Lappeenranta University of Technology  
School of Engineering Science  
Degree Program in Computer Science

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Finding Requirements and Characteristics for Omni-channel Customer Experience

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ABSTRACT

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Master’s Thesis

Examiners: Professor Ajantha Dahayanake
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Keywords: Multi-channel, Omni-channel, Customer experience, Touchpoint, Digital Marketing

Nowadays customers are more engaged in both offline and online shopping. In physical store, consumers can have feel and touch of the product while in online store, consumers have access to reviews and information about the product. Creating the same customer experience for the consumers throughout all the channels is the today’s business market requirement. Retailers are shifting their strategies from multichannel to omnichannel. The goal of this research is figured out what can be the requirements and characteristics the retailers must consider before migrating from multichannel to omnichannel.

This research study is analyzed based on literature review and online questionnaire. Final results and findings show that both physical and online store is needed to co-exist in current scenario for both customer and retailers. They need the seamless and consistent consumer experience for both offline and online channel.
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I would like to thank my parents for continuous support and encouragement throughout my study. This would be possible without their support.

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Author
Sagar Parajuli
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# LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>Multi-Channel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OC</td>
<td>Omni-channel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CX</td>
<td>Customer Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXMM</td>
<td>Customer Experience Maturity Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROPO</td>
<td>Research Online Purchase Offline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TMS</td>
<td>Translation Management System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MVC</td>
<td>Minimum Viable Content</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Nowadays consumers are more engaging in both online and physical store and expect their experience—whether on desktop or mobile, or via a quick visit to store shopping session—to connect. In Retail stores, consumers can interact with staff members and also can have the feel and touch of every products available in the store. This gives consumers the feel of satisfaction with every purchase. In Online, consumers may not have the same experience like in retail stores, but they can read the reviews about the product and make their decision. So, creating the same experience for the consumers throughout all the channels is the today’s business market requirement.

According to Smith (2016), most consumers start their buying process through web and other digital channel but finally they end up buying in physical shop. The study also found that half of consumers who go online store eventually visit the physical store within a couple of days. Bridget D. (2015), found out that online activity of consumers can influence the offline behaviors of consumers shopping experience therefore the digital media can be used as an attracting tool to influence the consumers to visit the physical store. By this approach, the consumer can use Research Online Purchase Offline (ROPO) (Rutigliano, 2013).

To anticipate these needs, retailers are shifting their strategies from multi-channel (MC) to omni-channel (OC), and businesses that have not taken the first step are already falling behind. According to Fernandez (2007), multichannel is a parallel distribution of several channels. Multichannel can be defined as the facility to engage with potential consumers on various heterogeneous platforms. Retailers are using this multichannel approach to consumer’s but they are not focusing on to provide the service seamless and consistently across all multiple channel. (Howell, 2014). Furthermore, only providing the service does not necessarily optimize the customer experience only based on the different channels (e.g. laptops, smartphones and tablets).

The omni-channel defined by Guzman and Carroll (2013) is a collection of all the available channels of retailers which is synchronized with all the channels and presented as a single
customer shopping face to the consumer. Omnichannel can be defined as the sales approach that provides the consumer with homogeneous shopping experience. The consumer can shop online from a smartphone or laptop, or tablet, or physical store, and the experience will be consistent and seamless. While retailers using the multichannel approach to provide the service to their customers, it can be differentiate with two factors; consistency and seamless on the consumers shopping experience.

In this thesis, I conducted research about requirements and characteristics towards the omni channel. Retail store are not going to shutoff despite the rapid increase in different channels for shopping. They will always have advantage of directly interacting with products. However, the development in technologies have made retailers to find the way to reduce the gap between online and offline stores.

1.2 Research Questions

The following questions were answered to fulfill the research in this thesis,

- What are the Multichannel requirements for assessing customer experience?
- What are the Omnichannel requirements for assessing customer experience?
- What are the key requirements the retailers must consider before migrating from multi-channels to omni-channel?

