

Strategic Omnichannel Integration in Digital Business: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

Article history:

Received: July 25, 2025

Revised: August 15, 2025

Accepted: September 29, 2025

Published: December 30, 2025

Keywords:

Digital Business,
Customer Experience,
Omnichannel Strategy,
Strategic Integration,
Systematic Literature Review.

Identifier:

Nawala

Page: 117-133

<https://nawala.io/index.php/ijdb>

The increasing integration of digital technologies has positioned omnichannel strategies as a critical component of contemporary digital business. Rather than functioning solely as a marketing approach, omnichannel integration represents a strategic mechanism that aligns technology, organisational capabilities, and customer experience across multiple touchpoints. This study aims to systematically review and synthesise existing literature on strategic omnichannel integration in digital business contexts. Using a qualitative systematic literature review approach, this research analyses peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2020 and 2024 to identify dominant themes, conceptual frameworks, and research gaps. The findings reveal that omnichannel integration is commonly discussed in relation to strategic alignment, technology-enabled coordination, organisational readiness, and value creation through seamless customer experiences. However, the literature remains fragmented, with limited consensus on integrative frameworks that connect strategy, technology, and organisational governance. This study contributes by consolidating dispersed insights into a coherent strategic perspective and proposing directions for future research on omnichannel integration within digital business strategy.

1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has fundamentally reshaped the way businesses design, deliver, and manage interactions with customers. In the contemporary digital business environment, firms increasingly operate across multiple channels, including physical stores, websites, mobile applications, and social media platforms (Cai & Lo, 2020; Both & Steinmann, 2023). As customer journeys become more complex and less linear, organisations face growing pressure to ensure consistency, continuity, and coherence across these touchpoints. In response to this challenge, omnichannel strategies have emerged as a central concept in digital business discourse, reflecting the strategic integration of channels rather than their mere coexistence (Gao & Huang, 2021). Unlike traditional multichannel approaches, which often treat channels as parallel and independent, omnichannel integration emphasises alignment, coordination, and synergy across organisational functions and technological infrastructures.

Within digital business contexts, omnichannel integration is increasingly recognised as a strategic capability rather than a purely operational or marketing initiative. Digital technologies such as data analytics platforms, customer relationship management systems, and integrated information architectures enable firms to collect, share, and utilise customer data across channels in real time (Wang et al., 2022; Tan et al., 2023). This technological foundation supports the delivery of seamless customer experiences while simultaneously informing strategic decision-making processes. Consequently, omnichannel integration intersects with broader themes in digital business strategy, including digital transformation, organisational

capability development, and value creation in technology-enabled environments (Cai & Lo, 2020).

The strategic relevance of omnichannel integration has been further amplified by changes in consumer behaviour in the digital age. Customers now expect consistent experiences, transparent information, and flexible interactions regardless of the channel they choose to engage with (Tyrväinen et al., 2020; Yin et al., 2022). These expectations compel organisations to rethink how strategies are formulated and implemented across organisational boundaries. Omnichannel integration therefore requires not only technological investment but also organisational alignment, cross-functional collaboration, and governance mechanisms that support coordinated decision-making (Quach et al., 2022). From a strategic perspective, the ability to integrate channels effectively can influence competitive positioning, customer loyalty, and long-term business sustainability (Zhang et al., 2024).

Despite its growing importance, the academic literature on omnichannel integration remains fragmented across multiple disciplines, including marketing, information systems, operations management, and strategic management. Many studies approach omnichannel phenomena from narrow perspectives, focusing on specific outcomes such as customer satisfaction, purchase intention, or operational efficiency (Gao & Huang, 2021; Suh & Moradi, 2023). While these contributions provide valuable insights, they often lack an integrative strategic lens that connects technology, organisational capabilities, and business strategy. As a result, there is limited conceptual clarity regarding how omnichannel integration functions as a strategic construct within digital business environments (Both & Steinmann, 2023).

Furthermore, existing research frequently employs empirical methods to examine isolated variables or contexts, which can obscure broader patterns and theoretical developments within the field. Although empirical studies are essential for validating specific relationships, there is a growing need for systematic synthesis to consolidate accumulated knowledge, identify dominant themes, and highlight unresolved conceptual issues (Cai & Lo, 2020). A systematic literature review offers a structured approach to addressing this need by organising diverse findings into coherent categories and revealing gaps that warrant further investigation. Such synthesis is particularly relevant in rapidly evolving domains such as digital business, where technological change can outpace theoretical integration.

