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The Impact of Omnichannel Marketing Strategy on Customer Loyalty: Evidence from Emerging Markets

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Abstract: This article examines the impact of omnichannel marketing strategy on customer loyalty in emerging markets, with a focus on the mediating roles of customer satisfaction and perceived value.

Keywords: Omnichannel marketing strategy; Customer loyalty; Customer satisfaction; Perceived value; Emerging markets



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1. Introduction

The retail landscape has undergone fundamental transformation as the distinction between physical and digital channels continues to blur. Consumers no longer differentiate between online and offline touchpoints; they expect seamless experiences that allow them to browse on mobile, purchase on desktop, and engage in-store—all within a single, unified journey. This reality has elevated omnichannel marketing from a competitive advantage to a strategic necessity for brands worldwide.

In emerging markets, this transformation carries particular significance. These economies—spanning regions such as Latin America, South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Africa—are characterized by rapid digital adoption, expanding mobile penetration, and a growing middle class with evolving consumption patterns. However, they also face unique challenges: infrastructural constraints, fragmented retail environments, and diverse cultural contexts that shape consumer behavior in ways distinct from developed markets.

The relationship between omnichannel strategy and customer loyalty has been well-documented in Western contexts, yet the applicability of these findings to emerging markets remains uncertain. Recent scholarship has begun addressing this gap. Studies from Ghana examining e-commerce users found that seamless user experience plays a crucial moderating role in the relationship between omnichannel personalization and customer retention. Research from Sri Lanka identified risk management, security aspects, and expected performance as key factors influencing omnichannel selection in supermarket retailing. Meanwhile, investigations in Bangladesh's fashion sector demonstrated that omnichannel customer experience significantly advances loyalty through the mediating mechanisms of satisfaction and perceived value.

This article synthesizes these emerging research streams to address the following research questions:

1. How does omnichannel marketing strategy influence customer loyalty in emerging market contexts?
2. What mediating factors explain this relationship?
3. What contextual considerations should guide omnichannel implementation in emerging economies?

By examining evidence from multiple emerging markets and sectors, this review aims to provide both theoretical contributions to the omnichannel literature and practical guidance for managers operating in these dynamic environments.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Defining Omnichannel Marketing

Omnichannel marketing represents an evolution from multichannel approaches. Whereas multichannel strategies operate through separate, often siloed channels, omnichannel strategies integrate all touchpoints—physical stores, e-commerce platforms, mobile applications, social media, and loyalty programs—into a unified customer experience. This integration enables consumers to move seamlessly between channels while maintaining context and continuity.

Leading brands demonstrate this integration in practice. PUMA scaled personalized campaigns across multiple countries by unifying data and automating execution, achieving a fivefold revenue growth from email within six months. CHRIST, a German jeweler, connected loyalty across email, web, and mobile wallet, enabling customers to download loyalty passes digitally and scan them in-store, resulting in a 40% increase in CRM revenue. These examples illustrate how channel integration creates value by removing friction from the customer journey.

2.2 Customer Loyalty in Retail Contexts

Customer loyalty encompasses both behavioral dimensions—repeat purchases, increased share of wallet—and attitudinal dimensions—positive word-of-mouth, resistance to switching, emotional attachment. In omnichannel contexts, loyalty is shaped by the cumulative experience across all touchpoints rather than any single interaction.

2.3 Theoretical Foundations

Two theoretical frameworks inform understanding of the omnichannel-loyalty relationship. **Customer experience theory** posits that consumers form holistic evaluations based on their interactions with a brand across channels and over time. Positive experiences generate satisfaction, which in turn fosters loyalty. **Perceived value theory** suggests that consumers assess the benefits received relative to the sacrifices made. Omnichannel strategies enhance perceived value by offering convenience, consistency, and flexibility—benefits that often outweigh any additional complexity.

2.4 Emerging Market Context

Emerging markets present distinctive characteristics relevant to omnichannel strategy. Rapid urbanization and mobile adoption create "leapfrog" effects, where consumers may engage with digital commerce before traditional retail infrastructure fully develops. However, infrastructural gaps—unreliable connectivity, underdeveloped logistics, fragmented payment systems—pose implementation challenges. Cultural factors also matter: trust-building mechanisms, preference for cash transactions, and the role of social networks in purchase decisions vary significantly across markets.

Kraft Heinz's approach to Asian emerging markets illustrates adaptation to these conditions. The company focuses on "driving penetration of the category through education"—teaching consumers how to incorporate products into their meals—while adjusting to local shopping patterns such as increased trip frequency and varied package size preferences based on cash flow timing.

