

AI-Enabled Omnichannel Marketing: Creating Seamless Customer Experiences Across Digital and Physical Touchpoints

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Abstract:

Customers often move between websites, mobile applications, social platforms, physical stores, and service desks while completing a single purchase. These movements create opportunities for convenience, but they also expose differences in information, service, and fulfilment. This conceptual review examines how artificial intelligence can support coherent customer experiences across digital and physical touchpoints. It draws on selected peer-reviewed journal articles published from 2020 to 2026 and brings together research on channel integration, AI-enabled marketing, customer experience, and responsible technology use. The review argues that AI contributes to seamlessness when it helps preserve relevant context, improves the reliability of customer promises, and supports useful assistance throughout the journey. Personalisation alone is insufficient. Inaccurate inventory information, disconnected service records, intrusive data collection, and weak human escalation can undermine otherwise advanced systems. A conceptual framework links AI capability and channel integration to customer effort and perceived continuity, with trust, customer control, and human support shaping the resulting experience. Four propositions are offered for future empirical examination. The paper also develops practical implications for journey design, employee coordination, and performance measurement. Its central contribution is to treat seamlessness as a customer judgement about continuity and dependable service rather than as the simple presence of several connected technologies.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Omnichannel Marketing, Customer Experience, Channel Integration, Personalisation

1 Introduction

A customer may discover a product on social media, compare alternatives on a retailer's website, inspect the item in a store, and complete the order through a mobile application. The customer may then seek help through a chatbot or return the purchase at a local outlet. From the customer's perspective, these actions belong to one task. From the organisation's perspective, they can involve several departments, databases, and performance targets. The distance between these perspectives is a central problem in omnichannel marketing.

Research on customer experience provides a useful starting point. Becker and Jaakkola (2020) explain that experience involves customer responses to stimuli and consumption processes, rather than simply the activities a firm delivers. De Keyser et al. (2020) organise experience analysis around touchpoints, context, and qualities. These

perspectives direct attention towards what customers encounter and how they interpret it. A technically connected system can therefore remain experientially fragmented.

AI extends the choices available to marketing managers. Prediction systems can identify likely needs, recommendation tools can narrow product options, and conversational applications can assist customers at different journey stages. Davenport et al. (2020) discuss the implications of AI for marketing strategy and customer behaviour. Huang and Rust (2021) distinguish AI contributions to routine automation, analytical decisions, and understanding interactions. However, the value of these capabilities depends on their connection to the organisation's actual service processes.

This paper asks how AI can support continuity across digital and physical touchpoints, which conditions make that continuity valuable, and how

marketing managers should assess the resulting experience. It develops a narrative conceptual review of journal literature published between 2020 and 2026. The argument is that effective AI-enabled omnichannel marketing requires alignment between customer understanding, channel coordination, and dependable execution. The paper first clarifies the main concepts, then synthesises the literature, proposes a framework, and discusses managerial and research implications.

2 Review Approach and Scope

This study uses a narrative conceptual review. Its purpose is to connect relevant ideas and develop an explanatory framework, rather than calculate a pooled effect or estimate relationships from primary data. Jaakkola (2020) emphasises the importance of a clear design and justified theoretical choices in conceptual research. Accordingly, the present review combines selected insights from customer experience research, omnichannel integration studies, and AI marketing scholarship around a defined problem: continuity when customers move between channels.

Targeted scholarly web searches used combinations of artificial intelligence, omnichannel marketing, channel integration, customer experience, customer journey, generative AI, trust, and personalisation. Articles were considered when they were published in peer-reviewed journals between 2020 and 2026 and addressed at least one component of the problem. Publisher records, journal pages, and author institutional repositories were used to verify bibliographic details and accessible descriptions of the research. The reference list contains 19 selected articles. The retrieval cut-off was 3 October 2026.

The articles were read at the level available through accessible full texts, abstracts, and publisher summaries. The synthesis grouped their contributions into customer experience, channel coordination, AI applications, and governance. Abstract-based evidence was used conservatively; unavailable methodological details and numerical effects were not inferred. The review does not claim exhaustive database coverage, a reproducible systematic screening process, or a formal assessment

of study quality. The proposed relationships are conceptual interpretations that require subsequent testing.

