

# Assessing Consumers Perception on Multi-Channel Integration: A Study at Department Store in Palembang

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study to examine consumer perceptions of the implementation of multi-channel integration in omni-channel retailing. Retailers that have the right channels are able to give consumers a good impress and one of the competitive advantages. Multi-channel integration implemented creates a uniform consumer model so companies can recognize consumer buying patterns. A study has been conducted on 212 respondents who are omni-channel retail consumers, namely Department Store in Palembang. The data analysis technique using SPSS 22. The result show multi-channel integration perform by retailers is aligned with respondents' expectations. The average respondent assesses that the items from multi-channel integration are in the high category, which is above >80%. Respondents have a positive perception of the multi-channel integration of retailers.

*Keywords: Multi-channel Integration, Omni-channel Retailing*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Retailers with physical stores realize to be more competitive and innovative, they must have diversified channels by adding online channels [1]–[4]. Consumers use at least three or more channels, to research and purchase products. According to [5] stated one in three consumers show a single channel shopping style, and the rest regularly use multi-channel in shopping. Similarly, according to [6], 73% of consumers use multi-channel in the buying process. Consumers will choose different channels based on their needs and preferences at this stage of the buying cycle. Consumers choose different channels based on their needs and preferences at this stage of the buying cycle [7]. During the shopping process consumers switch channels and get used to using multi-channel when completing a purchase [8].

Retail companies are gradually changing their channel strategy to integrate with each other as a successful strategy to serve consumers. Multi-channel integration makes it easier for consumers to get more comprehensive information. Multi-channel integration can enrich consumers' value propositions [9]. Reinforcement occurs when a firm offers consistent merchandise, pricing, messaging, and customer service through all of its channels, and when those channels reinforce one another's

efforts [10], [11]. The consumer's shopping experience will improve when the channel is integrated [4]. Integration aims to build a holistic concept that does not dominate each other, it is an integrated total system of special benefits for consumers [12], [13]. Different benefits will be obtained by consumers when the channels are used separately [14].

The omni-channel strategy is evolving due to the presence of digital channels [15]. Customers can be adapted to an omni-channel system through the integration of retail channels using digital technology [16]. Multi-channel integration (MCI) is a multi-channel management offering a good experience for consumers across all retail channels [17], [18]. The shopping experience will improve when channels are integrated [4], [18], [19]. According to [20] MCI aims to provide mutual support and exchange channels for consumers. Coordinating and integrating channels can provide synergies to increase the effectiveness of each channel and contribute to improving retailer performance. The existing channels are not integrated with each other; all separate from the side of coordination, interaction and supervision [21].

Multi-channel integration is a major characteristic of an omni-channel environment [16], [22]. Multi-channel integration has the following measurement dimensions: *Integrated promotion, Integrated product and price, Integrated transaction information, Integrated information access, and Integrated order fulfillment* [1], [24], [25] *integrated information, integrated customer service, and integrated channel access* [26]; *integration promotion, integrated transaction information management, integrated product and pricing information management, integrated information access, integrated order fulfillment, and integrated customer service* [1]; *information consistency, freedom in channel selection, e-mail marketing effectiveness, channel reciprocity, and appreciation off store-based customer services* [13]; and *integrated information and physical integrated* [20].

Many retailers have started to intensify their business by adding online channels as a competitive advantage compared to retailers relying on traditional channels. All channels must be well integrated to maximize results. It is not easy for retailers to integrate the channels created. Huge resources are required to integrate across channels [27], [28]. The emergence of multi-channels will reshape consumer behavior and retailer marketing system. For this reason, it is necessary to understand how Multi-Channel Integration is applied to omni-channel retail from the consumer's point of view and contribute to retail development.

**2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

**2.1. Omni-channel Retailing**

Retailing is a company's activity to provide its products or services to consumers and as the last step in the supply chain to reach end users [29]. Retailing is defined as the activity of selling products and services to end users for their personal needs [30]. Channels are defined as different touch points where companies and customers interact [31], [32]. There are six groups of Omni-Channel retail companies: sales force, outlets (retail branches, shops, depots, and kiosks); telephone (traditional telephone, facsimile, telex, and call center contact), direct marketing (direct mail, radio, traditional TV), e-commerce (email, Internet, and interactive digital TV), and m-commerce (cellular telephone, SMS and text messaging, and services and 3G) [33], [34]. Omni-channel retail is an enterprise channel service integration format to create a seamless experience across every channel.

