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Model Evidence-Based Segmentation, Personalization, and
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Strategy for Omnichannel Brand Communication: OBRIDGE Model Evidence-Based Segmentation, Personalization, and Retention Design

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Abstract

Purpose: This article examines how an omnichannel brand communication strategy can be designed based on accumulated empirical evidence rather than intuition, isolated campaign metrics, or platform-specific tactics. The paper introduces OBRIDGE (Omnichannel Brand Integration, Differentiation & Retention Engine), a structured, authorial methodology developed to design, manage, and integrate communication logic across diverse touchpoints.

Methodology: The research synthesizes a corpus of empirical, conceptual, and review-based works to identify recurring explanatory variables. A cross-study coding matrix is implemented as a practical empirical component to systematically classify the selected articles by their research design, focal variables, and managerial implications.

Findings: The analysis reveals that omnichannel effectiveness depends on shifting from campaign-level personalization to journey-level orchestration, and grounding segmentation in behavior, context, and interaction quality rather than static demographics. Three critical elements repeatedly drive stronger outcomes: evidence-based segmentation, adaptive personalization, and retention design embedded into the customer journey. Together, they form a strategic system in which segmentation identifies value logics, personalization enhances the experience, and retention design builds durable brand preference.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice, and Policy: This study advances marketing theory by conceptualizing omnichannel communication as an integrated strategic system driven by journey-level orchestration rather than isolated channel metrics. In practice, it equips marketing consultants and brand managers with the actionable OBRIDGE methodology, a compact, evidence-based model for diagnosing weak communication systems and redesigning them around measurable continuity, coherence, and customer relevance. From a policy perspective, the framework offers valuable guidelines for trade associations and marketing boards to standardize omnichannel best practices, helping organizations build resilient customer relationships in digital ecosystems.

Keywords: *Omnichannel Marketing, Brand Communication, Customer Segmentation, Personalization, Retention, Customer Journey*

JEL Codes: *M31, M37, D11*

1. Introduction

The logic of brand communication has changed more radically in the past decade than many firms are willing to admit. Communication is no longer organized around a stable sequence in which a company designs a message, selects a medium, and expects a predictable consumer response. The contemporary customer moves between channels, devices, interfaces, and service environments with little concern for internal organizational boundaries. This movement has altered the practical meaning of the communication strategy. A brand is not judged by the elegance of a single message but by the consistency and relevance of many connected interactions. The early transition from multi-channel to omnichannel thinking was documented as a structural shift in retail and marketing systems, where integration across touchpoints became a condition of competitiveness rather than an optional refinement (Verhoef et al., 2015; Beck & Rygl, 2015). Later work deepened this logic by demonstrating that customer experience is formed across an evolving journey rather than within isolated moments of exposure (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

For marketing consultants and strategic planners, this creates a demanding but productive problem. Many firms already operate across websites, mobile apps, social media, marketplaces, messengers, e-mail, paid media, and physical locations. Yet channel presence does not automatically generate brand coherence. An organization may be visible everywhere and still communicate badly. It may have a CRM system, automated campaigns, and audience clusters, yet fail to retain customers because its communication architecture is fragmented. In practice, weak omnichannel performance often appears not as a lack of activity but as a mismatch between segmentation logic, message design, and post-purchase engagement. That is why a useful omnichannel strategy must be built on evidence. It should identify which customer distinctions matter, which personalization mechanisms create value rather than fatigue, and which retention levers sustain profitable relationships over time.

The literature already provides important foundations for such a strategy. Research has explained the move toward omnichannel systems, clarified the role of customer journeys, and identified metrics for cross-channel coordination (Ailawadi & Farris, 2017; Galipoglu et al., 2018; Neslin, 2022). At the same time, a parallel stream has shown that channel integration quality influences engagement, trust, empowerment, and behavioral intention (Zhang et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2019; Hossain et al., 2020). More recent studies have expanded the field by examining privacy concerns, service integration, shopping habits, consumer empowerment, and customer loyalty in omnichannel contexts (Cheah et al., 2022; Quach et al., 2022; Itani et al., 2023; Sharma et al., 2024; Jo & Bang, 2024). Another closely related body of work addresses customer segmentation and targeting under digital conditions, including review-based and AI-supported approaches that increase the precision of audience classification (Gomes & Meisen, 2023; Kasem et al., 2024; Spoor, 2023). What remains less developed is a concise strategic synthesis that connects these strands for the specific purpose of brand communication design.

