

The Impact of Omni-Channel Integration on Generation Z Purchase Intentions Towards FMCG Retailers: An Empirical Study on Egyptian FMCG Consumers

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Abstract The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of omni-channel integration on Generation Z purchase intentions towards FMCG retailers in Egypt. A self-administered questionnaire and quantitative methodological approach were used to collect data from the selected sample. The study results revealed that omni-channel integration has an impact on generation Z FMCG retail purchase intentions. This showcases the integral role and importance of incorporating both an omni-channel approach in generating favorable retail purchase intentions. This study contributes to existing body of knowledge of the retail industry as well as winning in the Gen Z era. The results shall provide FMCG retailers with an actionable framework that shall help them grow their businesses in the dynamic Generation Z era. This study used a cross sectional research design and was implemented to examine the impact of omni-channel integration on Generation Z purchase intentions towards FMCG retailers in Egypt. Results came out supporting the main proposed hypothesis. Future researchers could employ a longitudinal method to investigate any possibility for variations in the results. Qualitative studies could equally be used to supplement the quantitative findings. Lastly, this study focused on FMCGs only. It is recommended that future research focus on other business sectors and investigate specific categories in more detail.

Keywords: *Omni-channel retailing, seamless experience “SE”, channel integration, customer experience “CX”, personalized customer journeys, purchase intentions, fast moving consumer goods “FMCG”, retail transformation, generation Z*

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1. Introduction

In order to adapt to the demands of customers and stay competitive in the current market, many companies have implemented omnichannel retailing strategies that provide personalized shopping experiences and innovative ways for customers to make purchase decisions [1].

However, achieving a consistent and seamless consumer experience across all channels presents a significant challenge for omnichannel merchants, who must integrate transaction and order fulfillment processes across multiple channels [2]. In today's marketing landscape, omnichannel marketing has become the norm, as businesses strive to offer customers a "seamless" multichannel experience [3]. The proliferation of channels and customers' access to multiple channels necessitate the integration of these channels by businesses [3]. With the advancement of digital technologies in the marketing industry, an increasing number of businesses are adopting an omnichannel business strategy [4].

Many executives consider the omnichannel approach to be

a top priority, as it has been shown to improve average order value by 13% and achieve 90% higher rates of customer retention compared to a single-channel strategy [5,6].

However, research by [7] indicates that only a small percentage of merchants (3%) have all their channels fully connected, while a significant number (53%) have only a few channels connected or no connection at all. According to [8] there is an overemphasis on technologies that provide convenience to customers, but consumers expect more than just convenience. They also expect affordable prices, high-quality products, and a seamless shopping experience.

Previous literature on omnichannel retailing has traditionally focused on elements of retailer channel integration that impact sales growth, such as promotion integration, order fulfillment, and customer service [9,10,11]. Research on customer experience has often examined consumer reactions to channel integration and its influence on channel loyalty [12], consumer empowerment [4] and customer engagement [1]. It is important to carefully and effectively implement channel integration strategies in order to generate positive purchase intentions among Generation Z, as understanding this generation is crucial for corporate

growth and competitive advantage. However, there is a lack of research translating the insights on Generation Z into practical implications for businesses.

Traditionally, shops could attract customer loyalty simply by offering lower prices than their competitors. However, with the emergence of Generation Z, who value convenience, social acceptance, and authenticity, the dynamics have changed. This generation considers more than just price when making purchase decisions. While their expectations are high, the benefits for merchants who can capture their attention are well worth the efforts [13].

Generation Z is truly an omnichannel generation, making purchases wherever it is most convenient for them at the time, regardless of the channel they use [14].

They are 56% more likely to have made fashion purchases in-store and 38% more likely to have made fashion purchases online in recent months [14]. Generation Z consumers are less loyal to specific merchants and expect businesses to provide what they need. As a result, retailers are under pressure to find new ways to attract and retain the attention of these consumers [15].

Generation Z has higher expectations, minimal brand affinities, and places greater importance on the overall experience [16]. To better understand and address the lower levels of loyalty observed in Generation Z compared to other generations, it is crucial to develop a comprehensive understanding of their buying behavior.

This understanding is vital for the sustainability of retail and businesses. Given the limited existing literature on the topic, this research aims to investigate how the integration of omnichannel strategies, coupled with a seamless customer experience, influences the purchase intentions of Generation Z. The researcher will conduct a review of related literature, define research aims, develop hypotheses, and outline a methodology to delve deeper into Generation Z's behavior and provide a usable framework for academia and practice.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Channel Integration

Channel Integration Retailing has altered drastically in the previous two decades as a result of the internet channel's introduction and continual digitizing. The internet channel has grown quite prominently in various retail areas, which might be viewed a disruptive trend [17]. multi-channel customer management is explicitly defined as a system for designing, implementing, and synchronizing channels to increase customer value through successful customer acquisition, retention, and fostering. Evaluation of channels is also an important element of this process [18]. Consequently, channels are seen as customer contact points or as a means via which the company and the customer engage. They deliberately narrow the domain to channels that would provide two-way communication by underlining interactivity in their definition, omitting conventional one-way mass-communication channels such as TV (advertising).

Omni-channel marketing is a customer-centered approach that aims to offer a seamless shopping experience across various traditional and modern channels. This means

that a customer's buying journey should be smooth and consistent, regardless of the channels used. According to [3], an omnichannel refers to the management of various available channels and customer touchpoints to optimize customer experience and performance.

This retail concept combines all channels, including physical stores, telephones, online shops, and mobile stores, to enhance customers' experiences and firm performance, unlike multi-channel retail, where channels are not necessarily connected, omnichannel methods provide a comprehensive experience through all channels [19].