3 Conceptual Foundations

3.1 Omnichannel marketing and channel integration

For this paper, omnichannel marketing means coordinating customer-facing channels so that customers can pursue a goal across them with meaningful continuity. The emphasis is on the relationship among channels. A business can maintain a website, a store, and a messaging account while still requiring customers to start again whenever they change the mode of interaction. Channel presence describes access; channel integration describes coordination.

Integration includes shared product information, aligned promotional conditions, accessible transaction records, coordinated service policies, and workable fulfilment arrangements. Gao et al. (2021) examine how channel integration relates to cognitive and affective customer experience. Their distinction is useful because integration can support both practical understanding and emotional reassurance. Gao and Huang (2021) also examine integration quality in relation to engagement and loyalty. Together, these studies support attention to the quality of coordination rather than the number of available channels.

3.2 Customer experience and seamlessness

Customer experience is broader than satisfaction with a single transaction. It includes the customer's understanding, feelings, effort, and responses as the journey develops. A recommendation can be accurate but uncomfortable. A return can be permitted but difficult to complete. A purchase can be fast while leaving the customer uncertain about delivery. These differences explain why a narrow conversion measure cannot represent the whole experience.

This review defines perceived seamlessness as the customer's judgement that relevant information, choices, commitments, and assistance remain coherent when the journey moves between

touchpoints. Three aspects are proposed: continuity of context, continuity of promises, and continuity of support. Context concerns what the organisation appropriately remembers. Promises concern whether information and commitments remain dependable. Support concerns whether the customer can obtain help without unnecessary repetition.

Seamlessness should not remove all pauses. Confirmation before payment, permission before sharing information, and an opportunity to review a recommendation may protect customer control. These pauses are purposeful. The problem is avoidable friction, such as repeating an order number because service systems do not communicate. The conceptual distinction is between effort that supports an informed decision and effort created by organisational fragmentation.

3.3 AI capability and customer control

AI capability refers here to the organisation's ability to use AI appropriately for customer understanding, prediction, communication, and service coordination. It includes the quality of inputs, the suitability of the model, and the ability to connect its output to an action. Purchasing a sophisticated application does not establish this capability if the organisation cannot maintain its knowledge, interpret its recommendations, or correct its errors.

Hoyer et al. (2020) discuss how emerging technologies can alter customer experience. Mustak et al. (2021) identify a broad marketing research landscape that includes relationships, loyalty, and customer understanding. These contributions suggest that AI should be evaluated across several marketing functions. This paper adds that capability must be assessed against the customer's task. An application is useful when it improves a meaningful decision or service transition, rather than merely producing more interactions.

Customer control is an accompanying condition. Customers should be able to correct preferences, decline optional personalisation, change channels, and reach a person when needed. The same automated action may be experienced differently depending on whether the customer authorised it. A

system that saves time can also create concern if it appears to act beyond the agreed purpose.

4 Synthesis of the Journal Literature

4.1 From channel availability to journey coordination

The selected literature reveals an important difference between improving a channel and improving a journey. Channel-level improvements concern a particular interface or encounter. Journey coordination concerns what happens before and after that encounter. Cai and Choi (2023) examine omnichannel marketing strategy in the digital platform era, directing attention to the interaction of marketing choices across online and offline settings. This strategic perspective complements customer experience research by showing that channels cannot be managed as isolated advertising outlets.

The present synthesis suggests that transition points deserve separate analysis. A customer can report a satisfactory store visit and a satisfactory website visit while still encountering difficulty moving between them. For example, an online shortlist may not be available to the employee who provides in-store assistance. Evaluating both touchpoints individually would miss the failure. The transition becomes a distinct unit of managerial attention.

This interpretation has consequences for accountability. When each department optimises its own response time or sales target, responsibility for the transition can remain unclear. Marketing managers should identify who owns the promise that passes between channels. The organisation also needs a procedure for resolving contradictions. A coherent journey requires someone to recognise and correct the failure, even when no individual department created it alone.