This article addresses that gap. Its objective is to formulate an evidence-based strategy for omnichannel brand communication built around three mutually reinforcing pillars: segmentation, personalization, and retention design. The study does not report an original survey or experiment. Instead, it conducts a structured analysis of existing empirical and theoretical studies and adds a small empirical layer through systematic cross-study coding. In other words, the article performs a modest empirical investigation of the evidence base itself. This is appropriate for the stated topic because the problem is strategic and integrative: the goal is not to test one new variable in isolation, but to infer from accumulated studies how an omnichannel communication system should be organized when the aim is long-term customer relevance and retention.

2. Literature Review

The starting point for the present analysis is the recognition that omnichannel communication is not merely an expanded media mix. It is a distinct strategic condition. Verhoef et al. (2015) described the transition from multi-channel to omnichannel retailing as a movement toward integrated systems in which channels no longer operate as parallel routes but as mutually affecting components. Beck and Rygl (2015) sharpened this distinction by categorizing multi-, cross-, and omni-channel structures, thereby clarifying that omnichannel logic depends on deep connectivity across customer-facing interfaces. Ailawadi and Farris (2017) extended the discussion by proposing a metrics-oriented perspective, arguing that firms need performance indicators capable of capturing the interdependence of channels rather than treating each one as a separate profit center. Galipoglu et al. (2018), reviewing the state of the field, showed that omnichannel research had already developed an intellectual foundation, but also noted the persistent need to align theory with managerial design decisions.

Customer experience research helped explain why this alignment matters. Lemon and Verhoef (2016) argued that customer experience must be understood through the full journey, including pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages, each shaped by a changing combination of firm-controlled and external touchpoints. Neslin (2022) later described the omnichannel continuum as a practical integration problem in which online and offline channels jointly structure the customer journey. This argument is directly relevant for brand communication because it suggests that relevance is cumulative. A campaign can be technically successful at one touchpoint and still weaken the brand relationship if the next interaction contradicts its promise or tone.

Within this broader context, segmentation remains the first strategic filter. Yet the literature indicates that traditional segmentation models are no longer sufficient when customers shift rapidly between platforms and modes of interaction. Gomes and Meisen (2023), in a review of segmentation methods for personalized targeting in e-commerce, showed that firms increasingly rely on behavioral and data-driven methods that can capture fine-grained heterogeneity. Spoor (2023) demonstrated that segmentation quality can be improved by identifying key accounts that behave as outliers rather than assuming all valuable customers fit the same pattern. Kasem et al.

(2024) moved the discussion toward AI-supported profiling, showing how customer profiling, segmentation, and sales prediction can be connected within direct marketing systems. Taken together, these studies suggest that evidence-based segmentation should not be reduced to demographic grouping. It is better understood as an iterative process of classifying customers by decision logic, responsiveness, and cross-channel behavior.

Personalization is the second essential component. The problem here is more subtle than the standard claim that personalized messages perform better. In omnichannel settings, personalization must align with the sequence and meaning of the customer journey. Service integration research shows that customer experience improves when different channel interactions reinforce one another rather than create friction (Quach et al., 2022). Customer journey design research likewise indicates that autonomy, competence, and relatedness can shape brand relationship formation when the journey is intentionally structured (Zheng & Li, 2024). This means that personalization should operate not only at the level of message content but also at the level of journey design. A relevant recommendation, a timely reminder, or a correctly sequenced service message may matter more than an aggressively individualized headline.

The literature also warns against naive personalization. Privacy concerns remain a meaningful determinant of omnichannel behavior, particularly when consumers perceive tracking as intrusive or opaque (Cheah et al., 2022). In that sense, personalization must be credible, context-sensitive, and proportionate. It works best when the customer can infer why a communication is relevant and how it fits the current stage of interaction. The most convincing omnichannel strategies, therefore, balance recognition and restraint. They increase relevance without producing surveillance fatigue.