The omnichannel environment helps retailers display all customers' touchpoints and increase customer procurement by utilizing various channels [20].

By adopting an omnichannel strategy, companies can interact with their clients through direct and indirect channels. Omnichannel retailing can provide customers with seamless experiences, where they can create action across channels with no differences in product, pricing, promotion, transaction of information, access to information, order fulfillment, and customer service [21].

According to the study outcomes of the statistical analysis conducted by [22] yielded a significant result ($p < 0.01$), indicating that there is a strong relationship between omnichannel experience and repurchase intention.

2.2. Generation Z and Retail

Succeeding the Boomers era, the era of Gen-Z has arrived, known as the iGeneration, Post-Millennials, NextGen or Gen Wii [23,24]. A tremendous debate as to how this generation should be defined. Demographers date its onset somewhere between the early 1990s and 2000 [25]. Almost a third of them witnessed the Internet since the day they were born, playing an integral role in their day-to-day operations fixed Playing a key role in shaping their behavior and character.

[26] defined generation Z as people born between 1996 and 2010. This generation's identity has been shaped by the digital age, climate anxiety, a shifting financial landscape, and COVID-19. In this paper, the researcher will be following McKinsey's rationale in defining the generation's age range, to be used in defining population, determining the sample, and then running analysis on the proposed model to test reliability.

Gen Zers have grown up with technology and connectivity as a natural part of their lives. They don't view these advancements as revolutionary, but they also aren't solely reliant on their digital devices. Surprisingly, nearly all Gen Zers (98%) still engage in shopping at brick-and-mortar stores to some extent. This reality underscores the importance of adopting an omnichannel approach when targeting Gen Z. The data supports this notion, with 88% of Gen Zers expressing a preference for omnichannel marketing. To effectively capture the attention of Gen Z, it is crucial to engage with them across various platforms and channels, including social media, YouTube, and mobile devices. Consistency in your marketing message across these diverse channels is key [27].

[13] discussed that Gen Z can largely contribute to the development of the retail sector given their spending power and tech-savviness, however, they look for more than just an attractive product or service; they expect companies to

provide great customer service and switch between digital and traditional channels quickly and reliably the importance of omni channel strategies and how they can help businesses build strong relationships with this demographic and optimize the customer experience.

Companies can use omni channels, such as online content, emails, and videos, to reach a wider audience and also connect with Generation Z. By leveraging social media platforms and user generated content, companies can amplify their reach and connect with Gen Z customers who may use these channels to influence their peers. Companies can also benefit from utilizing more video-oriented channels such as YouTube, Vimeo, and TikTok, as Gen Z shoppers are known to be more visual with their content [28].

H1: There is a positive significant relationship between omni-channel integration and Generation Z purchase intentions.

As Gen Zers become more involved in the workforce, creating content that appeals to their interests and aesthetics can help companies reach a wider and more affluent audience [29]. The use of Omni channels and Generation Z to reach a wider audience is an increasingly popular strategy amongst businesses. Gen Z employees are typically in their early twenties and make up over 40% of the global population, demonstrating the potential of this segment to reach an expansive series of audiences [30]. This can be achieved through strategies such as leveraging Gen Z's natural comfort with technology, utilizing the presence of mobile devices, and creating content that is specific to their interests [31]. Through various omni-channel approaches, businesses can ensure their message reaches a diverse audience. This can include digital platforms such as social media, websites, search engine optimization, and more [32].

[33] showcased that Gen Z is naturally comfortable with the virtual world. For these consumers, the Internet has always existed. Since their increasing independence from children to teens and teens, great advances have been made in technological devices (e.g., mobile phone functions, video streaming, social networks). This generation is not surprised that products are getting old and expects a lot from the speed of "more, smaller and better" versions of technology products. These consumers are likely to take constant innovation for granted, rather than feeling left behind and overwhelmed by planned obsolescence (as demonstrated by their thrifter or market-cynical parents and grandparents). As consumers, Gen Zers have always had more choice in the marketplace (both at large retailers operating in the physical market and in e-commerce) than their predecessors, and as such they rely on design-based or aesthetic choices to make their choices. Differentiation is likely to be strong. While spending can be discriminatory in many areas, one area this generation is willing to spend their money on is keeping abreast of technological and technology-based innovations.

Interestingly, Gen Z's insistence on comfort likely stems from their parents' upbringing. Gen X, the parents of most Gen Z, are known for their independence, cynicism, and lack of brand loyalty. Many Generations This reliance on convenience products will also infect Generation Z, which places greater emphasis on

convenience in product features, delivery, experience, and messaging. Unlike baby boomers and Gen X, Gen Z is far less concerned about privacy issues and is closely monitored by big businesses. It is not yet clear whether the parental influence of the more cynical and disenfranchised Gen X parents will reduce this "familiar and connected" Gen Z behavior [33].

2.3. Fast Moving Consumer Goods - FMCGs

Fast-Moving Consumer Goods industry is a vast sector that encompasses companies that offer low-cost products that are in constant demand. These products include groceries, beverages, personal care products, and homecare items, and FMCG firms can be classified as local, national, regional, or multinational entities. Examples of such companies include Coca-Cola, SABMiller, Diageo, Heineken, and Castel. Although these businesses are owned by separate individuals or groups, they are closely linked and operate independently in their functions [34].

