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# Omnichannel Retailing and Customer Retention: The Mediating Effect of Omnichannel Shopping Experience

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**Abstract**

Advances in technology have led to the growth of channels via which businesses can communicate with customers, sell goods, and provide services. To survive in today's competitive retail market, businesses are placing a greater emphasis on omnichannel strategies, which involve integrating and coordinating a variety of sales channels to better serve and retain customers. Omnichannel retailing is a prominent strategy used by businesses to provide customers with a unified shopping experience across multiple channels. Based on the Stimulus – Organism – Response (S-O-R) theory, the purpose of the research is to examine the effect of omnichannel retailing strategies on customer retention mediated by the omnichannel shopping experience. A quantitative approach was employed, and a questionnaire was distributed electronically to the customers of fashion retailing in Egypt. The data was analyzed using the Smart PLS software. The results showed that omnichannel dimensions: integration, seamlessness and fulfillment have a positive effect on customer retention, and that fulfillment has the strongest effect among the three dimensions on customer retention. The results also revealed that shopping experience mediates the relationship between omnichannel retailing and customer retention.

**Keywords:** Omnichannel retailing, Customer retention, Customer shopping experience, Omnichannel integration, Omnichannel seamlessness, Omnichannel fulfillment

## 1. Introduction

In light of the increasingly dynamic and intricate nature of the retail industry, it has become imperative for retailers to adopt diverse strategies in order to effectively cater to customer demands, thereby enhancing their shopping experiences and fostering customer loyalty within the company's avenues (Stein and Ramaseshan, 2015). Organizations consistently allocate resources towards diverse shopping experiences in anticipation of enhancing retention of customers (Cambra-Fierro et al., 2021). Researchers have found that marketers are keenly interested in exploring various approaches to tackle these challenges. One such approach that has gained attention is the implementation of an omnichannel strategy, which has been shown to be an effective option (Thaichon et al., 2020; Verhoef et al., 2015). The emergence of internet technologies and the subsequent virtual bubble enticed a significant percentage of retailers to adopt online platforms, driven by the anticipation of attaining a first-mover edge in the competitive landscape (Nagar, K.; Gandotra, P., 2016). Due to the ongoing advancements in technology as well as digital platforms, the traditional retail setting, characterized by separate and distinct shopping channels, has undergone a significant transformation into a unified and integrated shopping experience known as the "Omnichannel Experience." In this context, individuals have the ability to engage in shopping activities by utilizing various platforms such as online shopping, physical stores, and mobile commerce (Shi, S. et al., 2019). While multichannel retailing emphasizes the utilization of multiple sales channels that operate independently, the omnichannel retail model aims to integrate and unify every point of interaction to facilitate a seamless shopping experience without any disruptions (Chauhan, P.; Sarabhai, S., 2019).

Moreover, companies in recent years have encountered a growing complexity in the market environment, primarily caused by the rapid advancements in digital technology. These innovations have led to significant changes in consumers' lifestyles and their interactions with brands and businesses (Salviotti et al., 2022). These changes have increased challenges that face organizations in this technology era, one

of these challenges is the customer retention that has been proved by previous studies that it is vital for an excellent firm's performance and profits and plays a dynamic role in its long-term accomplishments (Chua et al., 2017). Therefore, it is crucial for firms to implement a variety of methods, such as Omnichannel strategies to increase its ability to retain customers.

## 2. Problem Statement:

The main problem underlying this research is the need to increase customer retention by examining the effect of omnichannel retailing strategies on customer retention, while also considering the role of shopping experience to increase consumer retention. Especially that research on omnichannel strategies is still fragmented in Egypt. Therefore, the research addresses these questions:

1. *What is the effect of omnichannel retailing dimensions (integration, seamlessness, fulfilment) on customer retention?*
2. *What is the role that the shopping experience plays in the relationship between omnichannel retailing and customer retention?*

Accordingly, the research's main objectives are to investigate the effect that omnichannel retailing dimensions (Integration, seamlessness and fulfillment) have on customer retention, and the mediating role of shopping experience in this relationship.

## 3. Theoretical foundation and hypothesis development:

### 3.1 The Theory of stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R)

The S-O-R theoretical framework was developed by Mehrabian and Russel (1974), and it is one of the theories that is utilized widely in describing the shopping behaviors that consumers exhibit in a variety of different contexts including retailing (Le & Nguyen-Le, 2021). The S-O-R model examines the subsequent response exhibited by individuals towards a given stimulus, primarily in the form of observable behavior. The term "stimulus" (S) denotes an external factor that serves as input and is closely connected to the surrounding

environment. Organisms are entities that exhibit responses to various stimuli, encompassing emotions, sensations, and affective reactions (Eroglu et al., 2003). The term "reaction" (R) pertains to the responses and behaviors exhibited by individuals towards organisms, as described by Buxbaum (2016). Human beings are complex organisms capable of generating emotional and psychological components, which in turn influence their mood, emotions, and attitudes as responses to various stimuli. Within the framework of this study, the dimensions of omnichannel retailing: Integration, seamlessness and Fulfillment are conceptualized as stimuli, the shopping experience plays a dominant role as the organism, and customer retention is regarded as the response.