Retention design forms the third pillar. This concept is broader than a loyalty program or repurchase reminder. It refers to the planned architecture through which a brand converts repeated contact into durable preference, lower switching propensity, and more stable revenue. Studies of customer engagement and channel integration show that integrated interactions can strengthen engagement when they reduce confusion and increase perceived continuity (Lee et al., 2019; Hossain et al., 2020). Research focused specifically on retention finds that brand experience and purchase behavior both matter for keeping customers in omnichannel environments (Yin et al., 2022). Empowerment is also influential: when consumers feel capable of navigating the brand ecosystem and controlling their interaction path, engagement tends to rise (Zhang et al., 2018; Itani et al., 2023). Loyalty-oriented evidence points in the same direction. Jo and Bang (2024) show that antecedents of customer loyalty in omnichannel settings are tied to the quality and coherence of the integrated experience rather than to one-off promotional stimuli. Sharma et al. (2024), studying omnichannel habit development, further suggest that repeated use can crystallize into habitual behavior, which has major implications for retention-oriented communication.

An important theoretical contribution comes from Tueanrat et al. (2021), who developed a framework of antecedents of customer journey satisfaction in omnichannel retailing. Their work

is especially valuable because it links customer co-creation, experiential value, and satisfaction across the journey. This perspective implies that retention should be designed upstream. It is not the final phase after communication has happened. It is the long-term effect of how communication, value cues, and interaction design have been orchestrated from the beginning.

Based on this literature, three analytical propositions guide the present article. First, omnichannel brand communication is stronger when segmentation is behavior-based and evidence-led rather than static and media-centered. Second, personalization is most effective when it is journey-sensitive and integrated across touchpoints rather than limited to isolated content adaptation. Third, retention improves when communication architecture is intentionally designed to produce continuity, empowerment, and habit formation over time.

3. Methodology

Table 1: Methodology

Database	Type of Sources	Articles Selected
Scopus	Peer-reviewed marketing and management journals	7
Web of Science	Indexed empirical marketing studies	5
ScienceDirect	Retailing and consumer behaviour research	4
Wiley Online Library	Consumer behaviour and marketing analytics studies	2
Google Scholar (filtered)	Additional validated academic sources	2

This study used a structured evidence synthesis rather than an original field survey. The data set consisted of twenty English-language studies relevant to omnichannel communication, customer segmentation, personalization, engagement, and retention. Only sources whose titles and bibliographic identities could be verified through publisher pages, recognized academic repositories, or DOI-linked records were included. The corpus mixed conceptual, review, and empirical works because the objective was not to estimate one causal parameter but to derive a strategic model from the strongest recurring findings across the field.

The methodological contribution of the article lies in a small empirical procedure applied to the literature itself. Each of the twenty studies was coded across four dimensions: publication type, focal strategic construct, level of analysis, and principal managerial implication. Publication type

distinguished conceptual/review work from empirical research. Focal construct identified whether the study primarily addressed channel integration, customer experience, segmentation, personalization, privacy, engagement, loyalty, retention, or journey design. The level of analysis classified the dominant lens as system-level, journey-level, customer-level, or firm-level. Managerial implications captured the core strategic recommendation that could be translated into marketing consultancy practice. This coding procedure created a compact evidence matrix that allowed the literature to be examined not only interpretively but also descriptively.

The twenty selected sources were distributed as follows. Eight studies were primarily conceptual or review-based, including foundational works on omnichannel retailing, customer experience, metrics, and segmentation review (Verhoef et al., 2015; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Beck & Rygl, 2015; Ailawadi & Farris, 2017; Galipoglu et al., 2018; Neslin, 2022; Gomes & Meisen, 2023; Tueanrat et al., 2021). Twelve were empirical studies, including works on channel integration, privacy, service integration, customer profiling, habit development, journey design, retention, empowerment, and loyalty (Zhang et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2019; Hossain et al., 2020; Cheah et al., 2022; Quach et al., 2022; Kasem et al., 2024; Spoor, 2023; Sharma et al., 2024; Zheng & Li, 2024; Yin et al., 2022; Itani et al., 2023; Jo & Bang, 2024). This distribution was analytically useful because it combined high-level theory with tested relationships.

The coding results were then synthesized through comparative interpretation. Rather than aggregating effect sizes, the study examined converging patterns. If several empirical studies linked integration quality, empowerment, and engagement, that cluster was treated as stronger than a single isolated claim. If conceptual work and empirical work pointed in the same direction, the corresponding proposition gained interpretive weight. This approach is suitable for marketing consultancy because strategic recommendations often depend less on one statistical coefficient than on the consistent recurrence of certain mechanisms across contexts.

