JYU DISSERTATIONS 505

Olli Tyrväinen

The Use of Digital Technologies in Omnichannel Retailing

Understanding Integrated Customer Experience across Diverse Touchpoints

JYVÄSKYLÄ UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

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ABSTRACT

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Digital technologies have become an inseparable part of the retail customer experience. Retailers have many new tools for building customer experience, such as personalization, mobile applications, and social media. However, the impact of these emerging channels on customer experience still remains mostly unclear. Therefore, this dissertation aims to contribute to the omnichannel marketing research by investigating the customer experience in these relatively new contexts. From managerial perspective, this dissertation contributes to the utilization of these tools via four research articles. Article I approaches the omnichannel customer experience by using qualitative customer interviews; Article II offers a systematic literature review of mobile retailing adoption; Article III considers the role of personalization and hedonic motivation in building the omnichannel experience; and Article IV examines the role of social media in the consumer purchasing process and compares the effects of user-generated and brand-generated social media content on customer experience. Based on the results of this dissertation, different marketing tools, such as mobile stores and applications and social media, seem to be context related. Even the previous omnichannel research highlights the importance of seamless channel integration, retailers should note the effects of both the channel used and the product category in their marketing activities because emotional and cognitive marketing activities are effective in different scenarios. From managerial perspective, it is essential to see the difference of emotions, that are linked to hedonic consumption, and cognitive information processing, which is more effective in utilitarian product categories. More specifically, results underscore the role of social media marketing regarding cognitive purchases and show that informative social media communications decrease the harmful effects of negative electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) on customer experience, decreased purchase intentions, and intention to generate negative e-WOM.

Keywords: customer experience, retailing, social media, personalization, mobile shopping

TIIVISTELMÄ (ABSTRACT IN FINNISH)

Tyrväinen, Olli
Digitaaliset teknologiat omnikanavaisessa vähittäiskaupassa:
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Digitaaliset teknologiat ovat nykypäivänä erottamaton osa vähittäiskaupan asiakaskokemusta. Liikkeenjohtajilla on käytössään laaja valikoima keinoja aina verkkokaupan personoinnista erilaisiin mobiilisovelluksiin ja sosiaaliseen mediaan asiakaskokemusta muotoillessaan. Näiden verrattain uusien kanavien vaikutus asiakaskokemuksen taustalla on kuitenkin monilta osin vielä epäselvä. Väitöskirja tuo oman osuutensa omnikanavaiseen markkinoinnin tutkimukseen käsittelemällä asiakaskokemusta näissä konteksteissa. Omnikanavainen markkinointi tarkoittaa ajattelutapaa, jossa kuluttajan asiakaskokemus yrityksen eri kanavien välillä on rakennettu yhtenäiseksi niin, että kanavien kokonaisuus on yhdistetty toimimaan saumattomasti. Tämä väitöskirja pyrkii edistämään näiden asiakaskokemuksen osa-alueiden hyödyntämistä neljän tutkimusartikkelin avulla. Ensimmäinen osajulkaisu lähestyy vähittäiskaupan omnikanavaista asiakaskokemusta laadullisen kuluttajahaastatteluaineiston kautta. Toinen osajulkaisu tarjoaa systemaattisen kirjallisuuskatsauksen kuluttajien mobiilikaupan käytön taustoista. Kolmas osajulkaisu käsittelee personoinnin ja hedonisen motivaation vaikutuksia omnikanavaisen asiakaskokemuksen muodostumisessa. Neljäs osajulkaisu käsittelee sosiaalisen median roolia kuluttajien ostoprosessissa, ja vertaa toisten kuluttajien ja kauppiaiden tuottaman sosiaalisen median sisällön roolia asiakaskokemuksen taustalla. Vaikka aiempi omnikanavainen tutkimus korostaa kanavien saumatonta integraatiota, eri markkinoinnin keinojen, kuten mobiilikaupan ja -sovellusten että sosiaalisen median hyödyntämisen, voidaan tulosten suhteen nähdä olevan hyvin kontekstisidonnaisia. Kauppiaiden tulee huomioida markkinointia suunnitellessa sekä käytetty kanava että tuotekategoria – tunteisiin ja kognitiivisiin prosesseihin perustuva markkinointi on tehokkainta eri tilanteissa. On tärkeä hahmottaa, että tunteet liittyvät oleellisesti hedoniseen kulutukseen, kun kognitiivinen informaation käsittely toimii utilitaristissa tuotekategorioissa. Sosiaalisessa mediassa vähittäiskaupan viestintä korostuu erityisesti kognitiivisten ostoprosessien osalta. Väitöskirjan mukaan informatiivinen viestintä sosiaalisessa mediassa vähentää myös kuluttajien keskinäisen negatiivisen keskustelun haitallisia vaikutuksia niin asiakaskokemuksen, ostopäätösten kuin suusanallisen viestinnän suhteen.

Avainsanat: asiakaskokemus, vähittäiskauppa, sosiaalinen media, personointi, mobiiliostaminen

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Finally, I owe a bow to my partner Anni and my family, who have supported me with all decisions I made during this unforgettable journey.

Jyväskylä 21.3.2022
Olli Tyrväinen

FIGURES

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TABLE 1 Author's contributions

Manuscript	**Research method and data collection**	**Literature review**	**Data analysis, results, and writing**
I. "Omnichannel Experience—Towards Successful Channel Integration in Retail"	The author was responsible for both the research design and the data collection.	The author was responsible for the literature review.	The data analysis, results, and writing were the responsibilities of the author. However, the co-author provided general comments and edits to improve the manuscript's quality.
II. "A Systematic Literature Review and Analysis of Mobile Retailing Adoption"	The author was responsible for both the research design and the data collection.	The author was responsible for the literature review.	The data analysis, results, and writing were the responsibilities of the author. However, the co-author provided general comments and edits to improve the manuscript's quality.
III. Personalization and Hedonic Motivation in Creating Customer Experiences and Loyalty in Omnichannel Retail"	The author was responsible for the research design and shared responsibility with the co-authors for the data collection.	The author was responsible for the literature review.	The data analysis and results were the responsibilities of the author. However, the co-authors responsibility for the writing, provided general comments, and edited the manuscript to improve its quality.
IV. "Social Media in Customer Experience Creation: User-generated vs. Brand-generated Content"	The author was responsible for the research design and shared responsibility with the co-authors for the data collection.	The author was responsible for the literature review.	The data analysis, results, and writing were the responsibilities of the author. However, the co-authors provided general comments and edits to improve the manuscript's quality.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study background

A company's survival is dependent on its ability to offer value to its customers. In today's omnichannel retail environment, the role of customer experience is indisputable in this value creation process. The omnichannel perspective of customer experience, which is defined as "the synergetic management of the numerous available channels and customer touchpoints, in such a way that the customer experience across channels and the performance over channels is optimized" (Verhoef et al. 2015, pp. 175–176), has recently been of interest to both retailers and marketing and information systems researchers. In 2019, omnichannel shoppers represented one-third of all shopping journeys (McKinsey Company 2019), making it no surprise that scholars have called for more research investigating omnichannel customer experiences (Lemon & Verhoef 2016).

The retail market has changed significantly due to digitalization. The growth of online retailing is continuing and will greatly impact traditional retail players. According to Deloitte (2020), the COVID-19 crisis has accelerated the retail shift from physical stores to online environments. The pandemic influenced the daily lives of people worldwide during 2020 and continues to in 2021. The state of emergency, risk of getting sick, lockdowns, and quarantines have had unprecedented impacts on consumer behavior. Suddenly, working, learning, socializing, and shopping were all being done at home (Seth 2020). Social distancing has forced consumers to break their habits and switch to online channels, but they have discovered the benefits of these previously unused services (Pantano et al. 2020). As the number of physical stores continues to decrease, digital technologies will play a key role in customer experience creation. In 2019, online retail sales worldwide were 3.53 trillion U.S. dollars—a number that is projected to grow to 6.54 trillion in 2022 (Statista 2020a). In 2016, 1.66

billion people globally were online shoppers, whereas the projected number for 2021 is 2.14 billion (Statista 2020b). Another recent trend in retailing has been the enormous growth of mobile commerce. The market share in the U.S. doubled from 2015 to 2019, and it was projected to grow to 45% of the total e-commerce market by the end of 2020 (Business Insider 2019). This transition has been caused by the huge growth and use of social media. In 2019, 91% of U.S. businesses were using social media for marketing purposes, spending a combined 17 billion U.S. dollars (Statista 2020c). Consequently, retailers must react to this evolution in the digital field. Today, customer experiences depend on online actions, the mobile channel tools used, and the physical environment. The research on omnichannel experiences can help managers understand the nature of channel integration and thereby provide resources to improve customer experiences.

As a theoretical concept, customer experience is defined as a customer's subjective and internal response to direct and indirect interaction with the firm (Zarantonello & Schmitt 2010). Because multiple channels are usually used in relation to the same purchase, and numerous experiences occur in different stages of the purchasing process, such as searching, shopping, receiving, and consuming, the focus has shifted from a single-channel paradigm to managing complex customer journeys with multiple touchpoints. Consequently, customer experience is a sum of numerous single customer experiences at these touchpoints (Lemon & Verhoef 2016; Shim et al. 2001; Zarantonello & Schmitt 2010). This dissertation considers customer experience as omnichannel construct, where the role of retail channels is to complement one another. In today's multichannel retail context, customer experience is a result of interactions at various touchpoints, where "customers expect consistent, uniform, integrated services and experiences, regardless of the channel they use" (Piotrowicz & Cuthbertson 2014, p. 8).

1.2 Study objective and research gaps

The objective of this dissertation is to increase our understanding of omnichannel customer experience by approaching it from various viewpoints. Multichannel use by consumers has forced retailers to focus on new aspects of their core business (Shim et al. 2001). Several new retail channels and information sources have created a demand for seamless, integrated experiences between channels. However, most of the omnichannel studies have adopted retailer perspective (Mishra et al. 2020). In marketing research, the lack of studies conducted from the customer perspective concerning how retailing channels should be integrated to provide the best possible omnichannel experience has been noted by several authors (Blom et al. 2017; Grewal et al. 2017; Oh et al. 2012). Article I, which aims to close this knowledge gap by defining and conceptualizing omnichannel experiences, serves as the basis for the other articles and provides useful insights into the interplay between retail channels and their integration. The purposes of the article are to describe the omnichannel experience from the customer

viewpoint, define customers' requirements for channel integration, and discuss the role of digital technologies regarding the in-store experience. From the managerial perspective, Article I aims to help retailers offer a smooth experience across retail channels. In the current retail environment, such functions help retailers differentiate themselves from competitors.

The mobile retailing field has developed rapidly, and forecasts suggest a strong increasing trend in U.S. m-commerce volumes—up to 418.9 billion U.S. dollars by 2024 from 128.4 billion U.S. dollars in 2019 (Business Insider 2019). This expected growth has resulted in numerous studies concerning mobile retailing in the fields of marketing and information systems. However, no literature reviews have been conducted in these fields. Scholarly opinions are divided regarding which factors influence mobile channel adoption; therefore, there is a need for a systematic literature review and a deep analysis regarding mobile retailing research. To fill this gap, Article II provides a systematic literature review of the mobile retail adoption literature and summarizes the motives behind the use of mobile devices during the purchasing process. The goal of Article II is to clarify the mobile retail adoption process and its determinants to provide essential information for managers.

In prior retail studies, the focus has been on single-channel research settings. Lemon and Verhoef (2016) suggested that more studies need to adopt research settings that combine multiple touchpoints. Hure et al. (2017) stated that more empirical research is needed regarding omnichannel shopping in general. Therefore, the objective of Article III is twofold. First, because the relationship between personalization and customer experience was previously examined in single-channel research settings (Bilgihan et al. 2015; McLean et al. 2018; Pappas et al. 2017; Rose et al. 2012), the research motivation for Article III derives from the lack of studies on the role of personalization regarding the entire omnichannel customer experience. Consequently, Article III aims to build an omnichannel research setting and test a conceptual framework in the omnichannel retailing context. From the managerial perspective, Article III aims to produce remarkable implications regarding personalization across retailing channels and suggest how to improve customer experiences via customer-brand-touchpoint personalization. Second, the role of hedonic motivation has been widely studied in online and offline contexts. However, some studies have argued that hedonic motivation is more important in the online context; consumers typically use online stores for hedonic shopping and offline stores for utilitarian products (Scarpi et al. 2014). Gilboa et al. (2016) stated that more research is needed in that field. Article III contributes to the above discussion regarding the relationships between omnichannel customer experiences and hedonic motivation. The objective of Article III is to clarify the role of hedonic motivation behind the omnichannel experience. From the managerial perspective, this information is essential because understanding the role of consumers' hedonic shopping motives supports the design of more satisfying customer experiences.

Today, consumers have their entire social network with them in retail stores in their smartphones (Grewal et al. 2017; Piotrowicz & Cuthbertson 2014). Real-time online interaction with other consumers has created new challenges for retailers. However, even though they are not able to control social media discussions in consumers' individual networks, they can participate in discussions on social media platforms. The relationship between social media and customer experience has been widely studied (Lemon & Verhoef 2016). From extant studies, it is unclear what social media's role is in customer experience and how retailers' participation in social media communications influences consumers' opinions. Article IV focuses on social media use in the retail context and how it is related to customer experiences. It provides useful information about customer preferences and insights for retailers regarding how to engage in social media communications. The article concludes with several guidelines for managerial practices concerning the mechanisms behind the outcomes of social media discussions.

TABLE 2 Research gaps

Research gap	**Methodology**	**Article**
The lack of studies conducted from the customer viewpoint concerning how retailing channels should be integrated to provide the best possible omnichannel experience.	Empirical testing based on 15 qualitative semi-structured interviews	Article I: Tyrväinen, O. & Karjaluoto, H. (2019). Omnichannel experience: Towards successful channel integration in retail. Journal of Customer Behaviour, 18 (1). 17-34.
Scholarly opinions are divided regarding which factors influence mobile channel adoption. Deep analysis of past mobile retailing literature is needed.	Literature review comprising 94 published peer-reviewed studies	Article II: Tyrväinen, O. & Karjaluoto, H. (2019). A Systematic Literature Review and Analysis of Mobile Retailing Adoption. Journal of Internet Commerce, 18 (2). 221-247.
The lack of studies on the roles of personalization and hedonic motivation regarding the entire omnichannel customer experience.	Empirical testing based on quantitative surveys of 2,084 and 2,334 respondents and 20 qualitative semi-structured interviews	Article III: Tyrväinen, O., Karjaluoto, H. & Saarijärvi, H. (2020). Personalization and hedonic motivation in creating customer experiences and loyalty in omnichannel retail. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services 57. 102233.
From extant studies, social media's role in customer experiences and how retailers' participation in social media communications influences consumers' opinions are unclear.	Empirical testing based on a quantitative survey of 2,156 respondents, an experiment with 659 respondents, and 17 semi-structured interviews	Article IV: Tyrväinen, O., Karjaluoto, H. & Karjala, P. Social media's role in customer experience creation: User-generated vs. firm-generated content. Under review.

1.3 Research questions

This dissertation addresses research gaps (Table 2) by proposing four research questions (RQs) (Figure 1) and answering them via one literature review and three empirical papers. Instead of providing an overall analysis of the topic, each article addresses one aspect of omnichannel retailing. Consequently, this dissertation contributes the marketing research by addressing the role of specific retailer-customer touchpoints from customer perspective.

RQ1 (How can retail channels be integrated to improve customer experience?) addresses omnichannel retailing from the channel integration perspective. A growing number of quantitative studies are considering channel integration. The question is qualitative in nature due to the pervasive nature of the phenomenon. Thus, answering RQ1 requires deeper analysis of the phenomenon, which supports the use of qualitative methods (Järvenpää & Lang 2005). Article I answers RQ1 by exploring retail channel integration from the customer perspective through qualitative consumer interviews.

Mobile retailing has been of interest to researchers for the last decade. However, despite a steep increase in published studies, the literature still lacks a clear consensus regarding the adoption of mobile channels. Answering RQ2 (Which components influence mobile retail adoption?) requires a deep analysis of previous literature that addresses mobile retail adoption. Therefore, a systematic literature review was required to classify previous studies. There was no clear understanding of the various requirements of different stages of mobile shopping adoption in the previous research. Therefore, Article II organizes mobile shopping adoption antecedents under hedonic and utilitarian categories, linking them with the pre-, adoption, and later stages of mobile retailing adoption.

RQs 3 (What are the roles of personalization and hedonic motivation in the omnichannel customer experience?) and 4 (What is the role of user-generated and firm-generated social media content in customer experience creation?) represent research topics that have not been widely explored. Providing a holistic understanding of such topics requires a mixed methods approach (Davies et al. 2011). Therefore, RQs 3 and 4 are explored via both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Mixing methods allows us to draw more comprehensive, complete, and convincing conclusions (Davies et al. 2011). Article III responds to the call of Hure et al. (2017) regarding the need for empirical research on omnichannel marketing. The research setting was designed to respond to RQ3 by addressing personalization and hedonic motivation from the omnichannel customer experience perspective.

Article IV responds to the call for social media research in the customer experience context (Lemon & Verhoef 2016) and answers RQ4 by building and testing a conceptual framework that examines the influence of user-generated and brand-generated social media content on customer experience and loyalty intentions.

In conclusion, the four RQs aim to explore four perspectives of omnichannel retailing. To answer these questions and thus provide a holistic, multi-perspective understanding of the studied phenomena, this dissertation adopts the mixed methods approach. Answering the four RQs contributes to the existing marketing research through considerable findings.

1. How can retail channels be integrated to improve customer experience? (Article I)
2. Which components influence mobile retail adoption? (Article II)
3. What are the roles of personalization and hedonic motivation in the omnichannel customer experience? (Article III)
4. What is the role of user-generated and firm-generated social media content in customer experience creation?

FIGURE 1 Research questions

1.4 Dissertation outline

This dissertation is divided into two sections. The first section includes five chapters. In the introduction chapter, the study background, research motivation and gaps, and RQs are presented. The theoretical background chapter presents previous literature, the core constructs, and the conceptual framework of this dissertation. In the research methodology chapter, the research philosophy and article-specific research approach are introduced. The findings chapter summarizes the key findings of the four research articles. Finally, in the discussion chapter, the theoretical contributions, managerial implications, and limitations of this dissertation are discussed, along with avenues for future research. The second section comprises the four articles, which are presented in Table 1.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Conceptualization of the omnichannel customer experience

2.1.1 Customer experience

In marketing research, customer experience is defined as a customer's subjective and internal response to direct or indirect interaction with a company, brand, product, or service (Brakus et al. 2009; Gentile et al. 2007; Meyer & Schwager 2007; Zarantonello & Schmitt 2010). Customer experience is a result of interaction in different stages of the purchasing process, such as searching, shopping, receiving, and consuming (Brakus et al. 2009). Due to the subjective nature of customer experience, the intensity and duration of experiences vary between different consumers (Brakus et al. 2009; Zarantonello & Schmitt 2010). Customer experience can be categorized by the objective of the interaction. Experiences with a brand are related to searching, shopping, receiving, and consuming products and services (Zarantonello & Schmitt 2010). Product experiences occur during product-related functions, such as searching, evaluating, and examining products. Shopping and service experiences happen when consumers interact with a store's physical environment. Consumption experiences are related to the behavioral aspects of shopping, such as consuming and using products (Brakus et al. 2009).

In previous studies in the retail domain, customer experience was considered a multidimensional construct (Table 3), and various definitions were presented: Gentile et al. (2007) classified experiences under sensorial, emotional, cognitive, pragmatic, lifestyle, and relational dimensions; Brakus et al. (2009) and Zarantonello and Schmitt (2010) divided experience into the sensorial, affective, intellectual, and behavioral dimensions; and Verhoef et al. (2009) used the cognitive, affective, social, and physical dimensions.

A cognitive (or intellectual) experience is driven by the internal processing of incoming stimuli, such as information (Frow & Payne 2007). It is a flow state that occurs during shopping (Hoffman & Novak 2009). The flow state includes enjoyment, involvement, and high concentration (Huang 2006). A cognitive experience may result in learning or developing new skills (Tynan & McKechnie 2009).

An affective (or emotional) experience refers to the response to emotional stimuli, such as moods, feelings, and emotions, which are generated by consumers' affective systems (Hansen 2005; Rose et al. 2012). Emotional experiences are entertaining, generate high levels of enjoyment, and make consumers feel good (Lemke et al. 2011; Tynan & McKechnie 2009). Affective experiences build long-term associations in memory-influencing information processing and behaviors in the future (Edvardsson 2005; Lemke et al. 2011).

A sensorial (or physical) experience refers to visual, auditory, tactile, gustative, or olfactory responses to interactions with a brand (Zarantonello & Schmitt 2010). Providing a positive sensorial experience requires addressing sights, sounds, touches, tastes, and smells that generate pleasure, excitement, and satisfaction (Gentile et al. 2007).

Behavioral (or pragmatic) experiences refer to experiences, lifestyles, and interactions with a brand (Zarantonello & Schmitt 2010). Behavioral experiences are related to practical acts of doing something, such as using a product in the post-purchase stage (Gentile et al. 2007). Typically, behavioral experiences occur in the later stages of the purchasing process (Puccinelli et al. 2009). The social (or relational) dimension refers to the use or consumption of a product together with other people (Gentile et al. 2007).

Building social interactions with other customers, salespersons, and the consumer's personal network is closely related to social experience (Zarantonello & Schmitt 2010). Consumers want to identify themselves by products. The meaning of a product can influence their social identity or their created sense of belonging to social groups (Gentile et al. 2007). According to Verhoef et al. (2009), retailers should consider the social dimension more from the customer-to-customer interaction perspective. Typically, the focus has been on the role of service persons during the purchase process. However, customers influence others directly and indirectly and can have both positive and negative effects on customer experience.

Another practice is to classify customer experiences among the stages of the purchasing process. According to Puccinelli et al. (2009), not all dimensions of customer experience are involved in the decision process. This results from various interactions during the stages. Direct contacts usually occur in stages that are initiated by the customer, while indirect contacts are driven by the company. For example, information processing and affective elements are present in all the stages (need recognition, information search, evaluation, purchase, and post-purchase), whereas factors influencing sensorial and behavioral dimensions, such as store atmospherics or employee behavior, occur in the later stages of the process (evaluation, purchase, and post-purchase). Lemon and Verhoef (2015) presented

a model of customer touchpoints during the pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages. They did not classify customer experience among the dimensions but rather by the actor who controls the touchpoint. In their model, brand-owned, partner-owned, customer-owned, and social touchpoints are presented in all three stages. The difference between these two models presents the shift from a single-channel perspective to an omnichannel view.

