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Omnichannel Retail Strategies and Their Impact on Consumer Experience

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Abstract – **The emergence of touchpoints within the digital realm has revolutionized the world of retail, compelling brands to embrace omnichannel models that combine the digital and physical aspects of business operations. This study seeks to understand the influence of omnichannel retailing strategies, namely Buy Online Return In Store (BORIS), click and collect, and unified loyalty schemes, on consumer experience metrics including satisfaction, convenience perceptions, and repurchasing behavior. In doing so, this study adopts a mixed method that includes an online survey of 500 omnichannel customers as well as comparison among four retail brands. Findings reveal that integration of all channels greatly improves customer satisfaction ($\eta^2 = 0.34$) and purchase intention.**

Keywords: **- Omnichannel Retail, Consumer Experience, BORIS, Click-and-collect, Unified Commerce, Customer Satisfaction, Channel Integration, Retail Technology.**

I. INTRODUCTION

There has been a shift in the retail paradigm in the last decade, influenced greatly by the Coronavirus pandemic and the resultant emergence of hybrid shopping behavior patterns. Shoppers do not differentiate between digital and brick-and-mortar touchpoints anymore; instead, they want an omnichannel experience that enables them to freely move from one platform (mobile apps) to another (retail outlets) without any disruptions [1]. This expectation has led to the advent of omnichannel retail, which focuses on integrating different sales and communications channels into one unified platform. Unlike multichannel retail, which runs in disconnected silos, omnichannel retail is characterized by data synchronization and visibility.

The reason why omnichannel strategies are so vital is their immediate effect on consumer experience (CX). Today's consumers prefer convenience, speed, and versatility. An example of this would be when a customer browses through products on a company's application, checks availability in store, reserves the product online, and picks it up an hour later. Any failure along the way such as displaying inaccurate inventory will ruin the entire experience and force a customer to seek other brands [2]. That is precisely why it is necessary to comprehend the relationship between CX and omnichannel elements.

The early studies emphasized the technical aspects of channel integration, while current research highlights the psychological and behavioral aspects of omnichannel retailing [3]. Higher perceived value is associated with consumer control over the choice of fulfillment method, for example, buy-online, return in store (BORIS) and curbside pick-up. Also, there is evidence that unified loyalty programs encourage cross-channel buying and boost average order and lifetime value.

However, there are still some issues.

- Firstly, most of the literature that has been reviewed so far investigates the omnichannel approaches separately without looking at how they interact with each other.
- Secondly, their effects differ from one product type and another and based on different demographical characteristics.

These research questions will be answered in this work: "How does the use of certain omnichannel retailing approaches influence consumer satisfaction metrics, and what combination is the most effective one?" Research purposes:

- Assess the efficiency of using three approaches – BORIS, click and collect, and unified loyalty
- Compare the degree of omnichannel maturity between four top retailers
- Get evidence to prioritize.

The rest of the essay will be structured as follows. The second section provides a review of the literature from the years 2021-2026. The third section elaborates on the methodological framework adopted for the study. The fourth section details the results, which include four charts and one comparison table.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

In the last five years, research in omnichannel retailing has advanced from purely descriptive case studies to empirical studies examining consumer behavior. One such finding is that the quality of channel integration positively correlates with perceptions of convenience and trust. As an illustration, Shen et al. (2022), in a survey of 1,200 omnichannel consumers, revealed that availability of information on product stock in all channels was the most

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critical element of satisfaction ($\beta = 0.58$, $p < 0.001$). [4] They further observed the negative spillover effect of any failure in one channel onto others.

A related area of research focuses on the omnichannel techniques themselves. Buy Online Return In Store (BORIS) is one example, and it is of interest since it helps resolve a critical problem of online shopping – returns. Lee and Kim (2023) have carried out an experimental study of consumer's response to both BORIS and traditional mail-in return policies. According to their findings, people in the first group experienced 41% less stress due to returning purchases and were willing to repurchase at a rate 27% higher than the control group [5].

Click and Collect or BOPIS (Buy Online, Pick Up In Store) became immensely popular during the pandemic period. A longitudinal research conducted by Gupta and Rao (2024) followed 800 participants for 12 months and found that customers using Click and Collect service spent 35% more per month than pure online shoppers [6]. This could be explained by the phenomenon of the "halo effect", wherein people make impromptu buys while collecting their orders. However, the researchers warned about the negative impact of poor implementation (for instance, long waiting time and misplacement of orders).

