International Review of Management and Marketing

ISSN: 2146-4405

available at http: www.econjournals.com

International Review of Management and Marketing, 2026, 16(2), 175-184.

Examining the Impact of Omnichannel Integration on Satisfaction, Trust and Customer Loyalty: The Moderating Role of Prior Online Experience

Nerisha Gowrie[1], Fiza Shetty[1], Komal Chopra[2], Neo Ligaraba[1]*

[1]Division of Marketing Management, School of Business Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, [2]Symbiosis Institute of Management Studies, Symbiosis International (Deemed University), Pune, India. *Email: neo.ligaraba@wits.ac.za

Received: 21 August 2025 **Accepted:** 11 December 2025 **DOI:** https://doi.org/10.32479/irmm.22035

ABSTRACT

Omnichannel integration is transforming grocery retail, redefining customer interactions, experiences, and relationship management across digital and physical channels. This study investigates how omnichannel integration in grocery retail—including promotion, product and price, transaction information, order fulfilment, and customer service—influences satisfaction, trust, and customer loyalty in South Africa, while also examining the moderating role of prior online experience. Survey data from 185 consumers who shop both online and in-store were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Results show that integrated product and price is the strongest predictor of satisfaction, which subsequently influences trust and customer loyalty. Contrary to expectations, prior online experience did not significantly moderate these relationships, suggesting that rapid digital adoption and intuitive omnichannel design have largely closed the gap between novice and experienced shoppers. The study contributes to omnichannel and relationship marketing literature in an emerging market context and demonstrates that cohesive, user-friendly omnichannel strategies enhance satisfaction, trust, and customer loyalty, offering actionable guidance for grocery retailers seeking to strengthen customer relationships.

Keywords: Customer Loyalty, Satisfaction, Trust, Omnichannel, Grocery Retail, Price, Product
JEL Classifications: M30, M31, M39

1. INTRODUCTION

Omnichannel integration has become one of the defining transformations in modern retailing, reshaping how firms create, deliver, and capture value. It transforms retailers from product distributors into service orchestrators that connect with customers across multiple touchpoints (Rooderkerk et al., 2023). Omnichannel integration is commonly defined as the seamless combination of physical and digital platforms to deliver consistent, unified, and personalised customer experiences (Muchardie et al., 2023). In contemporary retail settings, customers interact with brands through brick-and-mortar stores, e-commerce platforms, mobile applications, and social media channels, often switching fluidly between them within a single purchase journey (Aripin et al., 2024). This evolution is fuelled by digital transformation and rising consumer expectations for convenience, transparency, and continuity. The shift is particularly salient in emerging markets, where consumer spending growth outpaces that of developed economies, accelerating digital adoption and competitive pressure (Joshi et al., 2023). For retailers, omnichannel strategies enhance operational adaptability, service quality, and competitiveness by integrating processes and data across channels (Iglesias-Pradas and Acquila-Natale, 2023). For consumers, integration delivers convenience, reduces uncertainty, and enhances satisfaction and customer loyalty through cohesive service experiences (Chou et al., 2021; Lehrer and Trenz, 2022). Effective integration, therefore, becomes essential for sustaining trust, strengthening brand equity, and ensuring long-term success (Bansal and Kaur, 2024).

However, the implementation of omnichannel strategies presents distinct challenges. Integration requires the alignment of marketing, logistics, and service systems to ensure that consumers perceive continuity across channels. Inconsistent prices, fragmented information, or delayed fulfilment can undermine consumer trust and satisfaction, eroding the perceived reliability of a retailer's brand. These challenges are amplified in emerging markets, where technological infrastructure, logistics capacity, and digital literacy are still unevenly developed (Ismail et al., 2023). In grocery retailing, these dynamics are especially pronounced. The sector has undergone rapid digital transformation, with innovations in mobile commerce, digital payments, and fulfilment services driving new modes of engagement and competition (Reimold et al., 2024). Consumers increasingly expect the same accuracy, transparency, and responsiveness across online and offline environments. As a result, retailers are under pressure to integrate promotional consistency, product and price alignment, transaction information, order fulfilment, and customer service into a coherent omnichannel framework.

While prior studies have established that omnichannel integration enhances satisfaction, engagement, and customer loyalty (Cuesta-Valiño et al., 2023), many investigations remain limited to specific industries or regions. Few have examined how integration shapes broader relational constructs such as brand relationship quality (BRQ) — a multidimensional concept encompassing satisfaction and trust that reflects the depth of the consumer–brand connection. Understanding these relational mechanisms is crucial, as they capture the long-term emotional and cognitive outcomes of consistent omnichannel experiences. Moreover, the moderating role of prior online experience remains under investigated. Prior online experience, defined as the degree of familiarity and comfort consumers have with digital platforms, influences how they perceive integration and evaluate service quality (Flavián et al., 2019). Experienced consumers may evaluate integration efforts more critically, relying on established digital benchmarks, while less experienced consumers may focus on usability and perceived trustworthiness. This suggests that prior online experience may moderate the relationships among integration, satisfaction, trust, and loyalty, shaping how consumers interpret omnichannel consistency.

South Africa offers a distinctive and relevant setting for examining these dynamics. The country's grocery and fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sectors have expanded rapidly, driven by changing lifestyles, urbanisation, and digitalisation. Online grocery retail (FMCG e-commerce) is reported to be growing steadily (Bizcommunity, 2025), while formal retail food sales account for nearly 20% of the national GDP (Food Export, 2025). On the technological front, internet penetration reached approximately 75.7% in 2023 (Trading Economics, 2025), enabling a large proportion of consumers to adopt digital shopping channels.

Yet, this growth coexists with structural challenges. Persistent inequality, infrastructure limitations—most notably power instability and load-shedding—and uneven digital literacy across socio-economic groups constrain the effectiveness of omnichannel operations (World Bank, 2025). These constraints create a fragmented retail environment where integration must bridge both digital and physical divides. Energy disruptions, for example, can reduce service reliability, undermining customer trust and brand consistency. Consequently, South Africa presents a hybrid context—digitally active yet structurally constrained—making it a compelling setting to analyse how omnichannel integration influences satisfaction, trust, and loyalty within grocery retail.