1.3 Research Method

The purpose of this research is to find out the requirements the retailers must consider before migrating from multichannel to omnichannel.

In the first part of the research, I believe the literature review would be the appropriate methodology to gain the in-depth knowledge about research topic. The first phase research is started by retrieving the relevant document from Search Engines, Journals, Database, Dissertations from various sources. The searching keywords used as: Shopping Channels, Multi-Channel, Omni-Channel, Customer Experience, Digital Marketing. While searching those keywords were connected with logical operators AND depending on
searching needs. The selected literature sources were formulated from following sites.

**Database**

- IEEE
- Springer Link
- ACM digital library
- Science Direct

**Web Sites**

- Search query to Google

### 1.3.1 Initial Study Selection

With the search keywords and strings defined above, the literature needed for study is selected. The below figure 1 shows steps done to select the relevant literature.

![Diagram showing selection of literature articles](image)

**Fig 1: Selection of Literature Articles**

The review is started by searching in the online database and journals and from Google search using the keywords. The initial selection found were 76 articles. The initial
selection was based on the abstract and title of the articles. After using the keywords Shopping Channels, Multi-Channel, Omni-Channel, Customer Experience, Digital Marketing and filtered the articles according to the relevancy of the keywords, 40 articles were selected for final review.

1.3.2 Selection Criteria

Selection criteria defines the types of resources followed for the literature review. The below points were followed for selection of articles for this research.

- Articles selected with keywords Shopping Channels, Multi-channel, Omni-Channel, Customer Experience, Digital marketing
- Websites articles relevant to omnichannel customer experience
- Articles written in English
- Most recent paper, journal, book irrespective of geographic location

In the second part of research, I conducted the Survey about the experience the people have during online and offline shopping. The tool used to create the survey is the Google Forms and send it to the various participants to gather the information.

1.4 Delimitations

The importance of goals and delimitations is relevance. It allows to set the parameter in the boundary of research since study cannot address all the elements and helps to focus on certain goals.

This research study will be limited to the research questions. The research topic was taken because there is a lack of research and findings related in this field. There has been lot of research on offline and online shopping, customer experience, but the research based on omni-channel customer experience is mostly the web-based article. So, the topic can be considered as new one. I will research, study and analyze the literature and find it furthermore into this topic. I will conduct one survey to understand the consumers shopping experience and behavior in both offline and online shopping. I will more focus
on customer behavior to better understand the characteristics of shopping platform channel.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This section is about the structure of thesis. The structure of thesis is categorized into 6 chapters.

Chapter 1 will present a topic background, research questions, research methods, delimitations and structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2 is the study about the multi-channel and omni-channel.

In Chapter 3, the literature review was done to understand the different sales channel in order to understand the multichannel and omnichannel ecosystem.

In Chapter 4, the result of online survey is presented based on the participant answered the questionnaire.

In Chapter 5, the results from literature review and online survey is analyzed and discussed about the requirement for omni-channel customer experience.

In Chapter 6, the summary of the findings and future work is explained.
2 RELATED WORK

2.1 Multi channel

Multichannel can be defined as the facility to engage with potential consumers on various heterogeneous platforms. Retailers adopting this approach are using two or more channels to provide the service to their customers, however, retailers are unable to provide the consistent, uniform and integrated experience to the user. Retailers are using the multichannel in silos which different channels are running separately from different departments. In multichannel retailing, offline and online business is done separately. These differences directly impact in promotion, pricing and marketing of the products.

Fig 2– An Example of Multichannel. Reprinted from www.sqli.co/blogs/omni-vs-multi
According to Zhang et al., (2010), multi-channel retailing is about providing services to consumers using different heterogenous channels. Therefore, retailers have more complex system because they must maintain large heterogenous inventories, keep make changes according to customers demand and to make maximum profit.