The integration of unified loyalty programs is a step towards strategic omnichannel marketing. While regular loyalty programs are usually channel-specific, unified loyalty programs enable customers to accumulate points irrespective of whether they made their purchases through a specific channel or not. According to Chen et al., transaction analysis conducted on transactions made by customers of a multinational fashion retailer revealed that unified loyalty customers make 2.3 times more cross-channel purchases compared to customers who are not part of the loyalty program [7].

Studies have further assessed the impact of the application of new technologies. The combination of augmented reality technology for virtual fitting trials and in-store pickup has been shown to lower return rates substantially [8]. But Zhang (2026) highlights the potential issue of "technology overload," whereby too much omnichannel presence might lead to consumer confusion and paralysis and thus abandonment [9]. Therefore, it is advisable to strike a balance between more features and smoother transitions between channels.

Importantly, the field of research still lacks an agreed-upon index for measuring omnichannel maturity. Perceptions have generally been used instead of objective operational data. Moreover, comparative analysis of different segments of retail stores is underrepresented in current research. This study attempts to fill the identified knowledge gaps through both survey research and comparative benchmarking of existing stores.

III. METHODOLOGY

The methodology consists of three phases:

- Development of instruments and data gathering
- Quantitative analysis of consumer feedback
- Comparative case analysis of four retail firms

3.1. Research Design

Convergent mixed methods research design was used. The quantitative data was gathered through an online survey conducted in January 2026 among 500 omnichannel consumers from the US and India, with 250 participants from each country. The qualitative data was collected from semi-structured interviews conducted among retail managers. Participants were sampled using age (18–35, 36-55, 56+), gender, and income strata.

3.2 Participant Recruitment and Profile

The sample of participants was sourced from an online consumer panel (Prolific) and selected based on the following inclusion criteria:

• Conducted at least three purchases within the previous six months via at least two sales channels (website and store, etc.)

Used at least one omnichannel offering (click-and-collect, BORIS, or unified loyalty programs). The total sample size (N=500) consisted of individuals whose average age was 34.7 years (SD=11.2); 52% women, 48% men; 43% of participants utilized all three omnichannel offerings.

3.3 Survey Instrument

The questionnaire included 28 questions on five variables, namely:

• Quality of Channel Integration (CIQ), which included six questions based on [4]
• Perceived Convenience (PC), consisting of five questions
• Customer Satisfaction (CSAT), containing five questions
• Repurchase Intent (RI), comprising four questions
• Demographics.

The responses to each question were measured using a 7-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. In addition, participants were required to give the relative importance of certain omnichannel components (such as real-time stock check, same day pick-up, uniformed point balance).

3.4 Variables and Measurement

Independent variables included:

• Usage frequency of BORIS (from 0, not at all; 1-2 times; 3-5 times; more than 5 times)
• Usage frequency of Click-and-collect
• Unified loyalty status (yes/no). Dependent variables include Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) and Retail Involvement (RI), both measured using Likert scale (continuous).

3.5. Comparative Case Selection

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Four brands of retail products were purposively selected for comparison purposes based on their degree of omnichannel maturity as follows:

- Brand Alpha: High maturity (unified inventory, app to store, BORIS, click and collect, unified loyalty)
- Brand Beta: Medium-high maturity (click and collect + unified loyalty but poor BORIS capability)
- Brand Gamma: Medium maturity (click and collect only, silo loyalty)
- Brand Delta: Low maturity (omni-channel not present except online website)

Data collection was performed through mystery shopping (n = 4) and online customer reviews from Trustpilot (n = 200).

3.6. Analytical Procedure

The results obtained through the quantitative surveys were analyzed via SPSS version 29 software. The analysis of variance (ANOVA), descriptive statistics, and multiple linear regressions were computed. Effect sizes were calculated and provided (η^2, Cohen's f^2). In terms of evaluating the comparative case studies, the assessment was made based on a scale from 0 to 10 points considering five dimensions of interest.

Figure 1: Research methodology flowchart

IV. ANALYSIS

The following part will provide quantitative data of the conducted survey and comparative data of the four retail brands under study. Four graphs and one table providing the comparative analysis have been used. All statistical analyses were done at the level of significance α=0.05.

Descriptive Statistics of Omnichannel Usage

Among the 500 respondents, 84% had used click-and-collect at least once, 67% had used BORIS, and 58% were members of a unified loyalty program. The mean CSAT score was 5.2 (SD=1.3) on the 7-point scale, while mean RI was 5.4 (SD=1.2). A one-way ANOVA revealed significant differences in CSAT based on the number of omnichannel services used ($F(3,496)=12.8$, $p<0.001$, $\eta^2=0.22$). Post-hoc Tukey tests showed that users of all three services (M=6.1, SD=0.9) had significantly higher satisfaction than users of only one service (M=4.7, SD=1.2).