Against this backdrop, the present study examines how omnichannel integration shapes brand relationship quality and customer loyalty in South African grocery retailing. It also explores how prior online experience moderates these relationships. By addressing these research gaps, the study advances understanding of omnichannel marketing in emerging markets and extends existing models of consumer behaviour and relationship management in digitally enabled environments.

This study has two primary objectives:

1. To examine the impact of key omnichannel integration dimensions—promotion, product and price, transaction information, order fulfilment, and customer service—on the two core dimensions of brand relationship quality: satisfaction and trust.
2. To examine how brand relationship quality, reflected through satisfaction and trust, influences customer loyalty within an omnichannel grocery retail context, while also testing the moderating role of prior online experience in these relationships.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Underpinning

This study draws upon two established theories: Expectancy Confirmation Theory (ECT) (Oliver, 1980) and Brand Relationship Theory (BRT) (Fournier, 1998). Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive basis for analysing how integrated service experiences generate satisfaction, build trust, and sustain customer loyalty.

2.1.1. Expectancy confirmation theory (ECT)

ECT explains consumer satisfaction as the result of comparing pre-purchase expectations with post-purchase perceptions of performance. When performance meets or exceeds expectations, positive disconfirmation occurs, resulting in satisfaction and greater loyalty; when performance falls short, dissatisfaction emerges. The theory's core constructs—expectations, perceived performance, disconfirmation, and satisfaction—have been widely used to explain post-purchase behaviour, repurchase intention, and loyalty (Oliver, 1980; Seyedghorban et al., 2020).

In omnichannel contexts, ECT provides a valuable lens to understand how integration quality affects consumer evaluations. Seamless transitions across channels, accurate product information, and consistent pricing reinforce perceived performance, leading to satisfaction. Conversely, discrepancies between online and offline experiences (e.g., stock inconsistencies or delivery delays) create negative disconfirmation, eroding satisfaction and trust. By extending ECT to include trust and

relational outcomes, this study captures how omnichannel integration affects both functional and emotional dimensions of consumer response (Roy et al., 2022).

2.1.2. Brand relationship theory (BRT)

BRT conceptualises consumer–brand connections as analogous to interpersonal relationships, characterised by trust, commitment, intimacy, and interdependence (Fournier, 1998). It emphasises that consumers form emotional attachments to brands through repeated, consistent, and meaningful interactions. In an omnichannel setting, integration acts as a relational enabler, reinforcing brand consistency and responsiveness across touchpoints. When integration is effective, consumers perceive the brand as dependable and customer-centric, deepening emotional attachment and loyalty. Subsequent extensions of BRT incorporate constructs such as brand trust, identification, and satisfaction, linking them to relational strength and longevity (Japutra et al., 2018; Park et al., 2020). By combining BRT with ECT, this study develops an integrated framework that explains how omnichannel integration fosters satisfaction and trust—two core dimensions of BRQ—which in turn enhance customer loyalty.

2.2. Hypotheses Development and Conceptual Model

2.2.1. Omnichannel integrated promotion and satisfaction

Omnichannel integrated promotion refers to the coordinated use of marketing communications across online, mobile, and physical channels to deliver consistent messages (Verhoef et al., 2015). Such alignment reduces confusion, builds brand awareness, and fosters trust, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction (Keller, 2009). Prior studies show that consistency and transparency in communication improve shopping evaluations and signal professionalism, which strengthens satisfaction and engagement (Zhang and Wedel, 2009; Grewal et al., 2017). Evidence across industries further supports the link between integrated promotion and higher satisfaction (Pérez-Cabañero et al., 2017). Thus, we hypothesised that:

H_1: There is a positive relationship between integrated promotion and satisfaction.

2.2.2. Omnichannel integrated product and price and satisfaction

Omnichannel integrated product and price refers to the consistency of product offerings, availability, and pricing across online, mobile, and physical channels (Juaneda-Ayensa et al., 2016). Customers expect uniformity and seamless movement between channels without discrepancies (Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014). Research shows that consistent product information improves satisfaction and strengthens brand relationships (Flavián et al., 2019), while integrated pricing reduces channel conflict and enhances the overall experience (Zhang et al., 2018). Thus, we hypothesised that:

H_2: There is a positive relationship between integrated product and price and satisfaction.

2.2.3. Omnichannel integrated transaction information and satisfaction

Omnichannel integrated transaction information involves synchronizing accurate, up-to-date details across all touchpoints, including orders, payments, deliveries, and returns (Verhoef et al., 2015). Such transparency gives customers control over their shopping journey, enhancing satisfaction. Studies confirm that real-time access to transaction information is now expected across channels (Flavián et al., 2019) and serves as a key driver of satisfaction in digital environments (Grewal et al., 2017). Thus, we hypothesised that:

H_3: There is a positive relationship between integrated transaction information and satisfaction.

2.2.4. Omnichannel integrated order fulfilment and satisfaction

Order fulfilment in an omnichannel context encompasses timely, accurate, and seamless product delivery across online and offline platforms, including delivery speed, inventory accuracy, click-and-collect, returns, and tracking (Hübner et al., 2016). Customers expect consistency in these processes regardless of where transactions are initiated, and failures such as delays, lost packages, or inaccurate stock information can erode satisfaction and damage trust. Studies confirm that reliable fulfilment enhances customer experiences and supports positive brand perceptions (Gao and Su, 2018; Richey et al., 2009). Integrated systems not only reduce inefficiencies but also create transparency, improving confidence in retailers' ability to deliver. Yu et al. (2018) emphasise the logistics sector's role, linking integrated fulfilment strategies to improved satisfaction and competitiveness. By setting clear expectations and ensuring consistency, fulfilment integration becomes a critical determinant of satisfaction in omnichannel grocery retail. Thus, we hypothesised that:

H_4: There is a positive relationship between integrated order fulfilment and satisfaction.