2.2 Omni channel

Omnichannel can be defined as the sales approach that provides the consumer with homogeneous shopping experience. The consumer can be shop online from a smartphone or laptop, or tablet, or in physical store, and the experience will be consistent and seamless. While retailers using the multichannel approach to provide the service to their customers, it can be differentiate with two factors, seamless and consistency on devices used for interactions with the client.

Fig 3 – An Example of Omnichannel. Reprinted from www.sqli.co/blogs/omni-vs-multi

Offline sales have numerous advantages such as hands on product experience, instant
satisfaction, direct interaction and feedback while there are also benefits related to online sales like unlimited variety of products, transparency in price, reviews of products among others (Rigby, 2011; Agatz, 2008; Grewal, 2004). Therefore, several authors argue that the offline channel can also be integrated with online channel to generates the different shopping experience (Herhausen et al., 2015).

2.3 Multi-Channel vs Omni-Channel

Multichannel retailing changing to Omnichannel retailing. The future development in retailing moving to Omnichannel and how it will affect the new retailing method (Verhoef, 2015). According to Rigby, the omni-channel is the future of retail shopping i.e the integration of both channels that provides advantage of physical store along with information-rich online channel. The starting of the internet era has the multichannel purchasing approach to the consumers with different and separate channels. As the innovations in the technology is developing, the omnichannel strategy is catching up. According to Russi, the future of online shopping will be a mix of offline and online (Russi, 2014).

Table 1. Multichannel vs. Omnichannel (Verhoef et al., 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MULTICHANNEL MANAGEMENT</th>
<th>OMNICHANNEL MANAGEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHANNEL FOCUS</td>
<td>Interactive channels only</td>
<td>Interactive and mass communication channels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHANNEL SCOPE</td>
<td>Retail sales channel: online website, store and direct marketing</td>
<td>Retail sales channel: online website, store, smartphones direct marketing, consumer touch points, , social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEPARATION OF CHANNELS</td>
<td>Heterogeneous channels. No overlap between the channels.</td>
<td>Channels are integrated to provide seamless and consistent retail experiences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Brand vs. Channel Customer Relationship Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Focus on Consumer retail channel</th>
<th>Focus on Consumer retail brand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Channel Management</strong></td>
<td>Per channel</td>
<td>Cross-channel objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
<td>Channel objectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.4 Customer Experience

Something that can be sensed or perceived is an experience (Berry et al., 2002). In store (online or offline), customers perceive some sort of service but for a customer, the interaction of service during the journey of buying process through various touch points gives the customer’s experience (Ding et al., 2010). For the same service, each individual customer has its own experience. Thus, no two individuals have the same experience (Gilmore and Pine, 1998). Customers have different emotions (happy, sad, joy, surprise, anger) towards the service experienced.

Initially the business was more focused on shopping experience but due to multiple channels it’s difficult to provide the same shopping experience to each channel to customers.

#### 2.4.1 Customer Experience Assessment

The strengths and weakness of customer experience (CX) can be measure with the Customer Experience Maturity Model (CXMM). This kind of assessment gives the retailers a clear view in which area there is a need of improvement. It can be done by breaking the customer experience in four expects.

1. Data

   The know the consumers, there is need to understand the consumers thoroughly. Often retailer thinks that they know their customer. But to understand the
consumers, there is need of lot of data. Data might be floating around but collecting
the data in the meaningful ways with the right approach is important because these
data helps to build the consumers personas which eventually helps to build the
experience the consumers desire.

2. Design
The design of the CX should have the clear vision. The product managers, sales
staff have the key insights of the consumers, the company and the brand. Their idea
should be incorporated while designing the CX.

3. Delivery
The implementation of delivery is one of the important aspects in CX. Each staff
has the individual role in overall CX. Sometimes there might be the struggle to
adhere the vision of the brand, trainings can be provided.

4. Measurement
Measuring the interactions, the consumers are having with retailers is another
aspect of the CXMM. In the digital age, there are lot of channels the retailers can
reach out to consumers to rate their CX. Consumers can have different view for
different channels are assessing.