4.2 Personalisation, convenience, and perceived sacrifice

Ameen et al. (2021) link AI-enabled customer experience with convenience, personalisation, trust, and perceived sacrifice. Their research is important because it treats customer responses as a balance of

benefits and concerns. The present paper interprets this balance as relevant to omnichannel integration: connecting more information may improve assistance, but it can also make customers more aware of how extensively they are being observed.

The review therefore separates relevance from intensity. More personalised messages do not automatically create a better experience. Relevance depends on the current goal, available options, timing, and the customer's willingness to engage. Managers should assess whether an intervention reduces uncertainty or adds pressure. This is especially important when recommendations are transferred from private digital browsing into an interaction with a store employee.

4.3 Conversational assistance and social expectations

Puntoni et al. (2021) describe consumer AI experiences involving data capture, classification, delegation, and social interaction. These categories help explain why reactions to AI extend beyond speed and accuracy. Customers may welcome delegated search while feeling uncomfortable about classification. They may appreciate quick assistance but expect a person to understand a sensitive problem.

Liu-Thompkins et al. (2022) develop an account of artificial empathy in marketing interactions and discuss conditions under which it can be useful or undesirable. The implication for this review is that a friendly response should be evaluated alongside the capacity to solve the customer's problem. Language that signals concern can support an interaction, but it cannot substitute for an accurate refund decision or a workable replacement arrangement.

Recent work also directs attention to familiarity. Arce-Urriza et al. (2025) examine generative AI and the adoption of retail chatbots. Metwally et al. (2026) investigate generative AI in UK retail with attention to satisfaction, trust, and financial performance. These studies motivate treating experience with the technology as a boundary condition. The same interface may require different guidance for a frequent user and a customer encountering automated assistance for the first time.

4.4 Generative AI and the continuing importance of physical experience

Kshetri et al. (2024) discuss applications, opportunities, and challenges of generative AI in marketing. Sahut and Laroche (2025) provide an integrative synthesis connecting AI with customer experience and strategic marketing. These contributions broaden the discussion from prediction towards generated communication and interactive assistance. They also make it necessary to examine how generated answers connect to verified business information.

Mouammine (2026) reviews AI in customer experience and digital marketing through a sensory marketing lens. This perspective is particularly relevant to physical touchpoints. A customer may still need to inspect colour, feel a material, compare fit, or judge comfort in person. AI-enabled digital assistance can prepare that visit or help interpret options afterwards. It should not be assumed to reproduce every aspect of physical inspection.

5 AI Across Digital and Physical Touchpoints

5.1 Discovery and consideration

During discovery, AI can assist with content relevance, product search, and the selection of information shown to customers. A useful intervention introduces an option that matches a stated need or makes a comparison easier. The managerial problem is to ensure that the information corresponds to a real offering. Generated content can attract attention while still creating a service failure if it describes an unavailable feature or omits an important condition.

5.2 Purchase and fulfilment

Fulfilment is equally important to marketing credibility. A recommendation to collect an item from a nearby store creates an expectation about stock and readiness. The system should make that promise only when the necessary operational information is sufficiently reliable. Otherwise, the customer carries the cost of the organisation's

uncertainty through a wasted visit or an unexpected delay.

For this paper, promise reliability is a central bridge between marketing and operations. AI can help analyse likely demand or suggest an available alternative, but staff and systems must still execute the commitment. A suitable fallback might offer a revised collection time, another outlet, or cancellation. The choice should remain with the customer. A well-designed failure response can preserve continuity even when the original plan cannot be completed.

5.3 Service, returns, and recovery

After purchase, the customer's goal often changes from selecting a product to resolving a

problem. This change should alter the interaction. Continuing to recommend additional purchases while a complaint is unresolved can make the organisation appear inattentive. Journey context should therefore inform when marketing messages are reduced, delayed, or stopped.

Returns create a practical test of integration. If an online order can be returned in a store, the service desk needs access to the applicable transaction and policy. AI may help locate the relevant rule or summarise the case, but the organisation needs a clear owner for exceptions. The proposed standard is resolution continuity: the customer should understand who is handling the issue, which information has transferred, and when a response can be expected.

