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## Article

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Article

# Choosing Optimal Omnichannel Coupon Redeeming Options in Multiple Channel Settings

Adam Vrechopoulos, Chris Lazaris \*  and Stavros Theodoratos

ELTRUN, E-Business Research Center, Department of Management Science & Technology, School of Business, Athens University of Economics and Business, 104 34 Athina, Greece

\* Correspondence: lazaris@aueb.gr

**Abstract:** This article examines omnichannel redemption options when issuing digital coupons over social media. It investigates which channels or combinations of them provide optimal performance in terms of service-quality perception, customer satisfaction, and revenue. For that purpose, it compares three omnichannel redeeming options employing a between-participant quasi-experimental design that utilizes the primary data of a sporting goods retailer in Greece and a questionnaire as a data-collection instrument to investigate cause and effect relationships. Those three omnichannel redeeming options are analyzed in two pairwise comparisons: (a) multichannel (both online and offline) vs. offline-only (physical store), and (b) multichannel (both online and offline) vs. online-only (online store). Results reveal that while perceived service quality is essential to improve customer satisfaction, especially if satisfying the need for interaction with service employees, revenue performance depends only on the availability of multiple redemption options. Theoretical, practical, and research implications are thoroughly discussed at the end.

**Keywords:** omnichannel retailing; coupons; customer satisfaction; perceived service quality; store revenues



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## 1. Introduction

Coupons are one of the most important advertising vehicles used (Bawa et al. 1997). Traditionally, coupons have been distributed through offline printed media, such as newspapers, postal messages, and catalogs (Reibstein and Traver 1982). Along with technological progress, the internet has emerged as a new method of distributing coupons. Online coupons, sometimes called “e-coupons” (Blundo et al. 2005; Dass 2005), are available on voucher websites or directly from the businesses that provide them (Reichhart et al. 2013). Additionally, with the advent of mobile commerce and social media (Baethge et al. 2016; Wirtz et al. 2017; Supothamjaree and Srinaruewan 2021; Maslowska et al. 2021), it is common for a retailer to promote its coupons to other online channels to achieve greater reach through an omnichannel approach (Ravula et al. 2020). That could result in more coupon redemptions and higher revenues for businesses (Li et al. 2021).

In today's competitive environment, coupon strategies are a key marketing pillar for many retailers (EMarketer 2015). However, the question of the best coupon redemption strategy in an omnichannel environment remains (Valentini et al. 2020; Ackner 2020). Omnichannel integration is growing in popularity; retailers pursue the best mix of sales channels to differentiate their retail offerings and create seamless shopping experiences. Omnichannel marketing deals with the communication opportunities that arise from marketing channel integration to create a unified brand experience in the selling process (Cummins et al. 2016). Therefore, an omnichannel coupon may be provided either online (web, social, mobile) or offline (store, catalogs, printed media) and also redeemed either way across all available channels (Li et al. 2021; Majid and Laroche 2019). In parallel, as digital advertising platforms evolve, coupon-redemption options become integrated with

their features, while also leveraging location-based services (Limpf and Voorveld 2015). For example, Facebook Offer Ads may provide online or in-store ads, bringing a coupon on a phone within a physical shop (Facebook 2020). The coupon could then be redeemed in the store, online, or both. In that way, this omni-coupon initiates over the social media channel, and then the consumer could switch at other alternative ones, in an omnichannel marketing manner.

On the other hand, in a multi-channel coupon setting, channels usually work independently from one another and as there is no cooperation between the channels; customers can either choose to redeem an online or an offline coupon. In a native omnichannel scenario, however, coupons not only can be provided and redeemed at multiple channels, but also available channels (e.g., web, physical store, mobile, social media) cooperate, even at the same time, to provide customers with a seamless shopping experience (Beck and Rygl 2015; Lazaris et al. 2021).