In the context of digital business strategy, a systematic review of omnichannel integration literature can contribute to both academic and practical understanding. From an academic perspective, it enables the clarification of key concepts, strategic dimensions, and underlying assumptions that shape omnichannel research (Both & Steinmann, 2023). From a practical perspective, it provides managers and decision-makers with a consolidated view of strategic considerations, organisational requirements, and technology-enabled mechanisms that support effective omnichannel integration (Quach et al., 2022). This dual relevance aligns with the objective of bridging theory and practice, which is central to research in digital business and strategy.

Given the increasing strategic significance of omnichannel integration and the fragmented nature of existing studies, a comprehensive synthesis of recent literature is both timely and necessary. Focusing on publications from 2020 to 2024 allows

this study to capture contemporary developments influenced by accelerated digital transformation and evolving customer expectations (Salviotti, 2022; Zhang et al., 2024). By systematically reviewing and qualitatively analysing peer-reviewed research within this period, this study seeks to advance understanding of how omnichannel integration is conceptualised, implemented, and positioned within digital business strategy.

Accordingly, this study aims to systematically review the literature on strategic omnichannel integration in digital business contexts, with the objective of identifying key themes, conceptual approaches, and research gaps that characterise current scholarly discourse. Through this approach, the study contributes to the consolidation of knowledge in the field and provides a foundation for future research on omnichannel strategies as a core element of digital business and strategic management.

2. Methods

This study employs a qualitative systematic literature review (SLR) approach to synthesise and analyse existing scholarly research on strategic omnichannel integration in digital business contexts. The use of a systematic review method is appropriate for consolidating fragmented knowledge across disciplines and for developing a coherent strategic understanding of complex and rapidly evolving phenomena. Rather than generating new empirical data, this approach focuses on the critical examination and interpretation of prior studies to identify dominant themes, conceptual frameworks, and research gaps within the literature.

The literature selection process was conducted through a structured and transparent search strategy. Peer-reviewed journal articles were retrieved from established academic databases commonly used in business, management, and information systems research, including Scopus, ResearchGate, and Google Scholar. To ensure relevance and recency, the search was limited to studies published between 2020 and 2024. This period captures contemporary developments in omnichannel strategy influenced by accelerated digital transformation and shifting consumer expectations.

A combination of carefully selected keywords was used to identify relevant studies. These included terms such as “omnichannel strategy,” “omnichannel integration,” “digital business,” “customer experience,” “channel integration,” and “digital transformation.” Boolean operators were applied to refine the search and reduce irrelevant results. Only articles written in English and published in peer-reviewed journals were considered to maintain academic quality and consistency.

The screening process followed multiple stages. Initially, titles and abstracts were reviewed to assess topical relevance and alignment with the study’s strategic focus. Articles that addressed omnichannel phenomena solely from a technical, operational, or narrowly tactical marketing perspective were excluded. In the subsequent stage, full-text reviews were conducted to ensure that selected studies explicitly engaged with strategic, organisational, or technology-integration dimensions of omnichannel integration. Conceptual papers, literature reviews, and empirical studies were all included, provided they contributed theoretical or strategic insights relevant to digital business.

The final set of selected articles was analysed using qualitative thematic synthesis. This involved iterative reading, coding, and categorisation of the literature to identify recurring concepts, patterns, and relationships. Themes were developed inductively, allowing strategic dimensions to emerge from the literature rather than being imposed a priori. Particular attention was given to how studies conceptualise omnichannel integration, the strategic objectives associated with its adoption, the role of digital technologies as enabling mechanisms, and the organisational capabilities required to support integration across channels.

To enhance analytical rigour, the synthesis process emphasised comparison across studies, identifying areas of convergence and divergence in conceptualisation and findings. This approach supports the development of an integrated strategic perspective while preserving the diversity of viewpoints within the literature. By systematically organising and interpreting existing research, this method enables a comprehensive understanding of strategic omnichannel integration and provides a solid foundation for identifying limitations in current scholarship and directions for future research.