TABLE 3 Dimensions of customer experience

Dimension	Definition	References
Cognitive/intellectual	Internal processing of stimuli that engages consumers' convergent and divergent thinking	Frow and Payne 2007
Affective/emotional	Response to emotional stimuli generated by a brand or product, such as moods, feelings, and emotions, generated by consumers' affective systems	Hansen 2005; Rose et al. 2012
Sensorial/physical	Visual, auditory, tactile, gustative, or olfactory responses to interactions with a brand or product	Zarantonello and Schmitt 2010
Behavioral/pragmatic/lifestyle	Practical acts of and physiological reactions to doing something, such as using a product, in the post-purchase stage	Gentile et al. 2007
Social/relational	Use or consumption of a product or brand with other people; builds in social interactions with other customers, salespersons, and the customer's personal network	Verhoef et al. 2009; Zarantonello and Schmitt 2010

2.1.2 Customer experience touchpoints during purchasing process

All stages of the purchasing process are not under the company's control (Verhoef et al. 2009). Lemon and Verhoef (2016) divided the customer purchasing process into three stages—pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase—and classified touchpoints that affect customer experience among those who have control over each touchpoint's interactions. The importance of touchpoints varies according to the customer's preferences, and it may differ in each stage. Consumers compare their experience with their previous experiences with that retailer; therefore, their current experience also impacts future experiences. Vargo and Lusch (2004) stated that value for the customer is co-created by both the customer and the company. Every customer journey is a combination of multiple influences between the provider and the customer that affect value creation from a systems perspective (Heinonen & Strandvik 2018).

Brand-owned touchpoints are under the company's control (Lemon & Verhoef 2016). Typically, retailers can control their online, offline, and mobile

channels. In marketing research, an online channel's image is a combination of service, merchandise, atmosphere, and navigation. An offline store's image is a combination of service, merchandise, atmosphere, and layout (Verhagen & Van Dolen 2009).

In partner-owned touchpoints, the customer interacts with the company's partners, such as distribution partners, marketing agencies, and multivendor loyalty program partners (Lemon & Verhoef 2016). The company's partner has control over this touchpoint.

Customer-owned touchpoints are not under the company's or its partners' control and are related to the customer's cognitive processing, needs, desires, preferences, and individual consumption experiences (Lemon & Verhoef 2016).

Social touchpoints are related to other people. During each stage, other customers or the customer's personal networks serve as information sources that influence the overall customer experience (Lemon & Verhoef 2016). Today, social media plays an important role in the purchasing process. Slightly more than one-fourth (28%) of consumers have said that they have used social media as a channel for customer service (Smart Insights 2019). While consumer-to-consumer social media discussions are out of the retailer's control (Piotrowicz & Cuthbertson 2014), so are customers' personal networks; customers can participate in social media discussions and create social media content that influences customer experiences.

In recent years, the approach to customer journey management has shifted from managing specific, separate touchpoints to managing the entire journey. Companies are investing in omnichannel integration to provide seamless experiences. This requires information transparency and technological systems that provide relevant information in shopping situations, no matter which channel a consumer is using (Barwitz & Maas 2018).

2.1.3 The omnichannel customer experience in retailing

Vargo and Lusch (2010) stated that products are different from services due to their tangible nature. However, while goods are made by machines and services are provided by humans, digital retailing services have blurred this distinction. As a result of digitalization, new retailing channels have emerged, forcing retailers to consider their businesses from different perspectives besides the selling of tangible products. The multichannel retailing perspective was presented to control both online and offline stores (Verhoef et al. 2015), but channels were initially developed and managed separately and had limited interaction (Verhoef 2012). The introduction of mobile channels identified the importance of channel integration (Verhoef et al. 2015). Today, the omnichannel customer experience is seen as a combination of elements in various retail channels during customer journey (Piotrowicz & Cuthbertson 2014). Consumers interact with the entire retailer brand and its several channels, not only with a specific channel (Verhoef et al. 2015).

Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson (2014) defined the omnichannel customer experience as using many retail channels in the same transaction process. The

main difference from the multichannel perspective is the intermingled use of touchpoints, which allow a seamless experience within the entire retailing ecosystem (Shen et al. 2018). Channels, such as physical stores, online stores, mobile channels, and social media, should provide a smooth, integrated shopping experience. When managing channels together, customers can interact with a brand and not a specific channel. Managing numerous channels and customer touchpoints leads to an experience where performance is optimized (Verhoef et al. 2015). Previous studies have established the positive influence of integration and consistency of all channels on customer experience. Contrary to the multichannel view, which does not include sharing data between channels, the omnichannel perspective requires the effective use of data across channels (Shen et al. 2018). Content and information across channels should be consistent, which requires not only the effective use of customer data but also the proper training of servicepersons (Huré et al. 2017; Shi et al. 2020).

Recently, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) has increased in the retail sector. Because almost everyone has a smartphone, retailers are able to serve their customers with applications that respond to queries, recommend products, or locate products in physical or online stores (Grewal et al. 2017). From the omnichannel perspective, AI increases the quality of personalized recommendations, which helps companies manage in-store experiences, payments, customer services, and logistics (Shankar 2018).

Previous studies have presented positive outcomes for channel integration in a company's performance, consumer attitudes, and customer behaviors (Blom et al. 2017; Cao & Li 2015; Shi et al. 2020). It is undisputable that channel integration better serves customers and thus has a positive impact on firm performance (Oh et al. 2012). However, competing explanations for the mechanisms behind these effects have been presented, as well as critical perceptions regarding to integration (Gasparin et al. 2022). Cao and Li (2015) stated that channel integration has a positive effect on sales growth by boosting the sales of retailers who rely on physical stores. Herhausen et al. (2015) found that channel integration increases the quality of online stores and decreases the cannibalization effect of offline stores, creating a canceling out effect, where increased online sales might decrease offline sales. Blom et al. (2017) found positive effects of integrating customer data from different channels and stated that omnichannel retailing has positive outcomes related to both hedonic and utilitarian benefits, which may result in purchase behavior and more positive attitudes. Quach et al. (2020) showed that omnichannel service integration has a positive influence on shopping flow and loyalty. Supporting these findings, Shi et al. (2020) stated that channel integration influences the perceived compatibility of shopping and future purchase intentions. However, even disjointed customer journeys can result in positive experiences. Consequently, Gasparin et al. (2022) stated that not all touchpoints should be integrated.

2.1.4 Challenges in omnichannel retailing

The widely adopted omnichannel perspective in retailing research has encountered contradictory arguments. Not all channels are considered suitable for all stages of the customer journey. For example, a channel's characteristics determine its suitability for different stages. De Haan et al. (2015) suggested that consumers are more likely to use a mobile channel in the pre-purchase stages than in the purchase stage compared to online and offline stores. Conversely, consumers might try products in physical stores and complete purchases online. The offline store image has been shown to influence the online store image and thus purchase intentions (Verhagen & Van Dolen 2009).

Product type has also been shown to influence consumer preferences for channel choices. For example, functional products require utilitarian appeals, whereas emotional products are more likely to be purchased due to their hedonic appeal (Swani & Milne 2017). Consumers prefer offline stores for utilitarian products and online stores for hedonic shopping (Scarpi et al. 2014; Shen et al. 2016). Moreover, consumers seem to value channel integration for high-involvement products that require information searches and product evaluations, while low-involvement products require channel-service configuration instead of integration (Lee et al. 2019). In summary, omnichannel management involves a complex combination of various channels, products, and consumer preferences. The challenge for retailers is how to manage this aggregation and successfully provide seamless experiences for their customers.

Consumers interact with the entire brand and not only a single channel; therefore, successful omnichannel retailing requires effective use of AI and consumer data across channels. The question is, do consumers want their data used? AI is not without risks. Guha et al. (2021) argued that the challenge is to find a balance between risks and return. While AI offers benefits, consumers dislike its inherent risks (Carmon et al. 2019). New technologies always have the risk of digital bugs, such as privacy issues, which might negatively impact customer relationships. Even though most companies follow data protection regulations, there is always the risk of data breaches and leaks (Guha et al. 2021). Additionally, new data collection types, such as voice assistants or facial recognition systems, can be used to identify consumer moods, which can be utilized for personalized advertisement in different channels (Guha et al. 2021; Zhou et al. 2020). Naturally, not all consumers are excited about these features.

2.2 Conceptual framework

The objective of this dissertation is to understand the omnichannel customer experience by exploring the conceptual framework from various viewpoints. Table 4 summarizes the conceptual framework of this dissertation and presents definitions of the main antecedents and consequences of the retail customer experience.

Based on previous studies, the antecedents of customer experience can be classified according to retail channel types. In earlier multichannel studies, retail channels were divided into online and offline channels (Brynjofsson et al. 2013). From the wider omnichannel perspective, channels can include offline stores, online stores, mobile channels, and social media (Shen et al. 2018), which are all discussed in this dissertation. An offline channel is understood as a physical store, where an online channel can be defined as a shopping channel that is used not only on computers but also on smartphones, tablets, and even Internet-enabled TVs, which makes shopping more complex (Wagner, Schramm-Klein & Steinman 2020). In recent years, social media has revolutionized online shopping and strongly increased its popularity among consumers. In general, it is considered an information searching channel, but it has also been studied recently in terms of post-purchase discussions (Piotrowich & Cuthbertson 2014). From the managerial perspective, this channel classification is valuable because it clarifies the consistency of omnichannel retailing.

Online store image has been of interest to researchers during the last two decades and differs from offline store image in its virtual nature. Online environments have lowered consumers' searching costs and allowed more efficient access to information. Online channels also facilitate consumer-to-consumer discussions and consumer-to-retailer interactions (Browne & Durrett 2004). Thus, an online store's image is based on different online store elements. This dissertation adopts the perspective of Verhagen and Van Dolen (2009) and considers online store image a combination of online service, atmosphere, navigation, and merchandise. Offline store image represents consumers' vision based on their impressions of different elements of a physical store. In this dissertation, the logic of Verhagen and Van Dolen (2009) is applied, and store image is examined through service, merchandise, atmosphere, and layout.

Importantly, the line between online and offline stores is blurred (Brynjolfsson et al. 2013). Companies no longer allow their physical store image to rely only on real-world experience because many consumers are using their mobile devices in stores to search for additional information (Zhang et al. 2010). In this dissertation, a mobile channel consists of retailers' mobile pages and shopping applications. A workable mobile channel can increase consumers' perceived value, which leads to increased loyalty and sales (Ström et al. 2014). However, the use of mobile devices in stores has caused traditional in-store marketing stimuli to have a lower impact on consumers. Given that smartphones compete for consumers' attention, a consumer might even forget to make planned purchases (Bellini & Aiolfi 2017). This brings the retailers' role in this mobile world into question. From a managerial perspective, the key to success is to consider how to keep consumers' attention during purchase-related decision-making.

Social media has recently developed from simple platforms for e-WOM to interactive environments where individuals can exchange content with peer users, organizations, and institutions (Appel et al. 2020). Consumers can be connected with their social networks anywhere and anytime. Thus, shopping-

related information is no longer controlled only by companies (Balaji, Khong & Chong 2016; Piotrowich & Cuthbertson 2014). In this dissertation, social media content is studied from the user-generated and brand-generated content perspectives. User-generated content refers to posts that are generated by other consumers, whereas brand-generated content emanates from companies. Compared to real-world interactions, social media can be used anywhere and anytime, and the content differs in its non-simultaneous nature, anonymity, social risk, confidentiality, and geographical and spatial freedoms (Balaji, Khong & Chong 2016; Piotrowich & Cuthbertson 2014; Roggeveen & Grewal 2016).

Customer experience forms the core construct of the conceptual framework of this dissertation. The emotional and cognitive components of customer experience are derived according to the widely adopted classification of Rose et al. (2012). In essence, cognitive and emotional components differ in their nature. The cognitive state refers to more rational processing of information, whereas the emotional state involves unconscious reactions. Cognitive experiences are a result of customers' internal processing of stimuli (e.g., information) (Frow & Payne 2007), while emotional experience is a response to stimuli that affects customers' moods, feelings, and emotions (Gentile, Spiller & Noci 2007).

Oliver (1999, p. 34.) defines customer loyalty as ''a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior''. Customer loyalty intentions include the consequences of customer experience in this dissertation. In previous studies, word of mouth (WOM) and repeated purchase intention (RPI) were widely accepted as components of customer loyalty (Söderlund 2006; Zeithaml et al. 1996). WOM can be considered a consumer's likelihood to recommend or say positive things based on their previous shopping experiences (Zeithaml et al. 1996), whereas RPI is the likelihood of exhibiting repurchasing behavior (Rose et al. 2012).

TABLE 4 Conceptual framework of the dissertation

Construct	**Definition**	**Papers**
Antecedents		
Offline store image	A combination of service, merchandise, atmosphere, layout, and in-store technologies	I, III
Online store image	A combination of service, merchandise, atmosphere, navigation, and trust	I, III
Social media	Platforms where people build networks and share information	I, III–IV
Mobile channel	Retailers' mobile pages and shopping applications	I–III
Customer experience	Customers' subjective and internal responses to direct or indirect interactions with a company, brand, product, or service	
Emotional component	Customers' response to emotional stimuli generated by a brand or product, such as moods, feelings, and emotions that are generated by consumers' affective systems.	I, III–IV
Cognitive component	Internal processing of stimuli that engages consumers' convergent and divergent thinking	I, III–IV
Consequences		
Word of mouth	Likelihood to recommend and say positive things about a company to other consumers	I, III–IV
Repurchase intention	Likelihood of engaging in repurchasing behavior	I, III–IV

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the methodological decisions that were made for this dissertation. Section 3.1 discusses the research philosophy, and section 3.2 presents the article-specific research approaches, such as measurement protocols, data collection methods, and data analysis methods, and discusses the validity and reliability of the empirical studies.

3.1 Research philosophy

As discussed earlier, customer experience represents a customer's subjective and internal responses to interactions with brands, products, and services (Brakus et al. 2009; Gentile et al. 2007; Meyer & Schwager 2007; Zarantonello & Schmitt 2010). Consequently, the nature of the omnichannel customer experience is complex, which leads to the need to adopt a research philosophy that allows for understanding a customer's emotional and cognitive processes. Järvensivu and Törnroos (2010) noted that critical realism offers powerful perspectives for theory generation in that kind of setting. According to Easton (2002), it has become a central school in marketing research.

A research paradigm presents the researcher's scientific worldview and acts as a guideline for research problem setting, theorical perspectives, methodological decisions, and interpretation of results (Arndt 1985; Kuhn 1962). Critical realism aims to identify problems and explicitly solve them. From this perspective, theory is successful if it explains and predicts events over a significant period (Hunt 1990, 1992). Successful theory offers a reason to believe that events and relationships exist (Hunt 1990).

Ontology presents the nature of reality. According to Bhaskar (1978), three domains of reality exist: empirical, actual, and real. Experiences are placed in the empirical domain, events are placed in the actual domain, and causal mechanisms are placed in the real domain. Critical realism is based on the idea that the real world, independent of observers, exists (Easton 2002, 2010;

Järvensivu & Törnroos 2010; Hunt 1990). Critical evaluation of phenomena results in more accurate descriptions and understanding of reality (Hunt 1990). However, because of the nature of material reality, which is independent of the human mind, knowledge about the world is not certain and needs to be critically evaluated (Bhaskar 2008; Easton 2002).

Epistemology guides how knowledge about reality can be acquired, and critical realism views the world as socially constructed. According to critical realism, the world can be observed (with some accuracy) (Easton 2010; Hunt 1992). Therefore, this dissertation has chosen a multiple method approach. According to Hunt (1990, 1994) and Mcevoy and Richards (2006), critical realism can guide both quantitative and qualitative studies. The research paradigm guides methodological decisions (Arndt 1985; Kuhn 1996). On the methodological level, critical realism focuses on hypotheses to test relationships, which are supported or rejected (Bhaskar 1978). According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), quantitative approaches in social sciences should be treated similarly to those in natural sciences: theories are generalizable, and outcomes are reliable and valid. In quantitative approaches, causes and effects should be studied through interactions because social actors are closely related to realities (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004).

3.2 Article-specific research approaches

The omnichannel customer experience was analyzed from different viewpoints; therefore, each article used different research approaches. The choices made regarding the research approaches and arguments for their use are presented in Table 5. Because of the complexity of the studied phenomena, this dissertation applied both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Three qualitative consumer datasets (n = 15, n = 20, and n = 17), three quantitative customer survey datasets (n = 2,084, n = 2,334, and n = 2,156), and one quantitative experimental survey dataset (n = 659) were collected. Epistemological and ontological consistency needed to be considered due to the use of multiple research methods. Researchers should clearly follow the nature of knowledge and the idea of existence in all articles (Bergman 2011; Bryman & Bell 2007). Using multiple research methods might result in impractical use of the methods (Bergman 2011), which is discussed in the limitations section of this study. However, using multiple methods may allow researchers to draw more comprehensive, complete, and convincing findings about explored phenomena (Davies et al. 2011). Thus, using multiple research methods in this dissertation is justifiable.

TABLE 5 Research approaches used in the Articles I-IV

Article	Research approach	Reasons for choosing the approach
I. "Omnichannel Experience – Towards Successful Channel Integration in Retail"	**General approach:** qualitative approach	To understand the context of omnichannel customer experiences
	Data collection: semi-structured, customer-themed interviews	To provide concrete findings regarding the phenomenon
	Data analysis: categorization, classification, and content analysis	To achieve a rich description of customers' perspectives
II. "A Systematic Literature Review and Analysis of Mobile Retailing Adoption"	**General approach:** literature review	To understand existing literature concerning mobile retailing adoption
	Data collection: systematic literature review	To collect existing knowledge
	Data analysis: cross-case analysis	To confirm existing theories and define new ones
III. "Personalization and Hedonic Motivation in Creating Customer Experiences and Loyalty in Omnichannel Retail"	**General approach:** mixed methods: quantitative and qualitative approaches	To illustrate the role of personalization and hedonic motivation in customer experience creation
	Data collection: customer survey, semi-structured, themed interviews	To achieve wide descriptions of relationships
	Data analysis: PLS-SEM for survey data, categorization and classification for interview data	To analyze the relationships from the customer perspective
IV. "Social Media in Customer Experience Creation: User-generated vs. Brand-generated Content"	**General approach:** mixed method: quantitative and qualitative approach	To illustrate the role of social media in customer experience creation
	Data collection: customer survey, experiment, and semi-structured themed interviews	To understand the phenomenon from the customer perspective
	Data analysis: PLS-SEM for survey and experiment data, categorization and classification for interview data	To achieve rich description of the customer perspective

The literature review in Article I showed that prior omnichannel retailing research mostly relied on quantitative methods. Therefore, a research gap concerning qualitative, deep analysis of channel integration was identified. As a result, in Article I, qualitative semi-structured, themed interviews were

conducted to provide a deep understanding of the research topic and illustrate the channel integration from the retail customer's perspective.

In Article II, the literature review revealed that research has not provided a clear consensus on mobile retailing adoption. While these fields each have their own research goals, there was no existing framework for consumers' adoption process. The purpose was to understand the existing literature, confirm existing theories, and create new ones. Consequently, a systematic literature review was chosen as the research method.

Articles III and IV each answer calls for research in contexts where topics have not been explored earlier. To fully understand the mechanisms of customer experience in these contexts, it is key to provide deep, convincing findings. Consequently, the recommendations of Bergman (2011) were followed, and the mixed-methods approach was used in Articles III and IV. In Article III, customer surveys and customer interviews were used to illustrate the effects of antecedents on omnichannel customer experience and loyalty intentions. In Article IV, a customer survey was conducted, and an experimental research setting was created to test the relationships found in the survey setting. Finally, customer interviews were conducted to provide a deeper understanding of the phenomena. The datasets used in the articles are summarized in Table 5. As noted previously, the interview data were used in Articles I, III, and IV, and the survey data were used in Articles III and IV.

3.2.1 Data collection

Previously validated measurement scales were used in all the quantitative studies. The survey instruments were translated from English to Finnish according to the protocol of Coviello and Jones (2004). A 7-point Likert scale was used, except for measuring WOM (10-point Likert scale). The empirical survey data for Articles III and IV were collected by a market research company in Finland and Sweden, and experimental data for Article IV were collected by Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) from U.S. consumers. Given the demographic profile of the respondents, the samples represent the overall population of these countries. Moreover, collecting large samples increases the generalizability across target populations.

Qualitative data were collected for Articles I, III, and IV by using semi-structured, themed interviews. A purposeful sampling criterion was used to gather knowledge (Patton 2002, p. 40–46). Informants in the interviews were different for each article. Interview protocols were designed to guide the interviewees to reflect on their experiences regarding the addressed phenomena. All interviews were recorded, transcribed into text files, and translated from Finnish to English.

Both quantitative and qualitative data collection followed the ethical principles of Jyväskylä University, good scientific practice and valid legislations. No privacy-sensitive data was collected, and all disclosed information was anonymous.

Article II comprised a systematic literature review and therefore relied on results from existing studies. Literature was collected from three databases (Elsevier, Taylor and Francis, and Emerald Insight) using keywords related to retailing, smartphones, and channel adoption. In addition, several articles and conference papers were included based on reference lists and searches in ResearchGate. The final sample comprised 94 articles.

3.2.2 Data analysis

Quantitative datasets were analyzed using Smart PLS 3.0 software. This software was chosen due to the exploratory nature of customer experience studies, which focus on predictions instead of theory testing. According to Hair et al. (2014), partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) is appropriate for exploratory situations due to its ability to reveal patterns in data. The conceptual models of these studies do not rely on strong theoretical models, which supports the use of Smart PLS. In addition, the data from these studies were not normally distributed, which supports the PLS method (Hair et al. 2011). PLS-SEM relies on composite-based measurement practices, using unmeasured latent factors as a composite construct of parameters that are used to measure the construct. It is based on nonparametric bootstrapping, where many subsamples are randomly drawn from the original sample with replacement. As a result, standard errors of the parameters can be used for hypothesis testing (Hair et al. 2011).

The interview data from Articles I, III, and IV were analyzed according to the three-stage protocol of Miles and Huberman (1994): data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. Interview data were coded according to the themes of the interview structure. In the reduction stage, responses were read and coded under the main themes of the conceptual frameworks of each study. Data were organized on a spreadsheet under themes to visually present information systematically. Based on this display, conclusions could be drawn from the data.

Analysis of the literature review data was based on the cross-case analysis method because the varying dataset contained quantitative, qualitative, and review studies (Mays et al. 2005). Based on the instructions of Gioia et al. (2012), the articles were read individually and analyzed to confirm existing terms and theories and define new ones.