FMCGs are products that are characterized by high sales volumes, low prices, and a short shelf life. These goods are also known as consumer-packaged goods (CPGs) which are typically purchased frequently, consumed rapidly, and sold in large quantities. The perishable nature of FMCGs, such as soft drinks, confections, meat, dairy products, and baked goods, is due to their high consumer demand and the need for freshness. FMCGs are an essential part of the consumer goods industry and play a crucial role in driving economic growth. They contribute significantly to the retail sector and have a high turnover rate due to their popularity and affordability .

2.4. Omni-Channel Integration Determinants

2.4.1 Integrated Product & Price

According to [54], the proliferation of mobile devices has facilitated customers' access to product and price information, while the omnichannel retail environment has made it imperative for retailers to ensure consistency in product and price information across all channels [4]. To this end, [36] recommends that omni-retailers offer lower prices on online channels to increase customers' online purchase intentions.

[37] research in the US demonstrated that well-integrated product and price information across sales channels successfully decreased consumers' perceived risk. Furthermore, [38] caution that retailers must ensure consistency in product and price information across channels to avoid data mismatch, which can increase consumer concerns. Therefore, based on the above studies, integrated product and price information across channels in the retail environment can reduce perceived risks and increase customer satisfaction.

H1a: There is positive significant relationship between integrated product and price and Generation Z purchase intentions.

2.4.2. Integrated Promotions

Integrated promotion is a widely researched concept in marketing literature. According to [4] integrated promotion

refers to the promotion of one channel that promotes another. In this context, it is essential for a promotion campaign's message to be consistent across all channels. For instance, retailers often send both emails and catalogues to their clients to demonstrate channel choices [19].

This implies that if a company promotes its products online, it should also promote them in physical stores. Additionally, customers should be able to obtain and use sales promotions for every channel [4,39]. argued that integrated promotion has the potential to enhance user satisfaction as it creates an awareness of the connection between each channel. Moreover, integrated promotion can reduce the magnitude of customer concerns and uncertainty by promoting retail trustworthiness [21].

[40] highlighted the importance of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) activities and suggests that IMC is an effective approach for targeting consumers. The study found that consumers are strongly influenced by IMC implementations. Additionally, the research confirms the validity and reliability of previous literature by analyzing feedback from both consumers and brand managers.

Based on the feedback from consumers, it is apparent that they desire firms to incorporate IMC activities. This could be attributed to the fact that consumers are well-informed and have access to a wide range of brands, giving them the ability to make informed purchasing decisions. Therefore, the brand that effectively reaches consumers through IMC activities is more likely to have a greater influence on their purchasing decisions.

H1b: There positive significant relationship between integrated promotions and Generation Z purchase intentions.

2.4.3. Integrated Transactional Information

[20] research, omnichannel shoppers have the flexibility to move across platforms during the transaction process. [4] further explain that integrated transaction information enables retailers' clients to track and manage their purchase records on every channel. This information can be used by retailers to gain insights into customers' previous usage behaviors, which can help predict shopping behavior intentions [41].

By providing a seamless multichannel experience, brands can create convenience, reduce friction, and improve customer satisfaction. When customers have a positive and effortless experience across channels, it can build trust, increase engagement, and ultimately influence their decision to make a purchase [42].

Customers can also choose the channels that best suit their needs. It is important that omni-channel retailers to ensure that the information provided to customers on their web stores is clear and accurate to reduce any uncertainty that customers may have during transactions. This can lead to improved customer satisfaction and a better overall shopping experience [4].

H1c: There positive significant relationship between integrated transaction information and Generation Z purchase intentions.

2.4.4. Integrated Information Access

According to [4], channel integration allows customers

to switch between different channels easily, accessing information from various companies. This convenience reduces wasted trips to physical stores and increases customer satisfaction during shopping activities.

[19] supports this notion by emphasizing that a seamless multichannel experience enhances customer satisfaction. When customers can access product availability information online, they can make informed decisions without the need for unnecessary visits to physical stores.

[43] found that the perception of risk related to product availability decreases when customers can access availability information through multiple channels. This implies that customers are more likely to trust a company's information about product availability if it is consistently provided across various channels.

[44] suggest a solution to enhance trust and confidence in a brand's availability information: performing cross-checks on both online and offline channels. By regularly updating inventory levels in real-time across channels, customers will have more confidence in the brand and be more likely to make a purchase, knowing that the desired product is available.

H1d: There positive significant relationship between integrated information access and Generation Z purchase intentions

2.4.5. Integrated Order Fulfilment

[45] highlighted the integral importance of having a flexible supply chain management for realizing as favorable customer satisfaction levels. Satisfactory order fulfillment orientation is seen as a vital pillar in generating positive purchase intentions [46].

[47] stressed on how crucial it is to link logistical networks and product flows to enable better customer service through cross-channel substitutes and faster deliveries. While additional fulfilment options may be expensive, they can help in providing customers with the flexibility to order, pay for delivery, return or exchange a product regardless of where they purchase it. Customers can also select the channel they prefer to fulfil their order, such as ordering products online and picking up or paying at a local store [48].

However, customers may be concerned and dissatisfied if their orders are incorrect [19]. To address this issue, retailers must provide methods for customers to check the accuracy of their orders, which increases satisfaction. [19] also suggests that the omnichannel retailer may send the client an email or a message to confirm that the correct product has been purchased after the transaction. This feature of channel integration could reduce concerns regarding incorrect orders.

Customer order fulfilment is a crucial aspect of omnichannel retailing. While it requires a large amount of effort to link logistical networks and product flows, it enables better customer service through cross-channel substitutes and faster deliveries.

Retailers must provide methods for customers to check the accuracy of their orders to increase satisfaction, and the feature of channel integration could reduce concerns regarding incorrect orders.