2.5 Digital Marketing

Nowadays, the internet has played important role towards consumers perspective.
According to (Internetworldstats, 2011), there is a 44.8 % increase in the use of internet
from 2000-2010. The use of internet is increasing exponentially and becoming the daily
activity that the traditional medium of communication is diminishing and the online
medium is transforming the way of communication (Uttara, 2018). Moreover, the new
technologies like, broadband, Wi-Fi have made easy access to adopt the new digital
communication. Therefore, the retailers are adopting the digital platform to create their
value and strengthening their brand targeting the consumers worldwide. Every company
conducts their business in full or part through World Wide Web since 1990s (Sheehan,
Fig 4: Digital Marketing Reprinted from www.inethuddle.com/digital-marketing

The online media such as websites, social media, electronic newsletters are widely used to present the content to the consumers to accomplish the retailer’s business. Proper digital marketing will attract more consumers, hence it will increase in sales and image of the brand can reach to large consumers (Mayo, 2011). In digital marketing, the campaign should express the brand’s value and ideas. It can be in combination of words, logos, colors or design (Hackley, 2010).

Digital marketing is not just the advertising platform. It can be an important platform to provide services to their consumers. Digital marketing adds the value to the organization by improving customer service and creating personalized customer experience. The most advantage of digital marketing is about direct interaction with consumers, listening to them and learning from them. It shows organization is up to date with the latest technologies and increase the communication with the consumers and improving the quality of service.

2.5.1 Digital marketing relationship to Omni Channels

The rapid development of latest development in technology has increased the option for customer how and when they want to engage with brands (Bruggen and Rangaswamy, 2005). Consumers ability to select the channels has increased in recent years because
of latest development in various digital channel (Bell, 2014). The figure 5 shows the
different digital platform consumers used today for interaction with brands and retailers
also used for marketing and its difficulty in execution.

Fig 5: Channel Effectiveness vs Executinal Difficulty Reperinted from
www.learn.g2crowd.com/omnichannel-marketing

Omni-channel marketing is the one in which customer shopping experience is seamless
and smooth regardless of channels or device used by consumers (Shah., 2006; Gupta.,
2004;). Consumers can access the services by using the mobile app, by phone or a
computer but the consumer’s experience should be consistent and seamless through all
digital media. According to Verhoef (2015), Omnichannel management is collection of all
the available channels of retailers which is synchronized with all the channels and
consumer touchpoints in such a way that it is presented as a single customer shopping face
to the consumer. The Figure 6 shows each digital channel working with synergy and
providing the same information as customer travels through various channels.
The retailers opting for performance in each individual channel is focusing on multichannel whereas retailers focusing on customers engagement and their experience is using the omnichannel marketing strategy (Verhoef, 2015). The difference in opting the channels for providing the services are making the disorganized changes in marketing. The mobile platforms are becoming the core component of digital omni-channel marketing (Brynjolfsson et al., 2013).
3 RETAILS SALES CHANNEL

3.1 Physical channel

A physical channel allows the customer to instantly closeness to the product that they were buying (Grewal, 2004; Agatz, 2008). With traditional shops, retailers can provide unique experience for the customer and express the brand in the creative way. Consumers can be provided with personalized service which allow the consumers to touch, feel and try the product before making the purchase (Herhausen, 2015). Further, the physical store can incorporate the lightening, touch, smell into the customer experience. Designing the store plays an vital role in providing the product details to the customer. In some cases, customers might visit the store to buy the product (Bell et all, 2013). The physical store allows the customer to return/change the product in convenient manner and can also provide help in buying process through their well-trained staff.

Fig 7: An expample of physical channel (Brick and mortar shop of amazon)

According to above theory, the physical store provides some unique customer experience which cannot be provide with other channels. This also supports that online channels cannot make this offline physical channel obsolete. Lastly, all customers are not proficient in technology where these physical stores provide the needed option to shop.