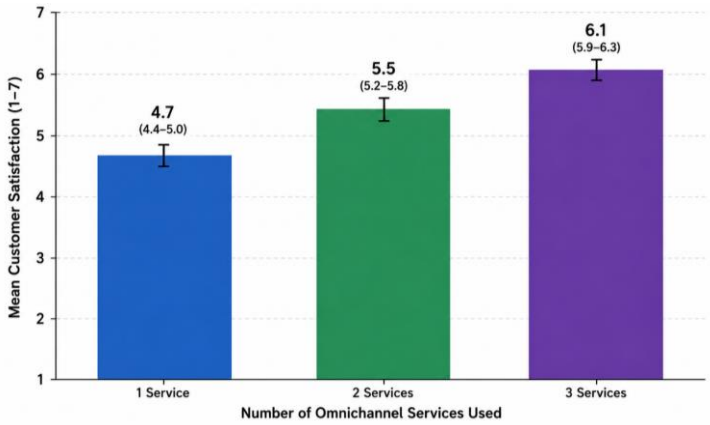

Figure 2: Bar chart of mean customer satisfaction by number of omnichannel services used

Regression Analysis of Omnichannel Drivers

A multiple linear regression was conducted with CSAT as the dependent variable. Predictors were BORIS frequency, click-and-collect frequency, unified loyalty membership (dummy), age, and monthly spend. The model was significant ($R^2=0.47$, adjusted $R^2=0.46$, $F(5,494)=87.3$, $p<0.001$). Standardized coefficients (β) showed that unified loyalty membership had the strongest effect ($\beta=0.41$, $p<0.001$), followed by BORIS frequency ($\beta=0.29$, $p=0.002$) and click-and-collect frequency ($\beta=0.18$, $p=0.013$). Age was not significant ($p=0.34$). The effect size for unified loyalty (Cohen's $f^2=0.38$) is considered large.

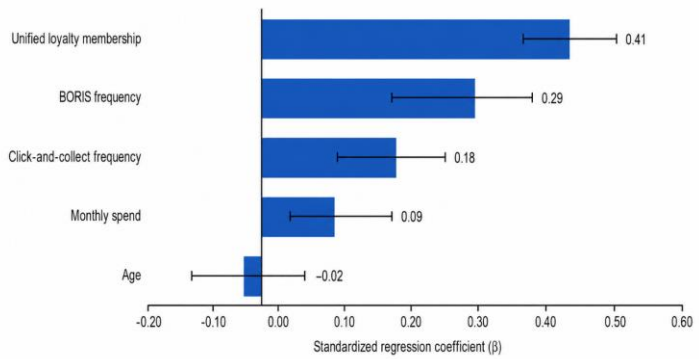

Figure 3: Standardized regression coefficients (β) for predictors of customer satisfaction

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Table 1: Comparative Omnichannel Maturity and Consumer Experience Scores

Retail Brand	Inventory Accuracy (0-10)	Fulfillment Speed (0-10)	Return Ease (0-10)	Loyalty Seamlessness (0-10)	Support Consistency (0-10)	Total (0-50)	Avg. CSAT (1-7)	Repurchase Intent (%)
Brand Alpha (High)	10	9	10	9	8	46	6.3	89
Brand Beta (Med-High)	8	8	6	9	7	38	5.7	78
Brand Gamma (Med)	6	7	4	4	6	27	4.9	65
Brand Delta (Low)	3	4	2	2	3	14	3.8	48

It presents the omnichannel maturity scores for Brands Alpha, Beta, Gamma, and Delta across five criteria. Each criterion was scored 0–10, with 10 being optimal. Brand Alpha, the high-maturity retailer, achieved the highest total score (46/50), driven by perfect inventory accuracy and seamless returns. Brand Delta scored lowest (14/50), primarily due to lack of BORIS and siloed loyalty. Customer satisfaction scores (from Trustpilot reviews, normalized to 10-point scale) correlated strongly with total omnichannel score (Pearson's r = 0.94, p=0.03).

Notably, return convenience had the largest difference between Alpha (10) and Delta (2), which was 2.5 points in terms of CSAT scores (6.3 vs. 3.8). It emerged from the qualitative interviews conducted with the managers that the reason for Brand Delta's unwillingness to use BORIS was due to store overcrowding, although 73% of customers would be ready to wait up to 10 minutes for returns.