TABLE 6 Summary of datasets used in Articles I-IV

Article	Type of data	Description of data
I. "Omnichannel Experience—Towards Successful Channel Integration in Retail"	**In-depth interviews**	20 customer interviews, researcher-lettered interviews, word for word
II. "A Systematic Literature Review and Analysis of Mobile Retailing Adoption"	**Peer-reviewed studies**	94 scientific articles concerning mobile retailing adoption
III. "Personalization and Hedonic Motivation in Creating Customer Experiences and Loyalty in Omnichannel Retail"	**Survey**	2 customer surveys, 2,084 and 2,334 responses from retail customers
	In-depth interviews	20 customer interviews, researcher-lettered interviews, word for word
IV. "Social Media in Customer Experience Creation: User-generated vs. Brand-generated Content"	**Survey**	Customer survey, 2,156 responses from retail customers
	Experiment	Experimental research setting and survey, 659 responses from retail customers
	In-depth interviews	17 customer interviews, researcher-lettered interviews, word for word

3.2.3 Assessing reliability and validity of the studies

Reliability reflects the consistency of measurements (Drost 2011). Conversely, validity can be defined as the accuracy of the research measures used for the studied phenomenon (Drost 2011). In qualitative research settings, the focus of reliability and validity is on the quality of the research process, whereas in quantitative research, the focus is on statistical evaluations of the measurement instruments (Lincoln & Guba 1985). The validity of quantitative research can be evaluated through content validity, criterion validity, and construct validity (Ping 2004). Content validity describes how measurement items represent the theoretical construct; criterion validity determines whether the construct corresponds to other tests of the same construct; and construct validity describes how the measured construct corresponds to the concept it is intended to measure (Ping 2004). Construct validity can be evaluated by convergent and discriminant validity. The correlation of separate construct measures indicates convergent validity, and the discriminant validity is related to the difference between the constructs (Ping, 2004). There are no guidelines to evaluate measurements of content validity and criterion validity (or face validity) (Ping 2004). Therefore, the use of previously validated scales is emphasized to increase content and criterion validity.

To ensure the reliability and validity of survey measurements, the following tasks were completed. Survey samples for Articles III and IV were collected with the assistance of a market research company, which recruited the study participants. Data for the experiment in Article IV were collected via MTurk. All scales and measurements had been previously validated and used. The survey instruments were tested before data were collected. Common method bias refers to when a survey respondent cannot give a true score for a construct due to measurement method issues. To decrease the effect of common method bias, items in the questionnaire were placed in alternating order, predictor and criterion variables were separated, and the respondents answered anonymously (Hulland et al. 2018; Podsakoff et al. 2003). Specific questions aimed at identifying potential bots were used. Concerning the data collected from MTurk, fake answers submitted by bots were identified and subsequently removed.

In this dissertation, the reliability and validity of the quantitative measurements used in Articles III and IV were evaluated through composite reliability (CR), Cronbach's alpha, average variance extracted (AVE), Fornell & Larcker's criterion, and Heterotrait–Monotrait ratios by using SmartPLS software. Consequently, the reliability was acceptable for all measurements: factor loadings, CRs, and Cronbach's alphas met the criteria set in the literature (Hair et al. 2014, p. 105). Likewise, construct validity was confirmed by evaluating AVE, Fornell & Larcker's criteria, and the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratios of correlations (Fornell and Larcker 1981; Hair et al. 2014, p. 105; Henseler et al. 2016).

To ensure the reliability and validity of the qualitative studies, the focus was on the quality of the research process. Consequently, the research settings were designed from that perspective. Semi-structured, themed interviews were selected as the data collection method to leave space for deeper discussions that reflected the interviewees' subjective experiences with the research topic (Järvenpää & Lang 2005). The main themes related to the interview structure were explained to the interviewees before the interviews, which were conducted face to face in quiet locations. The interviewees were encouraged to think about their answers and answer as they wished. To address unclear answers, follow-up questions were asked.

4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR ARTICLES I-IV

This section provides a summary and the key findings of the four articles included in this dissertation.

4.1 Article I: Omnichannel Experience – Towards Successful Channel Integration in Retail

Article I discusses the omnichannel customer experience in the retail context. The study illustrates how consumers form their omnichannel experience, and develops insights for retailers. Article describes not only the characteristics of the omnichannel experience but also the opportunities for in-store experiences that are offered by digital technologies.

The empirical data were based on 15 semi-structured, themed interviews that were conducted with customers with rich prior experience in omnichannel retailing. The interview data were categorized under research themes, and a content analysis was conducted.

The results indicated that customers expect retail channels to support one another. The experience between stores should be smooth and seamless. For example, there should be no differences in assortment or prices between channels. It was identified that the offline store experience plays an important role behind consumers' perceptions of the retailer's online store.

Regarding offline store image, customer service and merchandise were identified as significant determinants. Interestingly, from a perspective of offline store image, consumers seem to value the use of digital technologies in physical stores. Consumers expect retailers to support this by facilitating the use of digital technologies in physical stores. With digital solutions, retailers can provide information, help locate products, and enhance comparisons between products.

4.2 Article II: Systematic Literature Review and Analysis of Mobile Retailing Adoption

Article II provides a comprehensive review and analysis of mobile retailing adoption. The mobile retailing field has developed rapidly in recent years. Therefore, the article offers a framework for consumers' expectations and preferences along the stages of mobile retailing adoption and synthesizes 94 articles published in scientific journals between 2010 and 2018.

The results found that consumers have different expectations and demands during different stages of mobile channel adoption. A consumer's previous experience, stage of channel use, and retailing context influence the required features of mobile channel adoption during different stages. For example, when consumers are not familiar with technologies and lack experience using them, they prefer utilitarian benefits, such as saving time. By contrast, experienced users may value hedonic benefits such as entertainment and enjoyment.

The article divides the adoption process into three stages. In the pre-adoption stage, consumers are not familiar with mobile technologies; thus, their expectations are related to ease of shopping and highly personalized communications. In the adoption stages, consumers are familiar with technology, and their ability to use the mobile channel does not limit their use of it. When consumers increase their use of mobile channels, their expectations shift toward hedonic benefits. In post-adoption stage, consumers begin to value more hedonic aspects. Purchasing via mobile channels is related to hedonic value, and it generates high levels of enjoyment. Thus, hedonic benefits are linked with mobile shopping continuance.

4.3 Article III: Personalization and Hedonic Motivation in Creating Customer Experiences and Loyalty in Omnichannel Retail

Article III illustrates the effects of personalization and hedonic motivation on customer experience and loyalty outcomes in the omnichannel retailing context. Previous studies have explored these relationships in single-channel research settings. Consequently, the omnichannel research setting was designed, and 3 samples were collected: 2 surveys (2,084 responses in Finland and 2,334 responses in Sweden) and 20 semi-structured, themed interviews in Finland.

The results confirmed the positive relationships of both hedonic motivation and personalization regarding a customer's experience and the emotional and cognitive components. In addition, the findings show a positive relationship between customer experience components and loyalty intentions.

Given these findings, it is argued that a customer's experiences and loyalty can be improved by personalization. Personalized content, such as product recommendations, advertisements, and offers, can result in more positive customer

experiences. In omnichannel retailing environments, this indicates that customer data should be effectively transferred and used between channels to provide positive experiences, regardless of the channel being used. Moreover, the results concerning hedonic motivation indicate that retailers should invest in fun, enjoyable, and entertaining shopping environments to improve customer experiences. From the omnichannel perspective, this implies that retailers should highlight the use of hedonic elements across all retailing channels to enhance customer experience. Finally, Article III showed strong evidence of customer experiences's positive impact on loyalty. Therefore, it is essential for retailers to provide positive omnichannel experiences to their customers to increase the profitability of their businesses.

4.4 Article IV: Social Media in Customer Experience Creation: User-generated vs. Brand-generated Content

Article IV continues the discussion on customer experience from the social media perspective. First, the article examines the effects of both user-generated content and brand-generated content on customer experience and loyalty outcomes via a survey (2,156 responses). Next, an experimental research setting was developed to deepen our understanding of the results. With 659 responses in the experiment, we examined the influence of a retailer's participation in social media discussions. Finally, 17 semi-structured, themed interviews were conducted to address how user-generated and brand-generated content influences customer experiences from a qualitative, in-depth perspective. The qualitative research setting illustrates the mechanisms behind the examined phenomena.

The results imply that social media communications have a notable role in customer experience creation. User-generated content influences both customer experience's cognitive component and loyalty intentions. Brand-generated content moderates this relationship by increasing the positive influence of user-generated content on cognitive customer experience and by decreasing the harmful effects of negative e-WOM on the cognitive component of customer experience and consequently on consumers' loyalty intentions. Interestingly, a similar effect on the emotional component of customer experience was not identified. The interview data from Article IV aimed to clarify these findings. The interview results indicate that the cognitive elements of social media are related to an active information search, whereas emotional content is connected to passive browsing behavior. Thus, the non-significant results on the emotional component of customer experience can be explained by social media's principal role as an informative channel.

In addition, the findings of Article IV show that attached social media users generate stronger emotional responses to social media content than those who are not attached; therefore, content more effectually influences their loyalty

intentions. This indicates that the emotional perspective has a more important role for consumers who like to use social media platforms.

5 DISCUSSION

The objective of this dissertation was to provide an understanding of the omnichannel customer experience from the perspectives of different retailing channels. This section discusses the findings from the theoretical and managerial perspectives and presents the study's limitations and further research directions.

5.1 Theoretical contributions

The theoretical contributions of this dissertation include contributions from Articles I–IV. The article-specific contributions are presented in Table 7 as answers to the RQs.

Article I contributes to the understanding of the importance of channel integration in omnichannel retailing and answers RQ1: How can retail channels be integrated to improve customer experience? The article states that consumers expect integrated experiences across retail channels, which is consistent with the findings of previous studies (Blom et al. 2017; Piotrowich & Cuthbertson 2014). Moreover, the findings highlight the role of mobile channels and in-store technologies in customer experience creation.

Article II provides a theoretical contribution to the mobile retailing adoption process and answers RQ2: Which components influence mobile retail adoption? It bundles existing studies in this field, resolves inconsistencies in previous research, and presents a theoretical framework. Theoretically, it highlights the different roles of the utilitarian and hedonic aspects of different stages of mobile retail adoption and presents how retailers should serve their customers at different points in the adoption process. To put shortly, consumers are in different stages of adoption process, which creates different demands for channel aspects.

Article III answers RQ3: What are the roles of personalization and hedonic motivation in omnichannel customer experience? It is among the first studies to test the effects of these factors in the omnichannel research setting. Previous

studies have relied heavily on single-channel research settings, but we developed a research setting to address these relationships from the omnichannel perspective. Our results indicate that both personalization and hedonic motivation drive customer experience in the omnichannel environment.

Article IV answers RQ4: What is the role of user-generated and firm-generated social media content in customer experience creation? The article deviates from the existing literature in its novel insights concerning retailers' participation in social media discussions. The findings contribute to previous research by showing that retailers can decrease the harmful effects of negative e-WOM on social media by attending consumers' discussions. A retailer's participation influences the cognitive elements of customer experience and loyalty intentions. For emotional content, our results did not indicate similar effects. In addition, Article IV shows that the effectiveness of social media marketing varies between consumers. Attached social media users generate stronger emotional responses to social media content than those who are not attached. Consequently, social media content has a stronger impact on the former's loyalty intentions.

5.1.1 Summary of theoretical contributions

In general, this dissertation contributes to omnichannel marketing research by presenting various viewpoints of the retail customer experience. The omnichannel perspective focuses on retailing channels from the perspective of integrated experiences (Verhoef et al. 2015). However, varying customer journeys, consumers' personal demands, and rapidly evolving technologies have increased the complexity of the retail context. By investigating the channels presented in conceptual framework, this dissertation addresses the roles of these individual channels more specifically. The results indicate that customer experience differs according to different channels and platforms. Therefore, this dissertation presents critical and contradictory findings to the main omnichannel research streams, which strongly highlight the channel integration view. Even though previous omnichannel studies have highlighted the role of integrated, seamless experiences, this dissertation contributes by shifting the discussion toward serving each customer individually according to their preferences. In a recent study, Gasparin et al. (2022) presented similar results challenging the view of integration as an objective. A perfect omnichannel experience still requires an investment in retail technologies and effective use of AI, which is not within the reach of companies with smaller budgets. Consequently, it is not desirable for all companies to aim for highly integrated omnichannel customer experiences.

TABLE 7 Answers for research questions: theoretical contributions and managerial implications of Articles I-IV

Article	Research questions	Theoretical contributions	Managerial implications
I	How can retail channels be integrated to improve customer experiences?	• Contributes to the understanding of channel integration in omnichannel retailing by highlighting the role of consistency for retail channels • Underscores the considerable role of digital in-store technologies in customer experience formation	• Suggests that retailers should offer integrated, seamless experiences to increase customer loyalty • Digital technologies should be utilized to facilitate consumers' information searching process. For example, digital technologies can be used as a substitute for customer service during rush hour
II	Which components influence mobile retailing adoption?	• Synthesizes existing studies and solves inconsistencies in previous research • Presents a theoretical framework of mobile channel adoption • Identifies utilitarian and hedonic key factors for each stage of mobile retailing adoption	• Outlines the importance of different requirements for different stages of adoption. Marketing communications should be personalized according to the current stage • Mobile channels are not traditionally seen as purchasing channels. However, the full potential of mobile solutions is not being utilized (e.g., mobile applications can be designed to facilitate searching, comparing, and purchasing processes in physical stores)

continues

TABLE 7 continues

Article	Research questions	Theoretical contributions	Managerial implications
III	What are the roles of personalization and hedonic motivation in the omnichannel customer experience?	• Illustrates the role of personalization and hedonic motivation behind the omnichannel customer experience • Confirms the relationship of the omnichannel customer experience and loyalty intentions	• Suggests that retailers should exploit the opportunities that personalization offers in the omnichannel context. In other words, consumer data should be utilized to personalize customer experiences • Suggests that omnichannel experiences should be fun, enjoyable, and entertaining, despite the shopping environment
IV	What is the role of user-generated and firm-generated social media content in customer experience creation?	• Contributes to the understanding of retailers' role in social media • Presents how retailers' social media participation influences consumers' cognitive responses • Illustrates the role of social media attachment and its impact on consumers' emotional responses	• Highlights the importance of retailers' active participation in social media discussions • Highlights that social media users are more receptive to emotional content

5.2 Managerial implications

The managerial implications of this dissertation consist of the implications of Articles I–IV, which are presented in Table 7 and summarized in Table 8.

5.2.1 Implications of Article I

Article I delivers a general approach to omnichannel retailing. From the managerial perspective, the findings of the article suggest that retailers should offer integrated, seamless experiences to increase loyalty among their customers. Different retailing channels should interact with one another and provide equal, current information. Some retailers still have challenges in basic-level channel integration (e.g., they provide different price information across channels or have inconsistencies in product availability).

Digital technologies play a key role in shopping experiences. Most notably, consumers are using their mobile devices in physical stores. When combined with in-store technologies, such as smart vending machines, virtual showrooms, or dressing rooms, mobile technologies should be utilized to facilitate consumers' information-searching processes in physical stores. Technological solutions can help solve problems, such as a lack of customer service during busy periods, or help customers locate products in stores.

5.2.2 Implications of Article II

Article II provides a theoretical framework for mobile retailing adoption. Because this article outlines the importance of different requirements for different stages of the adoption process, it is suggested that retailers should design and personalize marketing communications according to a consumer's stage of channel adoption. The hedonic and utilitarian requirements differ in stages; therefore, retailers should individualize the offerings based on the stage of the adoption process. The full potential of mobile solutions has not been fully exploited. For example, retailers can use mobile applications to make the tasks of searching, locating, comparing, and purchasing products easier in physical stores. Facilitating these activities may result in more positive experiences and higher satisfaction.

Mobile channels were not seen as purchasing channels in previous marketing research. However, it has been shown that mobile purchasing generates a high level of endorsement compared to laptops and should therefore be utilized more effectively. From this perspective, it can be suggested that companies should target personalized advertisements immediately after mobile purchases are made.

5.2.3 Implications of Article III

Article III provides two important implications for managers concerning personalization and hedonic motivation. The findings indicate that omnichannel consumers expect personalized marketing content and that retailers should exploit the opportunities that personalization offers in the omnichannel context by utilizing consumer data. Retailers should personalize customer experiences, despite the channel used for shopping. For example, retailers should consider how data collected in an online store can be used in a physical store.

The findings also demonstrate a significant relationship between consumers' hedonic shopping motivation and customer experience. This indicates that omnichannel experiences should be fun, enjoyable, and entertaining, despite the shopping environment. From a managerial perspective, the role of hedonic elements should be widely considered across different touchpoints and stages of the customer journey.

5.2.4 Implications of Article IV

The managerial implications of Article IV offer practical guidelines for retailers' social media activities. First, the article highlights the importance of retailers' active participation in social media discussions. The findings illustrate that brand-generated social media content has positive effects on cognitive customer experience and loyalty intentions and that a retailer's participation in social media discussions can increase the positive effects of user-generated content and decrease the harmful effects of negative e-WOM by influencing a consumer's cognitive responses and hence their loyalty intentions. Consequently, Article IV strongly encourages retailers to attend social media discussions and interact with their customers.

Second, Article IV suggests that retailers should target emotional social media content, especially with consumers who are attached to social media. The findings indicate that highly attached social media users are more receptive to emotional content and generate stronger emotional responses. In light of these findings, it is essential to segment consumers according to their level of attachment and to target social media content based on these divisions.

5.2.5 Summary of managerial implications

Although channel integration has become a popular viewpoint in retailing, this research provides some contradictory insights for retailers. The omnichannel perspective considers marketing an integrated, seamless phenomenon, but the findings of this dissertation show that consumers' expectations and demands differ according to channels, products, and mechanisms, all of which influence their decision processes. This dissertation suggests that retailers should consider the palette of the channels and integrate unity while still matching requirements ac-

cording to different cases. Managers should effectively utilize and integrate consumer data from all channels to design and personalize customer journeys based on the specific demands of consumers, channels, and platforms.

As noted, effective omnichannel retailing requires the utilization of customer data and technological solutions, such as AI. However, not all companies have opportunities to benefit from these processes within their resources. Smaller companies should especially evaluate which channels are valuable for their customers and allocate their resources accordingly. As this dissertation suggests, companies still have challenges at the basic level of operations, such as deviations in product information between online and offline stores. Therefore, for smaller companies, it might be more relevant to invest in the development of these specific channels and leave channel integration to bigger operators.

Consumers' channel choices are still often related to the stage of their purchasing process. For example, mobile channels are not perceived as purchasing channels, but they are often used during the primary stages of information searches. Social media plays an important role in the information searching stage and post-purchase discussions.

Product type was also shown to influence channel choice. Hedonic shopping is often related to online shopping, whereas utilitarian purchases are done in physical stores. The features of marketing communication are dependent on product type. Functional products require utilitarian appeals, whereas hedonic products require emotional appeals.

Additionally, consumers' technological capabilities guide their channel use and their expectations for channel benefits. Consumers value utilitarian benefits in the early stages of technology adoption, whereas hedonic benefits come from consumers' familiarity with technology.

Finally, varying characteristics of retailing channels, consumers' preferences, and their reasons for channel choices indicate that there are diverse impacts on customer experience dimensions across channels. Because different channels influence different psychological mechanisms, it is essential to recognize not only the special features of touchpoints but also the traits of channel users. Thus, retailers can make the most interesting offerings to consumers at the best touchpoints.

TABLE 8 Summary of managerial implications

Managerially relevant issues	Recommendations for retailers
Channel integration Channel choice	• Retail customers are expecting a seamless omnichannel customer experience across channels. Firms should allocate resources to develop highly personalized experiences across channels. • An integrated experience requires effective use of customer data. Companies need to ensure that data can be utilized across multiple channels. • Effective channel integration requires significant resources. Technological solutions, such as AI, are outside smaller companies' budgets. In these cases, it would be more beneficial to target individual channels and their functionality. • The stage of the purchasing process, type of product, and consumers' technological capabilities guide their channel choices. These varying demands lead to situations where consumers should be served on a case-by-case basis. From the omnichannel perspective, retailers should use consumer data across multiple channels to provide personalized experiences.
Specific touchpoints	• The customer experience in offline stores no longer relies on physical shopping environments only. The line between offline and online channels has become blurred, and digital in-store technologies have become essential to the offline store experience. Therefore, retailers should consider how they can benefit from these technological solutions. • The online channel has expanded beyond webstores. Depending on the consumer's preferences, it can also include mobile channels and social media channels. • The level of consumers' technological capabilities determines their use of digital technologies. For example, consumers value different benefits along different stages of mobile channel adoption. • The importance of social media in the customer journey has increased. Consumers are more willing to use it for information searches, but they also share their experiences with their social networks. Consequently, it is indispensable for retailers to participate in these discussions. Increased social media interaction with customers has had a positive impact on customer experience.

5.3 Limitations and further research directions

While this dissertation has some limitations, these limitations offer fascinating topics for further research. Both the limitations and the future research directions of this dissertation are related to single articles, but they are also connected.

The limitations of Article I concern the methodological perspective of the research setting. The use of interviews as a data collection method can be criticized because the nature of the interview circumstances might lead interviewees to adjust their responses instead of providing truthful answers (Easton, 2010). Consequently, this had to be evaluated in the interpretation of the answers. The face-to-face context did not allow the interviewees to answer anonymously, which may have skewed their answers. In addition, the interviews were conducted with Finnish retail customers; therefore, the results may not be generalizable to other markets. Regarding future research directions, Article I highlights the continuous need for new studies as the development of technologies facilitating omnichannel retailing continues and thereby reshapes the field of channel integration.

The limitations of Article II include the consequences of the study method. A systematic literature review relies on existing studies. Therefore, the number of articles was limited. In addition, the mobile retailing context has developed rapidly during the last decade, resulting in differences between articles collected from the beginning of the mobile era and more recent studies. The study presented a theoretical framework of mobile retail adoption that was not empirically tested. Future research should address the framework with quantitative methods. However, previous research strongly indicates that consumers' technological abilities guide their use of mobile channels. Based on these perceptions, it would be beneficial to investigate the impact of consumers' technological readiness for other new solutions, such as augmented reality and virtual reality.

In Articles III and IV, the data mostly came from quantitative survey results. Samples were collected from specific markets, such as Finland, Sweden, and the U.S., which creates challenges with the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, researchers should investigate the frameworks of Articles III and IV in other areas, such as emerging economies. In addition, the single survey studies used in Articles III and IV do not fully capture the dynamism of customer experience; therefore, topics should be addressed by longitudinal research methods. In addition, the longitudinal research setting might increase the results' validity.

From a practical viewpoint, Articles III and IV offer interesting further research directions. In Article III, the research setting was limited to the omnichannel perspective, and Article IV focused on social media. Further studies should investigate topics in other contexts, such as other channels and platforms. In addition, the retailing context is evolving rapidly, and new channels and technologies are going to be utilized, creating potential new research directions.

Article IV demonstrated how highly attached social media users reacted to social media interactions. Thus, future studies should explore the types of heavy users of other channels and the influence of their touchpoint preferences on their reactions. This segmentation offers retailers valuable information and helps them design and target their marketing activities for specific consumers.

In Article III, personalization and hedonic motivation were shown to affect the emotional and cognitive components of customer experience, whereas Article IV demonstrated that social media primarily influences the cognitive component. Because it seems that different channels influence different mechanisms, more research is needed to address which dimensions of customer experience are relevant in cases of specific touchpoints. In addition, the rapid evolution of digital retailing technologies creates a need to evaluate these new technologies in light of these findings.

Finally, there are some limitations to bringing these articles together. This dissertation used multiple research methods, which may cause challenges for researchers. In previous literature, it has been stated that using multiple methods might result in impractical use of the methods (Bergman 2011). However, in this dissertation, methodological choices were weighed carefully and can be considered justified. Therefore, it can be argued that comprehensive, complete, and convincing findings were drawn (Davies et al., 2011), and the use of multiple methods was supported.