H1e: There positive significant relationship between integrated order fulfillment and Generation Z purchase intentions.

2.4.6. Integrated Customer Service

According to a study conducted by [4], the implementation of an omnichannel setting has the advantage of ensuring consistent and standardized service levels for customers across various channels. This implies that regardless of whether customers engage with a business through a chatbot, live chat, or direct message, they can expect the same level of service quality.

[19] suggests that effective integration of services in an omnichannel environment has a significant impact on increasing customer satisfaction by effectively meeting their needs. Additionally, [49] indicate that an omnichannel approach can reduce customer perception of risk and uncertainty. This is primarily due to the availability of alternative channels for customer support, which enhances customers' confidence in accessing assistance whenever required.

H1f: There positive significant relationship between integrated customer service and Generation Z purchase intentions.

2.5. Purchase Intentions

[42] defines purchase intention as “the tendency of consumers to take action related to the purchase, measured by the likelihood of purchasing or acquiring a brand”. Purchase intent is a well-studied construct in marketing and advertising that expresses the likelihood that consumers will consider or be willing to purchase a specific product or service in the future [50].

In recent years, online purchase intention has received significant attention in the literature and is defined as the extent to which a consumer is willing to purchase a product through an online store [51]. It should be noted that purchase intent is a strong indicator of actual purchase behavior. In fact, [52] have shown that an increase in purchase intent translates into an increase in the likelihood of purchase. Therefore, understanding and influencing consumers' purchase intention is a critical aspect of marketing and advertising. strategies.

Positive engagement with consumers, for instance, can promote a positive purchase intention and ultimately lead to a successful purchase. Overall, purchase intention is a crucial construct in the field of marketing and advertising, and it has significant implications for businesses and marketers looking to promote their products and services to nowadays savvy shoppers.

3. Study Objectives

This research's main objective is to study the impact of omnichannel integration on Generation Z retail purchase intentions as follows:

1. To investigate the relationship between implementing an omnichannel integration approach and Generation Z retail purchase intentions.
2. To investigate the importance of omnichannel customer experience to Egyptian Gen-Zers and its implications on their purchase intentions in the FMCG retail context.
3. To provide FMCG retailers with better understanding of Generation Z shopping preferences alongside an

actionable framework to help them remain competitive and grow their businesses as a result of serving their shopping demands.

The aforementioned objectives aim to address the research gap on the impact of omni-channel integration on Gen Z purchase intentions in the retail context, with a focus on the FMCG sector. A mediating variable's potential impact is also taken into consideration “seamless shopping experience” alongside demographics “age, FMCG spending, gender” as a control variable aiming to equip retailers with better understanding and deeper insights of what drives favorable Gen Z purchase intentions. Also, academics might find this research's insights beneficial as scarce literature could be found in such context, opening doors to further enrichment to the existing body of knowledge.

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Conceptual Framework

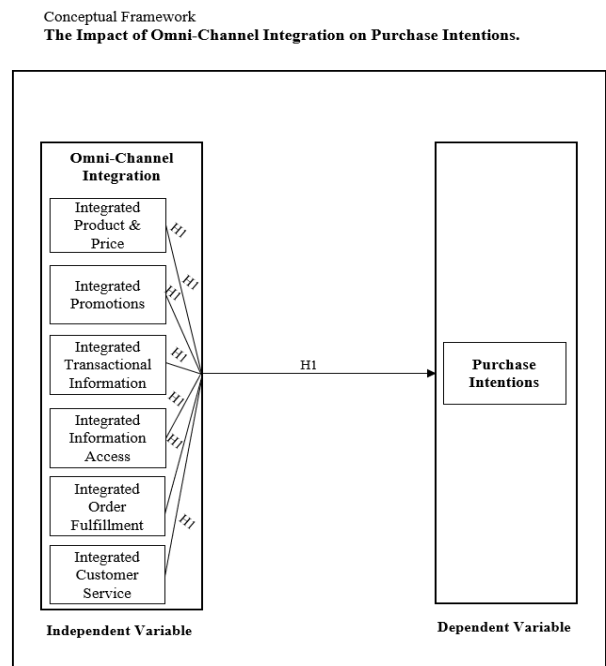


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

4.2. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional design, which means that data was collected at a specific point in time from a sample of participants. The data was gathered using an online administered survey questionnaire. The questionnaire was created based on measurement scales from previous research and underwent content analysis and validation by multiple academics. Following their input, the final design of the questionnaire was established, and it was then distributed to begin the data collection phase.

To ensure the quality of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted. The pilot study involved administering the questionnaire to a smaller sample of 45 individuals who

were relevant to the research topic. The purpose of the pilot study was to assess the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. Reliability refers to the consistency of the questionnaire in measuring the intended constructs, while validity concerns whether the questionnaire accurately measures what it intends to measure.

Based on the results of the pilot study, it was determined that the questionnaire was reliable and valid. This means that the questionnaire demonstrated consistent and accurate measurement of the constructs of interest.

4.3. Study Sample

The target sample size comprised 439 Generation Z FMCG consumers in Egypt. The initially set sample size was 384 responses as per [53]. However, this study succeeded in obtaining 501 questionnaires. However, out of 501 questionnaires received, 62 were eliminated as they don't fit the age group being studied in this research "out of generation z age range". As a result, 439 questionnaires were used (making the study hold a response rate of 88%). As mentioned in Table 1, luckily, this study has almost an equal number of male and female respondents with the following split: 51.3% males & 48.7% females which makes the study more relevant and descriptive to both genders. Gender bias is non-existing. This means that this study outcomes are based on both genders point of views equally.