3.2 Online channel
Online channel provides the service round the clock with multiple selection of product without any hindrance. Additionally, customers are provided with lots of information, reviews about the products as well as price comparisons and easy and quick payout process (Agatz, 2008; Rigby, 2011). The time saving is also one the important factor in this channel where customers can purchase in their own comfort. For the customers, in digital channel, products are delivered to their location at their suitable time is attractive. For retailers, they can keep track of customers interactions and relevant data can used for marketing unlike in physical store.

Despite many benefits of digital channel, digital retailers have to allocate more resources and time in marketing to let know their existence. It is also difficult to have meaningful interactions with customers as there is no direct/face-face interaction. It is difficult to build the trust and gain the customer’s confidence.

3.3 Mobile channel

The growing use of smartphones has made lot of rapid changes in retail shopping environment. Nowadays consumers are searching information on the store and mobile phone at the same time to get information about prices, discounts and attractive offers. As a result, webrooming (search online buy offline) is more is use than showromming (search and buy offline). Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson (2014) argued that smartphones has given consumer new shopping experience which allows them to instant review, price
comparison of the products. Furthermore, recent study by comScore (2015) shows that consumers are spending more time a month in an app than in a physical store. Its also the fact that consumers are online and connected longer in smartphone than before.

Fig 9: An example of mobile channel (Mobile app of amazon)

3.4 Catalog channel

This type of channel is old fashioned channel in which consumers use the catalog to shop. Retailer can print the photos of product with prices and description which give the customers different shopping experience. Catalog shopping is more expensive to print and the content in the catalogs are outdated very quickly.
Fig 10: An Example of Catalog channel (Printed Catalog of amazon)

Nowadays, retailers are printing the online catalog/e-catalog. Consumers are more turning into online and to get to the customers, retailers are constantly providing the e-catalog. Online catalog provides more flexibility as they can be modified and update very easily unlike printing the catalog. This channel has more advantage for the elderly people who are hesitant to use excessive technology (mobile apps, websites) to shop.


4 SURVEY FINDINGS

4.1 Online survey

According to Saunders et al. (2007), collecting information thorough questionnaire can be the great tool to obtain the related data when there is lot of questions to be answered by the participant. The questionnaire was created using Google forms and all the answer were collected anonymously in order to respect the privacy of the participant. In this study, there were ten questions to be answered by the participant with multiple-choice answers (survey questionnaire is in Appendix). At the end, participant was asked to indicate their age and gender. The questionnaire was mainly based on online and offline shopping behaviors of the participant.

A total of 32 surveys were completed during one-month period. The surveys are only taken from people who lived in Europe to focus in European market. Respondents were from 18 years to 65 years old. The new generation are becoming the large population and are affecting the way the people used to shop. Retailers are more focused and making the strategies to these consumers in mind.

Among the respondents, over sixty five percent were in 25-34-year age group, twenty eight percent were in 18-24 age group and six percent were in 35-44 age group (figure 11). Majority of the participants were young people.

![Figure 11- Age group](image)

Male respondents were accounted for two-third whereas females were accounted for one-
third (figure 12). The fact is today people are more active in social networks and the discussion are more focused/applicable on upcoming generations rather than current ones. However, all consumers regardless of age use digital channels and physical channel to shop.

Figure 12- Gender

The set of questions deals with online shopping behavior of consumers. When asked which platform is used for shopping, 68 percent respondents like to buy from store while 31 percent like to buy from websites(online) (figure 13). Considering more than half respondents still prefer to buy offline, it is important to understand the reason.

Figure 13- Preferred platform for shopping

In survey question 5, when asked why they prefer offline shopping, the most answers because of lack of touch and see the product. This was followed by consumers want to feel the experience (figure 14).
The second question was how often consumers buy using online platform. Over 55 percent of respondents said they often use the online platforms to shop while 37 percent only use rarely. Only 3 percent respondents replied with they always use online platform and 3 percent replied with never use online platforms for shopping (figure 15).