### **3.2 Omnichannel retailing and customer retention.**

Marketing channels are very important for any organization as they serve as a way of interaction with customers (Beck and Rygl, 2015). As suggested by Payne et al. (2017), customers exhibit a tendency to utilize various channels because they offer customers varying levels and types of services and outputs and help customers in assimilating product information throughout the shopping process. To capture the interest of consumers and address their needs, companies have adopted a multichannel strategy (Rangaswamy and Van Bruggen, 2005). A multichannel approach refers to a collection of strategies employed to market and distribute products or services through multiple channels. These channels, however, do not have any form of interaction with one another (Beck and Rygl, 2015). The utilization of a multichannel approach capitalizes on customers' inclination to seek out more convenient methods for enhancing their shopping experience. According to Zhang et al. (2010), the emergence of multichannel retailing has led retailers to utilize diverse online channels as a means to enhance sales by offering merchandise to customers. Multichannel retailing encompasses the strategic planning, implementation, synchronization, and assessment of various channels utilized by retailers to offer customers information, products, services, and support. This approach aims to enhance customer value and cultivate a lasting relationship with consumers (Neslin et al., 2006; Rangaswamy and Van Bruggen, 2005). According to Carroll and Guzman (2015), the multichannel marketing approach has undergone a transformation to

enhance customer experiences, resulting in the emergence of the omnichannel approach. Verhoef, et al. (2015), explained that omnichannel retailing can be defined as the cooperative handling of multiple channels and customer interaction points. Omnichannel retailing is distinguished by the integration of the processing of orders, which involves an ongoing transfer of information, collaborative operations, efficient logistics, and effective management of risks across multiple channels (Huebner et al., 2016). The competitiveness of omnichannel retailing is contingent upon the successful attainment and sustenance of outstanding interactions across all customer contact points, thereby engendering a comprehensive shopping experience (Von Briel, 2018). The objective of touchpoint handling in the context of omnichannel retailing is to ensure a cohesive and uninterrupted shopping experience for customers, rather than solely focusing on enhancing the individual performance of specific touchpoints. Previous studies have discussed many of the omnichannel retailing dimensions. Gao et al. (2021) studied three dimensions: channel transparency, channel convenience and channel seamlessness and their moderating effect on the relationship between customer experience and customer retention. While Rodríguez et al. (2020) proposed three dimensions including: consistency, freedom in selecting channel, and synchronization among channels. Finally, Riaz, et al. (2021) proposed four dimensions: omnichannel integration; omnichannel seamlessness; omnichannel fulfilment and omnichannel usability that had an influence on customer experience while using the omnichannel retailing. Based on previous studies, the researchers have selected three dimensions that are considered the most important dimensions for omnichannel retailing. These dimensions are integration, seamlessness, and fulfillment.

### 3.2 .1 Omnichannel integration

Channel integration is a crucial component of omnichannel retailing. According to Sousa and Voss (2006), the concept of channel integration pertains to the capacity of a company to offer customers a cohesive and uninterrupted shopping experience across various channels. The integration of various channels enables organizations to gain a competitive edge over their rivals (Wakolbinger & Stummer, 2013).

Previous research has consistently demonstrated that the quality of channel integration has a significant impact on customers' evaluations of a corporation or a brand, resulting in positive outcomes that are beneficial to retailers (Emrich et al., 2015; Herhausen et al., 2015; Seck, 2013; Seck & Philippe, 2013). According to Li et al. (2015), a consumer who engages in omnichannel behavior utilizes multiple channels prior to reaching a final decision. To achieve this, the implementation of omnichannel retailing necessitates the integration of brand efforts across multiple channels, ensuring consistency in both content such as product details, pricing, promotional materials, and inventory availability, and processes such as client services and outcomes (Sousa and Voss, 2006). Based on the S-O-R framework, the establishment of anticipated consistency in both process and content performs as an external stimulus within the consumer's cognitive processes (Roschk et al., 2017). The stimuli will, in turn, result in a modification of the customer's inner cognitive status (Le & Nguyen-Le, 2021).

### 3.2 .2 Omnichannel seamlessness

The concept of seamless shopping experiences encompasses various components, such as interactions with different channels, devices, and touchpoints (Cocco, H., & Demoulin, N. T, 2022). The increasing prevalence of technological devices has led to a growing expectation among customers for an omnichannel experience that is characterized by accessibility, convenience, and seamlessness. In the context of omnichannel retailing, the seamlessness of the shopping experience is contingent upon the ease with which customers are able to restart their buying actions from the point at which they left off (Schoutteet, P. et al., 2017), According to the Mirzabeiki, V.& Saghiri, S.S. (2020), omnichannel seamlessness refers to the degree to which customers perceive shopping across all physical, digital, and mobile devices as being adaptable, uniform, and user-friendly. The achievement of a seamless omnichannel experience necessitates the restructuring of customer value proposition components and activities to ensure the availability of products across various sales channels (Sulastini et al., 2018).