In the past, academia has focused on several aspects of coupon redemption across several channels (Gillison et al. 2019; Li et al. 2021; Ravula et al. 2020; Valentini et al. 2020; Zhang and Wedel 2009). Extant research that deals with coupon redemption options mostly employs model-estimation techniques (Ravula et al. 2020; Valentini et al. 2020; Zhang and Wedel 2009; Li et al. 2022). In addition to that, most studies focus on profits (Zhang and Wedel 2009; Ravula et al. 2020; Li et al. 2021), neglecting important behavioral antecedents of purchasing behavior. Only a single study focuses on omnichannel coupons from a multichannel distribution perspective (Li et al. 2022).

Multichannel research has established that multiple channel integrations increase consumers' perceptions of the service quality of physical stores and decrease their perceptions of risk (Herhausen et al. 2015). Perceived service quality depends on several dimensions, such as the in-store environment, product information consistency, employee assistance, and channel availability (Zhang et al. 2022). Therefore, providing more channel options could provide the perception of enhanced service quality, especially if there is consistent product information (Kallweit et al. 2014; Zhang et al. 2022), additional store atmospherics (Kim and Moon 2009; Wang et al. 2011), and ultimately better service employee assistance (Zhang et al. 2022). However, there is little research on omni-coupons in terms of perceived service quality, consumer satisfaction, and their effect on sales performance. Addressing this research need, the present study attempts to fill this gap by investigating which channels or combinations of them provide the optimal performance and revenue when providing omni-coupons over social media, along with investigating cause and effect relationships.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 presents the theoretical background, the research hypotheses, and the conceptual model of the study. The research methodology is discussed in Section 3, while Section 4 presents the results of the study. Section 5 then includes a discussion of the research findings and Section 6 summarizes the main conclusions and implications as derived from the present study findings.

## 2. Theoretical Background and Research Hypotheses

### 2.1. Multichannel Options for Social Coupon Redemption Effects on Perceived Service Quality

Providing multiple channels to customers throughout their shopping journeys has been mostly associated with positive consumer behavior (Pauwels and Neslin 2015; Teltzrow et al. 2007). More shopping alternatives could serve customers better, according to their distinct needs and shopping situations (Wang and Goldfarb 2016). While the online and the offline channel enclose different characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages, the combination of them mostly results in positive outcomes (Steinfield et al. 2002, 2005; Wang et al. 2013; Gwebu 2011; Timoumi et al. 2022). Hence, a consumer may be better served in his/her preferred way and that could contribute to the perception of enhanced service quality (Seck and Philippe 2013).

In the case of social coupons, the consumer is initially encountered at the social media channel, given the option to redeem either at the e-shop or in store or even at both of them.

Therefore, we posit that he/she would perceive better service quality when all available options are provided. In comparison to offline-only coupon redemption, the shopper would gain unique online benefits (Yang et al. 2011), whereas comparing online-only redemption with multichannel, a distinct advantage is a human service provided at physical stores (Andersen et al. 2020).

Formally,

**H1.** *A consumer's perceived service quality is increased when an online coupon can be redeemed both online and offline in comparison to a single channel.*

In other words, providing multichannel options (both online and offline) for social coupon redemption, in comparison to (H1a) offline-only and (H1b) online-only, increases consumer's perceived service quality.

## *2.2. Mediating Role of Service Quality Perception between Redeeming Options and Customer Satisfaction*

If perceptions of service quality increase when providing additional channels, we could also expect favorable consumer responses (Seck and Philippe 2013). In addition, if online coupon redemption is added as an option to the offline one, the customer would benefit from the perception of enhanced service quality that arises from the online environment, becoming more satisfied (Pantano and Viassone 2015). He/she would be pleased to find out that there are web features that facilitate service and support in a way that the physical store may be inefficient at providing (e.g., recommendation engines or personalization techniques). On the other hand, the online consumer may need the conventional store environment to redeem his/her coupon to physically inspect a product or visually compare it with alternative ones (Toufaily et al. 2013). Thus, the perception of service quality mediates the relationship between providing multichannel-option coupon redemption and customer satisfaction.

