

Understanding perceived shopping effectiveness with omnichannel: A MOA theory perspective

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ABSTRACT

Customers' shopping effectiveness is a critical factor in encouraging customers to stay with the firms, the knowledge regarding how to provide shopping effectiveness in an omnichannel retailing environment remains underexplored. Thus, this study draws on Motivation-Opportunity-Ability theory (MOA) and examines MOA factors affecting customers' perceived shopping effectiveness, which in turn influences customers' omnichannel usage continuance intention. The expected findings may suggest that the opportunity factor, channel integration quality encompassing channel-service configuration, content consistency, process consistency, and assurance quality, positively influences customers' perceived shopping effectiveness. Furthermore, the motivation factors such as relative advantage, perceived ease of use, personalized incentives, flow, and enjoyment, have positive effects on customers' perceived shopping effectiveness. In addition, ability factors encompassing technology readiness and self efficacy are expected to influence perceived shopping effectiveness. As a result, perceived shopping effectiveness positively influences omnichannel usage continuance intention. These findings enhance the literature on the shopping values and channel integration quality in an omnichannel retailing environment. These findings also offer insightful implications for omnichannel retailers in terms of creating and managing customers' shopping effectiveness in the post-COVID period.

Keywords: Omnichannel, shopping effectiveness, MOA, channel integration quality, personalized incentives.

INTRODUCTION

The proliferation of digital technologies leads to an increasing number of companies implementing an omni-channel retailing strategy to enhance customer shopping experiences (Adivar et al., 2019). Omnichannel retailing refers to retailing that involves channel integration quality for the purpose of creating a seamless shopping experience for customers, regardless of the channel or purchasing process stage, which lies at the heart of omnichannel retailing (Cummins et al., 2016). These days, customers no longer purchase only in-store or online; instead, they shop across channels. They use various channels such as physical stores, websites, direct mail and catalogs, social media sites, review sites, call centers, mobile devices, kiosks, home services, networked appliances, so on and so forth to complete a single purchase. For example, they search for information in one channel, and complete the purchase in another (Asare et al., 2022). Furthermore, the move toward shopping with omnichannel platforms has created opportunities for omnichannel retailers to improve the holistic consumer shopping experience by adding more fun, unique incentives, and higher shopping efficacy (Alizila, 2018). For example, omnichannel allows consumers to experience a shopping environment within a physical store, such as exploring product information that can only be found through digital channels with the added benefit of touching, feeling, and seeing how the products function, sharing information with friends, or receiving social network comments from friends. After leaving the store, they can still keep updated with new product information and sales events within the omnichannel platform. As a result, consumers can enjoy multiple benefits such as increased efficiency, monetary benefits, novelty, and enjoyment by a greatly enhanced consumer shopping process with omnichannel. In addition, omnichannel can facilitate personalized collaborative activities with friends to earn rewards, offering individualized shopping services, push notifications, and rewards, generating unique consumer shopping experience (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). IKEA (UK) reported that after making its products pretty much accessible across retailing channels, customers increasingly used both online and offline channels to complete their purchasing journey, which resulted in a 31% rise in online sales (Rigby, 2016). International Data Corporation (IDC) found that customers using both online and physical channels have 30% higher lifetime value than those purchasing from a single channel. Many managers have cited the omni-channel strategy as a top business priority (Shen et al., 2018), as it can increase per order value by 13% on average and produce 90% higher customer retention rates than a single-channel strategy (Collins, 2019). In China, 85% of apparel shoppers now engage with omnichannel services to make purchases, up from 80% in 2017 (McKinsey Digital, 2019). Furthermore, COVID-19 pandemic prompts 90% of younger customers to continue adopting omnichannel services (Oliver Wyman, 2020). In Vietnam, consumers have shifted towards omni-channel purchasing behaviours in the post-COVID period, resulting in more than 50 per cent of Vietnamese consumers have reduced their frequency of visits to supermarkets, grocery stores and wet markets, while 25 per cent of them have increased online shopping (Vietnamnet, 2020).