6 A Conceptual Framework for Seamless Experience

6.1 Framework logic

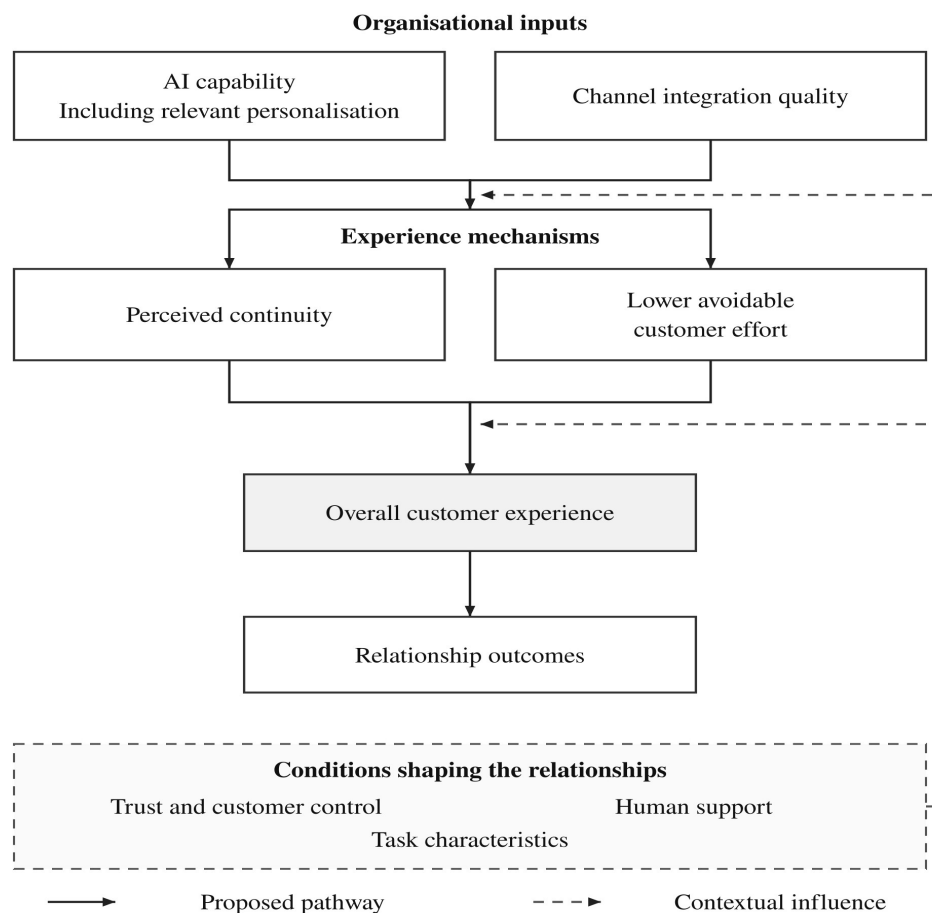


Figure: 1 Guided Conceptual Framework

Source: Author

The framework proposed in this paper links two organisational inputs, AI capability and channel integration quality, to two immediate experience mechanisms, perceived continuity and customer effort. These mechanisms contribute to overall customer experience and relationship outcomes. Trust, customer control, human support, and task characteristics condition the relationships. The framework represents a reasoned synthesis of the reviewed literature; it has not been statistically tested.

AI capability and integration quality are treated as complementary. Integration supplies the connection among relevant information and processes. AI helps interpret the information or choose an appropriate response. If integration is weak, a capable model can produce a recommendation based on incomplete context. If AI capability is weak, connected records may remain unused or may trigger unsuitable interventions. Investment in one component cannot be assumed to compensate for deficiencies in the other.

Perceived continuity concerns whether customers recognise a coherent journey. Customer effort concerns the work they must perform to continue it. The two mechanisms overlap but are distinct. An organisation can preserve an order record while still requiring a long and confusing authentication process. Conversely, a short interaction may feel disconnected if an employee ignores an earlier commitment. Future measurement should therefore assess both mechanisms separately.

6.2 Four propositions for future examination

Proposition 1. AI capability is more positively associated with perceived journey continuity when channel integration quality is high. The reasoning is that context-sensitive assistance depends on sufficiently connected information and processes. A strong recommendation engine operating on a disconnected channel may improve one encounter while leaving the transition unresolved.