2.2.5. Omnichannel integrated customer service and satisfaction

Customer service remains a cornerstone of retail success and a key driver of satisfaction. In an omnichannel setting, it involves providing seamless, responsive, and consistent support across physical stores, websites, apps, and social media (Verhoef et al., 2015; Frasquet et al., 2015). Effective integration allows customers to resolve issues and access assistance without facing fragmented or repetitive interactions. Studies show that cohesive service delivery enhances experiences, reinforces perceptions of brand reliability, and contributes to stronger satisfaction (Homburg et al., 2017; Parasuraman et al., 2005). Thus, we hypothesised that:

H_5: There is a positive relationship between integrated customer service and satisfaction.

2.2.6. Satisfaction and trust

Customer satisfaction is a central driver of trust in marketing relationships and a cornerstone of relationship marketing models such as the Commitment-Trust Theory (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). In omnichannel retailing, satisfaction reflects customers' positive assessment of a brand's ability to provide seamless, integrated experiences across channels (Verhoef et al., 2015). When brands deliver transparency, reliability, and responsiveness, customers are more likely to view them as acting in their best interests, thereby fostering trust (Gefen, 2002; Chiu et al., 2014). Empirical studies support this link: Flavián et al. (2006) showed that satisfied customers tend to trust e-commerce retailers because of reduced

risk and greater confidence in service consistency. In omnichannel contexts, this relationship is amplified, as satisfaction is shaped not by isolated interactions but by the coherence of experiences across multiple touchpoints (Herhausen et al., 2015). Hence, we hypothesise that:

H_6: There is a positive relationship between satisfaction and trust.

2.2.7. Satisfaction and customer loyalty

Customer satisfaction is a well-established driver of loyalty, particularly in omnichannel settings where integrated experiences across channels shape long-term relationships (Verhoef et al., 2015; Juaneda-Ayensa et al., 2016). High satisfaction fosters emotional attachment and trust, which enhance retention and loyalty (Gummerus, 2013; Chiu et al., 2014). Empirical evidence confirms this link: Ryu and Han (2010) connected satisfaction to stronger behavioural intentions. Zeithaml et al. (1996) demonstrated that greater satisfaction leads to loyalty, repeat purchases, and referrals. Hence, we hypothesise that:

H_7: There is a positive relationship between satisfaction and customer loyalty.

2.2.8. Trust and customer loyalty

Trust is a vital driver of loyalty, reflecting a customer's confidence that a brand will act in their best interest (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). In omnichannel retailing, trust is shaped by consistent service and messaging across touchpoints (Rahman et al., 2025). Research confirms its importance, Cyr et al. (2007) found trust significantly influences online loyalty, while Dholakia et al. (2018) highlight its role in sustaining loyalty in omnichannel settings. Reliable service, transparency, and ethical conduct further reinforce trust, strengthening emotional bonds and long-term commitment (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). Yeboah and Afrifa-Yamoah (2024) found that trust mediated the relationship between stimuli and customer loyalty in an emerging market. Hence, we hypothesise that:

H_8: There is a positive relationship between trust and customer loyalty.

2.2.9. Moderating role of prior online experience (POE)

Prior online experience (POE) reflects consumers' familiarity and confidence in engaging with digital shopping and omnichannel platforms (Flavián et al., 2019). Customers with greater POE often set higher expectations for usability, responsiveness, and service consistency, which can strengthen or weaken how satisfaction translates into loyalty (Oliver, 1999; Verhoef et al., 2015). POE may also influence the trust loyalty relationship. In online contexts, where uncertainty and perceived risks are higher, trust plays a central role (Gefen, 2000). Experienced users may depend more on established trust to sustain loyalty, whereas less experienced users may rely on simpler or more immediate cues. Thus, we hypothesise that:

H_9a: POE moderates the relationship between satisfaction and customer loyalty

H_9b: POE moderates the relationship between trust and customer loyalty

The hypothesised model is shown in Figure 1

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design and Data Collection

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional design to examine consumer perceptions of integrated grocery retailing. The target population included individuals aged 18 years and older with experience shopping both online and in physical stores. Data were collected over 12 weeks (June-August 2024) through a self-administered Google Forms questionnaire, distributed via the researchers' personal and professional networks. Purposive sampling ensured that only dual-mode (online and offline) shoppers participated. Of 207 responses, 185 were complete and valid for analysis. On sample size sufficiency for the estimation of structural equation modeling (SEM), Kline (2023) suggests at least 100 observations and for reliable estimates 200 observations Informed consent was obtained, anonymity assured, and all procedures adhered to ethical standards, with clearance granted by the University's Research Ethics Committee (Ethics Clearance No. CBUSE2192).

3.2. Measurement Instrument and Questionnaire Design

The survey instrument employed validated measurement scales adapted from prior studies, using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). Integrated Promotion was assessed with four items from Gao et al. (2021), while Integrated Product and Price were measured using four items adapted from Mihaela (2015) and Lee et al. (2019). Integrated transaction information (ITI) was captured through four items from Duralia (2018), and integrated order fulfilment (IOF) through four items from Khizar et al. (2016). Integrated customer service (ICS) was measured using four items adapted from Chen et al. (2009) and Lee et al. (2019). Customer satisfaction (SAT) was measured with five items from Davis-Sramek et al. (2009) and Garbarino and Johnson (1999), while Trust was assessed with four items from Gurviez and Korchia (2002) and Swaen and Chumpitaz (2008). Customer Loyalty was measured using four items from Zeithaml et al. (1996). Finally, prior online experience (POE) was assessed with four items from Ling et al. (2010).