As a result,

**H2.** *Improving consumer's perceived service quality by providing both online and offline coupon redemption options positively affects customer satisfaction.*

Alternatively stated, we expect that customer satisfaction increases with higher perceptions of service quality and, therefore, hypothesize that improving the perceived service quality by providing multichannel options (both online and offline) for social coupon redemption, in comparison to (H2a) offline-only and (H2b) online-only, positively affects customer satisfaction.

## *2.3. Moderating Impact of the Need for Interaction with Service Employees*

According to Dabholkar and Bagozzi (2002, p. 188), the need to interact with a service employee can be defined as "the importance of human interaction to the consumer in service encounters". For many consumers, the shopping process is not just a business transaction but provides useful social benefits, such as interactions with sales associates, information gathering, and contact with other consumers (Dabholkar 1996; Wang et al. 2007). However, SSTs (self-service technologies) reduce such interactions and connections with other people. For a service innovation that essentially involves replacing humans with technology, the corresponding reduction in social interactions can be seen as a disadvantage by those seeking human contact during purchases (Leung and Matanda 2013). Regarding the case of offline-only redemption, the consumer may also benefit from the online channel, since he/she would be provided with web agents, chat facilities, or other site features that would complement the conventional perception of service quality (Hwang and Kim 2007). We hypothesize:

**H3.** *When a consumer needs more employee assistance, perceived service quality acts as a stronger mediator between providing multichannel coupon redemption options and customer satisfaction.*

We anticipate that the need for interaction with service employees moderates the effect of perceived service quality on customer satisfaction when providing multichannel options (both online and offline) for social coupon redemption, in comparison to (H3a) offline-only and (H3b) online-only.

#### 2.4. Total Effects on Revenue

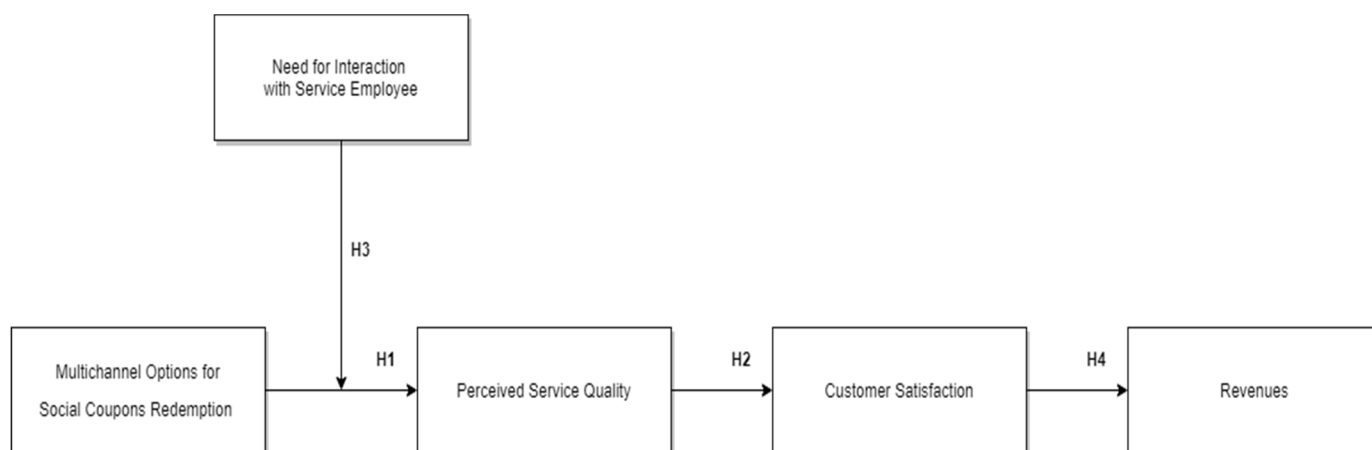
Since the customer becomes more satisfied as a result of the perception of enhanced service quality, we could also expect an increase in sales revenues (Montaguti et al. 2016; Gensler et al. 2012). When the quality of service is enriched for consumers that are served by sales associates, satisfaction improves and the shopper spends more (Cummins et al. 2016; Babakus et al. 2004). The offline-only customer has the additional option to buy online (Zhang et al. 2019), whereas the e-shopper has the chance to redeem his/her coupon in store (Wang and Goldfarb 2016). Both options would perform better than in isolation because of better satisfaction which stems from the greater perception of service quality (Cao and Li 2015; Herhausen et al. 2015).