With huge advantages of omnichannel, it is supposed that omnichannel retailing can be a promising strategy for firms to increase the customers' shopping effectiveness. However, limited research has explored the customer perception of shopping effectiveness with omnichannel. As it is the main contribution, this study explores the factors that influence the customer perception of shopping effectiveness with omnichannel. More specifically, the present study uses motivation, opportunity, and

ability (MOA) framework (MacInnis et al., 1991) to examine the factors that determine customers' perception of shopping effectiveness with omnichannel. In doing so, this study investigates the role of motivations (relative advantage, perceived ease of use, flow, and enjoyment, personalized incentives), opportunity (channel integration quality), and ability (self-efficacy, technology readiness) on shoppers' perception of shopping effectiveness with omnichannel, which in turn, influence their omnichannel usage continuance intention.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Motivation-Opportunity-Ability (MOA) Theory

MOA theory (MacInnis et al., 1991) explains that consumer behaviour is affected by motivation, opportunity, and ability. In other words, consumer behaviour is considered as a function of the consumer's willingness to perform a particular behaviour (motivation) combined with his or her internal capability (ability) and contextual factors (opportunity). Thus, consumers' behaviour can be proactively managed by controlling the levels of motivation, opportunity, and ability variables. For this reason, the MOA theory was chosen to examine customer adoption of omnichannel in this study.

Although the omnichannel retailing offers many benefits for customers, a lack of knowledge of its adoption drivers may cause retailers to struggle to manage it effectively. Thus, an understanding of the factors that drive customers to perceive shopping effectiveness of omnichannel is essential for retailers in providing insights into customers' adoption of omnichannel. The MOA framework (MacInnis et al., 1991) is used to theoretically identify and hypothesize variables that influence customers' perception of shopping effectiveness toward omnichannel. The MOA framework is a well-established theory, which has been applied to explain behaviours in consumers, employees, and salespeople (Sabnis et al., 2013). This theory assumes that if motivation, ability, and opportunity can each present a potential determinant of customers' shopping effectiveness with omnichannel, then retailers can identify specific driving forces and employ appropriate strategies for successful implementation of omnichannel. Consistent with existing research (e.g., Cui et al., 2020), this study identifies variables that are relevant for MOA factors for customer adoption of omnichannel. This study used this perspective as using MOA variables allows a more careful examination as well as considers context-specific factors influencing the customer perception of shopping effectiveness, which in turn, affects omnichannel usage continuance intention. Particularly, it is hypothesised that motivation variables encompassing relative advantage, perceived ease of use, personalized incentives, flow, and enjoyment. Opportunity variables including dimensions of channel integration quality, and ability variables including technology readiness and self-efficacy directly impact perceived shopping effectiveness. Perceived shopping effectiveness is defined in this study as the extent to which consumers perceive using omnichannel to improve their overall shopping experience (Roy et al., 2017). Consequently, perceived shopping effectiveness affects omnichannel usage continuance intention referring to the extent to which a customer wishes to continue to use omnichannel for shopping (Gao et al., 2021). Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of this study.

