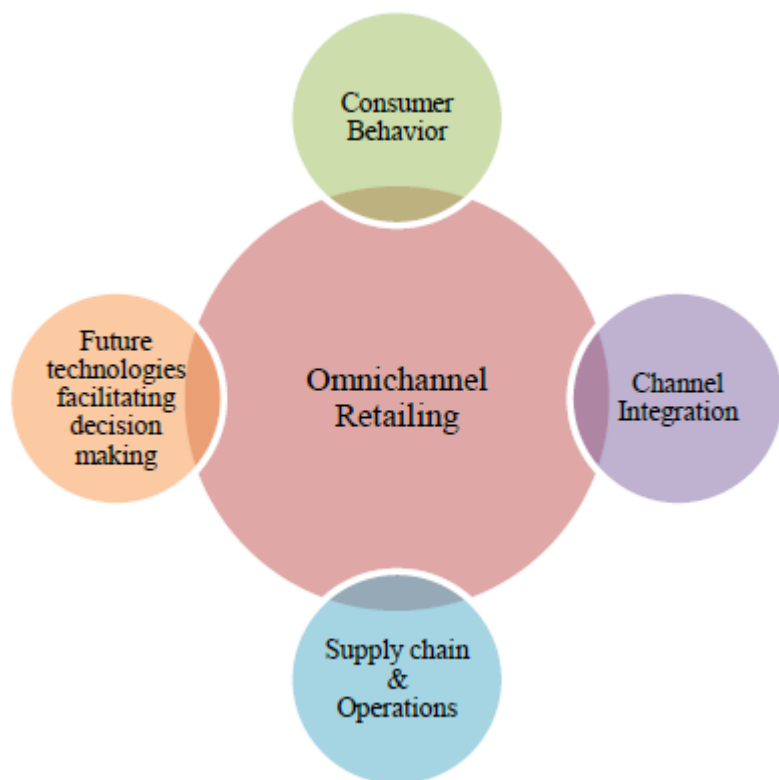
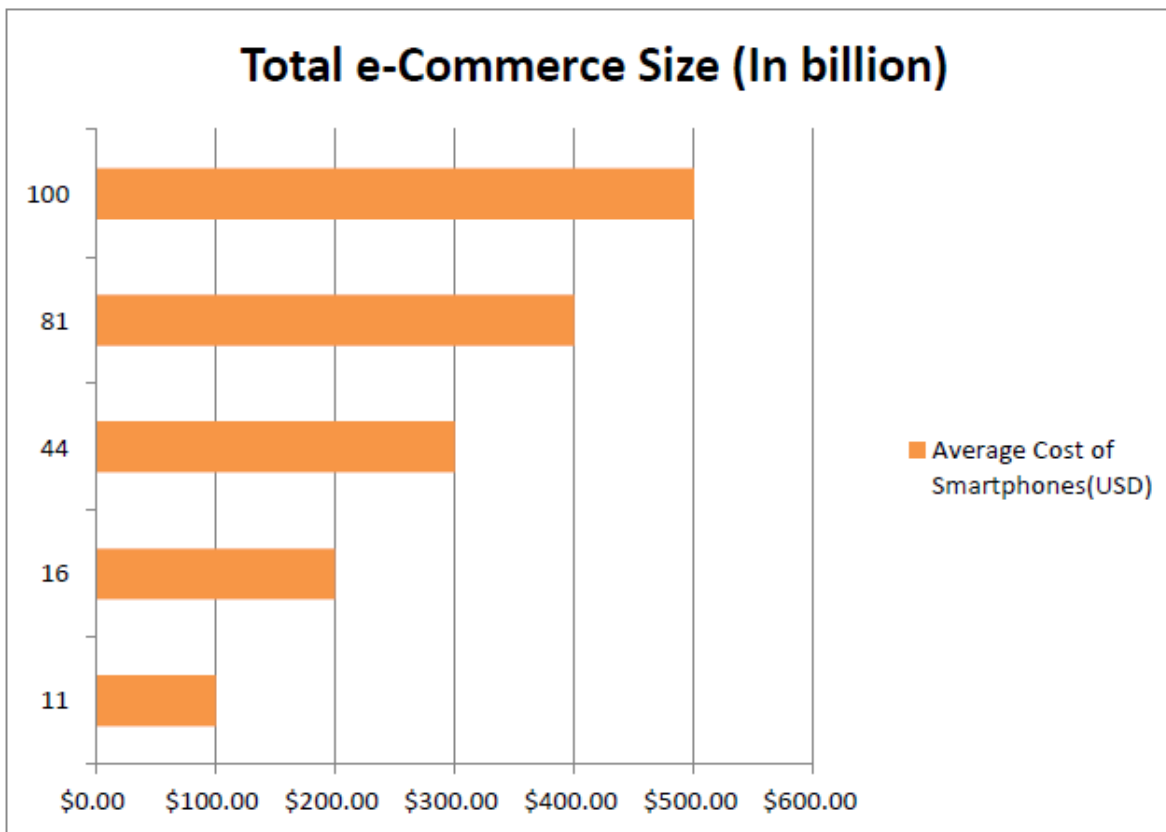