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ORIGINAL PAPERS

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OMNICHANNEL EXPERIENCE : TOWARDS SUCCESSFUL CHANNEL INTEGRATION IN RETAIL

by

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OMNICHANNEL EXPERIENCE – TOWARDS SUCCESSFUL CHANNEL INTEGRATION IN RETAIL

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ABSTRACT

This study examines omnichannel experiences in retail. The retail market has changed significantly since digitalization: Internet markets reveal price differences, provide product information, and offer comparison possibilities. The purpose of the present study is to theorize how retailers should integrate online and offline store channels to provide the best omnichannel experience. Empirical data for this study were collected through 20 semi-structured themed interviews conducted with customers who have visited both the online and the physical stores of the same retailer. The data were analyzed through content analysis. Overall, the findings provide several managerial insights into omnichannel management. According to the results, customers expect online and offline channels to support each other. They are using their mobile devices to visit online channels while in physical stores to compare prices and products and expect to see the same products and prices in both channels. They want their experience to be seamless. The results also highlight the importance of channel integration in enhancing positive brand experiences.

Keywords: Brand experience, omnichannel retail, omnichannel management

1. Introduction

According to Deloitte's (2018) forecast for 2018 many changes will occur in retail markets. The growth of online retailing is continuing, and it is going to have a great impact on traditional retail players. The number of physical stores will decrease, but they will still have important role in retailing. Customer experiences are now more important than ever, and digital technologies will have a key role to the store experience.

Consumers are spending more and more time on smartphones relative to other devices. Typically, they conduct searches on mobile devices and make purchase in physical stores (Singh and Swait, 2017). Today, 8% of time spent online is related to shopping (Mander and Jason, 2017). According to eMarketer's forecast (2017), while 80% of retail sales still occur in physical stores, 80% of all sales consist of web-enabled brick-and-mortar shopping. According to Brynjolfsson, Hu, and Rahman (2015), more than 50% of cell phone owners in the United States have smartphones, and over 70% of them have used their mobile devices for comparison shopping. Thus, understanding the role of mobile technologies in retail has become critical. For example, Apple's Siri application for the iPhone can make recommendations based on customers' location and other factors. It can help out-of-town visitors find local stores and restaurants. These applications open up new opportunities to marketers.

This research of omnichannel experiences can help managers understand the nature of online and physical store integration and provide resources to improve customer experiences. Consumers are searching for information from several sources and are using multiple-channel combinations, including stores, catalogs, and the internet (Shim et al., 2001). Technology is breaking barriers between different retail channels, and consumers are shopping in multiple channels and expecting seamless shopping experiences between channels. Customers use both online and physical stores when engaging in purchase behavior, and their choice can influence their purchase intentions (Verhagen and van Dolen, 2009). Retailers should synchronize all their channels (Shim et al., 2001), as the retail industry is shifting towards helping consumers rather than focusing only on transactions. New channels, such as mobile channels, are becoming more important, and Thakur (2016) noted that mobile shopping has very strong emotional significance for customers, because mobile shopping sites are a source of entertainment.

The purpose of this study was to determine how retailers should integrate their online and offline store channels to provide the best retail brand experience. The research focuses on online and offline store images and their effects on brand experience and examines channel integration from the perspective of omnichannel management. The specific research questions in this study are as follows: 1) What are the characteristics of the omnichannel experience? 2) How should retailers integrate online and offline channels to create a satisfying brand experience? 3) How should firms use digital technologies to improve brand experiences in physical stores?

First, the conceptual framework and methodology are presented. In the ensuing section, the findings as well as theoretical and managerial implications are discussed. We end with presenting the limitations of our study and proposing several areas for further research.

2. Retail brand experience in an omnichannel environment

Researchers have suggested various definitions of brand experience. Zarantonello and Schmitt (2010) described it as customers' subjective and internal responses, sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses. For example, a good experience plays a critical role when customers are choosing a website from which to purchase (Ha and Perks, 2005). Some experiences are more positive, and the durations and intensities vary between different customers' subjective experiences (Brakus et al., 2009; Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010). Ha and Perks (2005) show that in the online context, brand experience has an important link with satisfaction and trust. They argue that the brand is connected to intentions for future purchasing in that way.

Brand experiences occur when consumers are searching for, shopping for, receiving, and consuming products and services (Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010). According to Brakus et al. (2009), product experiences happen when consumers are interacting with products, particularly searching for, evaluating, and examining products. Shopping and service experiences occur during consumers' interactions with a store's physical environment, while consumption experiences involve consuming and using products. Frow and Payne (2007) highlighted the role of marketing communication and advertising, which allow marketers to influence customer's memory-based activities such as subconscious processes, and information processing.

Customer's experience includes the search, purchase, consumption, and after-sale phases—elements which the retailer may or may not be able to control (Verhoef et al., 2009). According to Brakus et al. (2009), brand experience contains four dimensions: sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral (See Figure 1). Additionally, Verhoef et al. (2009) stated that the social dimension, such as other customers, salespersons, friends, and family members, also influences the brand experience. Customers find some dimensions more important than others, and the importance varies among consumers (Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010).

Positive experiences online correlate with fun, recreational and experiential usage of the web (Novak et al., 2000). Customers form relationships with brands they interact with, which leads to satisfaction and behavioral intentions to purchase (Morgan-Thomas and Veloutsou, 2013). The positive online shopping experience, such as searching for product information and purchasing, should be easy (Novak et al., 2000).

2.1. Online channel image

For approximately 20 years, researchers have shown interest in how retail store images are built up online. Customer experience online is the consumer's response to the stimuli within a website environment, and it is linked to intention to purchase (Morgan-Thomas and Veloutsou, 2013; Verhagen, 2004). Because consumers are better informed about prices online, obtaining information about additional sellers reduces their costs of search. Communication possibilities and transaction capabilities online have lowered search costs for both customers and vendors (Bakos, 1997; Browne and Durrett, 2004). The literature suggests different factors influencing online store image (see Table 1).

Table 1.

Online store image

Author(s)	Year	Sample	Key findings
Childers et al.	2001	274 students in introductory classes in the business school of a large Midwestern university	Online navigation is "self-directed movement through the media" and involves nonlinear search and retrieval methods that increase freedom of choice. Easier navigation with product quality information makes consumers less price-sensitive and decreases the psychological costs of shopping, which may make the experience more enjoyable.
Elliot and Speck	2005	40 college students	Online store merchandise is amount of the assortment, accuracy of the stock, and information about the products offered. Online atmospheres that offer sensory and hedonic stimuli from colors, music, action, and interactivity increase customers' willingness to visit again. Useable online navigation requires clear organization, uncluttered screens, logical flow, and ease of navigation, which should help customers to process product and purchase information, decrease customer's search costs, and conduct faster and more effective searches. Online return policies, privacy policies, and third-party assurances diminish perceived risks, such as misuse of personal data, cookies, and spam.
Eroglu, Machleit, and Davis	2003	328 respondents of online questionnaire	Online atmospheric factors, such as website environment, provide information about the retailer. The atmosphere's effect on customer behavior is indirect, and it is the result of the emotions experienced on the retailer's website.
Gefen, Karahanna, and Straub	2003	213 online shoppers	Trust encourages customers' online business activities by reducing the social complexity, such as undesirable yet possible behaviors of the retailer, the consumer faces in online retail.

			trust has a link with usefulness of a Web site
Hoffman, Novak, and Peralta	1999	Two surveys; 1,555 and 14,014 web users	Consumers do not trust most online retailers and are not interested in giving money or personal information to them. Consumers are worried about misuse of their data and the difficulty of controlling secondary use of their information.
Lee and Lin	2006	165 members of online communities	Online service quality, linked with clear navigation, is a key driver of customer satisfaction and trust.
McKnight, Choudhury, and Kacmar	2002	1,403 undergraduate and graduate students	Website quality and vendor reputation contribute to trust in an online environment.
Verhagen and Van Dolen	2009	685 registered customers of one of the largest bricks-and-clicks music retail stores in the Netherlands	Online store image is a combination of four factors: online service, merchandise, atmosphere, and navigation.

2.2. Offline channel image

The literature on physical store image (see Table 2) recognizes several factors behind store image. Verhagen and Van Dolen (2009) presented a model for physical store image where they introduce factors behind it. Like their online store image model, it includes service, merchandise, and atmosphere factors, but instead of navigation, it includes the offline layout. Along with traditional offline store factors, customers are using their mobile devices in physical stores for information search, and retailers are offering digital in-store solutions to facilitate purchasing (Zhang et al., 2010).

Table 2.

Offline channel image

Author(s)	Year	Sample	Key findings
Baker, Grewal, and Parasuraman	1994	157 students	Service quality is a key component in physical store image. Store merchandise factors, such as quality, styling, pricing, and assortment, influence customers' behavior.
Dabholkar, Thorpe, and Rentz	1996	225 customers of department store chains in United States	Service quality involves physical aspects (appearance and convenience), reliability (fulfilling promises and doing it "right"), personal interactions (helpfulness and inspiring confidence), problem solving, and policy.
Donovan et al.	1994	60 shoppers of two different stores	If the atmosphere evokes the right emotions, consumers enjoy shopping in the store. They spend more time browsing and are more willing to contact salespersons. They may spend more money than they have planned and are more willing to return to the store.
Sweeney, Soutar, and Jonson	1997	Two different samples: an exploratory survey with 609 respondents and a confirmatory survey with 459 respondents	Functional service quality relates to how a service is delivered, responsiveness, empathy, and courtesy, and technical service quality relates to product that was delivered and knowledge about it.
Verhagen and Van Dolen	2009	685 registered customers of one of the largest bricks-and-clicks music retail stores in the Netherlands	Physical store image is a combination of service, merchandise, atmosphere, and layout.
Yoo, Park, and MacInnis	1998	294 customers of the two largest department stores in Ulsan, Korea	Physical store characteristics include assortment, price, service, location, facilities, and atmosphere. Returns, repairs, delivery, installation, and refunds are key elements of offline service.

Zhang et al.	2010	Literature review	Customers are using technologies like ordering hubs, iPads, and display screens to make purchasing easier, which creates a totally new merchandise layout.

2.3. Omnichannel perspective

Recently, Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson (2014) examined the role of information technologies in retail. New technologies, smart mobile devices, and social networks increase the incremental importance of in-store technological solutions. The omnichannel concept is defined as using many channels, like the internet, mobile devices, and physical stores, all within the same transaction process. The shopping experience should be smooth, and because the channels are managed together, customers should be interacting with the brand, not with the channel. Virtual screens, virtual mirrors in fitting rooms, digital signage, intelligent self-service kiosks, vending machines, and dynamic menus are in-store technologies used to improve customer's experience.

Accoding to Verhagen and Van Dolen (2009), online and offline stores are part of the same customer experience (See Figure 1). Previous studies (Vahie & Paswan, 2006; Yoo et al., (1998) have proposed the relationship between store image and customer's brand experience. Yoo et al. (1998) found positive relationship between in-store image and emotional experience and brand attitude. Vahie and Paswan (2006) got similar results between store image and private label brand quality and affective perceptions. Oh et al. (2012) stated that retail channel integration has positive effects on firms' performance and competences. With IT, firms are able to integrate their resources to create satisfying customer experiences. Both online and physical stores should serve cross-channel consumers, and successful channel integration may improve retailers' performance. In addition, Blom et al. (2017) noted that omnichannel retailing has a positive influence on performance and experience. Thus, we propose that:

> *P1.* Online and offline store images should be integrated smoothly to provide positive brand experiences.

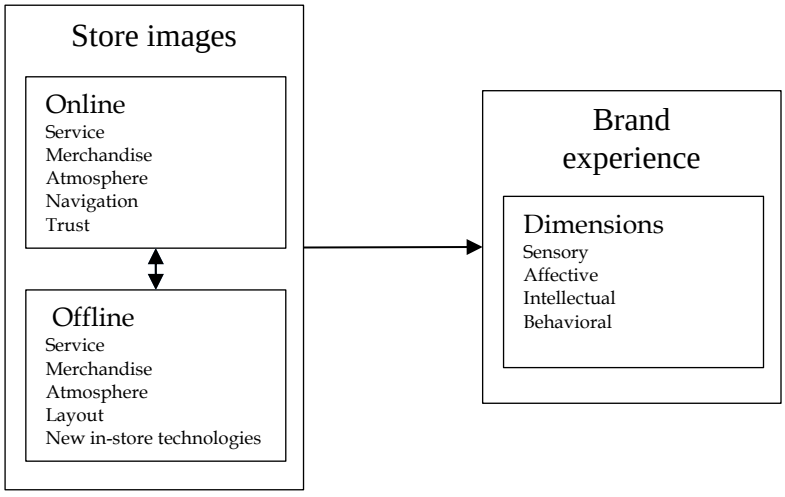

Figure 1 Research model: formulating customer experiences in an omnichannel context (modified from Brakus et al. 2009; Verhagen & Van Dolen, 2009)

Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson (2014) reported that channel integration plays an important role in building customer experience. Customers choose channels depending on their current situations, so easy movement among channels is important. Customers are also using their mobile devices in-store. For instance, they may check prices online before making an in-store purchase, search for information, compare products, ask for advice, and look for cheaper alternatives. Scanning QR codes and bar codes, which allows customers to check cheaper alternatives when they are in the store, has become popular as well. Customers are able to check product ratings from social networks or contact their groups to ask questions, and retailers cannot control these interactions.

Verhoef et al. (2015) showed that omnichannel retail is replacing multi-channel retail. Compared to multichannel management, omnichannel management includes more channels. Omnichannel channel management is interactive, and the mass-communication channels include stores, online websites, direct marketing, mobile channels, social media, TV, radio, print, and customer-to-customer communications. These channels should provide a seamless retail experience because they all influence retail customer experience and each touchpoint influences brand and retail performance. However, is integration across channels always as good as it is usually considered? Lemon and Verhoef (2016) noted that mobile devices are more suitable for searching than purchasing, and some channels are more useful than others at different stages of the buying process. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2010) stated that touchpoints like one-way and two-way interactions between retailers and customers, such as through social media or word-of-mouth communication, influence brand consideration.

Overall service quality perception is a result of customer's interactions with available technologies and service people (Pantano and Viassone, 2015). With digital technologies, retailers have enabled omnichannel retailing dynamics that influence both the consumer and the business (Lazaris and Vrechopoulos, 2014). For example, mobile shopping has strong emotional significance to customers because of the entertaining aspect of mobile shopping sites (Thakur, 2016). Based on these findings, we propose that:

P2. Digital technologies improve customer experiences in physical stores.

Verhoef et al. (2015) stated that the main difference between traditional multi-channel management and omnichannel management is the separation of the channels in multi-channel management. The channel integration characteristic of omnichannel management aims to provide seamless retail experiences. While multi-channel management focuses on interactive channels, omnichannel management also uses mass-communication channels to reach customers. Dholakia et al. (2005) examined customer behavior in a multichannel retail context and stated that customers typically use the same channels for repeat purchases. If they are switching between channels, they are more willing to switch between similar channels, such as catalogs and websites, than dissimilar channels such as retail stores and websites.

Brynjolfsson et al. (2013) reported factors that improve the omnichannel experience: First, retailers should provide attractive pricing and good content. Second, retailers should gather new data from social, mobile, and nearby establishments. Transaction data and data from customer interactions are both valued. Next, retailers should avoid facilitating direct price comparisons. Consumers like to compare prices, which may be damaging to sellers. Making direct price comparisons difficult, such as by providing exclusive offerings, distinctive features, or product bundles, can protect retailers from competitors. Retailers should provide information about their inventory that

makes finding products from physical stores much easier. The ability to transfer product knowledge across brands is damaging. Good channel integration attracts consumers who prefer shopping in multiple channels.

Verhagen and Van Dolen (2009) found a positive influence of online store image on offline store purchase intentions. They also propose that offline store image affects online store purchase intentions. Huré et al. (2017) discovered that all omnichannel touchpoints should be managed specifically but not in isolation. According to Herhausen et al. (2015), channel integration leads to purchase intentions on both online and offline channels. Therefore, we propose that:

P3. Good channel integration encourages consumer to use multiple channels.

3. Methodology

This paper utilizes a qualitative approach to investigate omnichannel experiences through one-on-one, in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The chosen primary data collection method leaves space for deeper discussion and understanding of the phenomenon (Järvenpää and Lang, 2005). Interviews followed a semi-structured guide that determined the topics of the study. However, the semi-structured interview format allowed interviewees to express their own viewpoints. Therefore, the respondents provided data on their own subjective experiences. The interview guide was designed to discover personal thoughts and opinions about omnichannel experiences. The aim was to collect reflections regarding channel use and integration.

Participants were selected using a purposeful criterion sampling method to gather knowledge and experience about the researched topic (Patton, 2002, 40–46). In this research, the following criteria were used: informants should be adults, both men and women. All informants should have had experience visiting both online and physical stores of the case firms. The age of the interviewees ranged from 19 to 29; people in this age range are the most active in using different channels for shopping.

Quiet locations were selected for each interview to facilitate recording. After each interview, the recording was transcribed, and interviews were lettered word for word. Respondents had time to think about their answers and felt free to answer as they wished. Further questions were used to keep the discussions going and to gain deeper insights. If an answer was unclear, the researcher asked follow-up questions to obtain a deeper understanding.

Miles and Huberman (1994) described three stages in successful content analysis: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In this research, the analysis phase followed their framework. In the reduction stage, data was organized according to the main themes. Interviews were read individually and then coded to categories.

In terms of gender, the sample (n=20) was evenly split to men (50%) and women (50%). Close to half of the interviewees (45%) were between 25 and 30 years old. Half of the respondents (50%) were students, and the rest were employed full-time. The average duration of the interviews was approximately 18 minutes. The profile of the sample (sex, occupation, age, and the duration of interview) is shown in Table 3.

Table 3.

Profile of the sample

Sex	Occupation	Age
Male	Student	21
Male	Student	22
Male	Working	23
Male	Working	23
Male	Student	23
Male	Student	25
Male	Self-employed	27
Male	Doctoral student	27
Male	Working	27
Male	Working	29
Female	Student	19
Female	Student	21
Female	Student	21
Female	Student	21
Female	Student	23
Female	Student	24
Female	Working	25
Female	Working	28
Female	Working	29
Female	Working	29

4. Findings

In the findings, the images of different retail channels are discussed first. Second, channel integration opportunities and problems are described. Third, the role of digital technologies in traditional offline purchasing is introduced.

4.1. Online and physical store images

Our data suggests that both online and physical stores are behind customer's impression about brand. Physical stores are only more important than online stores if the product is not important to the consumer. Some respondents thought that the product that they are buying has an impact on which channel they find more important. In some cases, the online store may be satisfying, but the offline store is not, or the reverse may be true.

> "The physical store has a bigger effect. If I visit a physical store and have a negative experience, it has a bigger impact. If I'm visiting an online store and have some problems with the internet connection, it isn't such a big problem for me."—Male, 25

> "I think that usually if the offline store is good, the online store is also. It is possible that smaller retailers are not very active in updating their websites, but the service

at physical stores is good. I think the physical store is more important to my brand experience."—Male, 27

"If products are not very important for you and you can find them anywhere, the online store is more important. For example, if I'm ordering a package of nails."—Male, 29

Over half of the respondents (65%) found the ability to see, touch, and try physical products prior to purchase the most important reason to visit physical stores. Thirty percent of respondents also wanted to get products immediately and found return policies to be better in physical stores than online. In addition, some of the study participants mentioned that offline shopping is an easier way to make purchases than through online stores because the purchasing process is physical.

"When I have to see the physical product. I can see if the size is suitable and try it."—Male, 23

"You can go to Intersport and buy a jacket and then walk out with that jacket and use it instantly."—Male, 23

Respondents set their expectations for physical stores based on their experiences in the same retailer's online store. They expect the same prices in both stores. Also, if the online store's website navigation is not clear and the site atmosphere is not pleasant, customers will expect to have a similar experience in the physical store. Some respondents note that in this digital age, every physical store should also have an online store.

"Prices should be same as in the physical store if the retailer is same. That way I can find the same product with the same price from the physical store."—Male, 26

"Online and physical stores should look the same. If the retailer has good quality online, I will expect the same in the traditional physical store. The images should be convergent."—Male, 29

"If the web store's layout doesn't make a good impression or if there is news from last year and I notice that the site isn't updated, I will think that prices and products are not correct. The website could have positive or negative effects. The layout doesn't have as big of an effect as the updating, but if it is confusing, I will choose another web store. The maintenance is important."—Male, 27

"Both online and physical stores have influence on my impression of the brand – if one is dissatisfying, the whole brand is ruined" –Male, 27

Why are customers visiting online stores? The larger assortment was the main reason for seven respondents. They noted that online stores offer more options, including the ability to visit international stores. Moreover, as with physical stores, some of the study participants see online shopping as an easier way to make purchases, one that saves time and effort because they can visit online stores from their homes. Men were more interested in functional value of online channel than women, for example searching for

information and comparing products. Social media was more essential for women, who got inspiration from blogs and Instagram.

> "There are more products available because I can also visit foreign markets."—Female, 21

Another key experience outcome from online stores was that comparing products is easier online. They see more alternatives in a shorter time. Customers are comparing products, prices, and assortment among different stores.

> "I visit online stores because comparing products is easier. You can compare, for example, prices and assortments between stores. From one place you can see many different stores."—Male, 22

4.2. Channel integration

The importance of seamless channel integration is undeniable. The experience narratives point out the relationship between the experienced problems and differences in prices and assortment. Respondents noted that sometimes prices are different between the physical store and online store. If a retailer is offering a certain price in its online store, the customer is expecting the same price if he walks into a physical store. Some retailers also have problems updating their product availability on their websites, and empty shelves disappoint customers. However, around one third (35%) of the respondents did not face any problems at all if a retailer had both online and physical stores.

> "It feels like they don't update product availability in real time. You are expecting that there should be still some products left but go to the store and find empty shelves."—Male, 27

> "I've checked that there are products in the store, but when I went to the store, there weren't. And then they told me that there wasn't anything left in the warehouse."—Female, 21

> "There have been situations in which the price is lower online. But the price difference is usually so small that I've bought the product from the physical store anyway."—Female, 29

Some of the study participants thought that online and offline stores should support each other by allowing consumers to search for or try products online and purchase them offline. If retailer only has a small amount of stock in its physical store, it might be acceptable to have lower prices in the online store.

> "There should be more physical stores where you can try products before you order those products with short delivery times. There is only a small stock in the physical store, and the products will be shipped from a bigger central warehouse."—Male, 29

Customers are often searching for arguments to confirm their purchase decisions. In some product categories, online information is not sufficient to allow them to make a

decision, and customers are trying to find more information from physical products in physical stores.