### 3.2.3 Omnichannel fulfillment

The evolving retail environment has sparked a growing interest in omnichannel fulfillment, leading to a rise in scholarly studies that specifically examine the fulfillment and inventories components of omnichannel strategies (Taylor et al., 2019). The study of omnichannel fulfillment involves the incorporation of numerous touch points that are seamlessly coordinated through comprehensive planning (Caro, et al., 2020). According to Riaz, et al. (2021) an effectively implemented omnichannel approach encompasses a streamlined fulfillment procedure that guarantees the convenient ordering, allocation, and shipment of products to the ultimate customer. Omnichannel fulfillment refers to a strategic approach employed by retailers to manage and regulate the movement of products through a cohesive distribution structure (Bhattacharya, A. and Srivastava, M. A, 2020). The marketing-oriented perspective of omnichannel emphasizes the consumer's preference for a seamless and inconspicuous order fulfillment process. Undoubtedly, when the product is available in the retail system, the client desires to make the purchase with the utmost convenience, independent of the channel and place (Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014). Consumers are increasingly seeking greater convenience and desire the ability to make purchases at any time, from any location, and using any device. They also expect the option to either pick up their things in-store or have them shipped to their homes. Additionally, they seek a simple return process, whatever the delivery location is (Mercier et al., 2014; Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014).

### 3.2.4 Customer Retention

Customer retention can be described as the likelihood of a client remaining loyal to a corporation in the future (Ranaweera and Prabhu, 2003). The passage delineates the dedication of customers who express their willingness to maintain ongoing commercial relationships and engage in transactions with enterprises (Cambra-Fierro et al., 2021). The objective of customer retention is to employ strategies that effectively meet customer satisfaction and foster lasting connections with those customers (Singh, 2006). Furthermore, a clear relationship exists between satisfaction, loyalty, and retention, as evidenced by the

fact that greater levels of satisfaction and loyalty lead to increased retention rates of customers (Ranaweera and Prabhu, 2003). The implication of customer retention necessitates additional emphasis within the contemporary hyper-competitive landscape. The ability to retain customers is closely linked to a company's performance and financial gains and serves as a critical factor in its sustainability and enduring achievements (Chua et al., 2017). The retention of current customers, or the enhancement of customer revisits, is a more efficient strategy as it eliminates the need to allocate resources towards acquiring prospective consumers (Jones et al., 2000). Hence, it is imperative for businesses to employ diverse strategies such as Omnichannel strategies. According to Li et al. (2019) an omnichannel strategy is essential for consumers' experience, as it has a significant impact on customer retention. This strategy can be used to encourage repeated customer visits, thereby optimizing the future achievements and financial gains of the firm. Therefore, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- H1: Omnichannel Integration has a positive effect on customer retention within the fashion retailing industry.*
- H2: Omnichannel seamlessness has a positive effect on customer retention within the fashion retailing industry.*
- H3: Omnichannel Fulfillment has a positive effect on customer retention within the fashion retailing industry.*

### **3.3 Omnichannel retailing, shopping experience and customer retention.**

Both academics and practitioners have acknowledged that the customer shopping experience plays a crucial role in influencing the customer decision-making process and the effectiveness of the retailer's strategy concerning omnichannel. The omnichannel shopping experience refers to a strategy that combines many channels to optimize and simplify all customer interactions, resulting in a cohesive and seamless experience (Alnawas & Brown. 2018). Retailers have been motivated to have a deeper comprehension of the entire customer journey in order to enhance the customer shopping experience (Aubrey, C.; Judge, D., 2012).

Lately, shopping experience has emerged as a crucial factor in the success of clothing businesses. In the context of omnichannel retailing, customer loyalty is influenced by both the perceived coordination between various channels and the overall shopping experience across those channels (Chen et al. 2022). Customers derive emotional gratification in addition to the utilitarian benefits of using and enjoying fashion products. Simultaneously, through a well-executed omnichannel coordination plan, customers will accumulate experiences from each channel and formulate an assessment. The retailer's omnichannel approach, as described by Chang and Li (2020), leads to a phenomenon known as integrated experience. Positive shopping experiences lead to greater merchant evaluations, resulting in increased purchasing frequency and the development of consumer loyalty which increases the ability of the firm to retain customers (Sun and Jeyaraj, 2013). These arguments have resulted in the formulation of the subsequent hypotheses:

*H4: Customer shopping experience has a positive effect on customer retention.*

*H5: Customer shopping experience mediates the relationship between Omnichannel retailing (Integration - seamlessness – Fulfillment) and customer retention.*

#### **4. Research Objectives**

The research aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Investigating the effect of Omnichannel retailing on customer retention.
  - Determining the effect of Omnichannel integration on customer retention
  - Exploring the effect of Omnichannel Seamlessness on customer retention
  - Studying the effect of Omnichannel Fulfillment on customer retention
- Examining how customer shopping experience mediates the relationship between omnichannel retailing and customer retention.

## 5. Research proposed model.

The study model was formulated according to the preceding hypotheses in the following manner:

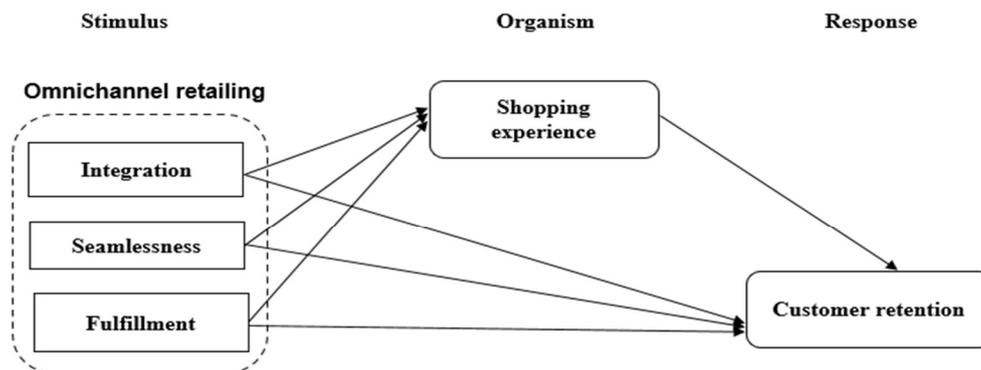


Figure (1) Research Model

## 6. Study Sector and Data collection

The researchers have chosen fashion retailing particularly (Zara, Mango and H&M) which were considered among the first fashion retailers in Egypt that has used Omnichannel retailing. Zara is a Spanish fashion retailer based in the region of Galicia, Spain. Established in 1975 by Amancio Ortega as part of the Inditex company and is considered the largest fashion retailer globally. According to Povedano (2023) Zara has a global presence in 96 countries and maintains a network of more than 2,000 outlets across the globe and introduces annually an estimated number of 12,000 novel designs. The revenue of Zara has exhibited consistent growth over the years, with a notable increase from €10.80 billion in 2013 to €23.76 billion in 2022. The online store of Zara witnessed a substantial increase in revenues, surging from \$0.81 million in 2014 to \$6.16 million in 2022 (Daniel,2023).

Mango is also a Spanish fashion store, that has achieved a 20% increase in its revenue for the first half of the year 2023, reaching €1.45 billion. This is a 30% growth compared to the levels seen before the pandemic in 2019. The company, headquartered in Barcelona, reported a strong

performance in its primary markets, where it has ambitious plans for growth. Mango has expanded its networks and partnerships, resulting in a current global store count of 2,615. This growth includes the launch of 40 new locations starting in December 2022. Concurrently, there was a nearly 10% increase in online sales compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. As of June 30th, Mango's online company had over 150 million visitors with log-ins that have reached 435 million times ([Beevers, 2023](#)).

Finally, H&M, a retail store specializing in women's clothing, took place in Västerås, Sweden in 1947. Presently, H&M Group is an internationally renowned fashion and design corporation. It is a retail giant with an extensive global presence, boasting a vast network of physical locations across 75 different regions. H&M introduces around 20,000 novel styles annually and boasts a vast network of more than 4,000 brick-and-mortar stores and a robust online platform that operates in over 50 nations. The brand value of H&M reached its highest point at \$19.18 billion dollars in 2017 and is currently at \$12.70 billion dollars as of 2022. In 2020, it was ranked as the ninth most expensive fashion brand globally. H&M's revenue has experienced fluctuations over the years, reaching its peak in 2019 with \$24.71 billion dollars. The corporation had a physical and online sales figure of \$22.42 billion in 2022 ([Daniel, 2023](#)).

The collection of data was done through an online questionnaire. The study population consisted of customers of fashion retailing in Egypt specifically the customers of Zara, Mango and H&M in Egypt. A filtering question was added to ensure that participants had prior experience with those fashion retailers' omnichannel. 450 questionnaires were distributed. The complete questionnaires that were collected were 401 complete and valid questionnaires with a response rate of 89.1%.

### **7. Measurement Scales**

The questionnaire was adapted from the scale developed by Zhang et al. (2019), which assesses two of the omnichannel retailing dimensions: omnichannel integration (6 items) and omnichannel fulfilment (4 items). The measurement of the third dimension of the

omnichannel retailing which is the omnichannel seamlessness (3 items) was measured using the scale developed by Huré et al. (2017), while the measurement of the shopping experience (4 items) was carried out using the scale of Kim and Choi (2016) and Gao et al (2019). Finally, the customer retention (5 items) was measured using the scale adapted from Li et al. (2018). The various components of the instruments were assessed using a five-point Likert scale, which encompassed responses ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". The concluding section of the questionnaire gathered demographic information from the respondents, encompassing variables such as gender, age, average monthly income, education, and the time spent on Zara application.

## 8. Data Analysis and results

The study used SmartPLS 4.0 along with the partial least squares (PLS) method to evaluate the measurement scales and the structural model. The findings of the analysis are presented in the following section.

### 8.1 Sample characteristics

Table (1) Sample characteristics

Item	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	190	47.4
	Female	211	52.6
	Total	401	100
Age	18-25	131	32.7
	26-35	120	29.9
	36-50	99	24.7
	above 50	51	12.7
	Total	401	100
Average Monthly income	less than LE 5000	96	23.9
	5000-10000	191	47.6
	More than LE10000	114	28.4
	Total	401	100
Education	Undergraduate	64	16
	Graduate	273	68.1
	Postgraduate	64	16
	Total	401	100
The use of Fashion applications	1-3 times a week	137	34.2
	1-3 times a month	140	34.9
	Daily	124	30.9
	Total	401	100

The results of Table (1) indicate that the largest percentage of respondents were females with 52.6% compared to males 47.4%, and the age group from 18 to 25 years was the most interactive with 32.7%, followed by the age group between 26 Up to 35 years old. the monthly income of 47.6% of the respondents ranged from 5000 to 10000. Moreover, 84.1% of the respondents were graduates and post graduate students. 34.9% of the respondents use fashion mobile applications one to three times a month. While 34.2% use the applications from 1 to 3 times a week and 30.9% use them daily.