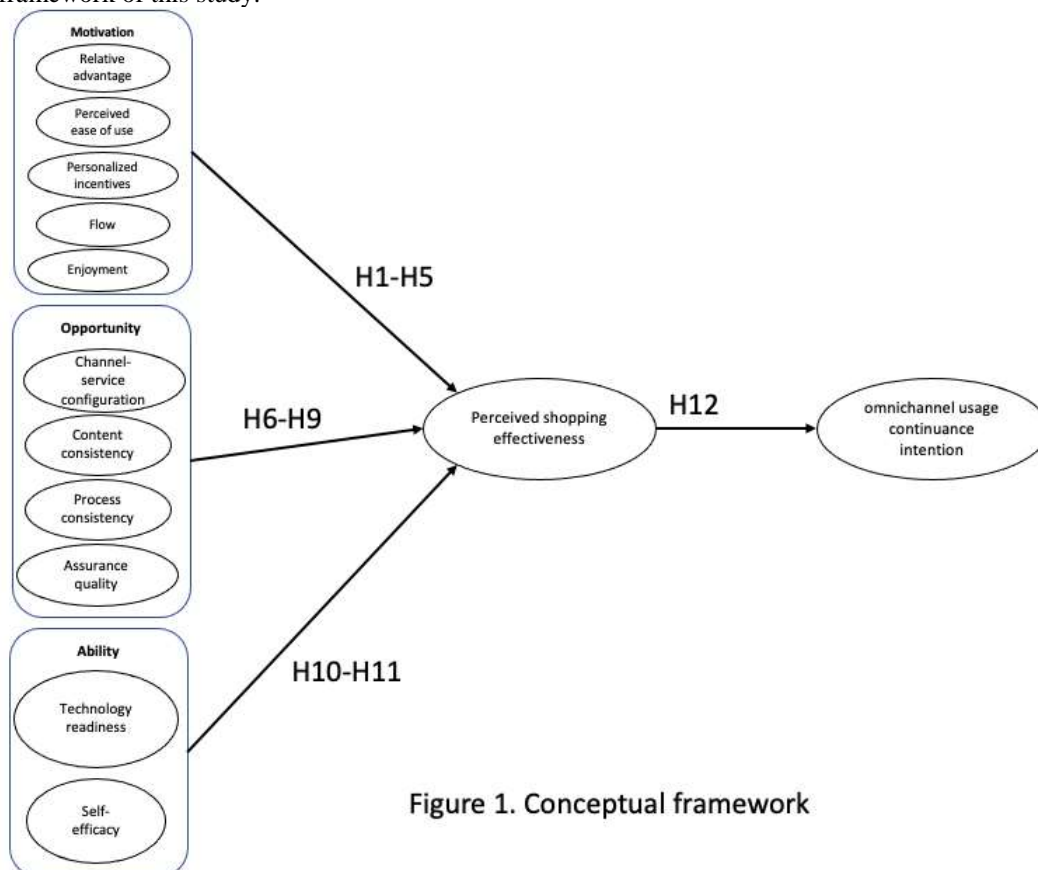


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

Motivation

Motivation refers to the desire or readiness of consumers to accomplish a specific behaviour (MacInnis et al., 1991). As motivation can stem from either an internally generated desire to participate in an act or an external one that arises from the performance of the behaviour (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Thus, this study considers intrinsic and extrinsic motivations as two types of drivers that are more likely to influence the customer perception of shopping effectiveness. Although the omnichannel approach is much more than a technology, its foundations lie in the capability of using technologies during a single purchase (Kopot & Cude, 2021), this study identifies relative advantage, perceived ease of use as extrinsic motivations, and flow, enjoyment, personalized incentives as intrinsic motivations for customer adoption of omnichannel.

Relative advantage is one of the critical extrinsic factors that facilitate the diffusion of innovation (Rogers, 2003). It refers to the extent to which new technology is perceived as offering advanced features and benefits for customers over existing technologies. Shopping with omnichannel offers many advanced features and functionalities such as ubiquitous connectivity, real-time interaction, localised and personalised information, and greater monitoring and support for customers (e.g., shopping efficiency, saving time and effort in shopping) (Asmare & Zewdie, 2022). Thus, this study proposes that these advantages can result in perceiving superior shopping values of omnichannel. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Relative advantage positively influences perceived shopping effectiveness.

Perceived ease of use is defined as the user's perception of the degree of effort that the user needs to use a specific technology (Venkatesh, 2000). The perceived ease of use is often considered to be opposite to perceived complexity referring to the degree to which customers perceive the new technology as relatively difficult to understand and use (Rogers, 2003). Extending this definition to the shopping context with omnichannel, perceived ease of use is the degree of ease associated with consumers' use of different touchpoints during the shopping process with omnichannel (Juaneda-Ayensa et al., 2016). Balaji and Roy (2017) demonstrated that the ease of use of smart technology is likely to result in customer perception of its superior functionality. Therefore, this study argues that when customers perceive omnichannel as ease of use, they hold a favor of it, which may shape their perception of shopping efficiency with omnichannel. Thus, this study hypothesizes that:

H2: Perceived ease of use positively influences perceived shopping effectiveness.

Personalized incentives refers to the perceived amount of individualized consumer information, services, rewards, and incentives given when using omnichannel platforms (Hsia et al., 2020). Modern consumers increasingly embrace personalized services, thus personalization incentives are widely used in omnichannel retailing (Zhu et al., 2017). For instance, omnichannel platforms provide consumers with purchase recommendations, shopping guides, location-based services (e.g., indoor navigation, reference cues, and route maps), real-time personalized rewards in stores or online (e.g., virtual coupons, red envelopes, and membership points), opportunities to collaborate with friends to earn rewards, and various shopping activities based on their unique preferences, needs, and shopping context. For example, by using detailed individual consumer records and corresponding webpage browsing and consumption analysis, Amazon and Alibaba offer consumers specific and tailored discounts and promotions to induce purchases when consumers shop online (Zhu et al., 2017). Thus, this study proposes that:

H3: Personalized incentives positively influences perceived shopping effectiveness.