Table 1. Sample characteristics

Respondents' Age Range	F	%
14-18	55	12.5
19-23	230	52.4
24-27	154	35.1
Gender		
Females	214	48.7
Males	225	51.3
Latest Educational Level		
Still in school	15	3.4
Highschool or equivalent	82	18.7
Bachelor's or equivalent	290	66.1
Master's degree or equivalent	52	11.8
Monthly Income		
1,000-4,000 EGP	69	15.7
4,001-8,000 EGP	140	31.9
8,001-13,000 EGP	123	28
13,001-20,000 EGP	68	15.5

Regarding the education section, 66.1% were bachelor's degree holders or equivalent, 18.7% of the sample were done with their high school studies, followed by 11.8% with master's degree and finally the least percentile represented those who are still in school with 3.4%.

When it comes to the income level analysis, the majority of the sample lied between an average monthly income/ parental allowance of 4,001 to 8,000 EGP with 31.9%. Followed by those who earn 8,001 to 13,001 EGP per month. Both income brackets "1,004 – 4,000" & "13,001 – 20,000" were very close in terms of sample percentage with 15.7% and 15.5% respectively. Finally, respondents who are making more than 20k/month

represented the least contribution with only 8.9%. More details could be found in Table 1 in the appendix section.

4.4. Measurement

The scales adopted in this research were adopted from both [36] for the dependent variable "purchase intention" and [48] for the independent variable "omni-channel integration".

Academic experts were involved to review the questionnaire and provide their opinions and suggestions to confirm the instrument's effectiveness. A 22-item 7-point scale was developed to test the proposed model. Answers ranged from 1 "strongly disagree" to 7 "Strongly agree". 22-items were used to test the independent variable "omni-channel integration" and a 3items were concerned with the dependent variable "purchase intentions".

4.5. Reliability & Validity Analyses

To make sure the adopted scales fit the study in hand. Both reliability and validity tests were conducted to test the dependability of various instruments. The researcher conducted a validity analysis to determine whether the scale used in the study accurately measured the intended concept [55]. Two tests, namely content validity and face validity were employed for this purpose.

The content validity test aimed to ensure that the dimensions and elements of the concept or variable being studied were appropriately defined. By conducting this test, the researchers sought to establish that the scale comprehensively covered all relevant aspects of the concept, ensuring its accuracy.

Subsequent to the content validity test, the researchers undertook the face validity test, enlisting the expertise of esteemed judges comprising marketing professors and qualified researchers [55]. These judges critically evaluated the instrument, providing their judgment on the extent to which the scale's items effectively captured the intended variables. The valuable insights from these experts confirmed the accuracy of the items in assessing the concept, thus bolstering the overall validity of the scale.

Based on the results of these validity analyses, which indicated that the scales were valid, the researchers were able to proceed with further data analysis. The confirmation from the expert judges provided assurance that the scale was reliable in measuring the intended variables, thereby supporting the validity of the study's findings. All scale variables were found significant, the scale was valid and reliable. Reliability results were as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Reliability results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N
Integrated Product and Price	0.917	3
Integrated Promotions	0.905	4
Integrated Transactional Information	0.911	3
Integrated Information Access	0.864	4
Integrated Order Fulfillment	0.92	5
Integrated Customer Service	0.833	3
Purchase Intentions	0.705	3

4.6. Data Collection & Analysis Methods

A quantitative approach was used to gather data for the study. The questionnaire was conducted using Google forms, and the link was posted on various social media platforms where Gen Z are actively present on (LinkedIn, WhatsApp, and Facebook). The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 26 IBM is used to conduct various analyses.

4.7. Empirical Results

Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to examine the strength, direction, and significance of the relationships between the variables proposed in the hypotheses. Multiple regression analysis was employed to test the hypotheses and identify the strongest relationship among the measured variables.

Omni-channel integration and purchase intentions Pearson's correlation ($r = 0.737$, $p < .05$). For omni-channel integration's sub-variables correlation values with the dependent variable "purchase intentions" were as follows:

- Integrated product & price with purchase intentions - ($r = 0.627$, $p < .05$), **significant**.
- Integrated promotion with purchase intentions - ($r = 0.662$, $p < .05$), **significant**.
- Integrated transactional information with purchase intentions - ($r = 0.638$, $p < .05$), **significant**.
- Integrated information access with purchase intentions - ($r = 0.594$, $p < .05$), **significant**.
- Integrated order fulfillment with purchase intentions - ($r = 0.666$, $p < .05$), **significant**.
- Integrated customer service with purchase intentions - ($r = 0.641$, $p < .05$), **significant**.

To further examine the relationships between variables, a regression analysis was also done to either reassure the above results or redirect the analyses to another direction. The results were found as follows:

Hypothesis One: There is a positive significant direct relationship between Omni-channel integration and Generation Z purchase intentions. **This main hypothesis was supported with a p-value of 0.000 ($\beta = 0.903$).** However, some of the sub hypotheses were insignificant. Details are as follows:

Hypothesis 1a: There is a positive significant direct relationship between integrated product and price and Generation Z purchase intentions. This hypothesis is supported with a p-value equals to 0.001. **The results show that the relationship between the variables is significant with a p-value of less than 0.05 ($\beta = 0.189$, $p < 0.05$).**

Hypothesis 1b: There is a positive significant direct relationship between integrated promotions and Generation Z purchase intentions. This hypothesis is supported with a p-value equal to .000. **The results show that the relationship between the variables is significant with a p-value of less than 0.05 ($\beta = 0.264$, $p < 0.05$).**

Hypothesis 1c: There is a positive significant direct relationship between integrated transaction information and Generation Z purchase intentions. This hypothesis is supported with a p-value equal to 0.009. **The results show**

that the relationship between the variables is significant with a p-value of less than 0.05 ($\beta = 0.155$, $p < 0.05$).