Of those of that, I want to understand that why they use online platform. Among the respondents, most of them (34 percent) selected price as their first choice followed by more choices (25 percent). 21 percent responded with comfort and 12 percent agreed with always availability of online platforms (figure 16).
The next set of questions was about how consumers like to deliver their product. 50 percent of respondents want their product to be delivered to their home while 15 percent wants in their postbox. 35 percent of respondents replied with the option they want to order online and collect from nearest store (figure 17).

In survey question 6, when asked about whether they use online channel only to get details about the product and visit physical shop to buy it. Over 60 percent answer were No while 40 percent respondents mainly female (70 percent female) replied with Yes (figure 18).
The last set of question is about whether the physical store should exist or not. Over 93 percent said Yes with less than 7 percent replied with No (figure 19).

The survey mentioned four reason which seemed to be common reason why the consumers want the physical store should exist. Over 50 percent consumers replied with they want to feel and touch of the product physically. 20 percent respondents replied with they can try the product and get it immediately. Only 6 percent replied with more attention to customer (figure 20).
Figure 20 – Reasons to visit physical store

The results from survey regarding why consumers want both online and offline channel and what can be done to improve the shopping experience in the future will be discussed and mentioned in the next chapter of analysis and discussion section.
5 ANALYZE AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, there will be discussion and analyzing based on literature review and online survey.

5.1 Consistent

Consumers move from channel to channel to complete the specific or various tasks over time, and they are exposed to various channel experiences. The retailers must present themselves in a trustworthy manner, so the consumers are satisfied with the shopping experience no matter what platform they are using. To ensure that trust, the company must maintain consistency across all platforms. These can be achieved with three steps.

5.1.1 Visual Design

The consistent and common design across all the platforms gives the retailers the instant recognition of the company. While creating the visual consistency, they should choose the same design and color schemes across all platforms will build trust with consumers which eventually encourages consumers for more actions in their platforms.

![Amazon Logo](image)

Fig 21: The logo of Amazon Company

The above figure 21 is the logo of amazon company which has their sales channel in every platform. They use this logo in every sales platform which makes consumers easily recognize the brand. This gives the consumers the confidence that they are buying from the genuine channel.

5.1.2 Functionality

It is true that different platforms can have different functionalities and one channel might support some task and others might be different. Some consumers may not have access to a
particular channel at given point. But the core features and functionality should be consistent across all the platforms. The same style interaction on all platforms will strengthen the brand and also offer consumers the opportunity to take advantage of any knowledge acquired in previous interactions with the company.

Fig 22: An example of both website and mobile apps having the same functionality

5.1.3 Consumer Data

Consumers do not consider the different platforms as different organization rather they see it as one whole organization. They expect the real-time consistent data as they move from one platform to another. So, to have the consistent information across all channels, the organization must create the integrated data systems that can update and share the information between all the channels.

A consistent experience builds user confidence and consumers can complete the activity faster and efficiently on the choice of their channel which brings trust and credibility towards the retailers

5.2 Optimization

As consumers interact with various platforms through different touch points, they create the lot of data which can be analyzed to see the pattern how the consumers using
different channels. Not just that, it also helps to make future improvements how the consumers will be interacting with various cross platforms. These can be some steps to optimize the customer data for omnichannel experience.

5.2.1 Unified Consumer Behavior across all platforms

The consumers are constantly creating the data about the products they are buying. However, this data is dispersed throughout various channels-- website, apps, social media, email, cart, purchases, returns, and more. The sets of individual data can be misleading. Only looking at the data of one channel may lead to wrong conclusion about consumers. To optimize the consumer journey, the data should be unified. There should be cross-channel data integration system which gives an whole organic view of consumers behavior.

5.2.2 Focusing on Important Journey

As lot of data is collected about the consumers behavior, it is extremely important to focus on important ones rather than focusing on trivial. With so much of data produced, it might be difficult to analyze. So, it is important to know KPIs and quantitative metrics. The focus should be on glitches as well opportunities that have the potential on the business.