**2.2. Multi-channel Integration**

Channel integration is the ability, skill, and competence of retailers in managing their

infrastructure (stores, hardware and software technology, systems, warehouses, etc.) which is a requirement for an omni-channel system. Multi-Channel Integration (MCI) is a form of diversified channel management to offer a good experience for shoppers across all channels of a retail company [17], [18]. In the stages of the consumer process, multi-channel integration is carried out in phases as shown below:

**Table 1. Dimension of Multi-channel Integration**

Dimension	Description
Integrated Promotion	A unified Promotion form that connects and synchronizes sources, channels, market data and promotions. Ideally all promotional data sources should be shared, product/brand names, logos and mottos should be consistent, and publicity of one channel should be used in other channels. Each channel should be used to actively promote across other channels to create a sense of brand identity everywhere
Integrated Product and Price	Integrated pricing and product information implies synchronizing product descriptions, stock status, prices and making changes in them (e.g. discounts, availability) visible to consumers and other members of the omni-channel system instantly
Integrated Information Transaction	Integrated information transaction is providing secure accessibility to complete transactions through all available channels.
Integrated Information Access	Integrated information access means that customers can find access to information available on other channels and can easily switch to other channels.
Integrated Order Fulfillment	Integrated order fulfillment means that customers can complete the entire transaction process (including orders, payments, shipping and returns) using one or more channels.
Integrated Customer Service	Emphasize providing standardized and consistent service across all channels, and providing after-sales service to each other.

Source: [1], [25]

**3. RESEARCH METHODS**

The study uses a descriptive method that provides as accurate a description as possible of a particular individual, situation, symptom or group. The type of data is primary data by distributing questionnaires to 212 retail consumers who have

purchased on two or more channels. The object of research is retail that implements an omni-channel strategy, namely the Matahari Department Store (MDS) in Palembang which has 4 outlets. The sampling technique is non-probability sampling and sampling method is purposive sampling. This study uses SPSS to determine consumer perceptions of the multi-channel integration. The operational definitions in this study are as follows:

**Table 2. Operational variables**

Variables	Dimension	Indicator	Measuring Scale
Multi-channel Integration (MCI)	Integrated Promotion (IP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistency</li> <li>Ongoing promotions</li> <li>Contacts Similarity</li> </ul>	Semantic Differential
	Integrated Product and Price (IPP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistent product description</li> <li>Consistent product category classification</li> <li>Consistent product prices</li> <li>Consistent discounts</li> </ul>	
	Integrated Information Transaction (IIT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access purchase history</li> <li>Recommendation for next purchase</li> <li>Quality Web information.</li> </ul>	
	Integrated Information Access (IIA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Product Search</li> <li>Retailer inventory status</li> <li>Access information and functions</li> <li>Access inquiry service</li> </ul>	
	Integrated Order Fulfillment (IOF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The use of vouchers and coupons</li> <li>Online purchase retrieval at physical stores</li> <li>Payment for online purchase in physical stores</li> <li>Stock order</li> </ul>	
	Integrated Customer Service (ICS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Product return, repair or exchange</li> <li>Post-purchase service support</li> <li>Access the service assistant</li> </ul>	

Source: [1], [24], [25], [26]

## 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Result

#### 4.1.1. Respondent Profile

**Table 3. Respondent Profile**

Variable	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	55	25.9 %
	Women	157	74.1 %
	<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>100%</b>
Age	<20 years	26	12.3%
	20-30 years	148	69.8%
	31-40 years	30	14.2%
	>40 years	8	3.8%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>100%</b>
Occupation	PNS	15	7.1%
	Housewife	15	7.1%
	BUMN/BUMD	22	10.4 %
	Private Employee	115	54.2%
	Student	20	9.4%
	Other	25	11.8 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>100%</b>	
Income	<1.000.000	21	9.9%
	1.000.000 – 2.500.000	64	30.2%

Expenses	2.500.000 – 5.000.000	102	48.1%
	>5.000.000	25	11.8%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>100%</b>
	<1.000.000	36	17%
	1.000.000 – 1.500.000	69	32.5%
	1.500.000 – 3.000.000	57	31.6 %
>3.000.000	<b>40</b>	<b>18.9%</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Soure: Output SPSS, 2021

From the table above, the respondents are dominated by women with 20 – 30 years of age. Most of the respondents' jobs are private employees. Respondent income between Rp. 2.500.000 – Rp. 5.000.000 per month and expenses between Rp. 1.000.000 – Rp.1.500.000.