Flow is an intrinsic motivation that refers to the positive state of consciousness that users experience when they are deeply involved in an activity (Ameen et al., 2021). The state of flow occurs when a consumer is so immersed in a compelling experience. In the flow state, consumers' awareness become concentrated on the activity itself, completely absorbed in the activity while feeling that they have control over their environment (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). According to this definition, consumers are in a state of flow during shopping process with omnichannel when they are completely focused on shopping and nothing else (e.g., lose track of time, lose self-consciousness about other activities). Prior research studies have emphasised the importance of flow in understanding interactions between humans and technology (Su et al., 2016). As omnichannel encompasses technological features, the flow may serve as a key motivation for its adoption. Consumers can combine mobile apps with in-store shopping, providing flow of continuous shopping experiences to customers. Researchers have examined consumers' shopping experiences through omnichannel using flow as a construct for measuring potential consumer experience (Ameen et al., 2021). Therefore, this study proposes that the deeply immersed state of flow of omnichannel will make customers perceive greater positive shopping values with omnichannel. Therefore, this study hypothesizes:

H4: Flow positively influences perceived shopping effectiveness.

Enjoyment is the extent to which the user of a product perceives the activity itself to be enjoyable, without consideration of any outcomes or gains that may be expected from performing the activity (Davis et al., 1992). According to this definition of enjoyment, activities are performed solely for the pure enjoyment or fun, excitement, relaxation gained from the activity. Based on the original definition, this study defined enjoyment as the degree of pleasure that consumers expect to obtain from using omnichannel for their single purchase. Enjoyment is distinct from the flow. Unlike enjoyment, which results from the pleasure of activities, flow shows intense concentration, and a sense of being in control of the activities and can result from self-directed activities which are not necessary to bring pleasure. Past researchers have shown that enjoyment has a significant effect on technology acceptance (Liu et al., 2015). For example, Liu et al. (2015) found that positive behaviors toward mobile coupons are formed because consumers feel pleasure (enjoyment) in the act of using mobile coupons itself, and Xu et al. (2014) showed that when consumers perceive greater enjoyment, they are more likely to engage with the technology system actively and positively evaluate it. Gao et al. (2015) demonstrated that enjoyment positively influences a consumer attitude towards

smart medical devices. Given the proliferation of IT enabled-hedonic characteristics when shopping with omnichannel, enjoyment could be a critical factor for the customer perception of shopping effectiveness with omnichannel. This study argues that if consumers judge the activity of using a retailer's omnichannel for their shopping to be interesting, they are more likely to engage in shopping experiences with omnichannel and realize more shopping values. Therefore, this study hypothesizes: H5: Enjoyment positively influences perceived shopping effectiveness.

Opportunity

Opportunity refers to the extent to which an individual can engage in a particular behaviour without restrictions (MacInnis et al., 1991). It reflects the situational factors that either strengthen or hinders an individual's behaviour. Opportunity often includes both positive and negative perspectives of resource availability and impediments for achieving the desired behaviours. Due to the benefits of omnichannel, retailers may put efforts into channel integration quality to facilitate customer shopping (Hossain et al., 2020; Mirzabeiki & Saghiri, 2020). Omnichannel integration quality as a hierarchical construct consisting of channel-service configuration with three sub-dimensions, content consistency with two sub-dimensions, process consistency with two sub-dimensions, and assurance quality with three sub-dimensions (Hossain et al., 2020). Channel-service configuration refers to channel performance in terms of providing services at the same level of quality and consistency (Banerjee, 2014). It is mainly the association between services and channels within a firm (Sousa & Voss, 2006). Channel-service configuration consists of three sub-dimensions including breadth of channel, transparency of channels, and appropriateness of channels. Breadth of channel refers to the availability of different channels through which a customer can avail various services (Lee et al., 2019). Transparency of channels refers to customer knowledge of existing channels. It is related to the awareness level of customers regarding the available channels and channel capabilities of the firm (Sousa & Voss, 2006). Appropriateness of channels refers to the suitability of the channel in providing the service (Banerjee, 2014). This study proposes that facilitating channel-service configuration enables customers to take advantages of omnichannel and perform their shopping effectively. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: Channel-service configuration positively influences perceived shopping effectiveness.