3. Results

3.1. Strategic Conceptualisation of Omnichannel Integration in Digital Business

The reviewed literature consistently conceptualises omnichannel integration as a strategic construct that extends beyond the coordination of multiple customer touchpoints. Rather than viewing channels as discrete interaction points, scholars

increasingly frame omnichannel integration as an organisation-wide strategy that aligns digital technologies, business processes, and customer experience objectives (Cai & Lo, 2020; Both & Steinmann, 2023). Within this perspective, omnichannel integration represents a shift from channel-centric management towards a holistic, customer-centric strategic orientation.

A dominant theme in the literature concerns the distinction between multichannel and omnichannel approaches. While multichannel strategies typically involve the parallel use of several channels, omnichannel integration emphasises seamless connectivity and consistency across channels throughout the customer journey (Gao & Huang, 2021). This integration is not limited to front-end interfaces but extends to back-end systems, data architectures, and organisational structures. Studies highlight that without strategic alignment across these dimensions, firms risk fragmented customer experiences and inefficient resource utilisation (Wang et al., 2022).

Digital technologies are repeatedly identified as foundational enablers of strategic omnichannel integration. Integrated information systems, customer data platforms, and analytics tools allow organisations to aggregate and synchronise data across channels, thereby supporting real-time decision-making and personalised interactions (Tan et al., 2023). These technologies facilitate the visibility and coordination necessary for omnichannel strategies to function effectively at a strategic level. However, the literature also cautions that technology alone is insufficient; strategic intent and organisational readiness play a decisive role in determining integration outcomes (Cai & Lo, 2020).

Another recurring theme relates to the role of omnichannel integration in value creation. Many studies associate effective integration with enhanced customer experience, arguing that seamless transitions across channels reduce friction and increase perceived value (Tyrväinen et al., 2020; Yin et al., 2022). From a strategic standpoint, customer experience is positioned not merely as an outcome but as a central mechanism through which omnichannel strategies contribute to competitive advantage. This perspective aligns omnichannel integration with broader digital business strategies that prioritise long-term relationship building and customer lifetime value.

The literature further indicates that omnichannel integration requires significant organisational coordination and cross-functional collaboration. Strategic integration involves aligning marketing, operations, information technology, and customer service functions to ensure consistent objectives and shared performance metrics (Quach et al., 2022). Several studies emphasise that organisational silos represent a major barrier to successful integration, often undermining the strategic coherence of omnichannel initiatives. As a result, governance structures and leadership commitment are frequently cited as critical enablers of strategic alignment (Both & Steinmann, 2023).

Despite broad agreement on the strategic importance of omnichannel integration, the literature reveals considerable variation in how the concept is defined and operationalised. Some studies focus primarily on customer-facing integration, while others emphasise internal process alignment or technological infrastructure (Gao & Huang, 2021; Suh & Moradi, 2023). This lack of conceptual consistency

contributes to fragmentation within the field and complicates cumulative theory development. Consequently, several authors call for integrative frameworks that explicitly connect strategy, technology, and organisational capabilities within omnichannel contexts (Cai & Lo, 2020).

Overall, the findings from this thematic synthesis indicate that omnichannel integration is increasingly understood as a strategic capability embedded within digital business models. However, the absence of unified conceptual frameworks and the varied strategic emphases across studies highlight the need for further theoretical consolidation. This fragmentation sets the foundation for the second thematic area, which addresses organisational, ethical, and strategic implications associated with implementing omnichannel integration in digital business environments.

3.2. Organisational, Technological, and Strategic Implications of Omnichannel Integration

Beyond conceptualisation, the reviewed literature highlights that the successful implementation of strategic omnichannel integration depends heavily on organisational and technological conditions. A recurring theme concerns organisational readiness, particularly the ability of firms to realign structures, processes, and capabilities to support cross-channel coordination. Studies consistently emphasise that omnichannel integration challenges traditional functional boundaries, requiring closer collaboration among marketing, operations, information technology, and customer service units (Quach et al., 2022; Both &

Steinmann, 2023). Without such alignment, omnichannel initiatives risk remaining fragmented and tactically driven rather than strategically embedded.