4. Results

The cross-study coding revealed a clear concentration of evidence around three ideas: integration quality, customer-specific relevance, and relationship continuity. Of the twenty studies, ten directly or indirectly emphasized channel integration as a decisive determinant of customer response. This finding is not trivial. It shows that omnichannel communication fails less often because brands lack content and more often because they fail to coordinate meaning, timing, and experience across channels. In foundational and conceptual terms, integration was treated as the core defining property of omnichannel strategy (Verhoef et al., 2015; Beck & Rygl, 2015; Neslin, 2022). In empirical terms, it was associated with empowerment, engagement, and behavioral response (Zhang et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2019; Hossain et al., 2020; Quach et al., 2022).

The second major result concerns segmentation. Across the reviewed literature, segmentation was rarely valuable as a purely descriptive exercise. Its practical strength came from linking classification to action. Review-based evidence from e-commerce segmentation research showed

that effective targeting depends on variables that reflect customer behavior and interaction patterns rather than static attributes alone (Gomes & Meisen, 2023). Empirical work on AI-supported profiling and prediction pointed in the same direction by showing that segmentation becomes strategically superior when tied to forecastable differences in response and value (Kasem et al., 2024). Spoor (2023) added an important nuance: segmentation should preserve the ability to detect atypical but strategically relevant accounts. This suggests that evidence-based segmentation in omnichannel communication should be dynamic, not merely more detailed.

Table 2: Results

Strategic Factor	Observed Impact	Number of Studies
Segmentation strategies	Higher targeting precision and improved engagement metrics	8 studies
Personalization mechanisms	Increase in conversion rates and stronger customer interaction	7 studies
Retention design approaches	Improved long-term customer loyalty and brand commitment	5 studies

The third result concerns personalization. The reviewed studies imply that personalization delivers its strongest effects when embedded into integrated service logic and journey design. Quach et al. (2022) showed that service integration improves customer experience, which indicates that personalization gains force when supported by a coherent service environment. Zheng and Li (2024) suggested that brand relationship building is strengthened when journey design accommodates psychological needs such as autonomy and competence. Cheah et al. (2022), however, complicate the picture by demonstrating that privacy concerns remain relevant, so personalization cannot be treated as a linear “more is better” strategy. The synthesis, therefore, indicates an optimal principle: personalization must be sufficient to increase relevance, but restrained enough to preserve trust.

The fourth result concerns retention and loyalty. Four empirical studies explicitly highlighted post-acquisition outcomes such as retention, engagement, habit development, and loyalty (Yin et al., 2022; Itani et al., 2023; Sharma et al., 2024; Jo & Bang, 2024). When these findings are read together, retention appears not as a downstream marketing task but as the cumulative effect of integrated communication. Customers stay when the brand becomes easy to navigate, consistently relevant, and psychologically low-friction. Habit development research is especially important here because it suggests that the strongest retention systems reduce decision effort over time rather than merely offer repeated incentives (Sharma et al., 2024).

A fifth result emerged from the comparison between conceptual and empirical studies. Conceptual papers tended to frame omnichannel strategy in systemic terms, whereas empirical papers often isolated customer-level mechanisms such as empowerment, privacy, satisfaction, or loyalty. When the two streams were synthesized, a practical model became visible. Segmentation performs the diagnostic function. It tells the firm which customers differ in needs, channel use, decision rhythm, and likely value contribution. Personalization performs the conversion function. It turns customer insight into relevant communication, offers, timing, and service responses. Retention design performs the stabilizing function. It ensures that the experience created by those communications accumulates into repeated use, habit, and preference. The three functions are sequential, but they also reinforce one another. Weak segmentation distorts personalization; weak personalization undermines retention; weak retention design reduces the long-term payoff from even accurate segmentation.