## 8.2 Descriptive statistics

**Table (2) Descriptive statistics**

Construct	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
<b>Omnichannel Integration (OI)</b>	OI 1	3.733	1.314	5
	OI 2	3.753	1.331	3
	OI 3	3.746	1.313	4
	OI 4	3.721	1.348	6
	OI 5	3.763	1.308	1
	OI 6	3.753	1.320	2
<b>Omnichannel Seamlessness (OS)</b>	OS 1	3.721	1.324	3
	OS 2	3.736	1.319	2
	OS 3	3.753	1.322	1
<b>Omnichannel Fulfillment (OF)</b>	OF1	3.753	1.325	2
	OF2	3.736	1.319	3
	OF3	3.753	1.310	1
	OF4	3.733	1.333	4
<b>Omnichannel Shopping experience</b>	OSE1	3.751	1.312	2
	OSE2	3.731	1.314	3
	OSE3	3.751	1.311	1
	OSE4	3.728	1.324	4
<b>Customer retention (CR)</b>	CR1	3.726	1.334	5
	CR2	3.776	1.298	1
	CR3	3.733	1.327	3
	CR4	3.733	1.320	4
	CR5	3.763	1.323	2

Table (2) shows the descriptive statistics for all variables. It is evident that the data exhibit low variability as indicated by the small standard deviation values (which are less than the mean). Additionally, the mean values of all variables are closely aligned. The value of the weighted arithmetic means for all the statements of the omnichannel integration falls between (3.72 - 3.76), statement (OI5) which states that Zara delivers a consistent brand image across the various channels ranked first with an average of 3.76. The value of the weighted arithmetic means for all the statements of the omnichannel Seamlessness falls between (3.72 - 3.75), statement (OS3) which states that I have not perceived any boundaries or any barriers when moving from one channel to another channel of ZARA ranked first with an average of 3.75. For the third dimension omnichannel Fulfillment, the value of the weighted arithmetic means falls between (3.73 - 3.75), statement (OF3) which states that the orders are delivered by the time promised by Zara ranked first with an average of 3.75. For the customer shopping experience variable, the value of the weighted arithmetic means falls between (3.73 - 3.75), (OSE3) I think the shopping experience across all the channels of Zara is consistent ranked first with an average of 3.75. Finally, the value of the weighted arithmetic means for the customer retention variable, falls between (3.73 - 3.78), (CR2) Even if Zara is difficult to reach, I would buy there, ranked first with an average of 3.78.

### 8.3 Reliability & Convergent Validity

The reliability and convergent validity of the proposed model were examined. Table (3) shows Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) values were calculated for all constructs. The results indicate that Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) values are above 0.7, and AVE values  $> 0.5$  (Hair et al., (2017)). Therefore, the proposed model and study variables have reliability and internal consistency.

**Table (3) Reliability & Convergent Validity Analysis**

Construct	Items	Factor Loading	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
<b>Omnichannel Integration (OI)</b>	OI 1	0.985	0.991	0.993	0.958
	OI 2	0.976			
	OI 3	0.978			
	OI 4	0.981			
	OI 5	0.979			
	OI 6	0.973			
<b>Omnichannel Seamlessness (OS)</b>	OS 1	0.985	0.984	0.987	0.962
	OS 2	0.981			
	OS 3	0.977			
<b>Omnichannel Fulfillment (OF)</b>	OF1	0.979	0.985	0.989	0.956
	OF2	0.977			
	OF3	0.974			
	OF4	0.980			
<b>Omnichannel Shopping experience</b>	OSE1	0.982	0.988	0.990	0.960
	OSE2	0.981			
	OSE3	0.982			
	OSE4	0.975			
<b>Customer retention (CR)</b>	CR1	0.982	0.991	0.992	0.963
	CR2	0.980			
	CR3	0.980			
	CR4	0.983			
	CR5	0.980			

#### 8.4 Discriminant Validity analysis

The Fronell-Larcker test is one of the most common tests to verify the validity of the data used in the study model. According to this test, the square root of the average variance is greater than the relative correlation of the study (Fornell& Lacker,1981). The results of Table (4) show that the value of the Fronell-Larcker test ranges between (0.979 - 0.997), which are strong correlation values, which indicates the validity of the study model.

**Table (4) Discriminant Validity (Fronell-Larcker Test)**

Construct	Customer retention	Shopping experience	fulfilment	integration	seamlessness
Customer retention	0.983				
Shopping experience	0.993	0.982			
fulfilment	0.997	0.996	0.979		
integration	0.997	0.996	0.997	0.979	
seamlessness	0.994	0.993	0.993	0.995	0.984

**8.5 Structural Model**

**8.5.1 Testing hypotheses (H1-H2-H3)**

In order to test the measurement model of variables (Integration - seamlessness - Fulfillment), the Partial Least squares (PLS) was used by using SmartPLS 4.0 program, as figure (2) shows the relationship between Omnichannel Retailing Strategies on Customer Retention