4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

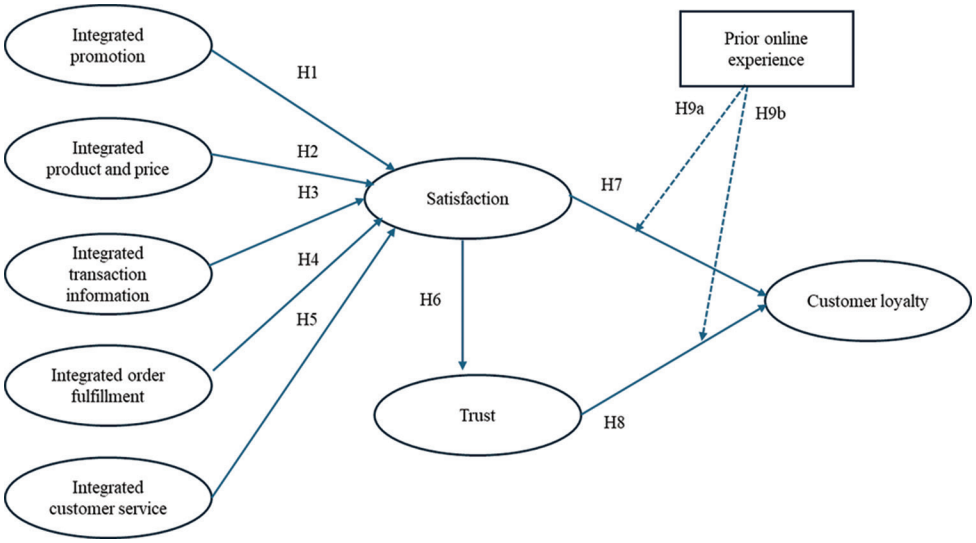
4.1. Respondent Characteristics

Table 1 presents the demographic and behavioural profiles of the respondents. The majority of participants were female (53%). In terms of age distribution, the largest age groups were 18-24 years (28.1%) and 45-54 years (24.9%), jointly comprising 53% of the sample. Regarding income, a significant portion of respondents reported a total monthly income of R60,001 or more (28.6%). Checkers emerged as the preferred grocery retail platform for most respondents (43.8%), and an equal proportion (43.8%) had used their preferred platform for <1 year.

4.2. Results of Structural Equation Modelling

This study uses a two-step procedure for data analysis based on partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM), as described by Hair et al. (2022). The first step involves validating the measurement model, during which the researchers will

Figure 1: Conceptual model



Source: (Author's own construction: 2024)

Table 1: Respondents profile

Variable	Sub-variable	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	80	43.2
	Female	98	53.0
	Prefer not to say	7	3.8
	Total	185	100
Race	Black	60	32.4
	White	47	25.4
	Indian	64	34.6
	Mixed Race	13	7.0
	Prefer not to say	1	0.5
	Total	185	100
Age	18-24	52	28.1
	25-34	36	19.5
	35-44	38	20.5
	45-54	46	24.9
	55-65	12	6.5
	>65	-	-
	Prefer not to say	1	0.5
	Total	185	100
Household monthly income	<R10 000	17	9.2
	R10 001-R25 000	8	4.3
	R25 001-R40 000	17	9.2
	R40 001-R55 000	15	8.1
	R55 001-R60 000	23	12.4
	>R60 001	53	28.6
	Prefer not to say	52	28.1
	Total	185	100
Favourite grocery retailer	Pick n Pay	19	10.3
	Checkers	81	43.8
	Woolworths	74	40.0
	Other	11	5.9
	Total	185	100
Length of time using online grocery platform	<1 year	81	43.8
	1-3 years	74	40
	More than 3 years	30	16.2
	Total	185	100

evaluate reliability (outer loadings, Cronbach alpha, composite reliability). Validity estimates were assessed through average variance extracted (AVE) and discriminant validity through the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (Hair et al., 2022). The second step will focus on examining the structural model, and the path coefficients.

Moreover, common method bias (CMB) will be analysed through variance inflation factor (VIF) values, while model fit will be determined using the Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and additional fit indices.

4.3. Common Method Bias

The study assessed common method bias using Harman's one-factor test and a full collinearity test (Kock, 2015). The results indicated no significant bias, with VIF values ranging from 1.389 to 3.165, all below the recommended threshold of 3.3 (Hair et al., 2022). In addition, preventive measures such as ensuring respondent anonymity, voluntary participation, and providing clarity of purpose were implemented during data collection. Accordingly, common method bias was deemed inconsequential in this study.

4.4. Measurement Model Validation

As presented in Table 2, Cronbach's alpha values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.7 (ranging from 0.776 to 0.922), indicating strong internal consistency. Convergent validity was supported by factor loadings (>0.7), composite reliability (>0.7). AVE values for all constructs exceed the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.50, with values ranging from 0.593 (integrated order fulfilment) to 0.760 (Satisfaction). All constructs satisfied these criteria.

4.5. Discriminant Validity using Heterotrait-monotrait Ratio (HTMT) – Matrix

The discriminant validity of the measurement model was assessed using the heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) ratios of correlations (Henseler et al., 2015). According to the criteria, discriminant validity is confirmed if the HTMT ratios are below the conservative threshold of 0.85 or the more liberal threshold of 0.90. The results presented in Table 3 show that the highest HTMT ratio was 0.818 (between integrated promotion and integrated customer service). This value is below the conservative cut-off of 0.85, thereby confirming the discriminant validity of the measurement model.

Table 2: Reliability and convergent validity (outer loadings, cronbach alpha, CR and AVE)

Variables/items	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Integrated customer service		0.823	0.837	0.652
ICS1	0.845			
ICS2	0.828			
ICS3	0.827			
ICS4	0.725			
Integrated order fulfilment		0.768	0.780	0.593
IOF1	0.679			
IOF2	0.842			
IOF3	0.740			
IOF4	0.808			
Integrated promotion		0.776	0.792	0.595
IPM1	0.686			
IPM2	0.803			
IPM3	0.795			
IPM4	0.796			
Integrated product and price		0.793	0.802	0.617
IPP1	0.756			
IPP2	0.759			
IPP3	0.795			
IPP4	0.829			
Integrated transaction information		0.873	0.876	0.724
ITI1	0.854			
ITI2	0.877			
ITI3	0.822			
ITI4	0.849			
Customer loyalty		0.892	0.895	0.756
LOY1	0.878			
LOY2	0.863			
LOY3	0.898			
LOY4	0.839			
Satisfaction		0.921	0.925	0.760
SAT1	0.856			
SAT2	0.890			
SAT3	0.831			
SAT4	0.894			
SAT5	0.885			
Trust		0.890	0.898	0.751
TRT1	0.882			
TRT2	0.851			
TRT3	0.874			
TRT4	0.860			