Hypothesis 1d: There is a positive significant direct relationship between integrated information access and Generation Z purchase intentions. This hypothesis is not supported with a p-value equal to 0.181. **The results show that the relationship between the variables is insignificant with a p-value of more than 0.05 ($\beta = -0.089$, $p > 0.05$).**

Hypothesis 1e: There is a positive significant direct relationship between integrated order fulfillment and Generation Z purchase intentions. This hypothesis is supported with a p-value equal to 0.000. **The results show that the relationship between the variables is significant with a p-value of less than 0.05 ($\beta = 0.264$, $p < 0.05$).**

Hypothesis 1f: There is a positive significant relationship between integrated customer service and Generation Z purchase intentions. This hypothesis is not supported with a p-value equal to 0.076. **The results show that the relationship between the variables is insignificant with a p-value of more than 0.05 ($\beta = 0.115$, $p > 0.05$).**

5. Discussion

The findings of the study confirm that omni-channel integration has a significant impact on Generation Z's purchase intentions in the Egyptian FMCG retail sector. The findings of the current study both aligned with, and contradicted previous studies reviewed in the literature. To provide a comprehensive analysis, the following paragraphs present a breakdown of each hypothesis, detailing the results obtained from the quantitative analysis and comparing them with existing research.

According to the study outcomes of the statistical analysis conducted by [22] yielded a significant result ($p < 0.01$), indicating that there is a strong relationship between omnichannel experience and repurchase intention.

Understanding the influence of omnichannel experience on repurchase intentions is crucial for retailers to develop effective omnichannel retail strategies, especially in the face of the post-COVID-19 downturn in the retail industry. Implementing an integrated omnichannel experience that encompasses both online and offline shopping channels is essential. This approach seeks to ensure connectivity, consistency, flexibility, and personalized services across channels. Successful implementation of such an omnichannel strategy requires collaboration among various stakeholders and allocation of adequate resources. The ultimate goal is to provide customers with a positive omnichannel experience, thereby fostering repeat purchases and enhancing customer loyalty.

[56] analysis proved that the configuration of service channels has a significant and positive impact on purchase intentions. This implies that as the service channel configuration decreases, purchase intentions also decrease. These findings confirm the first hypothesis, which states that service channel configuration has a positive effect on purchase intentions, concluding that the configuration of service channels influences purchase intentions.

The above results are in line with this paper's findings as there is a significant relationship between omni-channel

integration and generation Z FMCG retail purchase intentions “sig. 0.000”.

For hypothesis 1a: There is a positive significant direct relationship between integrated product and price and Generation Z purchase intentions. This hypothesis is supported with a p-value equal to 0.000. The results show that the relationship between the variables is significant with a p-value of less than 0.05 ($\beta = 0.264$, $p > 0.05$). This result is supported by various studies that exist in the literature. For example:

The findings of this study corroborate the outcomes of [57,37] research papers, demonstrating that the provision of consistent product and price information across online and offline channels contributes to a reduction in customer-perceived risk. This practice effectively minimizes uncertainties arising from potential discrepancies in data among different sales channels. Additionally, while [19] identified customer dissatisfaction in the Korean market when products were offered at the same price across omnichannels, the present study affirms that integrating product offerings and pricing positively impacts the satisfaction levels of Millennial customers. Path analysis of [57] showcased a significant relationship between integrated product and price via perceived risk and customer satisfaction on purchase intentions.

As for Hypothesis 1b: There is a positive significant direct relationship between integrated promotions and Generation Z purchase intentions. This hypothesis is supported with a p-value equal to .000. The results show that the relationship between the variables is significant with a p-value of less than 0.05 ($\beta = 0.264$, $p < 0.05$).

Similar to the outcomes of [4] integrated promotion seems to have the highest impact on consumer-perceived risk reduction and satisfaction which were proven in [57] study that they both positively impact purchase intentions. Also, [58] study outcomes revealed that E-IMC (Electronic Integrated Marketing Communications) is a significant predictor of customer purchase intention. This finding is particularly noteworthy because there has been limited attention given to examining such relationships in the context of mobile services.

Additionally, the study found that online advertising is a significant predictor of purchase intention. This result aligns with and validates the findings of [59], who stated that online advertising has a positive impact on customer purchase intentions. Similar conclusions have been drawn by [60,35,61] who argued that web-based ads influence customer purchase intentions.

Regarding Hypothesis 1c: There is a positive significant direct relationship between integrated transaction information and Generation Z purchase intentions. This hypothesis is supported with a p-value equal to 0.009. The results show that the relationship between the variables is significant with a p-value of less than 0.05 ($\beta = 0.155$, $p < 0.05$).

The results of this study showed the significant impact of integrated transaction information on purchase intentions. From the existing literature, [4] discovered a relationship between integrated transaction information and perceived customer risk which had a significant effect on purchase intentions. On the contrary, [57] study outcomes showed that integrated transaction information did not play a significant role on perceived risk, thus not significant.

For Hypothesis 1d: There is a positive significant direct relationship between integrated information access and Generation Z purchase intentions. This hypothesis is not supported with a p-value equal to 0.181. The results show that the relationship between the variables is insignificant with a p-value of more than 0.05 ($\beta = -0.089$, $p > 0.05$).