3. Methods

This article employs a systematic review approach to synthesize empirical evidence on omnichannel marketing and customer loyalty in emerging markets. The methodology follows these steps:

3.1 Search Strategy

Academic databases and institutional repositories were searched for studies published between 2024 and 2026, capturing the most recent research in this rapidly evolving field. Search terms included combinations of "omnichannel," "multi-channel," "customer loyalty," "customer retention," "emerging markets," "developing countries," and specific regional terms.

3.2 Inclusion Criteria

Studies were included if they: (1) reported empirical research on omnichannel marketing strategies; (2) examined outcomes related to customer loyalty, retention, or satisfaction; (3) were conducted in emerging market contexts as defined by the World Bank or similar classifications; (4) employed quantitative methods with sample sizes exceeding 100 respondents; and (5) were published in peer-reviewed journals or recognized institutional repositories.

3.3 Selected Studies

The review synthesizes findings from five key studies:

- Akude et al. (2026): Survey of 384 e-commerce users in Ghana examining seamless user experience as a moderator
- Maheepala et al. (2024): Study of 384 supermarket customers in Sri Lanka identifying factors influencing omnichannel selection
- Mahmood & Abdulkhaliq (2025): Survey of 415 apparel retail customers in Erbil, Iraq
- Alim et al. (2025): Study of 372 fashion brand customers in Bangladesh
- Blue Star Group case study (2025): Implementation across four Latin American countries with 554,120 loyalty members

3.4 Analytical Approach

Findings were analyzed thematically to identify consistent patterns across contexts, as well as variations attributable to market-specific factors. Effect sizes and statistical significance were compared where reported.

4. Results

4.1 Direct Effects on Customer Loyalty

Across all reviewed studies, omnichannel customer experience demonstrates a positive and significant relationship with customer loyalty in emerging markets. Alim et al. (2025) found that omnichannel experience significantly influences loyalty among Bangladeshi fashion consumers, with customer satisfaction and perceived value serving as key mediators. Similarly, Mahmood and Abdulkhaliq (2025) reported that omnichannel strategies greatly improve digital customer experience in Iraq's apparel sector, leading to enhanced satisfaction and loyalty.

4.2 Dimensions of Omnichannel Impact

The research reveals multiple dimensions through which omnichannel strategies affect loyalty:

Cross-channel customer experience shows a positively significant relationship with customer retention in Ghana's e-commerce sector. This finding aligns with the Sri Lankan study identifying "experience and expected performance" as influential factors in channel selection.

Channel service configuration also demonstrates significant positive effects on retention. The ability to configure services consistently across channels—whether browsing online and purchasing in-store, or accessing loyalty benefits regardless of transaction channel—enhances customer willingness to continue the relationship.

However, two dimensions showed insignificant direct effects in the Ghanaian study: channel

integration quality and omnichannel personalization. This finding is particularly noteworthy, suggesting that in some emerging market contexts, simply integrating channels or personalizing communications may not directly drive retention without additional facilitating conditions.

4.3 The Moderating Role of Seamless Experience

The moderating role of seamless user experience emerges as critically important. Akude et al. (2026) found that seamless experience positively and significantly moderates the relationship between omnichannel personalization and customer retention. In other words, personalization efforts translate into retention only when customers perceive the experience as genuinely seamless.

Interestingly, the same study found a *negative* significant moderation effect for the relationship between channel integration quality and retention. This counterintuitive finding may reflect that in contexts with infrastructural constraints, highly sophisticated integration efforts may introduce complexity that outweighs benefits, or may raise expectations that cannot be consistently met.

4.4 Practical Implementation Evidence

The Blue Star Group case study across Latin America provides compelling implementation evidence. By implementing an integrated loyalty management system connecting online and in-store interactions, the company achieved:

- 554,120 new loyalty members within six months
- 99.6% campaign delivery success rate
- Revenue uplift from automated welcome campaigns
- Consistent omnichannel experience across four countries and multiple brands

This case demonstrates that when execution challenges—data unification, cross-channel tracking, localized customization—are adequately addressed, omnichannel strategies can drive rapid loyalty growth even across diverse emerging markets.

4.5 Contextual Factors

The Sri Lankan study identified additional factors influencing omnichannel success in emerging markets: risk management, security aspects, and customer compatibilities. These findings highlight that in contexts where digital trust is still developing, addressing security concerns becomes foundational to omnichannel effectiveness.