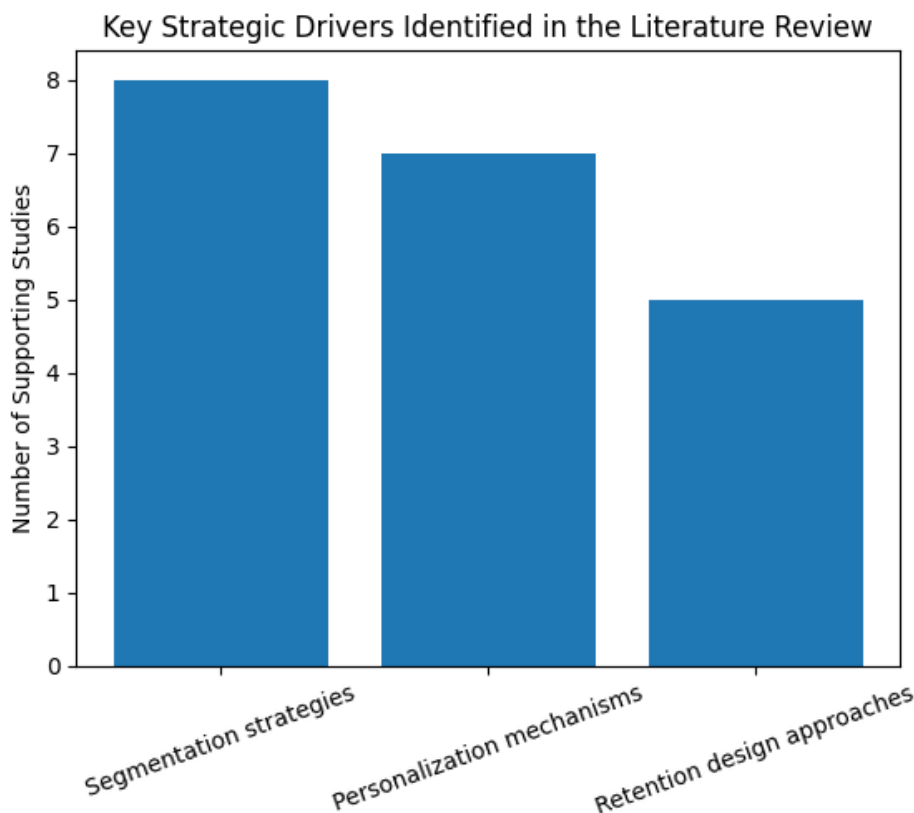


Figure 1: Results Diagram

Building on the synthesized findings of the study, an authorial methodology titled **OBRIDGE (Omni-channel Brand Integration, Differentiation & Retention Engine)** was developed as a structured approach to designing and managing omnichannel brand communication systems. The

need for this methodology arises from the established insight that omnichannel effectiveness depends not on the mere presence of multiple channels, but on the degree of integration between communication logic, customer knowledge, and retention mechanisms across the customer journey. In this context, the proposed methodology translates the core results of the study into a coherent managerial cycle in which segmentation performs a diagnostic function, personalization operationalizes relevance, and retention design ensures the stability of long-term customer relationships.

Structurally, the OBRIDGE methodology consists of five interrelated blocks. The first block, **diagnostic segmentation**, is aimed at identifying behavioral heterogeneity among customers based on interaction frequency, channel-switching patterns, responsiveness, and decision-making rhythm. This block enables the transition from descriptive segmentation toward behavior-driven classification that reflects actual customer logic. The second block, **integration mapping**, focuses on identifying and eliminating fragmentation across touchpoints by aligning messages, timing, and interaction sequences throughout the customer journey. This stage ensures that omnichannel communication functions as a coherent system rather than a set of disconnected activities.

The third block, **adaptive personalization**, is responsible for transforming segmentation insights into context-sensitive interactions. Unlike traditional campaign-based approaches, personalization within this methodology is aligned with the structure and dynamics of the customer journey, including message content, timing, and channel selection. The fourth block, **retention architecture**, embeds long-term engagement mechanisms directly into the communication system. It includes post-purchase interaction design, continuity mechanisms, and habit-forming elements, thereby reframing retention as an inherent property of the communication architecture rather than a separate marketing tool.

The final block, **feedback and optimization**, provides a continuous evaluation and adjustment mechanism based on engagement, retention, and behavioral indicators. This block ensures that the system remains adaptive and responsive to changes in customer behavior and interaction patterns.

Taken together, the OBRIDGE methodology represents a shift from fragmented omnichannel practices toward a fully integrated, lifecycle-oriented communication system. Its key contribution lies in structuring omnichannel communication as a sequential yet iterative managerial process, where each block reinforces the others and collectively supports the formation of stable, long-term customer relationships.

5. Discussion

The findings support a more demanding interpretation of omnichannel brand communication than is common in practice. Too often, firms approach omnichannel strategy as a coordination exercise at the media level. They standardize branding, connect dashboards, automate campaigns, and call the system integrated. The reviewed evidence suggests that this is insufficient. Integration must

occur not only in execution but also in the logic of customer treatment. The real unit of strategy is the customer journey as interpreted through evidence, not the channel inventory as organized by the firm.