The findings of this study indicate that there is no significant impact of integrated information access on purchase intentions. This contrasts with the findings of [57], which found that the integration of information access has a positive influence on customer perceived value and satisfaction, ultimately leading to favorable purchase intentions.

One possible explanation for this disparity in results is the information-seeking behavior of Thai Millennials. It is likely that this demographic tends to search for fashion product information from both online and offline sources. For retailers adopting an omnichannel approach, customer satisfaction increases when individuals have the flexibility to search for information online and subsequently make purchases in physical stores. This allows them to gather additional details on inventory status or reviews, among other factors. This finding aligns with the research conducted by [19].

Moreover, [43] proposed that the level of perceived risk may decrease when shoppers can access information about the availability of desired fashion products. This suggests that the integration of information access across channels can contribute to a reduction in perceived risk, which in turn positively influences purchase intentions.

Hypothesis 1e: There is a positive significant direct relationship between integrated order fulfillment and Generation Z purchase intentions. This hypothesis is supported with a p-value equal to 0.000. The results show that the relationship between the variables is significant with a p-value of less than 0.05 ($\beta = 0.264$, $p < 0.05$).

The findings of this study present a noteworthy departure from the conclusions drawn in previous research. Specifically, the results highlight a significant and positive impact of integrated order fulfillment on purchase intentions. This contrasts with the earlier study conducted by [57], which found no discernible effect of integrated order fulfillment on either reducing customer-perceived risk or improving customer satisfaction, ultimately resulting in no significant impact on purchase intentions.

The divergence in findings between the current study and the outcomes in [57] research raises intriguing questions and underscores the dynamic nature of the relationship between integrated order fulfillment and its effects on consumer behavior. It is possible that contextual factors, such as variations in industry, market conditions, or sample characteristics, contributed to the disparate outcomes observed. Additionally, methodological differences, such as variations in measurement instruments or analytical approaches, might have influenced the contrasting results.

Hypothesis 1f: There is a positive significant relationship between integrated customer service and Generation Z purchase intentions. This hypothesis is not supported with a p-value equal to 0.076. The results show that the relationship between the variables is insignificant with a p-value of more than 0.05 ($\beta = 0.115$, $p > 0.05$).

The results of this study indicate that there is no

significant impact of integrated customer service on purchase intentions. This aligns with the findings of [57], who similarly found that integrated customer service did not have a positive influence on perceived risk, and subsequently, no impact on purchase intentions.

Previous studies, including those conducted by [62,49,63] have suggested that customer service has the potential to decrease perceived risk, impacting purchase intentions. However, it is important to note that the effectiveness of customer service in reducing risk perception may depend on the quality of service provided. [63] suggest that while customer service from an omnichannel retailer can create a seamless experience, the level of risk perception is only diminished when high-quality service is delivered.

6. Conclusion and Implications

The output of this study has many implications that would benefit retail sector in understanding novel ways of fostering favorable purchase intentions to generation z specifically in the FMCG sector. and also, for academic use. The results show that purchase intentions are affected by omni-channel integration. Referring to the findings of this research, having a well-crafted omni-channel integration is key when it comes to generating favorable generation Z purchase intentions.

Nevertheless, the significant factors that that showcases such impact in this study are integrated product and price (IPP), integrated promotions (IP), integrated transactional information (ITI) and integrated order fulfillment (IOF). On the contrary, integrated information access (IFA) and integrated customer service (ICS) were not supported.

Based on these outcomes, the study implies that Integrated product and price (IPP) is key to generate favorable purchase intentions. Making sufficient information on both products and prices is vital for gen z to stimuli favorable purchase intentions. Identical pricing strategy shouldn't necessarily take place. Catering pricing based on the nature of the product, target audience and sales channel should determine the approach. Integrated promotions (IP) are very crucial as well. Not only to generate positive purchase intentions but also retail credibility and trustworthiness. Having consistent promotional strategy across channels was seen as of high importance to generation z retail consumers.

Integrated transactional information based on the findings also generates positive gen z purchase intentions. By having access to their transaction history, customers can feel more confident and have reduced uncertainty and risk perception. Additionally, customers have the option to choose the channels that best meet their needs. Based on the findings as well, it is important for omnichannel retailers to provide clear and accurate information on their web stores to minimize any uncertainty that customers may experience during transactions. This can result in improved customer satisfaction and an enhanced overall shopping experience.

Lastly, integrated order fulfillment (IOF) was an appealing feature to generation Z retail shopping experience. Although it requires significant effort to establish the linkages between logistical networks and

product flows, it enables enhanced customer service through cross-channel substitutes and faster deliveries.

Retailers should prioritize providing methods for customers to verify order accuracy, and leveraging channel integration can help address concerns related to incorrect orders, leading to improved customer satisfaction.

Regarding variables that were neither supported nor of high importance to generation Z are integrated information access (IFA) and integrated customer service (ICS). IFA refers to the ease to switch between different channels to access information provided by various companies. This means that customers can search for product availability online instead of making wasted trips to physical stores. While integrated customer service (ICS) refers to the seamless and coordinated delivery of customer support and assistance across multiple channels and touchpoints.

It involves connecting various communication channels, such as phone, email, live chat, social media, and self-service options, to provide a unified and consistent customer service experience. The aforementioned hypothesis was seen to be insignificant when it comes to purchase intentions if compared to the other 4 factors that were supported as mentioned earlier.

As there are very few existing research tackling generation z and retail, this research provided insights on how omni-channel integration influences Generation Z's purchase intentions. Generation Z represents a unique cohort of consumers with distinct characteristics, preferences, and behaviors. By examining how omni-channel integration influences their purchase intentions, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of this generation, shedding light on their decision-making processes, shopping habits, and engagement with various channels. This knowledge is crucial for academics, researchers, and marketers to effectively cater to the needs and preferences of Generation Z.