Figure 1: Areas of Omni-channel retailing

2. E-COMMERCE MARKET

The rapid development of smart phones, the internet, and mobile-based apps, together with the explosion of information, fundamentally transformed the consumer and retail scene. On the one hand, this new environment has ushered in a brisk rise of e-commerce in India, encompassing everything from fashion, food, and electronics to clothes, lifestyle, and mobility.

According to IAMAI, the overall size of the Indian e-Commerce market in 2015 was approximately USD 16 billion and is predicted to reach \$101.9 billion by 2020. Consumers can now connect and communicate in a variety of ways thanks to new e-commerce businesses with disruptive business models. Currently, e-commerce spending in India amounts for less than 2% of total retail consumption. The retail sector is growing at an 11 percent CAGR and is predicted to increase from an estimated size of \$600 currently to US\$ 1 trillion in 2020.



Source: IMAI-Deloitte Study, *Estimated Numbers

Figure 2: Total e-Commerce Size in India

Choice (Breadth and Depth of products, Deals, Payment and Delivery options), Convenience (Home delivery, Ease of ordering online, Ease of Product comparison and payment), Comfort (anywhere and anytime shopping), and Connectivity (Internet, social media, and messaging platforms) are the key value propositions that attract hordes of consumers. The introduction of the internet, mobile, social networking, messaging platforms, technology-enabled payment alternatives, and mushrooming e-tailers changed the entire buying experience of customers, ushering in a paradigm shift in how people think and shop.

The widespread use of low-cost smart phones enables people to carry their digital world with them. The decreasing cost of mobile data and free internet access via Wi-Fi in many regions is enthralling smart phone users like never before. According to Cisco, the average usage of mobile data per smart phone user in India is predicted to reach 2.08 GB per month by 2020, up 384 percent from 430 Mb in 2015.

According to an IMAI (Internet and Mobile Association of India) survey, the share of mobile internet spending increased to 64% in 2015 from 54% the previous year. In 2015, the cost of accessing mobile data reduced by around 18%. People are migrating to applications and the internet for the majority of their activities as mobile infrastructure improves and increased high-speed 3G and 4G access becomes available. People are less reliant on voice calls because they prefer to use the internet on their cell phone to make more informed judgments. Ironically, according to Akamai's State of the Internet 2015 report, India has the weakest average internet connection speed in Asia, at 2.8 MBPS.

India today has a plethora of e-Commerce players operating under various business strategies. Though the market place model is widespread, there are also inventory-led models, aggregators, and C2C e-Commerce businesses such as Quickr.com and OLX.in, as well as Omni-channel shops such as Shoppers Stop, Raymond, and Infinity.