Formally,

**H4.** *When a consumer needs more employee assistance, perceived service quality acts as a stronger mediator between providing multichannel coupon redemption options and customer satisfaction, which in turn results in higher revenues.*

Otherwise stated, perceived service quality positively influences customer satisfaction, which in turn increases revenues contingent on the need for interaction with service employees, when providing multichannel options (both online and offline) for social coupon redemption, in comparison to (H4a) offline-only and (H4b) online-only.

The conceptual model and the corresponding research hypotheses of the present study are depicted in Figure 1.



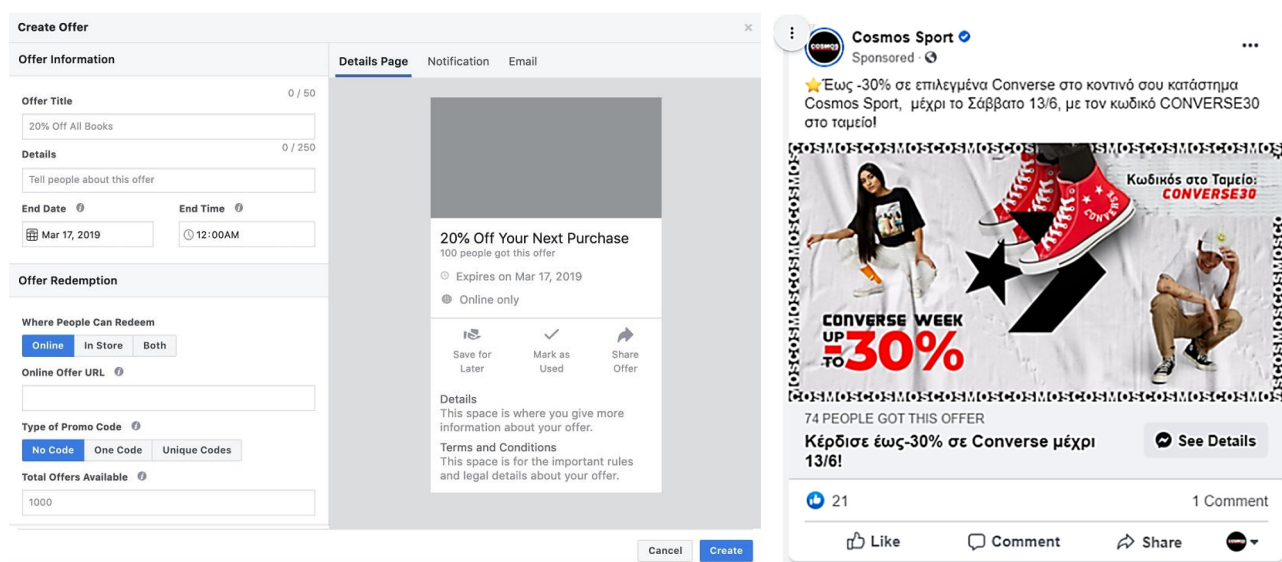
**Figure 1.** Conceptual model.