5.2.3 Update And Analyze in Real Time

The consumers prefer to have the relevant information customized to their needs in real time as they access the different channels. This can be done by tracking and analyzing the interaction of consumers in real time. By tracking the touchpoints of the consumers, the personalized experience of the users can be created, no matter what channel they are interacting at the moment. This will help to draw the behavioral pattern of the consumer in real time giving the chance to engage the consumers with the custom-made experiences.

5.2.4 Predicting Buying Intentions

Prediction is also one of the important crafts of optimization. Consumers data mapping and analytics offers the advantage of making some thoughtful and important predictions beforehand. The consumers buying intentions can be known from behavioral patterns right from very first interaction in the channels. By mapping and analytics, the data makes the
consumers’ intentions visible thus they can be engaged more into the channels.

5.2.5 Feedback From Consumers

Feedback is one important tool of e-commerce. The value of feedback is maximized when it is based on customer journey. Feedback provides all the good things as well as goof-ups that is present in channels. It also helps to discover and decipher the customer journey.

5.3 Seamless

There has been the rise in the new devices and increase in interaction with these channels. The consumers are also expecting the effective and efficient experience as they are moving between the channels. So only providing the solutions on different channels is not enough rather user are expecting seamless movement between the channels without difficulty in completing the activity. The consumers expect the zero or minimal overhead while transiting from one channel to next. The consumers mostly do not complete an activity through a single channel. So, consumer’s expectation is to pick up from same point where they have left it before. But if consumers have to reestablish the activity when switching the channel, the consumers user experience might not be seamless. There might be various reasons why consumers may change the channels. There might be external interruption while completing the activity and want to continue later on in some different channel.

Sometimes the consumers might want to change the channel because the ongoing activity might me more effective on another channel. So, understanding the consumers move across various touchpoints is important to design and create the seamless and efficient channel transition rather than different disjoint interactions.

5.4 Collaboration

The boom of the smartphones and digital services have brought the radical transformation on consumers shopping. The retailers are having difficulty to retain the consumers from competitors. Most of the retailers have different inventory and marketing systems for different channels. The growing demand of more personalized content and shopping conveniences from consumers have made retailers to constantly update their services to more advanced tools and technology across their multiple channels.
Today consumer’s also have high in their shopping experience and retailers are also responding it with more innovative services that makes the shopping experiences more efficient and effective. They are integrating their systems across their channels with new advanced technology. The in-store technologies can facilitate consumers access the web and can provide promotional and context-specific marketing based on consumers interactions. The real-time inventory data and POS systems should have the integration between back-office and payments systems.

Retailers should also empower the staff with relative data of consumers right at their fingertips using geotracking, IoT or AI to provide the more personalized services.

5.5 Localization

Retailers may have the business globally, but the consumers always think locally. The latest technologies are providing retailers more personalized content to their consumers.

According to CSA survey, 79% of the consumers using the service does not speak English, and 75% of buyers have the same opinion that they will choose between the products in their local language.

We know that content is important. But translating all the content may not be the right strategy when it comes to localization. Retailers should focus on least amount of data needed to translate in order to provide consistent and seamless experience to their consumers. It can be call it as Minimum Viable Content (MVC). This will help the retailers to control their operating cost and test the different markets easily. Once the retailers have their minimum viable content, then they can use the resources based on their requirements.

The retailers those want to shift their business to omni channel can use Translation Management System (TMS). In TMS, all the content is centralized and when the consumers access the content, the localized version is delivered instantly. Since the data is centralized in TMS, organization can decide the content and change it according the markets. Retailers speaking the consumers language will be most impactful and increase in consumer satisfaction in omni channel strategy.
Fig 23 : An example of amazon website which provides content in local market (the website is from german local amazon)
6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter gives the summary and findings of the research. It is going to present the findings and analysis of the result. The subsection provides the some elements which is not considered but which can be taken for future research.