> "Sometimes I find products from web stores, but I'm not sure if the size is right. I would like to see how it would look if I wore it. I might go to the physical store if I wasn't sure about the purchase and buy it there."—Female, 25

> "I might try products in physical store, but buy them online. But then I always use online store of that same brand"

4.3. Digital technologies

Digital technologies play a key role in customers' shopping experiences today. The findings reveal several important factors related to the use of digital technologies in physical stores. The role of traditional channels is becoming more indistinct, as two-thirds of customers are using their mobile devices in traditional physical stores. When respondents were asked how they use their mobile phones when they are visiting physical stores, comparing products (35%) and searching for information (30%) were the main answers. Customers like comparing products and checking prices from different stores. They are also finding more information about products, especially if they are making an impulse purchase.

> "Usually I've done comparing before I visit the store. But if I'm making an impulse purchase, I will do quick check to make sure the price is correct."—Male, 27

> "I've compared products. I've checked different options, for example colors, and done some price comparison."—Male, 23

Retailers have many opportunities to improve the shopping experience with digital technologies in physical stores. Overall, respondents said that stores should offer more product information through digital technologies.

> "Some extra product information. If you were buying sports equipment, for example, you would have more information about skis and waxes. You would be able to search for waxing reports."—Male, 29

> "If there is something that I don't have enough knowledge about and no salesperson available. For example, if I'm buying Frisbee-golf discs and don't have a clue about them, I need some advice. Maybe I can get some information from digital solutions?"—Female, 24

In addition, respondents pointed out that retailers should offer digital solutions to facilitate product comparing. However, the ability to compare prices is a double-edged sword: If the retailer is not the price leader, consumers might choose other options.

> "If the retailer is marketing its stores as a price leader, could there be an iPad where customers can check and compare prices?"—Male, 27

Respondents said that they would like to receive more personalized and targeted marketing. They noted that retailers today are able to personalize messages and content through technology.

> "I get offers to my email. Maybe they could make more personal offers. Today, it is possible."—Female, 25

Respondents also hoped for applications to help customers locate products in stores. Easier locating would save customers time and effort.

> "For example, in big supermarkets there should be something that helps you to find products so you don't have to walk through the whole store."—Female, 29

4.4. Summary of study findings

The results of investigating offline store image factors show that customer service and merchandise were the most important factors. In addition, digital technologies play an important role in physical stores. Good customer service is often behind positive offline experiences. Physical store layout helps customers navigate and find products in store. Physical store atmosphere also has an impact on the customer's perceptions of the online store. If the impression is good, customers expect a similar experience in online stores as well.

In the online context, the results show that merchandise was the most important factor. Customers expect a large assortment and good prices in online stores. In addition, customer service is important—but only if there are problems with purchases, products, or delivery. Atmosphere and navigation are linked. Navigation should be clear because customers want to save time and effort, and clear online navigation contributes to a good atmosphere. Information availability also plays a significant role. The online experience should be smooth, as respondents find online shopping to be an easier way to make purchases than traditional offline shopping. They are expecting to save time and effort through clear online navigation and good availability of information.

However, although customers are expecting good prices in online stores, they want the same prices in physical stores. Consequently, differences between channels may lead to negative brand experiences. In addition, customers expect online and offline channels to support each other. They are using online channels with their mobile devices in physical stores to compare prices and products. With digital technologies, retailers can facilitate such comparisons, which respondents find very important for their experience. With digital solutions, retailers can offer extra product information and help customers to find products. Respondents noted that personalizing offers and advertisements with digital technology is also a possibility.

5. Discussion and conclusion

5.1. Theoretical contributions

The study's objective was to characterize the omnichannel experience, to offer information about integrating online and offline channels to create satisfying brand

experiences, and to indicate how firms should use digital technologies to improve customer experiences in physical stores. This study provides several insights into the omnichannel management. According to Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson (2014), the importance of channel integration is growing. Customers are choosing channels depending on their current situations and are using mobile devices in-store to search for product information and compare products and prices. We proposed that online and offline store images should be integrated smoothly to provide positive experiences. As theory (Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014) suggests, customers expect online and offline channels to support each other. As Blom et al. (2017) proposed, omnichannel retailing can have positive effects on the customer experience.

We proposed that firms use digital technologies to improve customer experiences in offline stores. Our results support Verhoef et al.'s (2015) findings that digital technologies offered by a retailer facilitate shopping and improve customer experiences. For example, retailers can use digital technologies to offer information, facilitate product comparison, or help customers locate products. Our results underscore the fact that retailers can reduce the negative effects of crowd in physical stores with digital self-service technologies, as Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson (2014) noted. Customers are expecting service, but that is not always possible because of the crowd. With digital technologies, retailers can offer some of the same benefits that salespeople do. If customers are able to find information in another way, they will not have a critical need for service representatives. Lemon and Verhoef (2016) also stated that mobile channels are better for searching than for actually making purchases, and our results support their observations.

Our last proposition was that the good channel integration motivates consumers to use multiple channels. According to our results, the online channel is seen as an easy place to make purchases. Customers want to save time and effort. The study supports findings of Brynjofsson et al. (2013) that product comparison is easier and the assortment may be bigger online. With digital technologies, retailers may be able to offer some online benefits in physical stores as well. According to Verhoef et al. (2015), customers still want to see physical products, and this study strongly supports their findings.

5.2. Managerial contributions

The aim of this research is to create understanding of omnichannel experiences. According to the findings of this study, retailers can differentiate their brands from competitors by offering superior experiences. Positive customer experiences satisfy customers, which leads to loyalty. Thus, retailers should develop retail channels that improve customer experiences. Not only online and offline store images but also other channels, such as conversations on social media, newsletters, media, and product reviews, are important.

Customers are seeking seamless omnichannel experiences. They want to browse and compare products with their mobile devices while they are in physical stores. With digital technologies and mobile applications, retailers can facilitate the information search process, thereby improving customers' experiences.

According to this study, problems with customer service were the most important driver of negative customer experiences in physical retail stores. When the store is busy, it might be impossible to serve all customers. With digital solutions, retailers can offer some of the same benefits that service representatives provide. Customers are searching for support for their purchase decision from service representatives, and digital

technologies can help customers to find information and compare products. If customers are able to find same information in another way, they will not have a critical need for service representatives.

In terms of managerial implications, our results indicate that with seamless omnichannel experiences, a retailer can make customers loyal to its whole brand, not only to its online store. The main challenge is how to integrate all the channels. This study shows clearly that channels should interact with each other and should not contain contradictory information.

5.3. Limitations and future research

As with any study, the results must be evaluated in the light of certain limitations. It should be noted with regard to the validity of this study that the theoretical framework was tested with only 20 interviews. However, the interviews provided interesting insights about the study's themes. The interviewees were local citizens, and therefore it is not possible to confirm that the set of participants is a representative sample of all customers. Thus, future studies should collect more empirical data about the topic.

Because of the face-to-face connection during the interviews, the interviewees were not able to answer anonymously. This may have caused them not to be truthful and may lower the credibility of the study. In an interview study, researchers should avoid asking questions that are too leading, and the questions were designed to avoid being leading.

One possible limitation in this study is self-selection bias. According to Robinson (2014) it is not possible to avoid it in interview-based research. Because interviewees reported a self-selected experience, self-selection bias could have influence on results. Their general opinion towards retailing might be more positive because they were willing to participate in our interviews. In other words, our results might be biased towards people who are really shopping. We attempted to rule its effects out by evaluating its possible impact on results.

These limitations present opportunities for further research. The omnichannel perspective is quite a new topic in marketing research, so there is not much research about it. New technologies are developing all the time, and customer behavior changes with these new solutions. The omnichannel perspective should be further researched and the theory updated as technology develops. Conclusively, future research should further test the effects of store images on brand experience by using quantitative methods such as longitudinal surveys or experiments. New channels, such as mobile applications and social media have now their own influence to experience, and further research might quantitatively verify their relationship with online and offline store, and impact to brand experience.

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II

A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF MOBILE RETAILING ADOPTION

by

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A Systematic Literature Review and Analysis of Mobile Retailing Adoption

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive updated review and analysis of mobile retailing adoption. Although research on mobile channel utilization has increased significantly in recent years and many new studies on this topic have been published, research has not yet provided a clear structure regarding how consumers' expectations have advanced in relation to mobile retailing adoption. Thus, this study synthetizes the mobile retail adoption literature and develops a framework for it. Our systematic literature review analyzed 94 scientific articles that were published between 2010 and 2018 to determine customers' different expectations and demands during different mobile channel adoption stages. Our findings enhance the understanding of how retailers can serve customers in each stage. In addition, our framework provides opportunities and provokes questions for further research as well as shifts the focus from technology adoption-oriented topics toward customer journeys.

Keywords: mobile shopping, smartphones, retailing, review article

Highlights:

- Customers' previous mobile shopping experience, their stage of mobile channel use, and the retailing context determine which features are the most valuable.
- In the initial stages of use, when customers are unfamiliar with mobile technologies and thus lack experience on mobile channels, they prefer utilitarian benefits.
- In later stages, when customers are familiar with mobile channels, they value more hedonic aspects.
- A mobile channel is not seen as a purchasing channel but rather as a searching channel. If retailers succeed in turning a mobile channel into a purchasing channel, they can provide deeper and more satisfying customer experiences.

1. Introduction

In 2017 web traffic from mobile devices peaked above traffic from computers (Qubit 2018). Consequently, retailers must now react to this evolution and do business on the digital field. Today, customers' experiences depend on mobile channels as well as physical environments and web stores. Physical and virtual channels are interconnected, which makes serving consumers more complicated (Carvalho and Campomar, 2014). These channels should provide a seamless retail experience because both influence the retail customer experience, and each touchpoint influences both brand and retail performance (Verhoef et al., 2015). Thus, the in-store experience should be redefined as part of a larger and more connected customer experience (Blázquez, 2014).

Consumers are increasingly spending more time on smartphones relative to other devices (Sing and Swait, 2017). They are using retailers' online channels on their mobile devices via applications that provide integrated information for customers (Oh et al., 2012). By 2016, 81 of the 100 biggest retailers in the U.S. had their own mobile apps, which they can use to provide a better customer experience than mobile websites because functions and interfaces perform better in applications (Koo, 2016). While traditional retailing is based on a model in which consumers enter the retail environment, mobile channels are changing that by allowing retailers to enter a consumer's environment both anywhere and at any time, which eliminates dependency on a store's location (Shankar et al., 2010).

Mobile retail applications do not require large monetary investments (Pantano, 2014); rather, they are often developed as an add-on feature to already existing channels, which can limit a customer's shopping experience (Cook, 2014; Bang et al., 2013b). However, every channel should be similar in certain areas, such as price, product data, and promotions (Cook, 2014). In addition, perceived differences between mobile and online channel technologies and value can significantly affect a consumer's transfer between online and mobile channels. If a mobile channel has greater speed, consumers are more willing to choose it versus an online channel (Cao and Lu, 2015). Mobile applications also allow retailers to

utilize biometric technologies, such as fingerprint readers, to identify and profile potential customers through their mobile activities (Hino, 2015). Profiling allows retailers to personalize their marketing content, which strengthens customers' satisfaction (Trivedi and Trivedi, 2018).

The information searching process via mobile devices differs from computer searches because mobile screens are smaller, and consumers are reading content intermittently (Goh et al., 2015). Notably, smaller screen sizes may increase search costs (Chau et al. 2018). Consumers typically conduct searches on mobile devices, yet they tend to make purchases in physical stores (Sing and Swait, 2017). In addition, they often use their mobile devices in the store to compare prices online prior to making an in-store purchase (Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014). Wang et al. (2015) found that consumers tend to rely on previous choices when mobile shopping because screen size and functionality are limited. In addition, perceived quality of a retailer's e-service facilitates the belief that a mobile channel provides high-quality service (Lin, 2012).

Our research motivation derives from remarks that the mobile retailing field has developed rapidly since the conduction of previous literature reviews. Notably, there is no clear structure regarding how consumers' expectations have advanced in their journey toward mobile retailing adoption. Therefore, our research provides a deep analysis of past mobile retailing literature, with a specific focus on what have we learned from mobile retail adoption research.

In addition, no studies have presented a comprehensive review and analysis of mobile retailing adoption in recent years. Our article builds on and complements related research in important ways. Ström et al. (2014) noted a lack of studies about the value of mobile shopping for consumers. However, after 2014, several articles were published on that topic. The objective of this article is to synthetize the mobile retail adoption literature, develop a framework for it, and finally offer suggestions for future research opportunities.

The remainder of the article is organized as follows. We firstly present the utilized methodology of this systematic literature review and follow with the study's results. The main studies from both

hedonic and utilitarian views are presented in Tables 4 and 5. We conclude with theoretical contributions, managerial implications, and suggestions for future research directions.

2. Method

This study followed the systematic literature review model of Palmatier et al. (2017). During the topic formulation step, objectives and research questions for the review were set. Next, procedures and methods for evaluation of published works were developed. The main studies on the topic were analyzed, and relevant keywords for constructing search strings were identified. The objective was to define explicit criteria that could be used in the review. The search strings are presented in Table 1, and the inclusion/exclusion criteria are presented in Table 2.

Table 1 Search strings

Theme	Search String
Retailing	retail* OR shopping
Mobile	mobile OR smartphone
Adoption aspects	hedonic OR utilitarian

2.1 Searching and screening

The main objective of this review was to identify articles that had addressed mobile retailing adoption, including recent reviews of the mobile commerce (m-commerce) literature (Groß, 2015b; Ström et al., 2014; Thus et al., 2007). The reviewed articles were extracted from many different scientific peer-reviewed journals (Table 3). The aim of this step was to locate all relevant studies for this research (Palmatier et al., 2017). The examination began with a detailed search of previous reviews. Three electronic databases—Elsevier, Taylor and Francis, and Emerald Insight—were searched for articles whose titles, keywords, or abstracts contained at least one of the search terms from the retailing and mobile themes. In addition, full texts were searched for the adoption aspect theme. This search returned 212 articles.

The next task was determining which studies met the eligibility requirements (Palmatier et al., 2017). A preliminary screening of article titles and abstracts led to the retention of 61 articles that were

relevant to the topic. In addition, 20 articles from ResearchGate, 14 other articles, and 2 conference papers, which might not have been accessible in the online databases, were added from the authors' prior reading and the snowballing of database-sourced articles. These 97 articles were scored per the quality assessment criteria (which are presented in the appendix) of Pittaway et al. (2004). The 94 articles that scored 8 (of a possible 15) or more were selected for the final sample.

Table 2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Study type	Peer-reviewed empirical and theoretical studies	All others
Language	English	Other languages
Source	Articles from scholarly journals	Other sources
Date	2010–2018	<2010
Relevance	Mobile retailing	-Not relevant to the research question -Poor level of analysis

2.2 Extraction and synthesis

Per Palmatier et al. (2017), descriptive analysis is useful as a starting point of review due to varying data. Therefore, key findings, methodological decisions, and implications were summarized on an Excel spreadsheet. The dataset contained quantitative, qualitative, and review articles. Because of the varied data, the cross-case analysis method was used to synthesize each article (Mays et al., 2005). The analysis process, wherein articles were analyzed one by one, formulated constructs around the mobile retailing topic. The literature was scoped to confirm existing terms and theories as well as define new ones (Gioia et al., 2012).

3. Results

Table 3 Journals with two or more articles in the review

Journal title	**Number of articles**
Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	11
Journal of Retailing	7
Journal of Interactive Marketing	6
International Journal of Electronic Commerce	5
Computers in Human Behavior	4
Journal of Internet Commerce	4
International Journal of Mobile Communications	3
The Journal of Computer information Systems	3

Telematics and Informatics	3
Advances in Consumer Research	2
European Journal of Marketing	2
Information & Management	2
Journal of Business Research	2
Journal of Marketing	2
Psychology & Marketing	2
The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research	2
Other journals (have published only one article)	34
Total	94

3.1 A mobile channel's value for the customer

The goal of increasing the motivation of customers who are using digital technologies and mobile phones is to improve their shopping experiences (Rosenblum and Rowen, 2012). Customers' interactions with available technologies and salespersons together influence overall service quality perception (Pantano and Viassone, 2015). Technologies, such as mobile applications, in-store technologies, social media and Web sites, have enabled omnichannel retailing dynamics that influence both the consumer and the business (Lazaris and Vrechopoulos, 2014). With mobile technologies, retailers can increase perceived value, which increases both loyalty and sales results (Ström et al., 2014). In addition, mobile shopping has strong emotional significance to customers because mobile shopping sites are a source of entertainment (Thakur, 2016). Dennis et al. (2016) noted that shopping positively influences happiness and well-being, and cellphone shopping in particular provides the opportunity to escape reality. Online shopping with computers has a similar effect. In addition, Brasel and Gips (2014) found that touchscreen purchasing generates higher levels of endorsement when compared to laptop touchpads because there is a relationship between the touchscreen and perceived psychological ownership.

Mobile phones increase customers' feelings of control. If consumers search more with their mobile devices, their perceived control over the situation increases, which influences their purchase intentions. Retailers should provide consumers with Wi-Fi in stores to facilitate mobile shopping (Rippé et al., 2017).

Mobile platforms are often developed as an add-on to already existing channels, which limits product range. However, the product range in every channel should be the same regarding prices, product

data, and promotions (Cook, 2014). In-store marketing stimuli has less of an influence on shoppers using mobile devices in stores because they often pay less attention to it, which causes them to make fewer unplanned purchases. In-store mobile users even forget to purchase some products that they had planned to buy (Bellini and Aiolfi, 2017). Behaviors unrelated to shopping, such as texting, talking, or surfing on the web, can have negative outcomes regarding customers purchasing unplanned products, and those factors might result in a failure to purchase planned items. Related behaviors result in better purchasing decisions and staying on track during shopping (Sciandra and Inman, 2015).

Various authors have concentrated on explaining a customer's motivation to adopt a mobile channel. The literature emphasizes two determinants for mobile channel adoption: hedonic and utilitarian aspects (Iyer et al., 2018; San-Martin et al., 2013; Spaid and Flint, 2014; Yang, 2010). Both hedonic and utilitarian values positively influence the intention of using mobile services (Ltifi, 2018). Previous studies have highlighted that customers' expectations and demands for mobile channels vary per their stage of adoption and the type of products purchased (Yang, 2010, 2012). Different customers have different channel preferences in different shopping, service, and purchase contexts. For example, consumers differ in how they search for, purchase, and use interactive retail services (Berry et al., 2010). Customers' opinions toward mobile retailing vary, and they have different preferences in the types of products purchased (Chou et al., 2016). When they first utilize mobile shopping, usefulness of functions and features is more important; however, in later stages, customers regard enjoyment as more important (Yang, 2010). San-Martin et al. (2013) divided mobile shoppers into three groups: Utilitarian group respects advantages, such as utility; hedonic group prefers more hedonic aspects, and it is important that they are satisfied with their experience; group three sees no advantages in mobile shopping compared to other forms of shopping.

The stage of adoption can influence a customer's behavior. Early adopters can spread their opinions to non-users, and the role of early adopters has been shown to significantly influence mobile shopping adoption among others (Natarajan et al. 2017). Becoming confident in mobile shopping allows customers to explore more functions and features, which enriches their mobile shopping experience

(Yang, 2012). Ono et al. (2012) divided customers' motivation to browse stores into two categories: utilitarian motivation to follow information about prices, trends, and fashion and hedonic adventure motivation, such as motivation to follow exciting and stimulating content in mobile stores. Lai et al. (2012) presented a different viewpoint for consumer preferences when they stated that hedonic consumers are heavy shoppers, and utilitarian consumers are light users. They stated that, instead of targeting marketing communications based on the stage of mobile channel adoption or product categories, retailers should target communications based on types of consumers.

3.2 Utilitarian aspects of mobile shopping adoption

Mobile devices are changing the shopping journey from one in which consumers enter retail stores to one in which retailers enter the consumer's environment anytime and anywhere. Mobile consumer activities that satisfy customer needs include mobile websites, mobile emailing and messaging, mobile advertising and couponing, mobile customer service, and mobile social network management. Per the technology acceptance model (TAM), perceived usefulness and ease of use are key factors in determining the adoption of mobile technology (Shankar et al., 2010). Hung et al. (2012) perceived usefulness as an insignificant variable of mobile shopping continuance. However, it is significant to consumers' intention to adopt mobile shopping. Retailers should provide additional advantages compared to traditional offline stores to create the impression of usefulness. "Always available" and "portable" are features of mobile shopping that retailers should promote to increase the impression of usefulness. Perceived ease of use is a significant variable in the prediction of consumers' intention to adopt mobile shopping. Screen size, visual displays, and keyboard interfaces help create a favorable shopping environment.

3.2.1 Information sharing

Previous mobile retailing research has shown that information sharing is an essential feature of mobile channels. Retailers can facilitate a customer's purchase process with these informative technology solutions (Fuentes and Svingsted, 2017; Kowatsch et al., 2011; Kowatsch and Maas, 2010; Pousttchi and Hufenbach, 2014; Varadarajan et al., 2010; Zhang et al., 2013). Retailers can offer plentiful information

via a mobile service because product information systems can be combined with advertising (Pousttchi and Hufenbach, 2014), and interactive product information is seen as useful for in-store purchase decisions (Kowatch et al., 2011). Having mobile recommendation agents available for product information regarding in-store purchases increases sales volume through an increase in purchase frequency (Kowatsch and Maas, 2010). In addition, third-party technologies and applications are facilitating product comparison and research with mobile devices. This is both a threat and an opportunity because technology diminishes information asymmetry between the retailer and the customer. If a customer is not satisfied after comparing prices on a mobile device, he/she may walk away from the retail store. However, retailers are now able to compete more effectively with interactive technologies (Varadarajan et al., 2010). Notably, the findings of Fuentes and Svingsted (2017) support these results. They found that mobile customers are better informed about prices, technical properties, product availability, and environmental consequences, which has created a challenge for servicepersons. Retailers are trying to serve customers for example with Quick Response Codes (QR codes) and web links in stores.

Smartphones reveal a significant amount of personal information about customers, such as their location, device serial numbers, internal mobile equipment identity, Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) card identifiers, social relationships, lifestyle, preferences, and behavior patterns. Thus, customers are afraid of exposing their personal information (Zhang et al., 2013).

3.2.2 Marketing communication personalization

Previous studies have revealed that mobile technologies allow retailers to personalize their marketing activities and services (Morosan and Agnes, 2016) by sending targeted promotional offers and coupons based on a customer's location (Cao, 2014; Grewal et al., 2011; Hui et al., 2013; Izquierdo-Yusta et al., 2015; Khajehzadeh, 2015; Rigby, 2011; Taylor and Levin, 2014; Zubcsek et al., 2015). However, mobile advertising on a large scale and without any segmentation can cause consumers to not open messages (Izquierdo-Yusta et al., 2015). Zubcsek, Katona, and Sarvary (2015) stated that location history reveals

consumer preferences effectively. In addition, location data allows retailers to send offers when a customer enters their physical store (Rigby, 2011). Kim and Han (2014) noted that demographic-based data helps retailers personalize mobile advertisements, which helps them avoid presenting unwanted marketing communication. Per Bart et al. (2014), mobile display advertising could be effective for certain products (high involvement and utilitarian products). Hedonic and lower involvement products could be positioned as utilitarian and higher involvement products in mobile channel advertising.