Source: Primary data analysis using SmartPLS4

The overall model fit was evaluated using the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), Chi-Square and NFI. SRMR was 0.066, Chi-square was 1675.969 and NFI was 0.724, which is contemplated a good fit. The explanatory capacity of the structural model was examined using R2 (Hair et al., 2022). The R2 values were 0.539 for customer loyalty, 0.560 for satisfaction and 0.482 for trust. R2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 can be considered substantial, moderate. In some disciplines an R2 value as low as 0.10 is considered satisfactory (Sarstedt et al., 2021; Ozili, 2023).

4.6. Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing

The structural model results in Table 4 provide insights into the effects of omnichannel integration on brand relationship quality and loyalty. Integrated Product and Price showed a strong positive effect on Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.426$, $P < 0.001$), highlighting the importance of consistent product and pricing across channels. Integrated transaction information also positively influenced Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.165$, $P = 0.045$), underscoring the role of seamless and transparent transactional communication. By contrast, integrated promotion, order fulfilment, and customer service were not significant predictors of satisfaction ($P = 0.144$, $P = 0.446$, and $P = 0.271$). Satisfaction significantly influenced both trust ($\beta = 0.695$, $P < 0.001$) and customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.605$, $P < 0.001$), confirming its mediating role in building brand relationships. However, Trust did not directly affect Loyalty ($\beta = 0.015$, $P = 0.860$), suggesting its impact may be indirect. Finally, Prior Online Experience did not moderate the tested relationships, as both interaction terms were non-significant.

5. DISCUSSION

The structural model results provide important insights into the role of omnichannel integration in shaping satisfaction, trust, and loyalty. Integrated promotion was not found to significantly affect satisfaction ($\beta = 0.128$, $P = 0.144$), suggesting that promotional activities alone may not enhance evaluative judgments in the grocery retail sector. This aligns with prior studies that emphasise the transient nature of promotions, which often stimulate short-term engagement without strengthening long-term satisfaction (Taylor, 2020). In contrast, integrated product and price emerged as the strongest predictor of satisfaction ($\beta = 0.426$, $P < 0.001$), underscoring the importance of product consistency and transparent pricing in building positive experiences (Kim et al.,

Table 3: Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) - matrix

	Customer loyalty	Integrated customer service	Integrated order fulfilment	Integrated product and price	Integrated promotion	Integrated transaction information	Satisfaction	Trust
Customer loyalty								
Integrated customer service	0.674							
Integrated order fulfilment	0.588	0.769						
Integrated product and price	0.743	0.805	0.666					
Integrated promotion	0.677	0.818	0.688	0.731				
Integrated transaction information	0.580	0.726	0.723	0.559	0.650			
Satisfaction	0.777	0.699	0.621	0.794	0.662	0.600		
Trust	0.579	0.571	0.432	0.595	0.488	0.423	0.758	

Table 4: Hypotheses results

	Hypotheses	β-values	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T-values	P-values	Significance	Result
H_1	Integrated promotion -> Satisfaction	0.128	0.133	0.087	1.463	0.144	-	Not supported
H_2	Integrated product and price -> Satisfaction	0.426	0.417	0.084	5.056	0.000	***	Supported
H_3	Integrated transaction information -> Satisfaction	0.165	0.159	0.082	2.008	0.045	*	Supported
H_4	Integrated order fulfilment -> Satisfaction	0.064	0.072	0.084	0.761	0.446	-	Not supported
H_5	Integrated customer service -> Satisfaction	0.114	0.120	0.103	1.101	0.271	-	Not supported
H_6	Satisfaction -> trust	0.695	0.695	0.045	15.362	0.000	***	Supported
H_7	Satisfaction -> Customer loyalty	0.605	0.611	0.080	7.538	0.000	***	Supported
H_8	Trust -> Customer loyalty	0.015	0.013	0.083	0.177	0.860	-	Not supported
H_{9a}	Prior online experience×Satisfaction -> Customer loyalty	−0.108	−0.107	0.078	1.386	0.166	-	Not supported
H_{9b}	Prior online experience×Trust -> Customer loyalty	0.146	0.139	0.084	1.741	0.082	-	Not supported

***P<0.001.; *P<0.05.; -ns: Not significant. Source: Primary data analysis using SmartPLS4

2021). Integrated transaction information also had a significant impact (β = 0.165, P < 0.05), highlighting the value of seamless and accurate communication—such as receipts, order updates, and payment confirmations—in reinforcing consumer confidence (Lee and Lee, 2019). By contrast, integrated order fulfilment (β = 0.064, P = 0.446) and integrated customer service (β = 0.114, P = 0.271) did not yield significant effects. These findings suggest that customers perceive fulfilment and service as baseline expectations; while essential, they may not independently drive satisfaction unless paired with other integration mechanisms (Saghiri et al., 2017). The results further reinforce the centrality of satisfaction in relationship marketing models. Satisfaction significantly predicted both trust (β = 0.695, P < 0.001) and loyalty (β = 0.605, P < 0.001), confirming its mediating role in strengthening brand relationships (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Interestingly, trust did not significantly influence loyalty (β = 0.015, P = 0.860), which departs from traditional models that view trust as a direct antecedent of loyalty (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Gefen, 2002). This suggests that in omnichannel grocery retailing, loyalty may be driven more by evaluative outcomes of satisfaction rather than trust alone, implying a potential contextual shift in the trust–loyalty nexus. Finally, the moderating role of prior online experience (POE) was not supported. Neither the satisfaction–loyalty (β = −0.108, P = 0.166) nor trust–loyalty (β = 0.146, P = 0.082) interactions reached significance. This finding contrasts with earlier studies that identified digital experience as an important moderator of loyalty formation (Flavián et al., 2019; Bennett and Kottasz, 2019). One possible explanation is that as digital shopping becomes increasingly mainstream, differences in online experience may no longer be a salient differentiator in consumer evaluations within the grocery sector.