Content consistency refers to the consistency of outgoing and incoming information through different channels of the firm (Lee et al., 2019). Content consistency consists of information consistency and transaction data integration as its sub-dimensions. Information consistency refers to the consistency and uniformity of information within all the service delivery channels of the firm (Banerjee, 2014). Transaction data integration refers to collecting customers' transaction data and integrating it within all the channels to provide seamless service (Banerjee, 2014). This approach lets customers be easy to manage their purchase records and quickly access their purchase history, thus facilitating their future purchase decisions. Therefore, customers are highly appreciated for shopping values offered by consistently integrated transaction information. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H7: Content consistency positively influences perceived shopping effectiveness.

Process consistency is related to service design, which refers to the consistency of various customer-facing elements that are relevant and comparable within different channels. Service's feel, waiting time, image, employee discretion level gauge the quality of process consistency (Banerjee, 2014). This research identifies system consistency and image consistency as sub-dimensions of process consistency. System consistency, which is derived from electronic service quality research and information systems refers to the technical issues of service delivery process, which are required to ensure all the channels of the firm perform at a consistent level (Akter et al., 2021). Image consistency refers to consistent use of the store's brand name, logo, slogan, and color within all the channels (Oh & Teo, 2010). To ensure image consistency, ambient cues of a physical facility such as logo, surrounding colors, music, and overall feel should be reflected through typesetting, graphics, and display colors in websites and mobile apps (White et al., 2013). This approach signals customers to trust the retailer's capability of providing services/products with consistent quality, thus encouraging customers to engage more in omnichannel for their shopping goals. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H8: Process consistency positively influences perceived shopping effectiveness.

Assurance quality refers to different channel attributes that convey confidence and trust within customers. Assurance of service while using multichannel has been conceptualized as a dimension of channel integration by Hossain et al. (2020). Furthermore, this research conceptualizes Assurance quality through qualitative data analysis, and it confirms privacy, security, and service recovery accessibility within all the channels is required to ensure Assurance quality. Privacy and Security have been researched expansively within e-service quality research (Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Service recovery accessibility refers to offering customers with channels and incorporated systems through which they can conveniently raise their service-related issues to the firm. Research related to service recovery has always emphasized gathering customer feedback (Van Vaerenbergh & Orsingher, 2016). Collecting customer feedback is vital for organizations, as without that service recovery cannot be even attempted. Utilizing different channels easily informs service issues contributes to customers' shopping effectiveness. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H9: Assurance quality positively influences perceived shopping effectiveness.

Ability

Ability is the extent to which consumers have the necessary resources (e.g. knowledge, intelligence, money) to make an desired outcome happen (MacInnis et al., 1991). As all customers are not equally equipped to engage with omnichannel, thus

the knowledge or expertise of relevant products or technology can guide them in the assessment of the benefits of shopping with omnichannel. Without the necessary skills, even a motivated customer may not adopt omnichannel. Thus, this study considers technology readiness (Parasuraman, 2000), which refers to an individual's propensity to embrace new technology, as a critical customer belief for adopting omnichannel. Past research studies note that high technology readiness enables customers to understand the benefits of new technology better and operate it more efficiently (Blut & Wang, 2020). Along with customers' technology readiness, previous researchers have noted that psychological resources such as self-efficacy referring to confidence in customers' skills or proficiencies in using omnichannel for shopping can facilitate customer adoption of omnichannel (Van Nguyen et al., 2022). High self-efficacy consumers are likely to be more confident in their customers' skills or proficiencies to use omnichannel for a single purchase. They feel comfortable in using omnichannel and realize the value of shopping with omnichannel. In contrast, low self-efficacy consumers feel less comfortable in using omnichannel and thus find no incentive to adopt omnichannel. Formally stated, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H10: Technology readiness positively influences perceived shopping effectiveness.

H11: Self-efficacy positively influences perceived shopping effectiveness.