Smartphone-generated content helps retailers measure consumers' opinions, which facilitates marketing personalization (Melumad et al., 2015). Mobile promotions that are targeted at increasing travel distance increase unplanned spending. Therefore, shopping basket data should be analyzed to identify product combinations that are not normally purchased together. With this data, these products can be offered at the locations of both products (Hui et al., 2013). Subjective norm, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use support customers' mobile coupon usage intentions; therefore, retailers need to promote both usefulness and ease of use to encourage customers to use mobile coupons (Im and Ha, 2013).

Morosan and Agnes (2016) stated that mobile service personalization results in higher satisfaction, reduced costs, and direct distribution. Per Andrews et al. (2012), while customers do perceive value when they receive personalized mobile marketing communications, more research should be done to identify the sources, elements, and degrees of this value because different consumers find different kinds of value through different avenues. Some are expecting functional value, and they want to have control over this activity, while others are expecting conditional value, such as how much and what kind of marketing they receive.

Importantly, mobile adoption may rise in the future because opportunities to receive coupons and promotions, search for prices and reviews, and compare products play significant roles in retail commerce (Einav et al., 2014). More than 50% of cell phone owners had smartphones in 2015, and over 70% of those smartphone owners used their mobile devices for shopping (Brynjolfsson et al., 2015); therefore, it is obvious that mobile usage will continue grow in the future.

3.2.3 Ease of use

One feature of mobile channels that has great potential compared to other retailing channels is ease of use. From this utilitarian perspective, consumers will adopt mobile shopping if they believe that it will increase their shopping performance (Yang, 2010). Consumers are able to shop anytime and anywhere with mobile devices (Bang et al., 2013a; Blázquez, 2014; Huang, 2016; Shankar et al., 2010), and the ability to save time and money are core benefits of mobile channel use (Dmour et al., 2014; Groß, 2015a; Pantano and Priporas, 2016; Yang, 2010). Motivations for mobile shopping include savings of time and money and customized services (Dmour et al., 2014; Pantano and Priporas, 2016). Customers' habits and cost-benefit calculations can influence m-commerce adoption. The benefit is ease of use, while the costs are the limited user interface of mobile devices (Bang et al., 2013a). In addition, search cost is a significant determinant for m-commerce adoption (Bang et al., 2013b). When customers believe that mobile shopping will help them save time, obtain promotion information, and/or receive customized product information, it helps them adopt the technology (Yang 2010). Consumers are willing to adopt mobile shopping to avoid queues in offline stores (Pantano and Priporas, 2016). Groß (2015a) highlighted the importance of ease of use in mobile shopping services as it relates to an enjoyable mobile shopping experience. Per his results, utilitarian aspects are more important than hedonic aspects in the creation of positive attitudes toward mobile shopping, with the main aspect being the ability to save time and money. However, other existing studies have shown different results. For example, Yang (2012) showed that, in the beginning of mobile channel adoption, customers prefer utilitarian benefits, but when they become familiar with mobile shopping, they take on a more hedonistic perspective.

Table 4 The main studies related to the utilitarian aspects of mobile shopping adoption

Study and context	Method	Key takeaways
Andrews et al., 2012	15 qualitative customer interviews	Customers perceive value when they are receiving mobile marketing communications. Different consumers find value in different ways; some expect functional value, and they want to have control over this activity, while others expect conditional value, such as how much and what kind of marketing they receive.
Bang et al., 2013b	1,454,803 transactions of 30,000 users	Customers' habits and cost-benefit calculation influence m-commerce adoption. A benefit is the ability to use mobile technologies anywhere and at any time, while the costs include the limited user interfaces of mobile devices. In addition, search cost is a significant determinant for m-commerce adoption.
Bart et al., 2014	39946 participants in field tests	Mobile display advertising could be effective for high involvement and utilitarian products. Hedonic and lower involvement products could be positioned as utilitarian and higher involvement products in mobile channel advertising.
Blázquez, 2014	14 interviews with managers of a case company	Customers value the ability to shop anywhere and at any time with mobile devices.
Brynjolfson et al., 2015	Customer data of a medium-sized retail company	More than 50% of cell phone owners in the U.S. have smartphones, and over 70% of those users have used their mobile devices for making comparisons in shopping.
Cao, 2014	14 interviews with managers of the case company	Retailers can provide a more customized offering and greater convenience for customers with mobile applications.
Dmour et al., 2014	250 responses to a survey	Users' perceived mobile application quality has a significant effect on mobile shopping continuance. The benefits of mobile shopping include savings of time and money and easy facilitation of the purchasing process.
Einay et al., 2014	Random 1% sample of eBay users	Mobile adoption may rise in the future due to e-commerce. Opportunities to receive coupons and promotions, search for prices and reviews, and compare products play significant roles in retail commerce.
Fuentes and Svigsted, 2017	51 interviews with customers	Mobile customers are better informed about prices, technical properties, product availability, and environmental consequences.
Grewal et al., 2011	Literature review	Mobile applications offer opportunities for location-based price promotions, such as coupons and direct messages to customers' mobile devices when they are near a store.
Groß, 2015a	128 smartphone users with previous experience in m-purchasing	Groß highlighted the importance of ease of use regarding mobile shopping services and enjoyment. Utilitarian aspects are more important than hedonic aspects in the creation of positive attitudes toward mobile shopping due to savings in both time and money.

Hui et al., 2013	An initial survey with 275 consumers, and a second with 81	Mobile promotions that are targeted at increasing travel distance increase unplanned spending.
Im and Ha, 2013	611 responses to a survey	Subjective norm, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use are behind customers' mobile coupon usage intentions. For the first time, mobile coupon users' perceived risk is related to intention to disclose personal information.
Izquierdo-Yusta et al., 2015	612 responses to a survey	Mobile advertising on a large scale without segmentation leads consumers to decline to open messages.
Khajehzadeh et al., 2015	288 responses to a survey	Location-based technologies, such as mobile devices, facilitate the targeting of offers to the right customers. Personalization is important for utilitarian consumers, but it is less effective for hedonic consumers.
Kim et al., 2015	403 responses to a survey	Personalization, simplicity (access to shops anywhere and anytime), and connectivity significantly affect the utilitarian value of mobile shopping.
Kim and Han, 2014	256 responses to a survey	Mobile advertisement should be pleasant, credible, and informative to attract customers. With demographic-based data, retailers are able to personalize mobile advertisements, which helps them avoid sending unwanted messages.
Kowatsch and Maas, 2010	47 students in a lab experiment	Having mobile recommendation agents available to offer product information for in-store purchase situations increases sales volume through an increase in consumer frequency.
Kowatsch et al., 2011	116 subjects in an experiment	Interactive product information on mobile devices is perceived as more useful for in-store purchase decisions than static information.
Lemon and Verhoef, 2016	Literature review	Mobile channels are better for searching than for making purchases.
Melumad, Inman, and Pham, 2015	367 participants writing a restaurant review	Smartphone-generated content helps retailers measure consumers' opinions. It is more emotional and appealing for consumers and received more votes than PC-generated posts.
Morosan and Agnes, 2016	421 responses to a survey	Mobile apps allow service personalization, which results in higher satisfaction, reduced costs, and direct distribution in the hotel context.
Pantano and Priporas, 2016	29 consumer interviews	Consumers are willing to adopt mobile shopping to avoid queues at offline stores.
Pousttchi and Hufenbach, 2014	Interviews with four m-commerce and retail experts (two from	Retailers can offer information via a mobile service. Product information systems can be combined with advertising.

	academia and two from industry)	
Rigby, 2011		Marketers are able to send offers to customer's mobile devices with location-based platforms when customers check in at stores.
Shankar et al., 2010	Literature review	Traditional retailing is based on consumers entering the retail environment, but mobile devices are changing this situation to one in which retailers are entering the consumer's environment anytime and anywhere. Per the TAM, perceived usefulness and ease of use are the key factors in determining the adoption of mobile technology.
Tarute et al., 2017	246 responses to a survey	Mobile application usability and visuals influence emotional consumer engagement.
Taylor and Levin, 2014	345 responses to a survey	Customers' interest in a retailer's mobile app correlates with the intention to engage in purchasing and information-sharing activities. Customers are seeking mobile apps that help them complete a transaction.
Varadarajan et al., 2010	Literature review	Third-party technologies and applications facilitate product comparison and research with mobile devices. This is both a threat and an opportunity because technology diminishes information asymmetry between the retailer and the customer. If the customer is not satisfied with the price after checking it via the mobile app, he/she may walk away from the retail store.
Verkijika, 2018	372 responses to a survey	Perceived risk and perceived trust significantly affect behavioral intention toward mobile shopping adoption.
Wong et al., 2014	190 responses to a survey	Perceived usefulness significantly affects consumers' intention to adopt mobile shopping. Perceived ease of use is a significant variable for predicting consumers' intention to adopt mobile shopping. Conversely, perceived risk is insignificant regarding consumers' intentions to adopt mobile shopping.
Yang, 2010	400 mobile service users' responses to an online survey	A customer's belief that mobile shopping will help save them time, obtain promotion information, and/or receive customized product information increases his/her adoption of mobile shopping.
Zhang et al., 2013	278 responses to a survey	Smartphones reveal personal information about customers, such as their location, device serial numbers, internal mobile equipment identity, SIM card ID, social relationships, lifestyle, preferences, and behavior patterns. This aspect provides opportunities as well as challenges for retailers because customers fear exposing their personal information.
Zubcsek et al., 2015	217 participants using location apps during the research	Consumers' location history reveals consumer preferences effectively. Personal advertising can be done based on location history.
Yang and Kim, 2012	400 mobile service users' responses to an online survey	Mobile shopping saves search time by providing quick access to store locations and the ability to browse products at many retailers. For example, GPS on mobile phones helps customers locate the nearest stores, and mobile coupons help save money and make price comparisons both faster and easier.

3.3 Hedonic aspects of mobile shopping adoption

The emotional aspect plays a significant role in mobile channel adoption because mobile shopping is a source of entertainment for customers (Thakur, 2016). Entertainment is the most important determinant of adoption, per Yang (2010), and mobile channels have created a new way to explore products (Yang and Kim, 2012).

The findings of Kang et al. (2015) revealed that the intention to download and use mobile retailing apps is a result of the hedonic motives and positive feelings being evoked by mobile retail apps. In addition, Lee (2017) noted that hedonic motives guide consumers toward mobile channels and lead to the continuance of mobile shopping (Lee and Kim, 2018; Shang and Wu, 2017). When consumers are familiar with mobile shopping, they prefer values like fun (Spaid and Flint, 2014). Agrebi and Jallais (2015) noted that perceived enjoyment in mobile shopping leads to intention to use it. Therefore, from a hedonic perspective, it is important to develop enjoyable habituation to mobile shopping (Hubert, 2017).

Mobile website interactivity is a predictor of enjoyment of the site (Kang, 2015). Usability and visuals of mobile applications influence emotional customer engagement (Tarute et al., 2017), and customer's feeling of control of mobile marketing results in deepening their involvement (Persaud and Azhar, 2012). Yang (2010) stated that entertainment aspects are the most salient determinants of mobile shopping adoption. These hedonic aspects increase a customer's interaction with other customers. In addition, Yang and Forney (2013) found that hedonic performance expectancy was the most important predictor of intention to adopt mobile shopping.

Mobile shopping has been found to improve customers' quality of life; it is a great source of happiness and well-being, and it even provides the opportunity to escape reality (Dennis et al., 2016). Touchscreen purchasing generates higher levels of endorsement than purchases with laptop touchpads, which influence perceived psychological ownership (Brasel and Gips, 2014). Voropanova (2015) stated that retailers can improve consumer productivity by increasing shopping's emotional benefits. Per Blázquez (2014), the entire store experience should be redefined because, thanks to mobile technologies,

it is becoming part of a larger and more connected experience. In the future, mobile experiences will become more entertaining and satisfying because of the new developing functions of mobile applications - better usage of mobile apps results in higher satisfaction (Pantano and Priporas, 2016).

3.3.1 Trust

Trust is also an important factor in mobile shopping adoption (Blaise et al., 2018; Chong, 2013; Hung et al., 2012; Suki, 2011; Verkijika, 2018; Yang et al., 2015). It directly influences behavior toward mobile shopping extension and indirectly influences it via perceived benefits and risks. Thus, enhancing trust reduces perceived risk toward mobile shopping services (Blaise et al., 2018; Yang et al., 2015).

Chong (2013) stated that, for retailers, it is critical to ensure that consumers are satisfied with and have had their expectations for m-commerce met. Chong also noted that customer satisfaction leads to trust in the mobile retailing context, which motivates customers to continue their m-commerce usage. Retailers can make customers aware of security precautions to reduce perceived security risks. Hung et al. (2012) also noted that trust and satisfaction are the most important factors of mobile shopping continuance, and trust is a result of satisfaction. In addition, the results of Suki (2011) support the strong relationship between satisfaction and trust.

Perceived integration between channels has a strong positive effect on trust in mobile retailing (Yang et al., 2015). Customers choose channels depending on their current situation, making easy movement between channels critical (Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014). Channel integration increases perceived service quality, which increases overall outcomes (Herhausen et al., 2015). It has a positive influence on retailers' performance and competencies (Oh et al., 2012).

Table 5 The main studies related to the hedonic aspects of mobile shopping adoption

Study and context	Method	Key takeaways
Agrebi and Jallais, 2015	Survey of 400 French purchasers and non-purchasers	Perceived enjoyment positively influences the intention of purchasers to use mobile channels only. Non-purchasers' actions are based on utilitarian factors because they are more task-oriented.
Blaise et al., 2018	Survey of 165 North American adults	Trust reduces perceived risk, and thus facilitates mobile shopping adoption.
Blázquez, 2014	14 interviews with managers of a case company	Consumers can shop anytime and anywhere with mobile devices. Thus, the store experience should be redefined; it is becoming part of a larger and more connected customer experience.
Brasel and Gips, 2013	175 Amazon MTurk users	Touchscreen purchasing generates higher levels of endorsement when compared to laptop touchpads. There is a relationship between a touchpad and perceived psychological ownership.
Chong, 2013	Survey of 410 respondents	Trust is one of the most important factors in m-commerce usage; retailers can make customers aware of security issues to reduce perceived security risks.
Dennis et al., 2016	Survey with 1,386 respondents	Shopping has a positive influence on happiness and well-being. Cellphone shopping in particular provides an opportunity to escape reality. Online shopping on a computer produces a similar effect.
Hubert et al., 2017	410 responses to a survey	From a hedonic perspective, enjoyment of mobile shopping is less important than developing habituation. With temporary discounts, retailers are able to ensure customers' repeated purchases.
Hung et al., 2012	244 responses to a survey	Perceived usefulness is not a significant variable of mobile shopping continuance, but trust and satisfaction are the most important factors.
Kang, 2015	Survey of 853 women using mobile internet in the U.S.	The intention to download and use mobile retailing apps is a result of consumers' hedonic motives and the positive feelings that are evoked by mobile retail apps. Mobile website interactivity is a predictor of enjoyment of a mobile website.
Lee and Kim, 2018	216 responses to a survey	Hedonic shopping orientation correlates with the need for mobile app atmospherics, which are important to the reuse of applications.
Lee, 2017	635 consumers' with online or mobile shopping experience	Hedonic motives guide customers toward mobile channel use, whereas utilitarian motives lead to the use of online channels.

	responses to a survey	
McLean et al., 2018	1024 responses to a survey	Utilitarian factors, such as ease of use, convenience and customization, are behind hedonic experience. These are driving a customer's level of enjoyment during mobile app usage.
Pantano and Priporas, 2016	29 consumer interviews	In the future, mobile experiences will become more entertaining and satisfying because functions of mobile applications are developing and satisfying more customer's needs.
Persaud and Azhar, 2012	Survey of 350 young educated Canadians	When consumers have more control over mobile shopping, they are more willing to deepen their involvement. Engagement is important in this kind of customer relationship.
Shang and Wu, 2017	203 responses to a survey	Enjoyment of shopping increases customers' intentions to continue the use of mobile shopping
Spaid and Flint, 2014	32 customer interviews	Customers use mobile internet devices for different reasons: hedonic and utilitarian. Mobile internet devices create both challenges and new tools. When customers are familiar with technologies, they prefer values such as "fun."
Suki, 2011	200 responses to a survey	Trust, responsiveness, and brand image influence customer relationships in m-commerce.
Thakur, 2016	Three studies: 10 customer interviews, a survey of 304 respondents, and a survey of 433 respondents	Mobile shopping has a strong emotional significance for customers because mobile sites are a source of entertainment.
Voropanova, 2015	Literature review	Retailers can improve consumer productivity by increasing shopping's emotional benefits.
Yang and Forney, 2013	400 responses to a survey	Hedonic performance expectancy is the most important predictor of the intention to adopt mobile shopping.
Yang and Kim, 2012	400 mobile service users' responses to a survey	Adventure shopping via mobile sites entertains customers because they are able to explore stores and product reviews in a new way.
Yang et al., 2015	309 responses to a survey	Trust indirectly influences behaviors toward mobile shopping extension. Enhancing trust reduces perceived risk toward mobile shopping services. In addition, the relationship between mobile and web shopping platforms is important because perceived integration indirectly affects behaviors toward mobile channels.

4. Discussion

4.1 Theoretical contributions

This study contributes to an understanding of the mobile channel adoption. The recent literature on mobile retailing underlines the role of both the utilitarian and the hedonic value of mobile channels for customers. A customer's previous experience, stage of channel use, and the retailing context determine which features are the most valuable for mobile channel adoption in different stages (Figure 1).

In the initial stages, when customers are not familiar with mobile technologies and/or they lack experience in using them, they prefer utilitarian benefits (Yang, 2012), such as savings of time (Dmour et al., 2014; Pantano and Priporas, 2016) and personalized offerings (Melumad et al., 2015; Morosan and Agnes, 2016). In these stages, consumers perceive security risks (Chong 2013); however, trust reduces perceived risk toward mobile shopping services (Yang et al., 2015).

At the adoption stage, customers are comparing the costs of mobile channel use, such as limited user interfaces (Bang et al., 2013b), as well as benefits, such as easy shopping anytime and anywhere (Blázquez, 2014; Shankar et al., 2010; Bang et al., 2013b; Huang, 2016). Customers expect highly personalized mobile marketing communications (Andrews et al., 2012), but they are afraid of losing their personal information. Retailers can use customers' location data to personalize offers (Cao, 2014; Grewal et al., 2011; Hui et al., 2013; Khajehzadeh, 2015; Rigby, 2011; Taylor and Levin, 2014; Zubcsek, Katona, and Sarvary, 2015).

Our analysis also provides several insights into the later stages of adoption, when customers are accustomed to the technology. In these stages, customers start to value more hedonic aspects (Yang, 2012), such as enjoyment (Yang, 2010). This study shows that the purchase itself is commonly linked with hedonic value. The literature also shows that touchscreen purchasing generates higher levels of endorsement compared to laptops (Brasel and Gips, 2014), and mobile shopping continuance and hedonic benefits have a strong relationship (Lee and Kim, 2018; Shang and Wu, 2017).

Nevertheless, it was found that mobile shopping is used more for searching than actual purchases (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). From a hedonic perspective, mobile shopping is seen as an adventure—a possibility to escape the real world (Dennis et al., 2016). Mobile shopping engrosses customers and deepens their involvement because they feel that they have more control over their shopping (Persaud and Azhar, 2012).

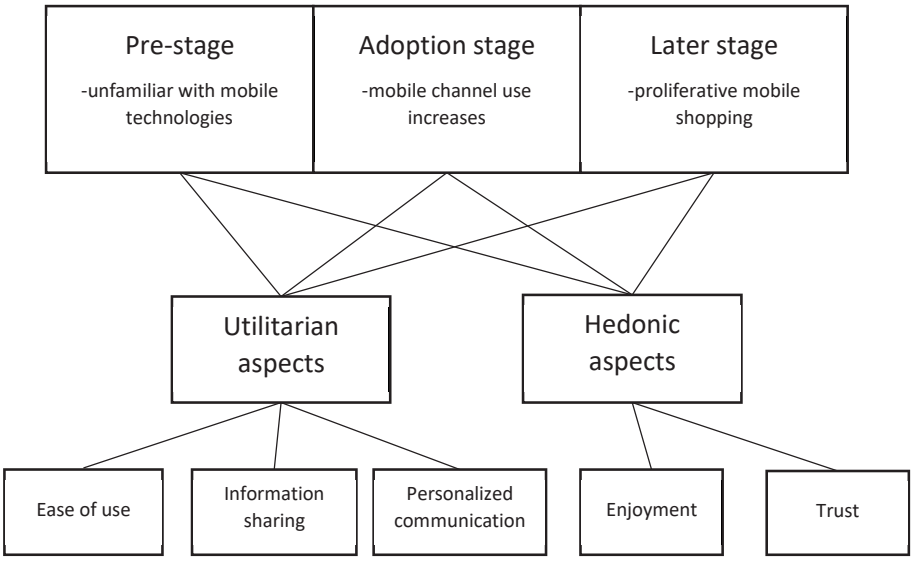

Figure 1. Mobile shopping adoption aspects per adoption stage

4.2 Managerial implications

Because customers have different preferences in different stages of mobile channel adoption, retailers should personalize marketing communications based on a customer's current stage. As Kim et al. (2017) suggested, instead of a single-app strategy, retailers are launching a collection of both shopping and non-shopping apps, which enable them to collect significant amounts of data about digital experiences and browsing behavior. The key factor in mobile success was found to be well-timed utilization of this data. Bilgicer et al. (2015) noted that retailers can influence channel adoption with marketing activities.

A mobile channel is not seen as a purchasing channel but rather as a searching channel. Because mobile purchasing generates high levels of endorsement, opportunities abound for retailers. If they can successfully utilize it in their business, they can provide deeper and more satisfying customer experiences.

Because of the growing popularity of mobile shopping, in-store experiences are also in transition. The ability to reach a mobile channel anywhere and anytime leads to an increase in in-store mobile use, which creates a demand for new mobile solutions that facilitate searching, locating, comparing, and purchasing products in stores.

4.3 Limitations of the study and future research directions

The taken review approach resulted in certain limitations. The number of articles published and searched were limited. The data were collected from articles published between the years 2010 and 2018. Because of the exponential growth of mobile shopping, the context changed significantly between those years. Consequently, newer publications should be given more importance. In addition, the chosen classification framework for articles can be criticized because the scoring was also guided by the authors' own subjective process.

We hope that this research has provided convincing answers to questions about the significance of the mobile adoption stage regarding customers' preferences. Future research can provide interesting insights with both new research methods and research topics. One interesting viewpoint would be a longitudinal study. Because the previous literature and our framework for mobile channel adoption aspects (Figure 1) clearly show that customers in different stages of mobile channel adoption have different preferences in terms of value, it would be beneficial to examine how their behavior and preferences change during their customer journey.

One future research topic would be the examination of the influence of mobile word-of-mouth (WOM). Bilgicer et al. (2015) showed that neighboring and peer customers accelerate the diffusion of the new retail channel. In addition, Riquelme et al. (2015) examined the effects of satisfaction and their

influence on WOM in the online context. Therefore, future research might shed more light on how satisfaction toward mobile channels has a similar positive influence on mobile WOM.