5.1. Theoretical Implications

By integrating three theoretical perspectives—expectation confirmation theory (ECT), Brand relationship theory (BRT), and brand equity theory (BET)—this study provides a holistic framework for understanding omnichannel marketing in emerging markets. From a theoretical standpoint, the findings extend ECT by demonstrating that customer satisfaction is strongly shaped by the alignment between consumer expectations and actual experiences. In particular, integrated product quality, transparent pricing, and clear transaction-related information emerged as critical drivers of satisfaction, reinforcing the principle that satisfaction occurs when brands consistently deliver on their promises across multiple channels. The study also contributes to BRT, which highlights the significance of emotional connections and trust in sustaining long-term brand–consumer relationships. The strong relationship between satisfaction and trust identified here highlights how positive omnichannel experiences strengthen brand relationships. In addition, the findings enrich BET by confirming that brand equity is built through consistent and positive customer experiences. The results show that integrated product offerings and pricing transparency serve as foundational elements of brand equity, suggesting that brand strength is derived primarily from core product attributes rather than promotional activities or customer service alone. Collectively, these insights advance theoretical understanding by positioning satisfaction, trust, and equity as interdependent outcomes of effective omnichannel integration.

5.2. Managerial Implications

The findings of this study provide important insights for retailers seeking to strengthen satisfaction, trust, and loyalty in an increasingly competitive omnichannel environment. A central implication is the need for consistency in product availability, pricing, and customer service across all touchpoints. Customers expect seamless transitions between physical and digital channels, and discrepancies can quickly undermine satisfaction and erode trust. Retailers must therefore ensure integrated operations that deliver uniform experiences, as this consistency forms the foundation for long-term customer relationships. Personalization also emerges as a critical driver of loyalty. Retailers should leverage data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) to gain insights into customer preferences and behaviours, enabling the delivery of tailored recommendations, promotions, and communications. Equally important is transparent communication. Providing customers with clear, real-time information about product availability, pricing, and order fulfilment enhances confidence in the brand and reduces uncertainty. Retailers should prioritise accurate updates and easy-to-understand policies, as transparency strengthens trust and supports overall satisfaction. Finally, the results suggest that while promotions and customer service remain valuable, they are insufficient on their own to sustain loyalty. Loyalty programs should evolve beyond transactional incentives, such as discounts or points, to emphasise relational and emotional engagement. Programs that cultivate trust, recognition, and emotional attachment are more likely to foster enduring loyalty in the omnichannel marketplace.

5.3. Limitations and Scope for Further Research

This study offers important insights but has several limitations. First, its focus on South African consumers limits generalisability; future research should extend more emerging markets to test broader applicability. Second, the exclusive use of quantitative methods may overlook the nuanced, subjective aspects of omnichannel experiences. Mixed method design, incorporating qualitative approaches, could provide deeper insights. Third, while demographic data were collected, moderating effects of variables such as age, gender, education, and income were not analysed. Exploring these factors could refine understanding of consumer responses. Finally, the cross-sectional design prevents causal inference. Longitudinal studies are needed to track evolving consumer perceptions as retail technologies and habits continue to develop.

6. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the influence of omnichannel integration on brand relationship quality (trust, satisfaction) and customer loyalty within the grocery retail sector, with particular attention to the moderating role of prior online experience. The findings highlight that integrated product and price, alongside integrated transaction information, play a central role in shaping customer satisfaction, while integrated promotion, order fulfilment, and customer service did not demonstrate significant direct effects. Satisfaction was found to be a strong predictor of both trust and loyalty, reaffirming its mediating role in relationship marketing. However, trust did not directly influence loyalty, suggesting that loyalty in omnichannel grocery retailing may depend more heavily on satisfaction-driven evaluations than on relational trust alone. Furthermore, prior online experience did not moderate the satisfaction–loyalty or trust–loyalty relationships, indicating that digital familiarity may no longer be a key differentiator in consumer behaviour in this context. In summary, these results advance the literature by providing empirical evidence that not all integration dimensions contribute equally to satisfaction and loyalty, and that traditional assumptions regarding trust and digital experience may require reconsideration in omnichannel environments. For practitioners, the study highlights the need to prioritise consistency in product offerings, pricing, and transactional transparency, while recognising that fulfilment and service are viewed by customers as baseline expectations rather than differentiating factors.

REFERENCES

Aripin, Z., Saepudin, D., Gunawan, A. (2024), The impact of omnichannel integrated marketing communications (IMC) on retail product and service satisfaction in Indonesia: An analysis with an open access approach. JESOCIN, 1(3), 33-48.

Bansal, M., Kaur, S. (2024), Omnichannel approach to meet retail customers' expectations. In: Creator's Economy in Metaverse Platforms: Empowering Stakeholders Through Omnichannel Approach. United States: IGI Global; p. 148-156.

Bennett, R., Vijaygopal, R., Kottasz, R. (2019), Willingness of people with mental health disabilities to travel in driverless vehicles. Journal of Transport and Health, 12, 1-12.

Bizcommunity. (2025), Retail Discounters and E-Commerce Dominate the Growth of SA's Retail Sector. Available from https://www.bizcommunity.com/article/retail/discounters/and/e/commerce/dominate/the/growth-of-sa-retail-sector-362458a?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Chaudhuri, A., Holbrook, M.B. (2001), The chain of effects from brand trust and brand affect to brand performance: The role of brand loyalty. Journal of Marketing, 65(2), 81-93.

Chen, Y.C., Shen, Y.C., Liao, S. (2009), An integrated model of customer loyalty: An empirical examination in retailing practice. The Service Industries Journal, 29(3), 267-280.

Chiu, C.M., Wang, E.T., Fang, Y.H., Huang, H.Y. (2014), Understanding customers' repeat purchase intentions in B2C e-commerce: The roles of utilitarian value, hedonic value and perceived risk. Information Systems Journal, 24(1), 85-114.