Perceived Shopping Effectiveness and Omnichannel Usage Continuance Intention

Perceived shopping effectiveness refers to the extent to which customers perceive omnichannel brings shopping values and enhances customers' overall shopping experience. Shopping effectiveness is determined by the extent to which customers can perform effectively their shopping using omnichannel. Yang and Forney (2013) demonstrated that the customer believes that shopping with mobile will facilitate them in achieving the tasks which is positively related to the intentions to continue using it. A customer experience is considered as high-quality if it can support customers to efficiently acquire products and services (Chen & Yang, 2021) and derive entertainment and pleasure from shopping (Barari et al., 2020). Therefore, this study proposes that continuously receiving values and superior customer experiences from shopping with omnichannel attracts consumers continue using the retailer's omnichannel. Formally stated, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H12: Perceived shopping effectiveness positively influences omnichannel usage continuance intention.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Data Collection

To test the conceptual model and hypotheses, a quantitative method with survey data was used. Data will be gathered from an omnichannel retailer's customers in US via Amazon MTurk. To ensure that the respondents who participated in the survey had actual experience using a retailer's omnichannel services, they were asked whether they had had omnichannel shopping experiences with this retailer at the beginning of the survey. Only the respondents who confirmed their previous experience with this omnichannel retailer were allowed to complete the rest of the survey. The convenience sampling strategy will be adopted to collect data. The intended sample size is around 500 valid responses.

Items and Measurement Validation

All of the measurement items in this study will be adopted from prior studies and modified to suit this research context. The ten dimensions of channel integration quality will be adapted from Hossain et al. (2020). The technology readiness and self-efficacy will be adapted from Rosenbaum and Wong (2015), Van Beuningen et al. (2009), respectively. Relative advantage, perceived ease of use, personalized incentives, enjoyment and flow will be adapted from Kim et al. (2022), Kucukusta et al. (2014), Dabholkar and Bagozzi (2002), and Wang (2015), respectively. Perceived shopping effectiveness will be adapted from Gao and Bai (2014). Omnichannel usage intention will be adapted from Shi et al. (2020). All measurement items will be scored on 7-point Likert scales.

Hypothesis Testing

Structural equation modeling will be used to examine the conceptual model and hypotheses via SmartPls software. Finally, to explore the influencing mechanisms of MOA variables on omnichannel usage continuance intention in detail, a bootstrapping analysis with 5000 repetitions will be performed to test the mediating role of the perceived shopping effectiveness within 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals.

RESULTS

Expected Contributions

Scholars and practitioners have paid close attention to omnichannel retailing strategies (Mishra et al., 2021). This study contributes to the emerging omnichannel marketing literature in the following points. First, the findings offer new insight into the salience of the shopping effectiveness regarding omnichannel shopping. The extant literature has identified the important role of an effective omnichannel strategy in loyalty (Chen et al., 2022), product purchases (Bleier et al., 2019), and word of mouth (Rodríguez-Torrico et al., 2021), all of which can create a company's competitive advantage. However, no studies have so far focused on the optimization of the shopping effectiveness in omnichannel environments. By adopting the MOA theory, this study investigates the extent to which motivation, opportunity, and ability variables can boost customers' perception of shopping effectiveness of omnichannel. This study answers the call of Lemon and Verhoef (2016) to go beyond the widely available channel choice models and develop a holistic omnichannel understanding customers' shopping needs to enable its shopping effectiveness. Second, studies have based on channel integration as a significant antecedent of customers' perceptions and behaviors, including their perceived fluency (Shen et al., 2018), customer engagement and word of mouth (Lee et al., 2019), customer empowerment (Zhang et al., 2018), perceived value (Hamouda, 2019), and cross-buying intention

(Hossain et al., 2020). Yet research exploring how channel integration quality shapes the shopping effectiveness in an omnichannel shopping context is largely unavailable. This study examines the relationship between channel integration quality and perceived shopping effectiveness. The empirical findings from this study may offer additional information regarding the influential mechanisms of channel integration quality newly reconceptualized (Hossain et al., 2020) to fill the research gap regarding the association between channel integration quality and shopping effectiveness. Thus, this study responds to researchers' calls to empirically test the channel integration quality viewed as a new approach of marketing concept in helping customers' shopping effectiveness (Homburg et al., 2017). In addition, this study elucidates the mediation effects of MOA variables on omnichannel usage intention through perceived shopping effectiveness. Third, previous studies have conceptualized channel integration as a multidimensional construct that plays a fundamental role in improving customer shopping experience and company performance (Hossain et al., 2020). However, the literature to date has focused exclusively on the effects of channel integration without comparing the effectiveness among the dimensions. By examining the four main dimensions with ten sub-dimensions of channel integration practices proposed by Hossain et al. (2020), this study may verify the usefulness of these metrics. Therefore, this study provides a more holistic view of the effects of channel integration quality in omnichannel retailing environments.

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