Generation Z is at the forefront of adopting new technologies and digital innovations. They seamlessly integrate online and offline experiences, making them an ideal group to study in the context of omni-channel integration. By investigating how omni-channel strategies impact their purchase intentions, this research provides insights into emerging consumer trends and behaviors, contributing to the advancement of knowledge in the field of consumer behavior and retail management.

Additionally, studying the impact of omni-channel integration on Generation Z's purchase intentions opens avenues for further research and exploration. It encourages scholars to delve deeper into related topics, such as the role of specific channels, the influence of social media, the effects of personalized experiences, and the evolving dynamics of omni-channel retailing. Subsequent research can build upon the findings of this study, expand the knowledge base, and provide continuous insights into the rapidly evolving consumer behavior landscape. For Practitioners, this research findings hold significant importance for corporations in several ways. Generation Z represents a substantial consumer segment with distinct characteristics, preferences, and behaviors.

Conducting research on how omni-channel integration influences Generation Z's purchase intentions provides corporations with crucial insights into this demographic's decision-making processes, shopping habits, and engagement

with different channels. This knowledge enables corporations to effectively target and engage Generation Z, tailoring their products, services, and marketing strategies to meet their unique needs and preferences.

Understanding the impact of omni-channel integration on Generation Z's purchase intentions helps corporations develop more effective marketing strategies. By identifying the channels and touchpoints that resonate most with Generation Z, corporations can create personalized and engaging experiences that align with their preferences. This targeted approach increases the likelihood of capturing Generation Z's attention, driving brand awareness, and ultimately, converting them into loyal customers.

Generation Z expects a seamless and integrated experience across various channels. Research on omni-channel integration provides corporations with insights into how to deliver a consistent and convenient customer experience, bridging the gap between online and offline interactions. By implementing effective omni-channel strategies, corporations can enhance customer satisfaction, foster loyalty, and differentiate themselves from competitors.

Omni-channel integration can have a direct impact on sales and revenue generation. By offering a seamless purchasing journey across channels, corporations make it easier for Generation Z to browse, compare, and make purchases. This convenience and accessibility can lead to increased sales volume, higher average order values, and improved customer retention. Research on omni-channel integration helps corporations identify the most effective channels and touchpoints to drive conversions and maximize revenue.

Omni-channel integration generates a wealth of data from customer interactions across channels. Research in this area helps corporations understand how to collect, analyze, and leverage this data effectively. By extracting valuable insights from the data, corporations can make data-driven decisions, optimize their marketing efforts, and better understand Generation Z's preferences,

allowing for more targeted and impactful strategies.

7. Directions for Future Research

The limitations associated with this study have led the researcher to propose several directions for further research as in including other omni-channel integration strategies that might evolve due to the ever-changing market we are witnessing. Expand the research horizon to tackle other domains other than retail FMCG, e.g., fashion, sports, luxury and pharmaceutical sectors pointing out the similarities and differences between the research in hand and the ones to come.

Further explore the impact of other variables as in lifestyle, geography on generation z purchase intentions. Expand the horizon to cover other contexts internally "to include other governorates", externally as in other African, Asian, European and Latin ones and evaluate the outcomes. Including a qualitative approach might provide more thorough understating that shall open some new horizons as well as adopting a longitudinal approach.

Digging deeper in FMCG retail, as in focusing on certain categories separately, e.g., commodities, impulse categories, etc. and see if all supported hypotheses are re-supported or not and vice versa for the unsupported ones.

Dissect Generation Z into clusters "Younger, middle and older one" and evaluate each separately highlighting key drivers for each and every age group within the generation. Finally, conducting future research on generation Alpha is vital too to provide an updated, useful framework for FMCG retailers to ensure business continuity and a base for academics to dig further into their points of similarity and differences vs. generation Z.

Appendix

Table 3. Correlation matrix for variables in this study

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1- Integrated Product and Price	1	0.763	0.586	0.644	0.616	0.666	0.823	0.627
2- Integrated Promotions	0.763	1	0.684	0.669	0.657	0.669	0.853	0.662
3- Integrated Transactional Information	0.586	0.684	1	0.776	0.764	0.727	0.876	0.638
4- Integrated Information Access	0.644	0.669	0.776	1	0.751	0.751	0.882	0.594
5- Integrated Order Fulfillment	0.616	0.657	0.764	0.751	1	0.781	0.88	0.666
6- Integrated Customer Service	0.666	0.669	0.727	0.751	0.781	1	0.883	0.641
7- Omni-channel Integration	0.823	0.853	0.876	0.882	0.88	0.883	1	0.737
8- Purchase Intentions	0.627	0.662	0.638	0.594	0.666	0.641	0.737	1

Table 4. Regression Analyses Outcomes

Predictor	Outcome Variable	Regression coefficient	t	Sig.
1- Integrated Product and Price	Purchase Intentions	0.189	3.465	0.001
2- Integrated Promotions	Purchase Intentions	0.264	3.94	0.000
3- Integrated Transactional Information	Purchase Intentions	0.155	2.638	0.009
4- Integrated Information Access	Purchase Intentions	-0.089	-1.339	0.181
5- Integrated Order Fulfillment	Purchase Intentions	0.264	4.264	0.000
6- Integrated Customer Service	Purchase Intentions	0.115	1.778	0.076
7- Omni-channel Integration	Purchase Intentions	0.373	4.974	0.000

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