Chou, X., Pietri, N.O., Loske, D., Klumpp, M., Montemanni, R. (2021), Optimization Strategies for in-Store Order Picking in Omnichannel Retailing. Conference: Advances in Production Management Systems. Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable and Resilient Production Systems. Vol. 633. p. 603-611.

Cuesta-Valiño, P., Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, P., Núnez-Barriopedro, E., García-Henche, B. (2023), Strategic orientation towards digitization to improve supermarket loyalty in an omnichannel context. Journal of Business Research, 156, 113475.

Cyr, D., Hassanein, K., Head, M., Ivanov, A. (2007), The role of social presence in establishing loyalty in e-service environments. Interacting with Computers, 19(1), 43-56.

Davis-Sramek, B., Droge, C., Mentzer, J.T., Myers, M.B. (2009), Creating commitment and loyalty behavior among retailers: What are the roles of service quality and satisfaction? Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 37(4), 440-454.

Dholakia, U., Jung, J., Chowdhry, N. (2018), Should I buy this when I have so much?: Reflection on personal possessions as an anticonsumption strategy. Journal of Public Policy and Marketing, 37(2), 260-273.

Duralia, O. (2018), Integrated marketing communication and its impact on consumer behavior. Studies in Business and Economics, 13(2), 92-102.

Flavián, C., Guinalíu, M., Gurrea, R. (2006), The role played by perceived usability, satisfaction and consumer trust on website loyalty. Information Management, 43(1), 1-14.

Flavián, C., Gurrea, R., Orús, C. (2019), Feeling confident and smart with webrooming: Understanding the consumer's path to satisfaction. Journal of Interactive Marketing, 47, 1-15.

Food Export. (2025), Market Country Profile: South Africa. Available from: https://www.foodexport.org/wp/content/uploads/south/africa/market/assessment/2024.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Fournier, S. (1998), Consumers and their brands: Developing relationship theory in consumer research. Journal of Consumer Research, 24(4), 343-373.

Frasquet, M., Mollá, A., Ruiz, E. (2015), Identifying patterns in channel usage across the search, purchase and post-sales stages of shopping. Electronic Commerce Research and Applications, 14(6), 654-665.

Gao, F., Su, X. (2018), Omnichannel service operations with online and offline self-order technologies. Management Science, 64(8), 3595-3608.

Gao, W., Fan, H., Li, W., Wang, H. (2021), Crafting the customer experience in omnichannel contexts: The role of channel integration. Journal of Business Research, 126, 12-22.

Garbarino, E., Johnson, M.S. (1999), The different roles of satisfaction, trust, and commitment in customer relationships. Journal of Marketing, 63(2), 70-87.

Gefen, D. (2000), E-commerce: The role of familiarity and trust. Omega, 28(6), 725-737.

Gefen, D. (2002), Customer loyalty in e-commerce. Journal of the Association for Information Systems, 3(1), 2.

Grewal, D., Roggeveen, A.L., Sisodia, R., Nordfält, J. (2017), Enhancing customer engagement through consciousness. Journal of Retailing, 93(1), 55-64.

Gummerus, J., Sihlman, R., Liljander, V., Perret, J. (2013), Consumers' Perceived Benefits of Participating in Ethical Facebook Communities, and their Effect on Community Loyalty and Commitment to Ethical Consumption. In: Proceedings of the Academy of Marketing Conference 2013, Cardiff, UK. Academy of Marketing.

Gurviez, P., Korchia, M. (2002), Proposition d'une échelle de mesure multidimensionnelle de la confiance dans la marque. Recherche et Applications en Marketing (French Edition), 17(3), 41-61.

Hair, J., Alamer, A. (2022), Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in second language and education research: Guidelines using an applied example. Research Methods in Applied Linguistics, 1(3), 100027.

Henseler, J., Ringle, C.M., Sarstedt, M. (2015), A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 43(1), 115-135.

Homburg, C., Jozić, D., Kuehnl, C. (2017), Customer experience management: Toward implementing an evolving marketing concept. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 45, 377-401.

Hübner, A., Wollenburg, J., Holzapfel, A. (2016), Retail logistics in the transition from multi-channel to omni-channel. International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management, 46(6/7), 562-583.

Iglesias-Pradas, S., Acquila-Natale, E. (2023), The future of e-commerce: Overview and prospects of multichannel and omnichannel retail. Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research, 18(1), 656-667.

Ismail, S.F., Zahari, A.R., Esa, E., Asshidin, N.H.N., Surbaini, K.N., Abdullah, A.E. (2023), A bibliometric analysis of omnichannel and customer satisfaction. Environment-Behaviour Proceedings Journal, 8(SI15), 73-79.

Japutra, A., Ekinci, Y., Simkin, L. (2018), Positive and negative behaviours resulting from brand attachment: The moderating effects of attachment styles. European Journal of Marketing, 52(5/6), 1185-1202.

Joshi, S., Sharma, M., Chatterjee, P. (2023), Omni-channel retailing enhancing unified experience amidst pandemic: An emerging market perspective. Decision Making Applications in Management and Engineering, 6(1), 449-473.

Juaneda-Ayensa, E., Mosquera, A., Sierra Murillo, Y. (2016), Omnichannel customer behavior: Key drivers of technology acceptance and use and their effects on purchase intention. Frontiers in Psychology, 7, 1117.

Khizar, N., Farooqi, S., Rehmat, M., Naz, F. (2016), Effect of integrated marketing communication components on brand awareness and customer loyalty in beverage sector. Paradigms: A Research Journal of Commerce, Economics, and Social Sciences, 10(2), 64-73.

Keller, K.L., Lehmann, D.R. (2009), Assessing long-term brand potential. Journal of Brand Management, 17(1), 6-17.

Kim, K.H., Ko, E., Kim, S.J., Jiang, Q. (2021), Digital service innovation, customer engagement, and customer equity in AR marketing. Journal of Global Scholars of Marketing Science, 31(3), 453-466.