Proposition 2. Lower avoidable customer effort and greater perceived continuity jointly explain the relationship between AI-enabled channel coordination and customer experience. The

expected benefit arises when customers can proceed with fewer repetitive tasks while understanding that previous choices and commitments remain relevant. This proposition distinguishes journey improvement from the simple speed of an automated response.

Proposition 3. Trust and perceived customer control strengthen the relationship between relevant personalisation and customer experience. The expected relationship weakens when customers cannot explain, correct, or decline the use of their information. Personalisation should therefore be examined as a conditional intervention rather than a uniformly beneficial service attribute.

Proposition 4. Accessible human support strengthens the contribution of AI assistance to customer experience when tasks are ambiguous, emotionally sensitive, or difficult to reverse. Routine questions may be resolved through automation. More complex situations require judgement, accountability, and a clear route to a person. The proposition concerns task suitability, rather than assuming that either AI or human service is always superior.

6.3 Constructs and empirical boundaries

A subsequent study could examine continuity through customer reports of consistent information, remembered context, and preserved commitments. Avoidable effort could be assessed through repetition, unnecessary channel changes, and difficulty obtaining a resolution. Trust should be measured as a distinct perception, rather than included in the same scale as satisfaction. Similarly, integration quality should not be inferred solely from the customer's use of several channels.

7 Privacy, Fairness, and Responsible Design

7.1 Appropriate use of customer information

An omnichannel system can combine information that customers originally provided for different purposes. This creates a governance question before it creates a modelling opportunity. The organisation should decide which information is necessary for the task, whether the customer

understands the use, and who can access it. A service employee may need an order history to resolve a complaint without needing the customer's entire browsing history.

Puntoni et al. (2021) make data capture and classification visible within the consumer experience of AI. Kumar et al. (2025) examine the promises, risks, and public policy implications of generative AI in marketing. These perspectives support treating governance as part of the customer relationship. The present paper proposes that a seamless experience should be proportionate: information follows the journey only where it serves an authorised and useful purpose.

Practical design should enable corrections and distinguish confirmed information from inferred preferences. Retention decisions should reflect the purpose of the record. Managers should also examine whether consent choices are carried across channels. A preference withdrawn in the application should not remain active in another marketing interface. Otherwise, the organisation presents an appearance of control while continuing the unwanted activity.

7.2 Fairness and generated information

Prediction systems learn from available records. If those records overrepresent customers who already use digital services, the system may provide weaker assistance to others. The proposed managerial response is to evaluate outcomes across relevant customer groups and channel preferences. Overall accuracy can conceal an uneven distribution of errors. A helpful average result does not explain who experiences repeated inconvenience.

Generative systems require a further separation between fluent language and verified information. A persuasive answer can still misstate a policy or invent a product detail. The organisation should limit transactional claims to approved and current records, review important exceptions, and provide a clear correction process. These are implementation recommendations derived from the review's concern with promise reliability, rather than claims about the performance of a particular application.

7.3 Accessibility and human assistance

Digital convenience depends on the customer's ability to use the interface. Short instructions, understandable language, accessible design, and channel choice can help preserve participation. The organisation should avoid making the most useful service conditional on advanced digital skills. A customer who prefers a store visit or telephone conversation still needs a dependable route through the journey.

Human support also requires organisational preparation. Employees need training to interpret AI suggestions, identify inaccurate information, and recognise when a customer wants a person. They should be able to explain a decision without overstating what the system knows. The review proposes that human escalation is a designed service function with defined ownership and authority. It should be evaluated as part of the omnichannel experience.

8 Managerial Implications

8.1 Begin with a customer problem

Managers should begin with a recurring journey problem rather than a list of technologies. Repeated questions, contradictory stock information, unrecognised offers, and disconnected complaint records are suitable starting points. The next step is to identify the cause. Some problems require clearer rules or improved information sharing before they require AI. Adding a conversational layer to an unresolved process may make the failure more visible.

A manageable first project should have a defined customer task, a clear operational owner, and an observable outcome. For example, a retailer could examine the transition from an online shortlist to in-store assistance. The organisation would specify which information transfers, how the customer authorises it, how employees use it, and how success is assessed. A narrow project makes errors easier to understand and improvements easier to attribute.