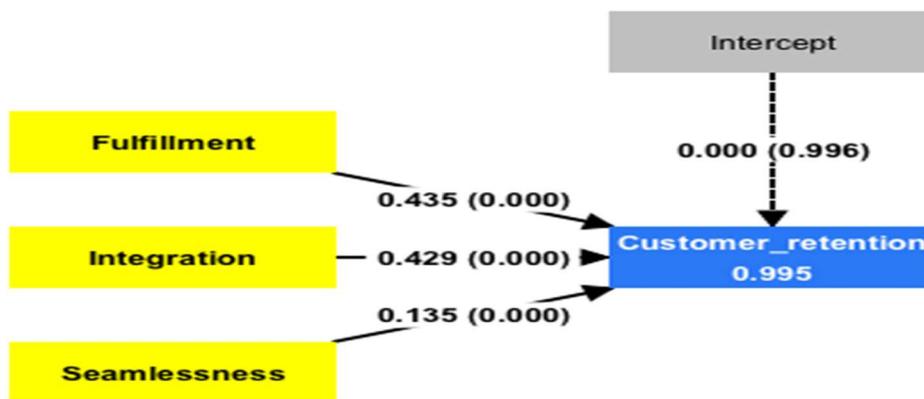


Figure (2) Multiple regression model (1) of omnichannel strategies on customer retention

Figure (2) shows that the R<sup>2</sup> coefficient is 0.995, meaning that (Integration-seamlessness - Fulfillment) explains 99% of the changes

that occur in customer retention within the fashion retailing industry. Also, Table (5) shows that the F-test = 0.00 which means that the model is significant and can be used to predict, and that The Durbin-Watson coefficient is 1.728 this indicates that there is no problem of autocorrelation between errors.

**Table (5) Summary Coefficients of Model of omnichannel strategies on customer retention**

variables	Standardized coefficients	T value	P value	F-test	0.00
Integration	0.429	7.429	0.000	Durbin-Watson test	1.728
Fulfillment	0.435	9.180	0.000		
Seamlessness	0.135	3.814	0.000		
Intercept	0.011	5.805	0.006		

Table (6) shows the tests for the quality of the estimated study model, with the aim of determining the validity of the results of the model, and the value of the Breusch-Pagan Test indicates that there is no problem of heteroscedasticity between the residuals. and VIF test indicates that there is no variance inflation in the estimation of the multiple regression model.

**Table (6) Model quality tests**

	Test-Statistic	df	P value
Breusch-Pagan Test	7.198	3	0.382
VIF			
Integration	Fulfillment	Seamlessness	
1.343	1.219	1.656	

*H1 predicts that Omnichannel integration has a positive effect on customer retention within the fashion retailing industry.*

As shown in Table (5), there is a positive effect of Omnichannel Integration on customer retention, with a value of 0.429, with a statistical significance level of less than 0.05 and T-value = 7.429, Based on the previous results, H1 is supported.

*H2 predicts that Omnichannel seamlessness has a positive effect on customer retention with the fashion retailing industry.*

Table (5) shows that there is a positive effect of the independent variable, Omnichannel seamlessness, on the dependent variable, customer retention, with a value of 0.135, with a statistical significance level of less than 0.05 and T-value = 3.814, and therefore, H2 is supported.

*H3 proposed that Omnichannel Fulfillment has a positive effect on customer retention with the fashion retailing industry.*

Based on the results shown in table (5), There is a positive effect of Omnichannel fulfillment, on customer retention, with a value of 0.435, with a statistical significance level of less than 0.05 and T-value = 9.180, and therefore, H3 is supported.

### 8.5.2 Testing hypothesis H4:

*H4 predicts that Customer shopping experience has a positive effect on customer retention.*



Figure (3) Multiple regression model (2) of customer shopping experience on customer retention

Source: From Smart PLS v4 Output.

Figure (3) indicates that  $R^2$  coefficient is 0.986, meaning that Customer shopping experience explains 98% of the changes that occur in customer retention within the fashion retailing industry. Also, Table (7) shows that the F-test = 0.00 which means the model is significant and can be used this to predict, and The Durbin-Watson coefficient is 1.747 This indicates that there is no problem of autocorrelation between errors.

**Table (7) Summary Coefficients of Model (2)**

variables	Standardized coefficients	T value	P value	F-test	0.00
Customer Shopping	0.993	9.806	0.000	Durbin-Watson test	1.747
Intercept	0.001	4.667	0.005		

As shown in table (7) there is a positive effect of the customer shopping experience, on customer retention, with a value of 0.993, with a statistical significance level of less than 0.05 and T-value = 9.806, and therefore, H4 is supported.

**8.5.3 Testing hypothesis H5:**

H5 predicts that Customer shopping experience mediates the relationship between Omnichannel retailing (Integration - seamlessness – Fulfillment) and customer retention,

After verifying the Reliability and Validity of the constructs, the structural relation among variables was examined. In order to test H5, path analysis was used through the Smart PLS 4.0 to examine the mediation effect of customer shopping experience. The result of the proposed relationship is shown in figure (4).