Leadership and organisational governance emerge as the central coordinating mechanisms in addressing these organisational challenges, shaping how omnichannel integration is aligned, prioritised, and sustained across the organisation. Rather than operating as a supporting factor, organisational governance functions as the strategic hub through which technological investments, cross-functional coordination, and customer experience objectives are managed and integrated. Several studies underline the importance of strategic leadership in articulating a clear omnichannel vision and in coordinating decision-making across departments (Cai & Lo, 2020). Governance mechanisms, including shared performance indicators and integrated planning processes, are frequently identified as tools for maintaining strategic coherence. These mechanisms help ensure that omnichannel integration is not implemented as a series of isolated projects but as a sustained strategic programme aligned with broader digital business objectives.

Technological integration represents another central implication discussed in the literature. Omnichannel strategies rely on the seamless integration of information systems that support data sharing and process synchronisation across channels. Customer data platforms, analytics systems, and fulfilment technologies are commonly cited as key infrastructural components that enable visibility across customer journeys and operational processes (Wang et al., 2022; Tan et al., 2023). However, the literature also cautions that technological complexity can introduce new risks, including system incompatibility, data quality issues, and increased

implementation costs. These challenges reinforce the need for strategic planning and prioritisation when investing in omnichannel technologies.

Ethical and governance-related concerns also feature prominently in recent omnichannel research, particularly in relation to data usage and customer privacy. The integration of channels often requires extensive data collection and cross-channel data sharing, which raises questions about transparency, consent, and responsible data management (Zhang et al., 2024). Several studies argue that ethical considerations should be incorporated into omnichannel strategy design rather than treated as post-implementation compliance issues. From a strategic perspective, ethical data practices are closely linked to trust, which is widely recognised as a key determinant of long-term customer relationships in digital business environments (Tyrväinen et al., 2020).

In addition to organisational and ethical implications, the literature discusses the strategic outcomes associated with effective omnichannel integration. Enhanced customer experience is frequently identified as a primary outcome, contributing to increased engagement, loyalty, and perceived value (Yin et al., 2022; Suh & Moradi, 2023). Beyond customer-level outcomes, some studies suggest that omnichannel integration can support strategic flexibility by enabling firms to respond more effectively to changing market conditions and customer preferences. This flexibility is particularly valuable in digitally intensive environments characterised by rapid technological change and heightened competition.

Despite these potential benefits, the literature also highlights persistent challenges that limit the strategic impact of omnichannel integration. Common

obstacles include resistance to organisational change, lack of digital skills, and difficulties in measuring the strategic performance of omnichannel initiatives (Cai & Lo, 2020; Both & Steinmann, 2023). These challenges contribute to mixed implementation outcomes and reinforce calls for more comprehensive frameworks that integrate organisational, technological, and strategic dimensions.

Taken together, the findings indicate that omnichannel integration is best understood as a multidimensional strategic phenomenon. Its success depends not only on technological capability but also on organisational alignment, ethical governance, and strategic leadership. The synthesis of these themes underscores the need for future research to move beyond isolated analyses and to develop integrative models that capture the complexity of omnichannel integration within digital business strategy.

4. Conclusion

This study synthesises recent literature on strategic omnichannel integration in digital business, emphasising its evolution from an operational or marketing activity into a core strategic capability. The review highlights that omnichannel integration is consistently linked to the alignment of digital technologies, organisational processes, and customer experience objectives. Prior studies position omnichannel strategies as key mechanisms for creating seamless customer journeys, enabling data-driven decision-making, and sustaining long-term competitive advantage in digitally intensive environments.

The findings further demonstrate that successful omnichannel integration extends beyond technological investment. Organisational readiness, cross-functional collaboration, and strategic leadership emerge as critical enablers influencing integration outcomes. In addition, governance structures and ethical considerations particularly those related to data transparency and customer trust—play an increasingly significant role in sustaining omnichannel initiatives. These insights reinforce the view that omnichannel integration should be embedded within broader digital business strategies rather than implemented as isolated initiatives.

Despite growing scholarly attention, the literature remains fragmented, with limited consensus on integrative frameworks linking strategy, technology, and organisational capability. To address this gap, the study advances a governance-centred perspective, positioning organisational governance as the coordinating mechanism aligning technologies, processes, and customer experience under a unified strategic logic. This perspective helps explain variations in strategic success and failure of omnichannel initiatives. The study acknowledges limitations related to its focus on peer-reviewed articles from 2020–2024 and suggests future research directions, including integrative conceptual modelling, longitudinal analysis, and industry-specific investigations.

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