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## Effects of Perceived Integration Quality and Attitude toward Information Seeking on Perceived Shopping Value in Omni-channel Shopping Experience

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Keywords: Perceived Integration Quality, Attitude toward Information Seeking

**Introduction** Omni-channel shopping experience involves not only simultaneous use of multiple shopping channels but the integrated connection of them (Lazaris & Vrechopoulos, 2014). Omni-channel retailing has become imperative when more than 80% of smartphone shoppers use their mobile phone during in-store shopping and 67% of consumers start shopping across channels (Worldpay, 2015). Despite the importance of the seamless connection between channels in omni-channel shopping, little empirical study tested effects of the integration of more than two channels to date. Considering the extended service connections with mobile devices and blurred boundaries between channels, the channel integration needs to be understood in an omni-channel environment. Thus, this online survey study aims to investigate how perceived integration quality, perceived brand innovativeness, and a personal disposition character, information seeking tendency, influence shopping values in an omni-channel shopping context.

**Literature Review and Hypothesis** Integration quality refers to “the ability to provide customers with seamless service experience across multiple channels” (Sousa & Voss, 2006). In a shopping environment where consumers use more than one channel, integration quality can be a construct to capture channel integration and is likely to be an important contributor to diverse shopping outcomes. For example, Herhausen and colleagues (2015) reported perceived service quality derived from integration between online and offline channels influenced channel choice for purchase, willingness to pay, internet search intention and purchase intention. Service quality literature emphasizes the importance of perceived service quality in forming shopping value perception (Bauer et al., 2006). For omni-channel shoppers, perceived integration quality is likely to be an important aspect of service quality, thus will be positively related to perceived utilitarian and hedonic shopping values (H1). When consumers experience seamless service across channels, they are likely to perceive the brand as innovative because creating a seamless service across multiple channels is still relatively new and involves technologies. Therefore, it is likely that consumers would have a high level of perceived brand innovativeness, “the degree to which consumers perceive a brand to be innovative” (Barone & Jewell, 2013), when they perceive a high level of integration quality. Moreover, according to Shankar et al. (2011), perceived brand innovativeness can influence customers’ evaluation of shopping experience (e.g., shopping value). Thus, perceived brand innovativeness derived from the seamlessly integration of retail channels will be positively associated with perceived utilitarian and hedonic values (H2). Finally, consumers who are inclined to search information (i.e., high in information seeking tendency) are likely to appreciate seamless integration of channels because they are more likely to use multiple channels concurrently to search information. Therefore, consumers’ information seeking tendency will be positively related to perceived utilitarian and hedonic values (H3).

**Methods & Results** All measurements were adopted from previous studies. US adults (N= 184) who have used multiple channels for a shopping trip recently were recruited through Amazon MTurk. The participants were asked to remember their recent apparel shopping trip that they used multiple shopping channels. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to test the proposed hypotheses. The measurement model presented an acceptable fit ( $\chi^2=479.837$ ,  $df=265$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $CMIN/df=1.811$ ,  $CFI=.929$ ,  $RMSEA=.067$ ) and convergent and discriminant validity was confirmed. The proposed model ( $\chi^2=534.392$ ,  $df=269$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $CMIN/df=1.987$ ,  $CFI=.912$ ,  $RMSEA=.073$ ) mostly supported the hypotheses. Perceived integration quality was positively related to perceived utilitarian ( $\beta=.36$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and hedonic value ( $\beta=.57$ ,  $p < .001$ ), supporting H1. The perceived brand innovativeness was positively associated with perceived hedonic ( $\beta=.32$ ,  $p < .001$ ) but not with utilitarian value ( $\beta=.09$ ,  $p > .05$ ), which partially supported H2. Consistent with H3, information seeking tendency was positively related to perceived utilitarian ( $\beta=.38$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and hedonic value ( $\beta=.22$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

**Discussion & Conclusion** Integration quality is a distinguished service quality for omni-channel retailers. This study contributes to the omni-channel shopping experience literature by extending and testing the integration quality effects literature. The results provided support for the importance of integration quality in consumer evaluation of omnichannel shopping experience. This finding is consistent with the previous study on two-channel integration effects (Herhausen et al., 2015). As proposed, integration quality and individual's information seeking tendency was positively associated with shopping value perception. The findings imply providing a seamless experience for consumers with information seeking tendency can be extremely important because they are more motivated to use multiple channels concurrently. The results showed no relationship between perceived brand innovativeness and utilitarian shopping value. This may suggest enhanced brand innovativeness perception is a symbolic quality, which increases hedonic shopping value but not utilitarian shopping value.

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