Per Lemon and Verhoef (2016), mobile channels are used more for searching than for making purchases. From a retailer's perspective, it would be beneficial to have the ability to remove all barriers to mobile purchases.

Our model investigated customer behavior in which only one retailer was considered. However, that is not the circumstance in retail markets. Melis et al. (2015) noted that, when customers had more experience with online shopping, they made comparisons within the online channel across different retail chains. It would be interesting to determine whether the situation is the same in mobile channels.

Finally, future research could consider the relationship between online and mobile channels. Do mobile channels cannibalize the web channel? Although some evidence exists on that topic (Huang et al., 2016), more research is required. Pauwels and Neslin (2015) showed that online and offline stores are complements instead of substitutes. Because all omnichannel literature highlights the positive effect of channel integration, how this should be seen via Huang's (2016) results, that mobile channel cannibalizes online channel, should be explored.

4.4 Conclusion

Mobile retailing adoption has been relatively actively discussed during the last decade. The purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive updated review and analysis of mobile retailing adoption. Although research on mobile channel utilization has increased significantly in recent years and many new studies on this topic have been published, research has not yet provided a clear structure regarding how consumers' expectations have advanced in relation to mobile retailing adoption. Thus, this study synthetizes the mobile retail adoption literature and develops a framework for it. This study provides a systematic review of literature on mobile retailing adoption published from January 2010 to December 2018. The analyzed 94 relevant studies present wide view of existing mobile retailing adoption literature. The analysis of the literature highlights hedonic and utilitarian viewpoints behind mobile retailing

adoption. Our study develops a theoretical framework (Figure 1) of the adoption that highlights how hedonic and utilitarian aspects are related in different stages of mobile retailing adoption. Our findings enhance the understanding of how retailers can serve customers in each stage. In addition, our framework provides opportunities and provokes questions for further research as well as shifts the focus from technology adoption-oriented topics toward customer journeys.

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Appendix: Quality Assessment Criteria for Review Articles, Pittaway et al. (2004)

		Level				
Element		0 Absence	1 Low	2 Medium	3 High	Not applicable
1.	Theory robustness	The article does not provide enough information to assess this criterion	Poor awareness of existing literature and debates. Under- or overreferenced. Low validity of theory	Basic understanding of the issues around the topic being discussed. The theory is weakly related to data	Deep and broad knowledge of relevant literature and theory relevant for addressing the research. Good relations theory-data	This element is not applicable to the document or study
2.	Methodology, data and supporting arguments	As above	Data inaccuracy and not related to theory. Flawed research design	Data are related to arguments, though there are some gaps. Research design may be improved	Data strongly supports arguments. Besides, the research design is robust: sampling, data gathering, data analysis is rigorous	As above
3.	Implication for practice	As above	Very difficult to implement the concepts and ideas presented. Not relevant for practitioners or professionals	There is potential for implementing the proposed ideas, with minor revisions or adjustments	Significant benefit may be obtained if the ideas being discussed are put into practice	As above
4.	Generalizability	As above	Only to the population studied	Generalizable to organizations of similar characteristics	High level of generalizability	As above
5.	Contribution	As above	Does not make an important contribution. It is not clear the advances it makes	Although using others' ideas, builds upon the existing theory	Further develops existing knowledge, expanding the way the issue was explained so far	As above

III

PERSONALIZATION AND HEDONIC MOTIVATION IN CREATING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES AND LOYALTY IN OMNICHANNEL RETAIL

by

Olli Tyrväinen & Heikki Karjaluoto & Hannu Saarijärvi 2020

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Personalization and hedonic motivation in creating customer experiences and loyalty in omnichannel retail

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effects of personalization and hedonic motivation on customer experience and its loyalty outcomes in omnichannel retail context. The study develops eight hypotheses which are tested using two survey samples (Finland (n = 2084) and Sweden (n = 2334). In addition, empirical analysis includes 20 semi-structured interviews. The findings support all the hypotheses confirming the positive relationships personalization and hedonic motivation have on cognitive and emotional customer experience components. Further, the positive effects of customer experience on loyalty are confirmed. The results provide both theoretical and managerial insights for improved CX and customer loyalty.

1. Introduction

Digitalization is reconfiguring retailing. This retail transformation is not only changing the channel of transaction but is redefining the nature and types of exchanges, actors, offerings, and retail settings (Hagberg et al., 2016). The integration of digital technologies into the consumer shopping experience (see Reynolds and Sundström, 2014) is enabling new means of value creation (e.g., Pantano and Viassone, 2015; Saarijärvi et al., 2014) and value capture (e.g., Hänninen et al., 2018; Hure et al., 2017). For example, shoppers can be offered various digital touchpoints on their path to purchase with the aim of supporting their purchase process, which will simultaneously allow the collection of information regarding their needs and preferences (Blom et al., 2017; Yurova et al., 2017). Consequently, consumers use complementary channels as an integral part of their shopping experience (see Beck and Rygl, 2015; Dholakia et al., 2010) with the aim of optimizing different channels' benefits and costs (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). This has exerted pressure on retailers to redesign their channels according to consumers' processes.

One outcome of this evolution is that, when considering customer experiences (CXs), retailers are striving toward omnichannel retailing, which is defined as "the synergetic management of the numerous available channels and customer touchpoints, in such a way that the CX across channels and the performance over channels is optimized" (Verhoef et al., 2015, pp. 175–176). Per the McKinsey Company (2019), omnichannel shoppers represent one-third of all shopping journeys. Toward that end, prior literature has discussed the importance of synchronizing bricks and clicks in enabling omnichannel customer journeys that are valued by consumers and that drive satisfaction, loyalty, and word of mouth (WOM) (Kumar and Reinartz, 2016; Leroi-Werelds et al., 2014). Moreover, recent studies have identified a positive relationship between successful channel integration, a firm's performance (Blom et al., 2017; Oh et al., 2012), and consumers' benefits (Grewal et al., 2017). Conversely, Briel (2018) has discussed the increasing demand for personalized experiences and how megatrends, such as the expanded use of mobile devices (e.g., smartphones), artificial intelligence, and real-time big data analytics, play an increasingly important role in personalization efforts toward CXs in omnichannel retail settings. Personalization has become even more important in the omnichannel context because the integration of channels holds great potential in delivering more personalized CXs (Hänninen et al., 2019). However, despite retailers' increased spending on personalization systems, there is still a lack of empirical research on investment returns concerning personalization (Kalaignanam et al., 2018). More specifically, Salonen and Karjaluoto (2016) state that the focus of personalization studies should move toward integration of psychological elements, such as emotions, into personalization.

Prior research has mainly examined the relationships within

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personalized interactions and CXs in specific areas, such as mobile and online channels (Bilgihan et al., 2015; McLean et al., 2018; Pappas et al., 2017; Rose et al., 2012) and has relied heavily on single-channel research settings. In that respect, there have been recent calls for more empirical research to investigate omnichannel shopping in general (Hure et al., 2017) and how omnichannel strategies can enhance CXs in particular (Souiden et al., 2019).

Lemon and Verhoef (2016) have suggested that future studies should focus on the relationship between the combined effects of CXs at multiple touchpoints and customer behaviors, such as loyalty intention. Hence, while hedonic motivation (HM) is as a key driver of online shopping (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003; Bridges and Florsheim, 2008), prior research has produced contradictory results about the relationship between HM and CXs (Arnold and Reynolds, 2012; Evanschitzky et al., 2014; Hubert et al., 2017; Izogo and Jayawardhena, 2018; O'Brien, 2010). Notably, Gilboa et al. (2016) stated that this relationship requires further examination in a retail context. In prior studies, researchers have investigated the role of hedonic motivation in online and offline stores. Scarpi et al. (2014) found that hedonic shopping motivation has more important role in online context. Shen et al. (2016) show that consumers prefer shopping utilitarian products from offline stores and hedonic products from online stores. In this study, we contribute to this discussion from omnichannel viewpoint. Our objective is to consider the impact of hedonic motivation on cognitive and emotional CX viewpoints in omnichannel context.

In this study, we extend the abovementioned prior research by linking HM and personalization to CX and loyalty outcomes in omnichannel research setting. Understanding these interlinkages is key for addressing several important managerial questions that arise in the omnichannel environment, including deeper insight into what consumers want in such an environment. To address this purpose, we first define the key study constructs and discuss relevant studies that are related to our research framework. This is followed by the presentation of our pilot study (Study 1; n = 20), which was used to further develop the study hypotheses. Study 2 presents the development and testing of the study hypotheses. We conclude this paper with a discussion of the findings' conceptual implications, the ways in which the findings might alter retail practices, and directions for future studies.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Customer experience

A CX is defined as a consumer's internal and subjective response to any direct or indirect contact with a company (Brakus et al., 2009; Gentile et al., 2007; Meyer and Schwager, 2007). It comprises the search, purchase, consumption, and other after-sale phases, which are elements that the retailer may or may not be able to control (Verhoef et al., 2009). CXs occur when consumers search and shop for products, receive services, and consume both (Brakus et al., 2009). A retail CX is a combination of many elements in various retail channels (Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014). Gentile et al. (2007) introduced six CX components: cognitive, emotional, sensorial, pragmatic, lifestyle, and relational. The study of cognitive and affective CX components is common in prior research (Frow and Payne, 2007; Rose et al., 2012; Tynan and McKechnie, 2009). We follow the logic of Rose et al. (2012), who stated that the online customer interprets online stores' stimuli from both the cognitive and the emotional perspectives and uses these components to form the core construct of his/her CX.

Cognitive experience refers to the flow state that occurs during shopping (Hoffman and Novak, 2009). Flow refers to states of enjoyment, involvement, and concentration (Huang, 2006) that lead to a positive, subjective experience (Hoffman and Novak, 2009). A cognitive CX results from the internal processing of incoming stimuli, such as either the review of incoming information (Frow and Payne, 2007) or online interactions, such as navigation (Novak et al., 2000). The cognitive experience results in the customer learning and developing new skills (Tynan and McKechnie, 2009).

An emotional experience is a consumer's emotional response to stimuli (Hansen, 2005). An emotional CX is entertaining, and it generates enjoyment (Tynan and McKechnie, 2009). Rose et al. (2012) viewed the CX's affective state as the moods, feelings, and emotions that are generated by a customer's affective system. The experience makes the customer feel good and enriched (Lemke et al., 2011). An emotional experience, whether positive or negative, influences a consumer's information processing and builds long-term associations in a consumer's memory, which can lead to certain behaviors, such as recommendations (Edvardsson, 2005; Lemke et al., 2011).

2.2. Hedonic motivation

Jin and Kim (2003) defined shopping motivations as drivers that bring consumers to marketplaces to satisfy needs. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) divided consumers' shopping motivations into utilitarian and hedonic dimensions. Hedonic shopping motivation presents behavior that is related to fun, amusement, fantasy, and the sensorial stimuli aspects of consumption (Babin et al., 1994). HM is defined as a key predictor of intention to purchase in consumer behavior research (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982) and has recently also been associated with customer satisfaction and loyalty (Vieira et al., 2018). In the technology context, HM is defined as fun or pleasure that results from technology use (Venkatesh et al., 2012). However, HM varies across different retail formats (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003). For example, in the physical store context, hedonic shoppers value enjoyment, entertainment, and exploration, whereas in the online context, they respect adventure, authority, and status (To et al., 2007). Our study focuses on HM as a component of CX.

2.3. Personalization

Personalization involves providing customized content and services based on customer data (Adomavicius and Tuzhilin, 2005) and adapting offers to meet a customer's needs (Lemke et al., 2011). In traditional offline stores, personalization refers to serving customers in a face-to-face manner to satisfy their needs (Shen and Ball, 2009). In the online context, retailers can track customers' previous purchase habits with personalization technologies; based on this amassed data, they can then modify what to display and how to display it (Zhang et al., 2011). Personalization aims to offer the most suitable products at the optimal time and in the best place to please customers (Sunikka and Bragge, 2012). It provides benefits for both retailers and customers because individualized products, services, and interactions appeal to consumers (Ansari and Mela, 2003). Personalization also offers transaction flexibility, more targeted banner advertisements and websites, and product recommendations (Kalaignanam et al., 2018). Per Choi et al. (2017), personalizing pricing information with location-based systems results in financial gains for consumers, and personalized pricing helps consumers make more informed decisions. In addition, the quality and benefits of personalization have been shown to increase the intention to purchase (Pappas et al., 2016). In this study, we are interested in consumer perceptions of personalization in the retail environment as a driver of CXs.

2.4. Word of mouth

Per Zeithaml et al. (1996), WOM is a component of customer loyalty. They defined WOM as a consumer's likelihood to recommend and say positive things about a company to other consumers. Today, the Internet is a place for consumers to interact with one another and share their experiences (Bilgihan, 2016) on different platforms, such as social media. Compared to traditional face-to-face WOM, social media WOM differs in its non-simultaneous nature (Balaji et al., 2016), and electronic channels also provide opportunities to have discussions anonymously.

Chen et al. (2017) showed that WOM in the form of online product reviews can positively affects sales. For example, negative electronic WOM can spread widely and have harmful effects on a firm's reputation and sales (Balaji et al., 2016). In this study, we follow the same logic as Zeithaml et al. (1996); thus, we operationalize WOM as a loyalty outcome of the omnichannel CX.

2.5. Repeat Purchase Intention

RPI indicates the likelihood of engaging in repurchasing behavior (Rose et al., 2012). Chiu et al. (2014) defined it as the subjective probability that a customer will purchase a product from the same retailer. RPI is widely used as a behavioral outcome in retail studies (Bilgihan, 2016; Chiu et al., 2014; Rose et al., 2012; Verhagen and van Dolen, 2009). Similar to WOM, it is conceptualized as a component of customer loyalty (Zeithaml et al., 1996). In this study, RPI is operationalized as an outcome of CX.

3. Pilot study

We applied a qualitative pretest to conceptualize and identify the key themes that are related to our research model (Fig. 1).

3.1. Procedure

In-depth consumer interviews (n = 20) were conducted among consumers with rich prior experience in omnichannel retail in Finland (FIN) during September and October of 2018. The participants were selected via the purposeful criterion sampling method to gather knowledge about the research topic (Patton, 2002, pp. 40–46). All participants had experience as omnichannel customers (i.e., they had visited both online and offline stores of the same retailer). The definition of omnichannel retail was explained to the respondents before each interview session, and they were guided to reflect on their recent purchasing process regarding one specific retailer. The interviewees' demographic information is presented in Table 1.

The interview protocol was designed to lead the interview. Semi-structured questions left space for deeper discussion and allowed the interviewees to express their own viewpoints (Järvenpää and Lang, 2005). All interviews were conducted in Finnish. Thus, semi-structured questions were translated from English to Finnish. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed into text files after each session, and the transcription was translated from Finnish to English. The average time for each interview was 18 min.

In the data analysis, we followed the three-stage content analysis protocol of Miles and Huberman (1994), including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Interview responses were read carefully and then coded and organized according to the main themes, which were based on the literature review.

Table 1
Demographic profile of interviewees.

Gender	Occupation status	Age
Female	Student	19
Male	Student	21
Female	Student	21
Female	Student	21
Female	Student	22
Male	Student	22
Male	Working	23
Male	Working	23
Male	Student	23
Female	Student	23
Female	Doctoral student	24
Male	Working	25
Female	Working	25
Male	Self-employed	27
Male	Doctoral student	27
Male	Working	27
Female	Working	28
Male	Working	29
Female	Working	31
Female	Working	31

3.2. Results

The results from the interviews are presented in Table 2. Regarding HM, our results imply its interconnection with CXs. Briefly, the interviewees described a positive CX as having hedonic components. HM was associated with unplanned spending and impulse purchases. In addition, customers appreciated a retailer's personalized content, such as personalized advertisements, offers, and product recommendations. These were closely related to a positive CX and a consumer's purchase behavior in the future. The interviewees were expecting retailers to utilize amassed data on their previous purchases to personalize content. Lastly, the findings suggest that a positive CX is linked to loyalty outcomes. Per the interviewees, a positive CX and positive WOM, such as recommendations from within one's family circle, increased their purchase intentions in the same store. By contrast, repeated negative CXs were associated with ending the customer relationship with the retailer.

4. Survey

To further investigate the CX's relationships to its antecedents and outcomes, we developed eight hypotheses. Our research model (Fig. 1)

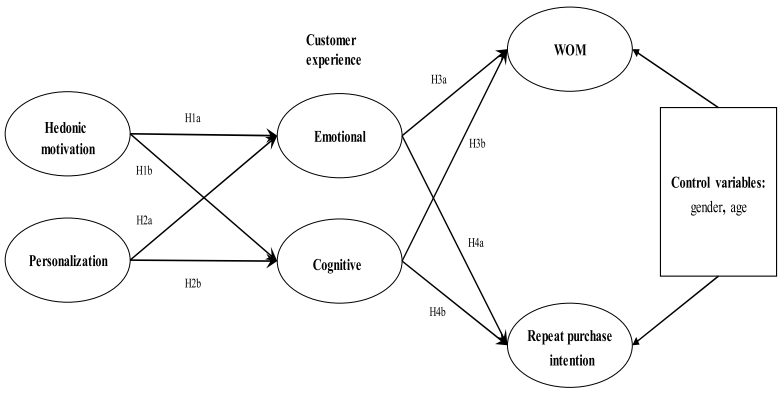

Fig. 1. Research model.

Table 2
Study 1 findings.

Theme	Summary of findings
Hedonic motivation	Positive customer experience is described by hedonic components. Elements like "positive feelings," "endorphins," "happiness," and "laugh" came forth in interviews when the interviewees were asked to describe a positive customer experience. High hedonic motivation during the shopping journey is related to change, including unplanned spending and impulse purchases.
Personalization	Consumers appreciate personal offers and advertisements via mobile phones and email. Product recommendations based on previous purchases and personal preferences lead to new purchases. Personalized advertisements, such as those in social media and retailers' newsletters, are mentioned to improve a customer's experience. Personalized advertising content is positively related to purchase behavior.
Loyalty outcomes	Positive customer experiences influence customer loyalty intentions. Consumers will recommend a retailer and purchase again at the same store. "I will visit again"; "it will be my first choice next time"; and "I will recommend it" were typical answers when interviewees were asked how a positive experience influences their behavior. Seriously negative customer experiences may end customer relationships.

posits both HM and personalization as independent variables and demonstrates how they are linked with CX components and how CX affects both WOM and RPI.

4.1. Hypothesis development

4.1.1. The impact of hedonic motivation on customer experience

Previous studies have shown the importance of HM during a customer's shopping journey; researchers have proven this relationship in the contexts of offline search behavior (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003), time spent browsing in online stores (Kim and Eastin, 2011; Menon and Kahn, 2002), and intention to use mobile retail services (Shaw and Sergueeva, 2019).

In this study, we want to examine HM's relationship with CXs. HM has been shown to influence a CX's emotional and cognitive components. The relationship has been studied in the retail context and in individualistic and collectivistic consumer cultures (Arnold and Reynolds, 2012; Evanschitzky et al., 2014; Izogo and Jayawardhena, 2018; O'Brien, 2010). Evanschitzky et al. (2014) showed that HM influences flow experience. Arnold and Reynolds' (2012) study of the relationship between HM and hedonic shopping value found that consumers who are searching for hedonic experiences usually find them.

Hubert et al. (2017) hypothesized that HM can be better served if retail allows for a seamlessly integrated experience. Their examination of the relationship between HM and experience response in the mobile shopping context did not find a significant effect. However, their focus was on pure mobile channels, which do not represent the entire omnichannel concept and are usually related to seamless experiences (Verhoef et al., 2015). Based on the above discussion, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1a. HM has a positive direct effect on emotional CX.

H1b. HM has a positive direct effect on cognitive CX.

4.1.2. The impact of personalization on customer experiences

Creating personalization for customers helps retailers meet customers' needs, which will positively influence RPI (Ha et al., 2010; Lemke et al., 2011). Personalization has been shown to decrease customers' searches and product evaluation costs, which subsequently increase customer loyalty. Moreover, it reduces customers' shopping efforts (Kim and Baek, 2018; Zhang et al., 2011).

Personalization is positively related to CXs (Bilgihan et al., 2015; McLean et al., 2018; Pappas et al., 2017; Rose et al., 2012). Bilgihan et al. (2015) stated that recommendation systems with personalization features can engage customers in online stores. McLean et al. (2018) examined the relationship between customization and CXs within retail mobile applications and proposed that customization directly influences CXs. Rose et al. (2012) studied the relationship between web store customization and the affective components of CXs; they found that providing personalized, relevant content can result in positive customer emotions and thus influence the affective CX component. In addition, personalization increases the customer's feeling of control and makes him/her part of creating the experience (Chang et al., 2010), which both affect the cognitive CX. Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed for empirical testing:

H2a. Personalization has a positive direct effect on emotional CX.

H2b. Personalization has a positive direct effect on cognitive CX.

4.1.3. The impact of customer experience on word of mouth

Brakus et al. (2009) confirmed the positive relationship between CXs and customer loyalty intentions. In this study, we focus on WOM and RPI, which have been verified as indicators of customer loyalty (Zeithaml et al., 1996). Prior studies have confirmed the relationship between CXs and WOM (Bilgihan, 2016; Keiningham et al., 2007; Klaus and Maklan, 2013; Klein et al., 2016; Maklan and Klaus, 2011).

Both the emotional CX (Klaus and Maklan, 2013; Lovett et al., 2013) and the cognitive CX (Klaus and Maklan, 2013) drive positive WOM. Positive experiences influence customer loyalty intentions, and after a positive experience, consumers are more likely to recommend the brand to others (Brakus et al., 2009). Klaus and Maklan (2013) show a direct positive relationship between CX quality and WOM. Similar results were presented by Jones et al. (2006), who found that WOM is reflected in the CX with a retailer. Zhang et al. (2017) found that cognitively and affectively engaged customers are more likely to promote their brand communities. Lovett et al. (2013) studied drivers of WOM in both online and offline channels and found that consumers prefer to share their positive feelings about and experiences with a retailer. For example, brands that are considered more exciting received more WOM in their study. In addition, customers' cognitive processes have been shown to have a positive relationship with their intentions toward recommendation (Zhang et al., 2017). Based on the preceding discussion, we advance the following hypotheses:

H3a. Emotional CX has a positive direct effect on WOM.

H3b. Cognitive CX has a positive direct effect on WOM.

4.1.4. The impact of customer experience on repeat purchase intention

RPI has been widely used as an outcome of CXs in prior research (Bilgihan, 2016; Chiu et al., 2014; Kim and Han, 2014; Rose et al., 2012). Flow experience and purchase intention have a significant direct relationship in that shoppers remember their positive experiences, and customers who experience flow during their online shopping will be more willing to repurchase in the same store (Bilgihan, 2016; Chiu et al., 2014; Kim and Han, 2014). Purchase experience via the Internet predicts both the positive and direct intention to use the Internet for repurchasing (Shim et al., 2001).