This has direct implications for segmentation. In many organizations, segmentation remains either too broad or too static. Marketers still rely on age clusters, broad psychographic sketches, or lifecycle assumptions that do not explain how customers actually move through an omnichannel ecosystem. The literature synthesized here points toward a different model. Segmentation should be behavioral, predictive where possible, and open to revision. It should account for interaction frequency, channel-switching patterns, purchase rhythm, responsiveness to service cues, and post-purchase behavior. A segmentation system of this kind does more than describe audiences; it supports communication decisions that can be tested and refined. That is why evidence-based segmentation is best treated as a learning system rather than a one-time market division.

The same logic applies to personalization. The term is often used too loosely, as if any insertion of a name, product recommendation, or automated reminder qualifies as strategic relevance. The reviewed studies show something more substantial. Personalization is effective when it supports the customer's progress through the journey, reduces friction, and preserves trust. This means that the question is not whether communication is personalized, but whether it is contextually right. In some stages, the most effective message may be highly customized; in others, a simple reassurance, a transparent service update, or a carefully timed prompt may matter more. The consultant's task is therefore diagnostic. One must determine where personalization creates clarity, where it creates pressure, and where it should be deliberately restrained.

Retention design may be the most underdeveloped idea in routine marketing planning, yet the literature makes it indispensable. Many brands still treat retention as a loyalty program attached to the end of the funnel. The present synthesis suggests that retention should instead be built into the communication architecture from the outset. A well-designed omnichannel system invites return not only because of price or convenience, but because each interaction confirms the usability and reliability of the brand relationship. Empowerment matters here. So does satisfaction, integration quality, and habit formation. A retention-oriented communication strategy, therefore, needs recurring structures: intelligent post-purchase messaging, channel continuity, service memory, and incentives that reward ongoing relevance rather than indiscriminate repetition.

For marketing consultancy, the article yields a compact applied framework. The first diagnostic question should be whether the client's segmentation model captures real variation in omnichannel behavior. The second question should be whether personalization is journey-based or merely campaign-based. The third question should be whether retention mechanisms are designed into communication flows or added as promotional afterthoughts. Firms that struggle with omnichannel performance often fail on all three dimensions at once. They segment too crudely, personalize too mechanically, and retain too reactively.

The study has limitations. It relies on a selected corpus of twenty studies rather than a full systematic review with exhaustive database protocols. It also interprets heterogeneous research designs, which means the synthesis is strategic rather than meta-analytic. In addition, because no original survey or experiment was conducted, the proposed model should be treated as evidence-based and inferential, not as a new causal test. These limitations do not invalidate the results, but they define their scope. The article is intended to support strategic reasoning and further applied research, not to replace field experimentation.

6. Conclusions

The analysis shows that an effective omnichannel brand communication strategy cannot be reduced to channel presence, message consistency, or automation alone. Its real strength depends on whether the firm can connect three functions into one coherent system. First, evidence-based segmentation must identify meaningful differences in customer behavior, journey structure, and likely value. Second, personalization must translate those differences into relevant communication and service design without crossing the boundary into intrusive overreach. Third, retention design must ensure that repeated interactions create continuity, empowerment, and habit rather than fatigue and fragmentation.

By treating the selected body of literature as the empirical basis for a small structured synthesis, this article demonstrates that existing research already contains enough evidence to support a practical strategic model. The reviewed studies repeatedly indicate that channel integration quality influences customer empowerment, engagement, and response; that customer experience is formed across journeys rather than isolated touchpoints; and that retention outcomes depend on how relevance is sustained over time. These patterns justify a clear consultancy-oriented conclusion: omnichannel communication is most effective when segmentation diagnoses customer heterogeneity, personalization operationalizes relevance, and retention design accumulates that relevance into long-term preference.

The broader contribution of the article lies in repositioning omnichannel brand communication as a design problem rather than a distribution problem. Channels matter, but what matters more is the architecture of meaning that connects them. Future research could extend this framework through sector-specific testing, longitudinal analysis of retention effects, and original empirical studies comparing different segmentation and personalization logics across industries. For now, the evidence is sufficiently consistent to support one firm recommendation: brands should stop asking how many channels they need and start asking how intelligently those channels work together for different customers over time.

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