At the moment, mobile payments account for a negligible portion of India's overall digital payments market. Phones and tablets, on the other hand, are predicted to contribute 30% by 2020. Mobile payments in India are expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 68 percent from \$86 million in 2011 to \$1.15 billion in 2016.

The M-wallet market is expected to expand at a CAGR of over 30% over the next five years, from 2015 to 2019. The m-wallet market covers money transfers, banking transaction services, and value-added services such as shopping, ticketing, recharging, and bill payments. Money transfer firms have the biggest market share in this group, accounting for 38 percent, followed by recharge and bill payments, which account for 30 percent and 12 percent, respectively. Others have a 20% market share.

3. OMNI-CHANNEL VS. MULTICHANNEL

You may be asking what the distinction is between omni-channel and multichannel approaches. The approach of having numerous sales and marketing channels to engage your customers is known as multichannel. Traditionally, these were siloed systems that couldn't communicate data or processes. Omnichannel marketing efficiently bridges the gap between these various channels, resulting in an immersive customer experience.

Table 1: Differences between Multi-channel and Omni-Channel Management

	Multi-channel	Omni channel management
Channel focus	Interactive channels	Mass communication and Interactiveand channels
Channel scope	Store, online website and direct marketing	Stores, online website, direct marketing, mobile channels and social media including mass media channels
Separation of channels	Separate channels	Integrated channels with seamless experience
Brand versus channel customer relationship focus	Customer-retail focus	Customer-retail and brand focus
Channel management objectives	Sales per channel	Total sales across all channels. Overall retail consumer satisfaction

Channels are utilized interchangeably and smoothly throughout the search and purchase process, and organizations have little or no control over this utilization. Whereas research shopping attracted some attention during the multi-channel phase (Verhoef, Neslin, and Vroomen 2007), show rooming has become a significant concern during the Omni-channel era. Shoppers now commonly conduct in-store searches and concurrently conduct mobile device searches to obtain further information about offers and possibly find more enticing prices (Rapp et al, 2015). The inverse of show rooming occurs as well, and is now referred to as web rooming, in which shoppers research information online but make purchases offline. Historically, this was discovered to be the most prevalent method of research shopping (Verhoef, Neslin, and Vroomen 2007).

Neslin et al. (2006) show that consumers choice of channels varies according to the stages in their buying journey. Consumers channel preference for search need not be the same as their purchase preference. Besides consumers use of channels vary greatly by category.

The degree of involvement in a product category also affects the use of channels for search and purchase. Product categories differ in terms of purchase complexity, purchase frequency, and tangibility (Peterson, Balasubramanian, & Bronnenberg, 1997). Giles Laurent and Jean-Noel Kapferer (1985) study on measuring consumer involvement shows that products perceived importance, risks, hedonic and symbolic or sign value influences consumer behavior.

Peter C. Verhoef, P.K. Kannan, J. Jeffrey Inman (2015) Define omni-channel management in such a way that customer experience over canals and performance over chansons is optimized, as synergistic management of various available channels and customer contact points.

Review of practitioner’s literature explains Omni channel as multi-channel approach towards sales that seeks to provide seamless shopping experience for consumers across channels. For instance, consumer can look for product information in a website, place order from mobile and pick up the product from a particular location. Extending the example even further, a consumer can download a

coupon (say a discount offer) from a mobile app, redeem the coupon in a physical store or a merchant location and buy the product. What differentiates multichannel from Omni-channel is how seamlessly these channels are integrated to create seamless experience for consumers. Therefore all Omni-channels are multi-channel but not all multi-channels are Omni-channel. In other words, a company may have various channels (multi-channel), but if they are not integrated to create seamless experience, then it is not Omni-channel except multi-channel.

4. PERCEIVED COSTS AND BENEFITS OF CHANNELS

Numerous researchers have explored the advantages of internet buying. These features provide a level of convenience that is not available through regular shopping channels. Electronic commerce further increases the uncertainties inherent in Internet purchases, and customers who perceive increased risk associated with this channel of commerce are less eager to make online purchases (Bhatnagar, Misra, & Rao, 2000).