Kline, R.B. (2023), Principles and Practice of Structural Equation Modeling. New York: Guilford Publications.

Kock, N. (2015), Common method bias in PLS-SEM: A full collinearity assessment approach. International Journal of e-Collaboration, 11(4), 1-10.

Lee, Z.W., Chan, T.K., Chong, A.Y.L., Thadani, D.R. (2019), Customer engagement through omnichannel retailing: The effects of channel integration quality. Industrial Marketing Management, 77, 90-101.

Lee, J., Ryu, M.H., Lee, D. (2019), A study on the reciprocal relationship between user perception and retailer perception on platform-based mobile payment service. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 48, 7-15.

Lehrer, C., Trenz, M. (2022), Omnichannel business. Electronic Markets, 32(2), 687-699.

Ling, K.C., Chai, L.T., Piew, T.H. (2010), The effects of shopping orientations, online trust and prior online purchase experience toward customers' online purchase intention. International Business Research, 3(3), 63.

Mihaela, O.O.E. (2015), The influence of the integrated marketing communication on the consumer buying behaviour. Procedia Economics and Finance, 23, 1446-1450.

Morgan, R.M., Hunt, S.D. (1994), The commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing. Journal of Marketing, 58(3), 20-38.

Muchardie, B.G., Gunawan, A., Pratama, P. (2023), Omnichannel shopping intention in Indonesian online-to-offline grocery retailers. E3S Web of Conferences, 426, 02023.

Oliver, R.L. (1999), Whence consumer loyalty? Journal of Marketing, 63(4_suppl1), 33-44.

Oliver, R. L. (1980), A cognitive model of the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction decisions. Journal of Marketing Research, 17(4), 460-469.

Ozili, P.K. (2023), The acceptable R-square in empirical modelling for social science research. In: Social Research Methodology and Publishing Results: A Guide to Non-Native English Speakers. United States: IGI Global, p134-143.

Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A., Malhotra, A. (2005), E-S-QUAL: A multiple-item scale for assessing electronic service quality. Journal of Service Research, 7(3), 213-233.

Park, C.W., MacInnis, D.J., Priester, J., Eisingerich, A.B., Iacobucci, D. (2020), Brand attachment and brand attitude strength: Conceptual and empirical differentiation of two critical brand equity drivers. Journal of Marketing, 74(6), 1-17.

Pérez-Cabañero, C., Cervera-Taulet, A., Schlesinger, W. (2017), Analysis of the impact of length of stay on the quality of service experience, satisfaction and loyalty. International Review on Public and Nonprofit Marketing, 14(2), 253-268.

Piotrowicz, W., Cuthbertson, R. (2014), Introduction to the special issue information technology in retail: Toward omnichannel retailing. International Journal of Electronic Commerce, 18(4), 5-16.

Rahman, S.M., Carlson, J., Gudergan, S.P., Wetzels, M., Grewal, D. (2025), How do omnichannel customer experiences affect customer engagement? Theory and empirical validation. Journal of Business Research, 189, 115196.

Reimold, A.E., Hall, M.G., Rummo, P.E., Duffy, E.W., Gonzalez, D., Smith Taillie, L. (2024), A Scoping Review of Online Food Retail: Who is using it, what they are Buying, and what Tactics are used to Promote healthy or Unhealthy Purchases. [medRxiv Preprint].

Richey, R.G., Chen, H., Genchev, S.E., Daugherty, P.J., (2009), Developing effective reverse logistics programs. Industrial Marketing Management, 38(4), 535-543.

Rooderkerk, R.P., De Leeuw, S., Hübner, A. (2023), Advancing the marketingoperations interface in omnichannel retail. Journal of Operations Management, 69(2), 188-196.

Roy, S.K., Balaji, M.S., Sadeque, S., Nguyen, B., Melewar, T.C. (2022), Constituents and consequences of smart customer experience in retailing. Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 172, 121029.

Ryu, K., Han, H. (2010), Influence of the quality of food, service, and physical environment on customer satisfaction and behavioral intention in quick-casual restaurants: Moderating role of perceived price. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research, 34(3), 310-329.

Saghiri, S., Wilding, R., Mena, C., Bourlakis, M. (2017), Toward a three-dimensional framework for omni-channel. Journal of Business Research, 80, 53-67.

Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C.M., Hair, J.F. (2021), Partial least squares structural equation modeling. In: Baarda, B., Musa, R., editors. Handbook of Market Research. Berlin: Springer International Publishing, p587-632.

Seyedghorban, Z., Matanda, M.J., Khaksar, S.M.S. (2020), Consumer engagement in omnichannel retailing: The impact of channel integration. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 55, 102082.

Taylor, D.G. (2020), Putting the "self" in selfies: How narcissism, envy and self-promotion motivate sharing of travel photos through social media. Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, 37(1), 64-77.

Trading Economics. (2025), South Africa - Individuals Using the Internet (% of Population). Available from: https://www.com/tradingeconomics.com/south/africa/individuals/using/the/internet/percent-of-population-wb-data.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Verhoef, P.C., Kannan, P.K., Inman, J.J. (2015), From multi-channel retailing to omnichannel retailing: Introduction to the special issue on multi-channel retailing. Journal of Retailing, 91(2), 174-181.

World Bank. (2025), The World Bank in South Africa; 2025. Available from: https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/southafrica/overview?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Yeboah, A., Afrifa-Yamoah, E. (2024), The influence of social presence on customer loyalty in emerging market retail industry: The mediating role of trust. Journal of African Business, 25(2), 287-308.

Zeithaml, V.A., Berry, L.L., Parasuraman, A. (1996), The behavioral consequences of service quality. Journal of Marketing, 60(2), 31-46.

Zhang, J., Wedel, M. (2009), The effectiveness of customized promotions in online and offline stores. Journal of Marketing Research, 46(2), 190-206.

Zhang, T., Wei, W., Lee, H. (2018), The effects of integrated marketing communications on customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry. International Journal of Hospitality Management, 75, 27-35.