6.1 Summary

In the Chapter 1, the research questions is the following: “What are the key requirements the retailers must consider before migrating from multi-channel to omni-channel?” This subchapter aims to present the summary of the findings. At the beginning of the research, delimitations and research method were settled. The literature study about multi-channel, omnichannel, customer experience in online shopping were done in order to the in-depth knowledge about the topic. In the second phase, the participate were asked to fill the online questionnaire, there were participant of different ages and genders.

The initial point of the research was to find out the how the channels are integrated in the echo system of shopping. Although we found out that most of the retailers have integrated all the channels due to the advances in latest technology, there is still a hurdles for the retailers to develop the proper omnichannel strategy for their organization. In this paper, the main attempt is to study about the touchpoint across all the channels so that these channels can be integrated and provide the superior consumer experience.

During the research, some requirements were identified that the retailers should accept in order to develop the omni-channel consumer experience

- The retailers should maintain consistency across all the channels they are providing services. The consistent and common design across all the platforms gives the retailers the instant recognition of the company. The core features and functionality should be same regardless of the which platform the consumers are using. The flow of information should be consistent which can be achieved through integration of
the data so that retailers can deliver a unified information to each consumer.

- The consumers are constantly using online and offline channels and creating lot data. These kinds of data should be integrated and analyzed to understand the consumer behavior. This helps to understand and predict the buying intentions of the consumers.
- There is still the key role of physical channel although there is rise in online channels. The retailers must understand the importance of physical channel along with online. Consumers still have desire to have feel, touch and try out the product and direct interaction with the staff while purchasing offline. So, the retailers should give attention on both the channels to gain the omnichannel ecosystem.
- There has been the rise in digital channels and consumers interaction with these channels are also increasing. This the one of the important issues for the retailers because most of them are managing their consumers individually in individual channel. There should be a provision for the consumers to transit between the channel seamlessly.

6.2 Future Work

There is still a gap in the research which indicate there is need of future research. There is sufficient study about multi-channel, customer experience and various channel but more research is needed in integration of channel to reach the omnichannel ecosystem. The one of the most issue with consumers concern is about the privacy. As consumers want to protect the privacy, more study and research is needed in order to satisfy the consumer’s and assure consumers that their private data will be used correctly across different channels.
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APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS

The survey will take few minutes to complete. I will be grateful if you fill the survey and help me in this research. The data is collected anonymously for a master's thesis by Sagar Parajuli.

Email: Sagar.Parajuli@student.lut.fi

1. Which platform do you use for shopping (clothes and electronics)?
   - O Store
   - O Websites
   - O Mobile sites
   - O Apps

2. How often do you buy products using online platforms?
   - O Always
   - O Often
   - O Rarely
   - O Never

3. How do you like to deliver your product?
   - O Delivery to home
   - O Order online and collect from nearest store
   - O Post box

4. Why do you shop online?
   - O More choice
   - O Price
   - O Always Available
   - O Comfort
   - O I do not use online platform
     (continues)
APPENDIX 1. (continues)

5. Answer this question if you have chosen option "I do not use online platform" in previous question. Why you do not shop online?
   - I want to touch/see the product
   - I do not like to shop through websites
   - I want to feel the experience

6. Do you use online channel to know the information about the product and visit physical shop to buy?
   - Yes
   - No

7. Do you go to the physical shop to have touch and feel of product and buy online?
   - Always
   - Often
   - Rarely
   - Never

8. Do you think the physical store should exist?
   - Yes
   - No

9. If yes is your answer in previous question. Why?
   - I want to see the product physically
   - More attention to customer
   - Want the product immediately
   - I can try the product
APPENDIX 1. (continues)

10. If No is your answer in previous question. Why?
   O Online platforms are faster and convenient
   O Always available (24/7)
   O Do not like to contact with sales person
   O Do not like the store outlet

Gender
   O Female
   O Male

Age
   O 18-24
   O 25-34
   O 35-44
   O 45-54
   O 55-65