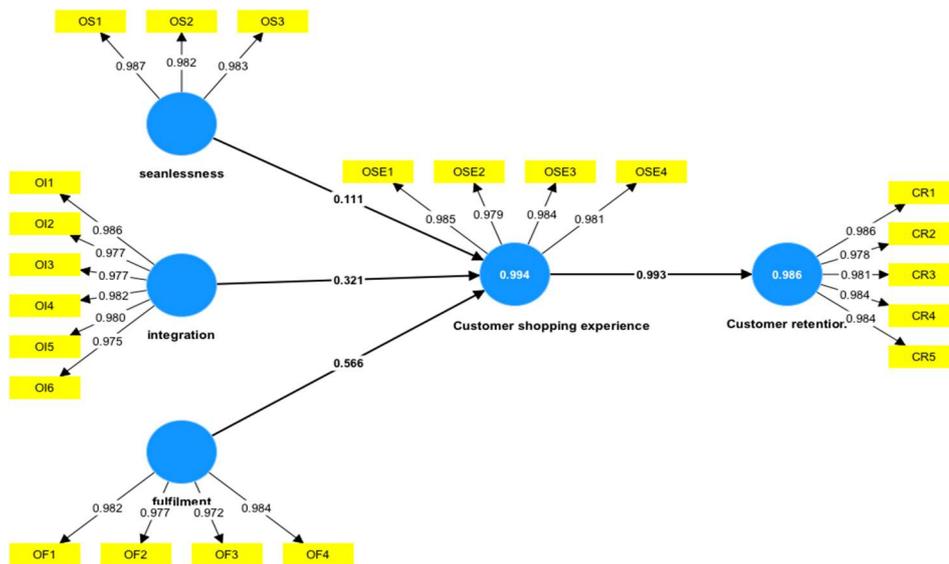


Figure (4) Path analysis result  
Source: From Smart PLS 4.0 Output.

The results of the path analysis indicate that the parameters of the independent variables Omnichannel retailing (Integration - seamlessness - Fulfillment) amounted to 0.321, 0.111 and 0.566, respectively, and they affect these values in the mediating variable Customer shopping experience, and the interpretation coefficient was 0.994, meaning that 99.4% of the changes in customer shopping experience are due to variables (Integration - seamlessness - Fulfillment).

The mediating variable (customer shopping experience) contributes to increasing the impact of omnichannel retailing strategies on customer retention with a value of 0.993, or 99%. We conclude that the variable (customer shopping experience) mediates the relationship between Omnichannel retailing and customer retention, and therefore accepting the fifth study hypothesis.

**Table (8) Results of Direct and Indirect Effect.**

	Path coefficients	T-value	P-value	Decision
Customer shopping experience -> Customer retention	0.993	9.81	0.00	Supported
fulfilment -> Customer shopping experience	0.566	9.18	0.00	Supported
integration -> Customer shopping experience	0.321	7.43	0.00	Supported
seamlessness -> Customer shopping experience	0.111	3.81	0.00	Supported
seamlessness -> Customer shopping experience -> Customer retention	0.110	4.16	0.00	Supported
fulfilment -> Customer shopping experience -> Customer retention	0.562	9.55	0.00	Supported
integration -> Customer shopping experience -> Customer retention	0.319	8.29	0.00	Supported

Table (8) shows the direct and indirect effects of the path analysis, as the results of the structural model indicate that the customer shopping experience significantly affects customer retention with a value of (0.993) at the significance level ( $P = 0.00$ , which is less than 0.05). With

reference to the direct effects, we find that Omnichannel Fulfillment affects the customer shopping experience with a value of (0.566), which is the largest effect among Omnichannel retailing, followed by Omnichannel Integration with a value of (0.321), and the least effect is Omnichannel Seamlessness with a value of (0.111). The results of the path analysis presented in Table (8) show that the indirect effects of the model variables are as follows: There is a positive effect of Omnichannel Fulfillment on Customer retention with a value of (0.562) at the significance level ( $P = 0.00$ , which is less than 0.05). There is also a positive effect of Omnichannel Integration on customer retention with a value of (0.319). There is also a positive effect of Omnichannel Seamlessness on customer retention with a value of (0.110).

**Table (9) Summary of hypotheses testing results.**

Hypothesis	Relationship	Coefficient		results
H <sub>1</sub>	Omnichannel Integration has a positive effect on customer retention with the fashion retailing industry.	0.429 (0.00)		supported
H <sub>2</sub>	Omnichannel seamlessness has a positive effect on customer retention with the fashion retailing industry.	0.135 (0.00)		Supported
H <sub>3</sub>	Omnichannel Fulfillment has a positive effect on customer retention with the fashion retailing industry.	0.435 (0.00)		supported
H <sub>4</sub>	Customer shopping experience has a positive effect on customer retention.	0.993 (0.00)		supported
H <sub>5</sub>	Customer shopping experience mediates the relationship between Omnichannel retailing (Integration - seamlessness – Fulfillment) and customer retention	0.321	0.993	supported

## 9. Discussion and Conclusion

The current study examines a mediating model of customer retention in the context of omnichannel retailing in Egypt. Based on the S-O-R framework, it was proposed that omnichannel retailing strategies with three dimensions: Integration, seamlessness and fulfillment could enrich customer retention through the mediating role of shopping experience. All the hypothesized relationships were proved to be positive.

According to the S-O-R theory, omnichannel dimensions: integration, seamlessness and fulfillment play the role of a stimuli that influence customers' shopping experience that play the role of organism, which in turn influence the customer retention which is considered as a response for the positive shopping experience. The results revealed that omnichannel integration has a positive effect on customer retention within the fashion retailing industry. This result is consistent with (Li et al.,2019; Mishra et al.,2020; Li et al.,2020) who found that cross-channel integration empowers retailers to retain their customers. This finding also confirms the view of Yin et al., (2022) who considered integration with unplanned purchase correlated more with customer retention than with planned purchase. It also supports the study of Wang & Jiang (2022) who proved that channel integration will influence customer retention moderated by the customer showrooming experience. This finding implies that customers strongly demand coordination between online channels (mobile apps and websites) and offline channels (physical stores) in their purchase journey. It can be explained by the fact that by integrating the retailers' channels, customers feel more at ease and in control, which enriches their purchasing experience and increases their patronage behaviour.