8.2 Align departments and employee incentives

Marketing, store operations, customer service, and fulfilment should agree on the commitments made to customers. A campaign should not promise availability that operational systems cannot confirm. A service policy should not depend on which channel the customer happens to choose. Shared review of recurring failures can reveal where information, authority, or incentives are misaligned.

Employee incentives also matter. If a store employee loses recognition when assisting an online purchase, there may be little reason to support cross-channel completion. Managers should recognise contributions to the customer's overall task. The recommended principle is journey accountability: departmental success should include

Table 1

Proposed indicators for evaluating journey quality

Dimension	Suggested indicator	Interpretation
Context continuity	Repeated questions per service case	Whether relevant information follows the customer
Promise reliability	Commitments fulfilled as communicated	Whether information corresponds to execution
Avoidable effort	Extra contacts needed to complete a task	Whether fragmentation creates additional work
Service continuity	Cases resolved after a channel transfer	Whether support continues through escalation
Customer control	Preference corrections carried across channels	Whether stated choices are respected

A reduction in chatbot handling time should not be interpreted as success if unresolved cases move to the store. Similarly, a rise in recommendation clicks may have limited value if returns and complaints increase. Managers should examine whether a reported benefit is accompanied by a transferred cost. Evaluation should cover the period and channels necessary to observe the complete task.

9 Research Agenda and Limitations

Future research should examine channel transitions directly. Journey diaries, linked service records, interviews, and observations can reveal where continuity breaks. Surveys can measure perceptions, but a single retrospective score may obscure the stage at which a failure occurred.

whether customers can move forward coherently, even when the final sale or resolution is recorded elsewhere.

8.3 Measure experience alongside commercial outcomes

Managers should combine commercial measures with indicators of journey quality. Conversion, average order value, and repeat purchase remain useful, but they should be interpreted alongside avoidable repetition, transition completion, promise fulfilment, complaint resolution, and customer control. The proposed measures in Table 1 are suggestions for operational evaluation, not validated scales or reported study results.

Combining customer accounts with process evidence would help establish whether the problem arose from inaccurate information, missing authority, or unsuitable assistance.

The proposed framework also requires longitudinal testing. Initial curiosity about an AI tool may differ from experience after repeated use. Researchers should distinguish adoption from continued use and relationship outcomes. A customer may try a chatbot once without trusting it during a later service problem. Familiarity should be measured with attention to the type of application and task, rather than treated as a general familiarity with technology.

Comparisons across contexts would strengthen the explanation. Research could examine routine and considered purchases, large retailers and

smaller firms, and customers with different language or accessibility needs. Indian retail settings offer useful opportunities to investigate how stores, applications, and messaging interfaces are combined. These are proposed contexts for future work; the present review makes no empirical claims about Indian customer behaviour.

The review has several limitations. Its purposive selection of 19 journal articles cannot represent the whole literature. Accessible descriptions differ in depth, and reliance on some abstracts limits methodological appraisal. English-language retrieval may overlook relevant regional scholarship. The conceptual framework integrates evidence from different settings without establishing common effect sizes. Finally, the propositions remain untested. These limitations make the paper an interpretive contribution and a basis for future inquiry, rather than a definitive ranking of AI applications.

10 Conclusion

AI-enabled omnichannel marketing can improve customer experience when it supports continuity across the customer's task. The reviewed literature shows why channel integration, customer perceptions, and responsible AI use belong in the same discussion. The proposed contribution is to connect these areas through continuity of context, promises, and support. These mechanisms direct attention towards the moments when customers move between digital and physical touchpoints.

The analysis suggests that relevant personalisation must be supported by dependable information and workable service processes. A recommendation has limited value when the product cannot be obtained as promised. A conversational response has limited value when the customer must repeat the problem to another employee. Conversely, a modest system can contribute meaningfully when it helps the customer proceed with confidence and appropriate control.

For marketing managers, the practical priority is to identify the customer problem, connect the necessary processes, assign accountability, and evaluate the complete journey. For researchers, the priority is to test the proposed mechanisms and their

boundaries with real customer and organisational evidence. Seamless experience is best understood as an outcome that customers recognise through coherent and dependable service. AI is one capability through which organisations can work towards that outcome.

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