#### 4.1.2. Respondent Behavior

**Table 4. Respondent Behavior**

Variable	Category	Frequency	%
Preferred products to buy in stores	Convenience goods	17	8%
	Fashion Product	171	80.7 %
	Beauty Product	10	4.7%
	Sport Product	2	0.9%
	Electronic Product	1	0.5%
	Others	11	5.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>100%</b>
Preferred products to buy at online retail stores	Fashion Product	158	74.5%
	Beauty Product	24	11.3%
	Electronic Product	1	0.5%
	Healthcare Product	3	1.4%
	Others	25	0.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>100%</b>	
Modern retail preferred for online and offline shopping	MDS	212	100%
	Carrefour	137	64.4%
	Hypermart	141	66.5%
	Alfamart	162	76.4%
	Indomaret	162	76.4%
	Other modern ritel	142	67%
The preferred online channel for shopping	Shopping	124	58.5 %
	Application Website	16	7.5%
	Instagram	55	25.9%
	Facebook	17	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Source: Output SPSS, 2021

From the table above, fashion products are the most preferred products purchased in physical and online stores. Respondents have shopped at both physical and online stores. The respondent's favorite online shopping place is a shopping application.

4.1.3. Validity and reliability

Table 5. Factor Loading and Reliabilities Model

Dimension	Indicator	Factor loading ( $\lambda$ )	Factor loading Square ( $\lambda^2$ )	Error (e)	Description
Integrated Promotion (IP)	IP1	0,730	0,533	0,467	Valid
	IP2	0,810	0,656	0,344	Valid
	IP3	0,820	0,672	0,328	Valid
	IP4	0,780	0,608	0,392	Valid
	IP5	0,710	0,504	0,496	Valid
Integrated Product and Price (IPP)	IPP1	0,830	0,689	0,311	Valid
	IPP2	0,810	0,656	0,344	Valid
	IPP3	0,780	0,608	0,392	Valid
	IPP4	0,790	0,624	0,376	Valid
	IPP5	0,700	0,490	0,510	Valid
Integrated Information Transaction (IIT)	IIT.1	0,790	0,624	0,376	Valid
	IIT.2	0,820	0,672	0,328	Valid
	IIT.3	0,860	0,740	0,260	Valid
	IIT.4	0,870	0,757	0,243	Valid
Integrated Information Access (IIA)	IIA.1	0,800	0,640	0,360	Valid
	IIA.2	0,800	0,640	0,360	Valid
	IIA.3	0,820	0,672	0,328	Valid
	IIA.4	0,820	0,672	0,328	Valid
	IIA.5	0,810	0,656	0,344	Valid
Integrated Order Fulfillment (IOF)	IOF.1	0,870	0,757	0,243	Valid
	IOF.2	0,860	0,740	0,260	Valid
	IOF.3	0,860	0,740	0,260	Valid
	IOF.4	0,820	0,672	0,328	Valid
Integrated Customers Service (ICS)	ICS.1	0,860	0,740	0,260	Valid
	ICS.2	0,840	0,706	0,294	Valid
	ICS.3	0,800	0,640	0,360	Valid
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,060</b>	<b>17,109</b>	<b>8,891</b>		
Construct Reliability (CR)				0.980	Reliabel
Average Variance Extract (AVE)				0.658	

Source: Output SPSS, 2021

Based on the table above, the CFA Integration model with 26 indicators from six dimensions obtained all valid indicators, because it has a factor loading ( $\lambda$ ) value of more than 0.5. The reliability value shows that the Integration variable with 26 indicators is reliable, because the CR value is greater than 0.7 (CR=0.980) and the AVE value is greater than 0.5 (AVE=0.658). This means that the indicators formulated in the integration variable measurement model are valid and reliable.