Emotional experiences influence a customer's loyalty intentions, and the quality (positive or negative) of each experience directly affects RPI (Gountas and Gountas, 2007; Ou and Verhoef, 2017). Rose et al. (2012) estimated the total effects of both affective CX and cognitive CX on RPI and found a significant effect. Therefore, the following can be hypothesized:

H4a. Emotional CX has a direct positive effect on RPI.

H4b. Cognitive CX has a direct positive effect on RPI.

4.2. Methodology

4.2.1. Data collection

Our objective was to study omnichannel CXs. Thus, our research setting was designed to guide the survey respondents to reflect on their recent purchasing process in one specific store, which was either partly or entirely conducted in an online store or an offline store. We explained the meaning of the essential terminology, the purchasing process, and both offline and online stores at the beginning of the survey form.

The target population of the survey was defined as retail customers in FIN and Sweden (SWE). To achieve a suitable sample, we employed a market research firm to recruit the participants. The hypotheses were tested by using different samples from the two countries.

The study was conducted in FIN and SWE. The results were based on data that were gathered during December 2018. A total of 4418 valid responses were received: FIN (n = 2084) and SWE (n = 2334). The demographic profile of the sample is shown in Table 3. A total of 44.0% FIN and 43.8% SWE respondents were male (49.3% of the entire population is male in FIN [Statistics Finland, 2019] and 50.3% is male in SWE [Statistics Sweden, 2019]). The sample was skewed toward young consumers (15–25 years old: 39.9% in FIN, 56.2% in SWE), whereas the percentage of this age group is 11.2% in FIN (Statistics Finland, 2019) and 11.3% in SWE (Statistics Sweden, 2019). The mean household income was between 40,000 and 50,000€ for the FIN respondents and between 30,000 and 40,000€ for the SWE respondents (the average household incomes for 2017 were 38,300€ in FIN (Statistics Finland, 2019) and 36,190€ in SWE (Statistics Sweden, 2019). Therefore, the FIN sample was slightly skewed toward a higher income, while the SWE sample represented the overall Swedish population. The mean household size was two in both samples; therefore, both samples represented the overall populations of these countries from this perspective.

4.2.2. Method biases

Per Hulland et al. (2018) the nature of non-response bias should be considered by comparing the demographics of the respondent group to those of the sampling frame. The FIN and SWE populations were compared to our sample in Table 3. Thus, nonresponse bias was unlikely.

Common method bias refers to contexts in which a respondent could give a construct's true score, but because of a measurement method, he/she does not (Kock, 2015). Common method variance (CMV) is often present in self-reported survey studies that use a single data source (Podsakoff et al., 2003). To ensure that CMV did not threaten our results, we structured the survey as follows: items in the questionnaire were placed in an alternating order; we separated the predictor and criterion variables; and we hid the respondents' identities (Hulland et al., 2018; Podsakoff et al., 2003). In addition, the respondents were allowed to answer anonymously and were assured that there were no right or wrong answers; therefore, they were asked to answer all questions as honestly as possible.

Table 3
Demographic Profile of the Respondents vs. Population.

	Finland			Sweden		
	N	%	Population	N	%	Population
Gender						
Male	918	44.0	49.4	1023	43.8	50.3
Female	1166	56.0	50.6	1311	56.2	49.7
Age (years)						
15–24	831	39.9	11.2	1334	57.2	11.3
25–34	308	14.8	12.3	315	13.5	14.0
35–49	538	25.8	19.0	414	17.7	18.9
50–60	407	19.5	13.9	271	11.6	12.6
Household size						
1	589	28.3	44.0	469	20.1	37.7
2	679	32.6	32.7	552	23.7	31.3
3	357	17.1	10.3	452	19.4	12.4
4	254	12.2	8.4	502	21.5	12.3
5	128	6.1	3.1	217	9.3	4.3
6+	77	3.7	14.1	143	5.1	2.0

Data for Finnish population derived from Statistics Finland (2019) and Swedish population from Statistics Sweden (2019).

4.2.3. Measurement scales

All variables were measured on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," except for the variable WOM, which was measured on a 10-point scale. Previously validated instruments were used to measure the items that represented the study variables (Appendix A). For measurement, three items for measuring cognitive CX four items for measuring emotional CX were adopted from Brakus et al. (2009); three items for measuring HM were adopted from Venkatesh et al. (2012); three items for measuring personalization were adopted from Pappas et al. (2014); three items for measuring RPI were adopted from Chiu et al. (2014); and two items for measuring WOM were adopted from Leppäniemi et al. (2017).

To secure equivalent data collection from both countries, we followed the protocol of Coviello and Jones (2004) for the survey's translation from English to Finnish and Swedish. We used the same cover letter and the same items, and the items were both forward and back translated. The data collection process was similar and concurrent in both countries.

The hypotheses were tested with a sample of 2084 retail customers in FIN and 2334 customers in SWE using SmartPLS 3 software (Ringle et al., 2015). Both samples were analyzed separately. Partial least squares (PLS) structural equation modeling was selected because this study focused on predictions instead of theory testing (Hair et al., 2014; Richter et al., 2016). Moreover, many variables were not normally distributed because the study was exploratory in nature, and it examined several new relationships. In these situations, PLS is a preferred method (Hair et al., 2014).

To test the compositional invariance, we used the non-parametric measurement invariance of composite models procedure with 5000 permutations (Hensler et al., 2016). Because all the c values of the multiple indicator measures were not significantly different from 1 ($p > 0.05$), partial measurement invariance was established. In addition, we examined the structural invariance of the model and found no significant differences between the two countries (Hensler et al., 2016). Therefore, the conditions for analyzing both data sets in the same study were considered adequate.

4.3. Results

4.3.1. Measurement model

The reliability and validity of the models were evaluated in both samples by composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), Cronbach's alpha (α), and factor loadings (Table 4 and Appendix A). The factor loadings were all significant and higher than 0.70 in all cases, and the CR, AVE, and α met the criteria that were set in the literature (Hair et al., 2014, p. 105). The square root of the AVE in each latent variable was compared with the other constructs to evaluate discriminant validity. The square root of the AVE was higher than the correlation between any two latent constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), which verified the discriminant validity. The Heterotrait-Monotrait ratios of correlations were also all below the cut-off criterion of 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2016), which further confirmed the discriminant validity. Moreover, all the items had the highest factor loadings in the construct that they were measuring. Thus, the reliability and validity of the models were found acceptable.

4.3.2. Structural model

The R^2 values for emotional and cognitive CX, WOM, and RPI were all above 0.40, indicating predictive accuracy (Fig. 2) (Henseler et al., 2009). The Stone-Geisser criterion (Q^2) values were above zero, indicating the models' predictive relevance (Henseler et al., 2009).

Table 4
Discriminant validity, means and standard deviations.

Finland	AVE	CR[a]	α	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
HM[b] (1)	0.891	0.961	0.94	**0,944**								
PERS[c] (2)	0.769	0.909	0.85	0,495	**0877**							
COG[d] CX (3)	0.747	0.898	0.83	0,630	0550	**0,864**						
EMO[e] CX (4)	0.760	0.927	0.89	0,784	0490	0,624	**0872**					
WOM[f] (5)	0.946	0.972	0.94	0,700	0444	0,578	0724	**0,973**				
RPI[g] (6)	0.787	0.917	0.86	0,660	0407	0,501	0648	0,701	**0887**			
Gender (7)	n/a	n/a	n/a	0,075	0021	0,086	0039	0,102	0073	n/a		
Age (8)	n/a	n/a	n/a	−0,108	−0,122	−0,180	−0,048	−0,092	−0,020	−0,174	n/a	
Income (9)	n/a	n/a	n/a	−0,048	−0,041	−0,038	−0,037	−0,055	−0,008	−0,061	0145	n/a
Mean				5.44	4.59	4.85	5.36	7.86	5.71	n/a	n/a	n/a
s.d.				1.26	1.44	1.30	1.21	2.02	1.19	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sweden	**AVE**	**CR[a]**	**α**	**(1)**	**(2)**	**(3)**	**(4)**	**(5)**	**(6)**	**(7)**	**(8)**	**(9)**
HM[b] (1)	0.761	0.905	0.842	**0.872**								
PERS[c] (2)	0.733	0.892	0.818	0.562	**0.856**							
COG[d] CX (3)	0.731	0.891	0.816	0.655	0.585	**0.855**						
EMO[e] CX (4)	0.706	0.906	0.861	0.688	0.574	0.596	**0.840**					
WOM[f] (5)	0.925	0.961	0.919	0.620	0.455	0.491	0.618	**0.962**				
RPI[g] (6)	0.737	0.894	0.821	0.604	0.486	0.500	0.622	0.706	**0.859**			
Gender (7)	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.115	−0.007	0.061	0.056	0.137	0.086	n/a		
Age (8)	n/a	n/a	n/a	−0.087	−0.028	−0.103	−0.020	−0.014	0.026	−0.082	n/a	
Income (9)	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.008	−0.004	−0.015	−0.017	−0.015	0.026	0.039	0.012	n/a
Mean				5.21	4.82	4.91	5.26	7.83	5.53	n/a	n/a	n/a
s.d.				1.53	1.60	1.60	1.49	2.30	1.50	n/a	n/a	n/a

Notes: [a] CR – Composite Reliability; [b]C_{α} – Cronbach's alpha; [c]HM – Hedonic Motivation; [d]PERS – Personalization; [e]COG CX – Cognitive Customer Experience; [f]EMO CX – Emotional Customer Experience; [g]WOM – Word of Mouth; [h]RPI – Repeat Purchase Intention.
n/a = Not applicable. Item measured with single item. AVE, CR and C_{α} cannot be computed.

The results fully support all the hypotheses in both samples (Fig. 2; Table 5). The findings show that HM had a positive direct effect on both the emotional ($\beta_{FIN} = 0.717$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta_{SWE} = 0.533$, $p < 0.01$) and cognitive ($\beta_{FIN} = 0.475, p < 0.01$; $\beta_{SWE} = 0.478$, $p < 0.01$) components of CX in both samples, confirming H1a and H1b. The results also support H2a and H2b, showing that personalization had a significant positive effect on CX (emotional CX: $\beta_{FIN} = 0.136$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta_{SWE} = 0.274$, $p < 0.01$; cognitive CX: $\beta_{FIN} = 0.315$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta_{SWE} = 0.317$, $p < 0.01$). Significant positive effects in both samples were found between cognitive CX and WOM ($\beta_{FIN} = 0.187$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta_{SWE} = 0.189$, $p < 0.01$) and emotional CX and WOM ($\beta_{IN} = 0.590$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta_{SWE} = 0.500$, $p < 0.01$), confirming H3a and H3b. Finally, H4a and H4b are supported: both emotional CX ($\beta_{FIN} = 0.546$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta_{SWE} = 0.487$, $p < 0.01$) and cognitive CX ($\beta_{FIN} = 0.164$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta_{SWE} = 0.189$, $p < 0.01$) had a significant effect on RPI.

Although we did not hypothesize country differences, we examined how the path coefficients differed between FIN and. SWE. With the multimethod PLS-multi-group analysis (MGA) (Parametric Test, Welch-Satterthwait Test), including 5000 subsamples and 1000 permutations, we found some significant differences ($p < 0.05$ or >0.95) between the countries (Hair et al., 2014, p. 253). These differences were related to the relationships between HM and emotional CX, personalization and emotional CX, and emotional CX and WOM. The findings indicate that these relationships were stronger in the FIN sample, except for the relationship between personalization and emotional CX, which was stronger for SWE (see Appendix B). The relationship between emotional CX and WOM was stronger in the FIN sample.

When controlling for demographics (gender and age), we found a slight positive effect of gender on WOM ($\beta_{FIN} = 0.059$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta_{SWE} = 0.100, p < 0.01$) and RPI ($\beta_{FIN} = 0.046, p < 0.01$; $\beta_{SWE} = 0.044, p < 0.01$) in both samples, indicating that females have a slightly higher intention to spread positive WOM and RPI. Regarding the relationship between

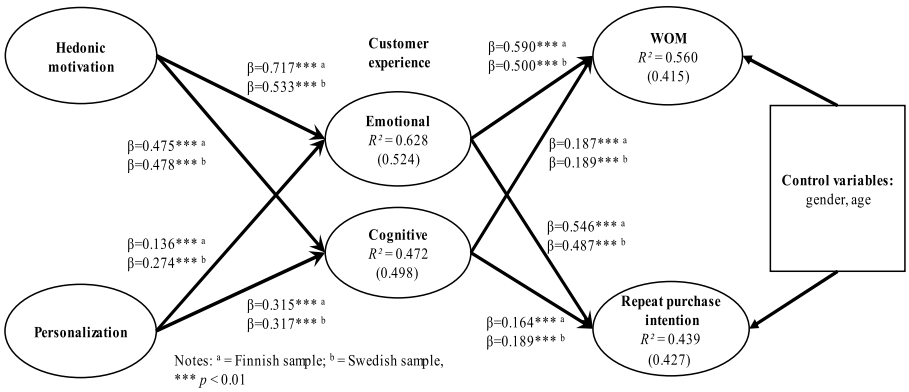

Fig. 2. Study results.

Table 5
Hypothesis testing.

Hypothesized relationship	Path coefficient (β) (Finland)	Path coefficient (β) (Sweden)	Hypothesis testing
H1a: Hedonic motivation → Emotional CX	0.717***	0.533***	Supported
H1b: Hedonic motivation → Cognitive CX	0.475***	0.478***	Supported
H2a: Personalization → Emotional CX	0.136***	0.274***	Supported
H2b: Personalization → Cognitive CX	0.315***	0.317***	Supported
H3a: Emotional CX → WOM [a]	0.590***	0.500***	Supported
H3b: Cognitive CX → WOM [a]	0.187***	0.189***	Supported
H4a: Emotional CX → RPI[b]	0.546***	0.487***	Supported
H4b: Cognitive CX → RPI[b]	0.164***	0.189***	Supported

Notes: [a] WOM – Word of Mouth; [b]RPI – Repeat Purchase Intention.
***$p \leq 0.001$.

age and WOM and age and RPI, the only significant positive effect was found between age and RPI in the SWE sample ($\beta_{SWE} = 0.078$, $p < 0.01$). This indicated that, among Swedes, the older one is, the higher the RPI. The other relationships did not exceed the threshold of significance ($p < 0.01$).

5. Discussion

5.1. Theoretical contributions

Consumers today are presented with a large variety of opportunities through which they can search, compare, purchase, and obtain goods and services (Yrjölä et al., 2018). While omnichannel retailing is becoming the new norm for many retailers, the purpose of this study was to develop and test a conceptual framework that links key retailing constructs in an omnichannel research setting. While previous studies have focused more on limited retail sections and single-channel studies, such as online retail or mobile shopping, we developed a research setting that focused on the entire omnichannel experience, as Hure et al. (2017) suggested. The results of the customer interviews and a survey of 2084 retail customers in FIN and 2334 retail customers in SWE provide both theoretical and managerial contributions concerning the effects of personalization and HM on CXs and their influence on WOM and RPI. The results provide three main theoretical contributions.

As suggested by Souiden et al. (2019), we extended our empirical investigation beyond the single-channel setting by studying CX from the omnichannel perspective. In general, our findings confirm that CX is a key determinant of consumer behavior in the omnichannel context. Among both samples, the findings show the positive effects of CXs' emotional and cognitive components on loyalty outcomes, WOM (Klaus and Maklan, 2013), and RPI (Gountas and Gountas, 2007; Ou and Verhoef, 2017; Rose et al., 2012). Therefore, the results strengthen the previous findings that are related to the relationship between CX and customer loyalty (Brakus et al., 2009). CX is a key determinant of consumer behavior in the omnichannel context. Among both samples, the findings show the positive effects of CXs' emotional and cognitive components on loyalty outcomes, WOM (Klaus and Maklan, 2013), and RPI (Gountas and Gountas, 2007; Ou and Verhoef, 2017; Rose et al., 2012). Therefore, the results strengthen the previous findings that are related to the relationship between CX and customer loyalty (Brakus et al., 2009).

Previous studies have compared online and offline stores from HM viewpoint and shown that consumers shopping hedonic products prefer online stores (Scarpi et al., 2014; Shen et al., 2016). This study contributes to this discussion by presenting the omnichannel viewpoint. The key findings of our research in both the FIN and SWE samples particularly show that emotional and cognitive CX is driven by HM—a relationship that has been identified in the online context (Evanschitzky et al., 2014; Izogo and Jayawardhena, 2018). Similarly, the results also confirm the direct relationship between personalization and CX components, which were previously studied in the online retail context (McLean et al., 2018; Pappas et al., 2014; Rose et al., 2012). The effect of personalization is slightly stronger on cognitive CX than on emotional CX in omnichannel context.

Finally, even though FIN and SWE are geographically and culturally close to each other, three differences were found between these two samples through the use of the PLS-MGA. Generally, HM proved to be more related to emotional CX in FIN, while personalization was a more significant driver of emotional CX in Sweden. The relationship between emotional CX and WOM was stronger among the FIN sample. The present study is the first to demonstrate the differences that are related to CX in these countries.

5.2. Managerial implications

It is widely acknowledged that CX plays an increasingly important role in retailing. Today, retailers are piloting (and both succeeding and failing) diverse omnichannel initiatives (Yrjölä et al., 2018) in serving customers such as various mobile applications, click & collect concepts, home delivery or cashierless stores (Amazon Go). Clearly, there is a need for well-grounded empirical insight that can help managers design their presence in an omnichannel environment. In that respect, our findings put forth three main managerial implications for enhancing CXs in omnichannel retailing.

Our results indicate that creating more personalized offerings and advertisements improves the total CX. Consequently, retailers should identify personalization as a key driver for improving CX. Moreover, although the empirical focus was placed on personalized offerings and advertisements, retailers should actively search for new ways to build the perception of personalization, which can take various forms, such as using customer data in order to provide customers with personalized information about their purchases, e.g. information regarding healthfulness or carbon footprint of their previous food purchases.

Our findings demonstrate that better CXs in omnichannel retailing lead to positive effects on customer loyalty through increased WOM and RPI, which underscores that retailers have the possibility to influence customer purchasing behavior via personalization. In that respect, our findings help managers understand the interlinking nature of these constructs and consequently prioritize among different marketing activities in an omnichannel environment.

This study draws the attention of retailers to HM. It is well-established that HM represents a key element in CX creation. Similarly, higher HM indicates a higher cognitive and emotional CX. This finding indicates that creating a fun, enjoyable, and entertaining shopping environment also leads to a more positive experience in omnichannel retailing, which increases RPI and positive WOM. Thus, while general attention is often placed in e-commerce on providing low prices and a wide product selection, retailers should always consider the potential of supporting consumers' omnichannel behavior via more hedonic characteristics, such as emphasizing the enjoyment of using a personalized promotion.

5.3. Limitations and further research

This study has certain limitations that can be addressed in future studies. Because our results were mainly drawn from a survey study, which is not a longitudinal tool, the dynamism of CXs could not be fully captured. By using a longitudinal study setting, future studies will be able to confirm the causality of the studies' relationships.

In addition, personalization was measured with items that are considered especially personalized advertisement. However, our qualitative results reveal that other issues, such as social media personalization, play a role in forming CX. Therefore, we encourage researchers to investigate personalization in a limited context. While the focus of retail research has turned into integrated omnichannel experience, customer's preferences, demands and behavior are varying between different channels. It would be important to study if the consumers' attitudes towards personalization differ between retail channels, such as webstores, mobile applications, and retailer's social media channels.

Finally, our convenience samples led to empirical data that might not accurately represent the opinions of retail consumers in FIN and SWE. Retailers in those two markets are in the leading position to add elements of personalization. To enhance the generalizability of our findings, additional studies should access our theory in other markets, especially those that are emerging.

Appendix A. Measurement Scales

Constructs and items	Factor loadings[c]	
	Finland	Sweden
Hedonic Motivation		
Shopping in this store is fun.	0.952	0.827
Shopping in this store is enjoyable.	0.949	0.903
Shopping in this store is very entertaining.	0.930	0.884
Personalization		
This retailer can provide me with personalized deals/ads that are tailored to my activity context.	0.888	0.839
This retailer can provide me with more relevant promotional information that is tailored to my preferences or personal interests.	0.904	0.873
This retailer can provide me with the kind of deals/ads that I might like.	0.837	0.856
Cognitive CX		
When I visit the online and B&M stores of this specific retail chain, I get inspiration and new ideas (e.g., store window displays, product displays, and tips from store personnel).	0.891	0.854
Visiting the online and B&M stores of this specific retail chain evokes curiosity and a thirst for knowledge (e.g., I want to try new products and services).	0.881	0.871
It is nice to test products in the online and B&M stores of this specific retail chain (e.g., off-line product demonstrations or using applications in the e-store).	0.818	0.839
Emotional CX		
I become careless while visiting the online and B&M stores of this specific retail chain (e.g., reliance on the quality of merchandise, data privacy, and security matters).	0.840	0.827
I feel relaxed while visiting the online and B&M stores of this specific retail chain (e.g., proficient customer service, functioning product delivery and returns).	0.894	0.848
I am looked after while visiting the online and B&M stores of this specific retail chain.	0.880	0.847
I feel welcome while visiting the online and B&M stores of this specific retail chain.	0.871	0.839
WOM [a]		
How likely is it that you would recommend [company X] to a colleague or friend?	0.972	0.961
How likely is it that you would say positive things about [company X] to other people?	0.974	0.963
RPI[b]		
I plan to continue using this store to purchase products.	0.905	0.879
I consider this store my first choice for transactions in the future.	0.847	0.811
It is likely that I will continue purchasing products from this store in the future.	0.909	0.884

Notes: [a] WOM – Word of Mouth; [b]RPI – Repeat Purchase Intention; [c] – All factor loadings significant at $p < 0.001$.

Appendix B. Multimethod multigroup analysis: Differences between countries

P-value tests					
Relationship	Path Coefficients-difference	MGA	Parametric test	Welch-Satterthwait test	Permutation
HM[a] → COG CX[c]	0.003	0.536	0.923	0.924	0.926
HM → EMO CX[d]	0.183	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***
PERS[b] → COG CX	0.002	0.525	0.954***	0.954***	0.941
PERS → EMO CX	0.139	1.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***
COG CX → WOM[e]	0.017	0.304	0.595	0.596	0.611
COG CX → RPI[f]	0.045	0.918	0.172	0.174	0.207
EMO CX → WOM	0.103	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***	0.004***
EMO CX → RPI	0.049	0.062	0.120	0.122	0.165

Notes: [a]HM – Hedonic Motivation; [b]PERS – Personalization; [c]COG CX – Cognitive Customer Experience; [d]EMO CX – Emotional Customer Experience; [e]WOM – Word of Mouth; [f]RPI – Repeat Purchase Intention.
***$p \leq 0.1$ or $p \geq 0.9$.

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IV

SOCIAL MEDIA'S ROLE IN CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE CREATION: USER-GENERATED VS. FIRM-GENERATED CONTENT

by

Olli Tyrväinen & Heikki Karjaluoto & Pinja Karjala

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