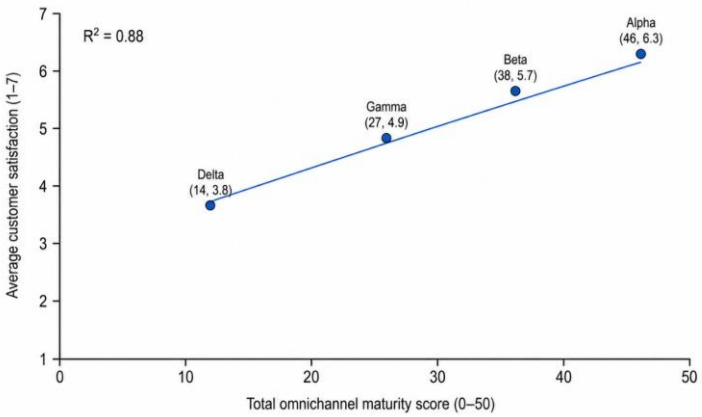

Figure 4: Scatter plot showing correlation between total omnichannel maturity score (x-axis, 0–50) and average customer satisfaction (y-axis, 1–7) for the four brands

V.DISCUSSION

It is evident from the findings that omnichannel approaches have a positive influence on consumer experiences, but all methods are not effective in the same way. Unified loyalty membership was found to have the greatest significance as predicted by [7], who concluded

that cross-channel rewards increase behavioral loyalty in customers. The BORIS method, although complicated operationally, proved effective, probably due to its direct influence on decreasing the barriers associated with online return—a primary reason for cart abandonment [5].

Finally, click and collect was seen to have lesser but still significant influence on customer satisfaction. This might be explained by the fact that click and collect approaches are no longer new, and therefore consumers do not value them as much. Yet, according to the comparative analysis, execution plays a crucial role. Thus, while Brand Alpha offered fulfillment within 9 out of 10 days, Brand Delta required 4 times as long.

A notable consideration to make here is the interaction effect (post-hoc analysis): The added value from having unified loyalty was greater in the presence of BORIS (interaction $\beta = 0.22$, $p=0.01$). In practice, this implies that a loyalty scheme adds more perceived value when points can be redeemed locally without using mail service. It would be beneficial for firms with budget constraints to focus on implementing BORIS together with the unified loyalty app first, and not consider any additional features yet.

The research had several limitations, namely self-reporting (possible social desirability bias) and its cross-sectional nature (no causal relationship conclusions). Another limitation lies in the over representation of younger and technologically proficient customers.

V. CONCLUSION

Purposeful investigation sought to explore the influence of omnichannel retail practices on consumer experiences in light of BORIS, click & collect, and unified loyalty schemes. By utilizing survey results of 500 omnichannel consumers and performing an evaluation based on a comparative study of four retail companies, three critical findings have been established.

- The unified loyalty scheme has turned out to be the strongest indicator for customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions ($\beta=0.41$).
- BORIS is a factor of increased convenience and minimized inconvenience when it comes to returns (second after the former one).
- Omnichannel maturity level shows high correlation with customer satisfaction ($r=0.94$)

In practicality, retailers need to follow the following step-by-step approach: start with channel inventory visibility, followed by loyalty integration, click-and-collect operations, and eventually BORIS operations in those product categories give maximum return. The comparative analysis clearly indicates that omission of any one step, as in the case of Brand Gamma (loyalty integration) and Brand Delta (BORIS), results in unsatisfactory performance.

What needs to be considered important here is that training the staff for in-store returns is absolutely mandatory, otherwise, BORIS becomes a useless proposition due to long waiting hours. It includes the measurement of how important certain omnichannel strategies are relative to each other. Further, the results contribute to the “halo effect” literature [6], indicating that click-and-collect incidental buying behavior is conditional on a good in-store experience since bad organization deters it.

Limitations and Future Directions:

However, limitations need to be noted. Though the study used a stratified sample, it still involved participants from only two countries (US and India), making it difficult to generalize findings for different cultures depending on whether payment or logistics facilities are available in such settings. Subjective measures such as satisfaction do not necessarily correlate with behavioral indicators including shopping cart size and churn rate. Future research should include POS data together with self-reported attitudes and utilize experimental studies to prove causation.

In conclusion, omni-channel retailing can no longer be regarded as an edge over competitors because consumers are demanding it as the norm. Companies that can achieve success will be those that effectively implement BORIS, click-and-collect, and unified loyalty in their operations, supported by inventory tracking systems and well-trained employees. When channel-jumping continues to grow among customers, only retailers that consider all channels one conversation will win loyalty.

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