Consumers, especially first-time Internet users, think that the Internet offers various benefits, yet this tends to bring up additional uncertainty while making a purchase. While compared to traditional retail locations, consumers perceive a larger amount of risk when purchasing online (Lee & Tan, 2003; Tan, 1999).

Perceived benefits of internet purchasing were found to include greater convenience, greater product range, easier browsing, and more pleasurable/delightful shopping. The ability to purchase practically anytime, from a number of locations, without visiting a store is seen as convenient shopping. The convenience of shopping is considered avoiding the challenges of purchasing in other channels, including time and stress. Non-store shopping has been proven to be motivated mainly by these incentives.

Peter C. Verhoef, Scott A. Neslin, and Björn Vroomen were selected for the project based on the notion of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Sheppard, Hartwick, & Warshaw, 1988). (2007) This article asserts that the channel consumers perceive each channel's search and purchase qualities determines the relevance of each channel in terms of search and/or purchase. When the authors identify search-only attributes (e.g., the ease of obtaining information), purchase-only attributes (e.g., quickness of receiving the product), and search-and-purchase-only attributes, they refer to these three categories as "search-only attributes, purchase-only attributes, and search-and-purchase-only attributes" (e.g., product assortment). According to TRA models, perception drives attitude, which in turn influences behaviour.

4.1 Consumer Behavior

Since the outbreak of the epidemic, consumer behaviour has evolved dramatically. Their needs and expectations are continuously evolving across multiple areas of technology and media. As a result, transformation is occurring across multiple company verticals at the same time. Businesses must also study larger trends, foresee the consequent changes, and be ready to capitalize on opportunities as they come. (Mathers, 2020).

4.2 Channel Integration

Channel Integration has an impact on how customers shop. Positive revenue growth is being driven through integrated channels. It gives them a sense of superiority over the salesperson (Shakir Goraya et al., 2020). Customers will be more motivated and loyal as a result (Zhang et al., 2018). Furthermore, it raises their satisfaction and increases their spending intent. Customers benefit from increased

accessibility and limitless shopping alternatives thanks to the integration of new in-store technology and mobile devices. It also allows for the creative supplementation of various retail networks. (Bèzes, 2019; McCormick et al., 2014; Mladenow et al., 2018).

4.3 Supply chain & Operations

Since it merges online and offline shops, customers have a smooth experience. For example, retailers can complete orders on a cross-channel basis since they enable a business to make orders online from any location. A second omni-channel retailing objective is price transparency that enables clients to match online pricing with retailing prices. (Harsha et al., 2019).

5. FUTURE TECHNOLOGIES FACILITATING DECISION MAKING

Mobile devices are critical in the implementation of an Omni-channel strategy. They act as a link between the online and offline worlds. New devices facilitate payments and purchases by scanning barcodes. Personalization has taken the form of data analytics, which allows for the planning of customer-specific offerings. Another emerging field is location monitoring, which results in ring-based offers. It works like this: you walk into a retail mall, and offers begin to appear on your mobile device. Other advancements, such as shopping applications, have made stores available to customers 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Mobile wallets are further altering the way in which seamless buying will take place.

6. CONCLUSION

For an hour, Omni-channel is required. Retailers must focus on the identified areas of Omni channel retail in order to effectively suit consumer wishes, preferences, and purchase behavior. Furthermore, new technology has the potential to play a critical role in the current circumstance. It will force the shop to prepare for any potential pandemic so that their business is not harmed. Covid-19, for example, has raised the likelihood of paying without cash. Small shops would recognize its worth and incorporate it into their business model by including numerous platforms, ordering and delivery choices, and payment alternatives. Most businesses will need to make significant changes to their supply chain and logistics network in order to build an acceptable omni-channel portfolio. The appropriate portfolio is likely to have an impact on customer preferences, as well as experienced, production and transport technologies.

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