In addition, the omnichannel seamlessness is found to have a significant positive effect on customer retention. The result is in line with (Gao et al., 2021) who proved that channel seamlessness mitigates the negative effect of customer experience incongruence on customer retention. The results also support previous studies on the effect of seamlessness on shopping experience (Le & Nguyen-Le, 2021; Kuppelweiser and Klaus,2020; Lynch and Barnes,2020; Ye et al., 2018) this result is logic because when customers are familiar with the different retailer online and offline channels and how to use them, they can complete any task effortlessly during their buying journey.

The omnichannel fulfilment is found to have a positive effect on shopping experience supporting the study of Riaz et al., (2021) and on customer retention. This study contributes to the literature by proving that fulfilment strategies have a positive effect on customer retention. As far as we know there is no previous study that have investigated the effect of omnichannel fulfilment on customer retention.

Additionally, it was proven that omnichannel fulfilment have a stronger effect on shopping experience and customer retention than omnichannel integration and omnichannel seamlessness. It can be interpreted by the fact that fulfilment strategies can be used to guide customers through the purchasing process using omnichannel concept, helping customers taking the decision to buy online or in physical store, facilitate the exchange of the inventory information in both channels and help customers either to receive the product from physical store or to get it delivered to his doorstep. The shopping experience that the customer can get from omnichannel can never be a complete positive experience without the proper fulfilment strategies that played a major role in this context.

The results also proved that customer shopping experience has a positive influence on customer retention. This result is in line with Le & Nguyen-Le, (2021) who demonstrated that customer experience greatly affects patronage intention. As well as this finding concurs with (Chang et al 2015; Mc Lean et al 2018; Le & Nguyen-Le, 2021) who found the positive influence of customer experience on patronage intention which in turn increase the customer satisfaction that can lead to customer retention.

In addition, the results have proved that shopping experience mediates the relationship between omnichannel retailing and customer retention. As experience theory posits that when consumers have a superior omnichannel shopping experience, they will be more satisfied with the company's products and services, leading to increased loyalty (Gao et al., 2019) As the customer 's relationship with the retailer get strengthened, customer retention increases.

The results reveal that omnichannel retailing strategies affect customer retention and confirm that customer shopping experience plays a mediating role in the relationship of omnichannel and customer retention. Although, all the hypotheses were supported, there is a differential effect of each omnichannel dimension.

## **10. Managerial implications**

This research provides both managerial and practical implications. Up to the knowledge of the researchers, this research is among very few

studies that have studied the concept of omnichannel in Egypt, it is also one of the first studies that have added to the literature the study of the impact of omnichannel strategies on customer retention and the mediating effect of the customer shopping experience in the relationship between omnichannel and customer retention. Based on the findings of this study, using of Omnichannel strategies has increased fashion retailers 's capacity in retaining customers with the important role played by the positive shopping experience provided by them to its customers.

Fashion retailers and managers will find this study to be of great value. First, Fashion retailers have to embrace the concept of omnichannel, they need to integrate all channels used by customers and apply fulfilment strategies that can create a seamless customer shopping experience which can increase their capacities in retaining those customers. In this high technology era those who will still apply the multichannel approach will probably be surpassed by their competitors. Second, the use of omnichannel necessitates that managers upgrade their information systems to facilitate the integration of both physical channel and online channel, they also need to re-evaluate their data security and data storage to be convenient for that integration. Third, organizations need also to increase the awareness of customers about the use of omnichannel retailing strategies, and make the customers perceive the benefits that they can get from those strategies. Fourth, the results of this study have shown that managers in the fashion retailing sector needs to deliver a consistent brand image for customers across various channels. They also need to increase their service level and make it as rapid as they can and to make customer perceive the simplicity and the fluidness of moving from one channel to another. They must be sure that orders are accurate and shipped and delivered by the times promised. Finally, fashion retailers should integrate various technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), Augmented reality (AR) and Virtual reality (VR) to their channels in order to enhance omnichannel shopping experience subsequently, customers' desire increase to remain with the retailer.

## 11. Limitations and future research

This study has some limitations that future research can address. Initially, this study was implemented within the fashion retailing industry in Egypt, specifically on Zara, Mango and H&M. Thus, the outcomes of this research were limited exclusively to this sector. Future studies should consider investigating additional sectors in Egypt. Furthermore, this study has specifically concentrated on a limited scope of three dimensions pertaining to omnichannel retailing. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies incorporate additional omnichannel dimensions, such as flexibility, usability, and consistency. This study has investigated the impact of omnichannel strategies on customer shopping experience and customer retention and has studied the role played by customer shopping experience in mediating the relationship between omnichannel strategies and customer retention. Therefore, it is advisable to examine the impact of omnichannel strategies on other variables such as consumer satisfaction, brand trust, and brand equity. It is also advisable to study either the moderating or the mediating effect of other variables such as age, gender, culture and customer empowerment

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