4.2. DISCUSSION

4.2.1. Descriptive analysis

Table 6. Descriptive analysis

Dimension	Item	Frequency		
		Weak	Average	High
IP	IP1	3.3%	15.1%	81.6%
	IP2	3.3%	16.5%	80.2%
	IP3	4.2%	8.9%	86.9%
	IP4	4.2%	9.4%	86.4%
	IP5	1.9%	10.4%	87.7%
IPP	IPP1	1.4%	11.9%	86.7%
	IPP2	3.8%	11.9%	84.3%
	IPP3	3.3%	11.4%	85.3%
	IPP4	2.4%	10.8%	86.8%

Dimension	Item	Frequency		
		Weak	Average	High
IIT	IIP5	3.3%	13.3%	83.4%
	IIT1	4.2%	12.7%	83.1%
	IIT2	2.8%	17.0%	80.2%
	IIT3	2.4%	16.0%	81.6%
	IIT4	2.8%	14.7%	82.5%
IIA	IIA1	3.3%	9%	87.7%
	IIA2	3.3%	9.8%	86.9%
	IIA3	3.8%	17%	79.2%
	IIA4	2.8%	16.5%	80.7%
	IIA5	4.7%	13.2%	82.1%
IOF	IOF1	2.8%	10.4%	86.8%
	IOF2	4.2%	9.4%	86.4%
	IOF3	4.2%	12.7%	83.1%
	IOF4	5.2%	17.4%	77.4%
ICS	ICS1	3.8%	11.9%	84.3%
	ICS2	0.9%	10.8%	88.3%
	ICS3	2.4%	9.9%	87.7%

Note: 1 – 2,99 = weak, 3 – 4,99 = average, 5 – 7 = high  
 Source: Output SPSS, 2021

From the results of the table above, the respondent's perception of the company's multi-channel integration has been exactly as expected. The average value given by respondents to the form of integration carried out is >80%. The experience that consumers get from multi-channel integration matches the expectations criteria. The shopping experience will improve when the channel is integrated [4]. Integration aims to build a holistic concept which is an integrated total system that provides special benefits for consumers [12], [13]. Consumers will get different benefits if the channels are used separately [14]. If the integration strategy is applied, retailers can apply a uniform consumer model, and there is a close reconciliation between the marketing mix instruments.

The resulting multi-channel integration shows several indicator items that have a dominant influence. The Integrated promotion (IP) indicator item which is considered more influential on retail is to use shopping bags as a company promotion medium by placing the company's online channel address. In this case, retail should place more emphasis on promotion across multiple media through all channels. Each channel should be used to actively promote across other channels so as to create a sense of brand identity everywhere [25]. Integrated product and price (IPP) indicator items that is considered more influential on retail is the similarity of discount promos across all channels. This form of synchronization and consistency

across all channels will provide a good experience for consumers.

The indicator item Integrated product and price (IPP) which is considered more influence on retail is the similarity of discount promos across all channels. This form of sync and consistency across all channels will provide a good experience for consumers. The indicator item Integrated information transaction (IIT) which is considered more influential on retail is that consumers easily access previous purchase history on company channels. This will make it easier for consumers to retrace the products that have been previously searched for. Integrated transaction information management refers to how omni-channel retailers manage centralized big data managed from multiple channels providing additional services. Omni-channel retailers allow consumers to check their transactions across all different channels [35]. Additionally, omni-channel retailers can make recommendations for future purchases based on past transaction records. Transaction integration can also imply secure accessibility to consumer transaction data via multiple channels.

The indicator of the Integrated Information Access (IIA) item which is considered more influential on retail is that the respondents stated that they could see the stock of physical products on the company's online channels. Respondents have the convenience of searching for products that are not found in physical stores through online channels. This will certainly be a very good strategy for the company because consumers are expected not to divert purchases elsewhere. The indicator item Integrated order fulfillment (IOF) which is considered more influential on retail is that respondents can use vouchers that they get at physical stores to use on online channels. The indicator item Integrated customer service (ICS) which is considered more influential on retail is the respondent stating that the warranty is also given to products purchased online. Providing after-sales service is an added value for the company. Consumers feel they have a guarantee for the product purchased.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Multi-channel integration is a major characteristic of an omni-channel environment. A successful omni-channel retailer is able to properly organize and manage all the channels owned. That is, no one dominates, all channels are unified supporting for a seamless experience for consumers in every retail channel. Consumers can access a variety of brands, products, services and flexibility in purchasing, payment and delivery. Consumers are not constrained by time, location, destination and get the benefit from different channels.

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