Kraft Heinz's experience in Asian emerging markets reinforces the importance of adaptation. Rather than imposing standardized approaches, the company focuses on understanding local shopping patterns—increased trip frequency, varied package size preferences based on cash flow timing—and adjusting omnichannel execution accordingly.

5. Discussion

5.1 Interpretation of Findings

The accumulated evidence supports the conclusion that omnichannel marketing strategies positively impact customer loyalty in emerging markets, but the relationship is more nuanced than in developed market contexts. The consistent finding that omnichannel experience drives loyalty across Ghana, Sri Lanka, Iraq, Bangladesh, and Latin America suggests a fundamental principle: consumers everywhere value seamless, integrated experiences.

However, the insignificant direct effects for channel integration quality and personalization in Ghana deserve careful interpretation. Rather than indicating that these dimensions lack importance, these findings may reflect that in emerging markets, the *quality* of integration and personalization matters more than their mere presence. When infrastructure constraints or data limitations prevent truly seamless execution, customers may not perceive integration benefits.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

These findings extend customer experience theory by demonstrating its applicability across diverse socioeconomic contexts. The mediating roles of satisfaction and perceived value identified

in Bangladesh suggest that the theoretical mechanisms linking omnichannel experience to loyalty operate similarly across markets, even as the specific manifestations vary.

The moderation findings from Ghana add theoretical nuance by identifying conditions under which omnichannel dimensions affect retention. Seamless user experience emerges as a critical enabling factor—without it, personalization efforts may fail to generate loyalty benefits.

5.3 Managerial Implications

For managers implementing omnichannel strategies in emerging markets, several practical implications emerge:

First, prioritize seamless experience over channel proliferation. The Ghanaian findings suggest that adding channels without ensuring seamless integration may not drive loyalty. Investment should focus on unifying data and creating consistent experiences across the channels customers actually use.

Second, build integrated loyalty programs that bridge online and offline. The Blue Star Group case demonstrates that loyalty programs connecting digital and physical channels can drive rapid membership growth and revenue increases. This approach is particularly valuable in emerging markets where consumers may alternate between channels based on convenience, trust, or cash flow considerations.

Third, address foundational concerns—security, risk management, education—before pursuing advanced personalization. The Sri Lankan findings highlight that customers in emerging markets weigh security and risk factors heavily in channel selection. Kraft Heinz's education-driven approach to driving category penetration similarly recognizes that in emerging markets, building foundational understanding precedes advanced engagement.

Fourth, maintain flexibility for market-specific adaptation. The variation in findings across Ghana, Sri Lanka, Iraq, and Bangladesh underscores that while omnichannel principles apply broadly, execution must adapt to local infrastructure, culture, and consumer behavior.

5.4 Limitations

This review has several limitations. The synthesized studies employ different methodologies, measures, and analytical approaches, limiting direct comparability. Sample sizes, while adequate for individual studies, remain modest for cross-market generalization. Publication bias may overrepresent positive findings. Additionally, the rapidly evolving nature of both technology and emerging market retail means that findings require ongoing updating.

5.5 Future Research Directions

Future research should address several questions. Longitudinal studies could examine how omnichannel-loyalty relationships evolve as markets develop and infrastructure improves. Cross-market comparative research using standardized measures would enable more precise identification of contextual moderators. Qualitative research could illuminate the mechanisms through which seamless experience enables personalization effectiveness. Finally, research on specific emerging market segments—rural consumers, older adults, small business owners—would enrich understanding of heterogeneity within markets.

6. Conclusion

This review synthesizes recent evidence on the impact of omnichannel marketing strategy on customer loyalty in emerging markets. The findings consistently demonstrate that omnichannel customer experience significantly influences loyalty, with customer satisfaction and perceived value serving as key mediating mechanisms. However, the relationship is moderated by contextual factors including seamless user experience, risk management, security considerations, and infrastructural conditions.

Successful omnichannel implementation in emerging markets requires more than replicating developed-market approaches. It demands adaptation to local conditions—mobile-first strategies

where leapfrog adoption has occurred, education-driven approaches where category penetration remains low, flexible systems that accommodate varied shopping patterns, and robust security measures where digital trust is still developing. The brands that thrive will be those that combine unified data and automated execution with deep understanding of the specific markets they serve.

As emerging markets continue their digital transformation, omnichannel strategy will only grow in importance. The evidence reviewed here suggests that when thoughtfully adapted to local contexts, omnichannel approaches can drive meaningful loyalty growth, creating value for both customers and the brands that serve them.

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