### 3. Research Methodology

To test these predictions, we compare three omnichannel redeeming options employing a between-participants quasi-experimental design that utilizes primary data and a questionnaire, as tools to investigate cause and effect relationships. The experiment follows a quasi-design, since participants were separated into different groups based on the redemption option they selected on their own (Campbell and Stanley 2015). Those three omnichannel redeeming options are analyzed in two pairwise comparisons:

- (a) multichannel (both online and offline) vs. offline-only (physical store) social coupon redemption
- (b) multichannel (both online and offline) vs. online-only (online store) social coupon redemption.

The consumer database of a sporting goods retailer served as the sampling frame of the study, while simple random sampling was the sampling technique employed. The data-collection phase of the present study was executed in August 2020 in Greece, and the total sample consisted of 172 consumers who were randomly selected from the three different segments (omnichannel redeeming options). Facebook's Offer Ads option was utilized in Ads Manager to provide the social coupons over all available Facebook and Instagram placements. The social coupon was configured to be able to be redeemed either online, offline, or both (Figure 2 depicts related setup options). The coupon offered a 30% reduction across a specific brand (see Figure 2) and was configured to be provided to mobile shoppers who were situated at a close distance (up to 1 km) to the retailer's physical stores. According to their redemption type, they were then assigned to the three experimental conditions (quasi experimental design). In this way, omnichannel coupon redemption was achieved, since consumers initially utilized social media over the mobile channel and afterward could complete their shopping journey by redeeming their coupon either over the online channel, the offline, or both.



**Figure 2.** Facebook Offer Ads default redemption options (left) and a related coupon that was provided for the experiment (right).

The data-collection instrument of the study was an online structured questionnaire, as well as the point of sale (POS) data of the online and the offline physical stores of the retailer. Participating consumers were recruited based on the POS data gathered (purchases that resulted from the specific omnichannel coupon redemption). Therefore, revenues were directly measured out of their actual purchases. Moreover, the structured questionnaire included the constructs (Table 1) of perceived service quality (Dagger and Danaher 2014), satisfaction (Pons et al. 2016), and need for interaction with service employee (Dabholkar 1996) as well as other important questions for the scope of the present study (e.g., demographics, social media habits, fear of spam, coupon economic benefits, redemption effort, coupons attitude, impulse buying behavior, online/offline/omnichannel shopping frequency, perceived control).

**Table 1.** Measurement instruments of main variables (5-point Likert Scale).

<i>Constructs</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Reference</i>
Perceived Service Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I believe this firm offers service that is superior in every way.</li> <li>The quality of the service provided by this firm is impressive.</li> <li>The service provided by this firm is of a high standard.</li> </ul>	(Dagger and Danaher 2014)
Customer Satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am satisfied with my experience in this place.</li> <li>I think I did the right thing by coming to this place.</li> <li>My choice to come here was a wise one.</li> </ul>	(Pons et al. 2016)
Need for Interaction with Service Employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human contact in providing services makes the process enjoyable for the consumer.</li> <li>I like interacting with the person who provides the service.</li> <li>Personal attention by the service employee is not very important to me.</li> <li>It bothers me to use a machine when I could talk to a person instead.</li> </ul>	(Dabholkar 1996)

Consumers who redeemed the coupon were contacted by email to answer the online questionnaire, which was administered in Google Forms (questionnaire available at the Appendix A).

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS ver. 22 leveraging Process Macro ver. 3.5 (Hayes 2017). Group comparisons were tested through analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests (H1). The mediation was tested using Process Macro Model 4 (H2) and moderated mediation by running Process Macro Model 4 (H3). Finally, serial moderated mediation was conducted by applying Model 83 (H4). All models employed bootstrap confidence intervals. Process Macro was chosen as a state-of-the-art statistical tool to test for moderation and mediation in experimental design.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Descriptive Statistics

The sample of the study was well-balanced in terms of demographic characteristics (52% female and 48% male, 35% aged between 18–25, 31% aged between 26–35, 14% aged between 36–45, and the rest 19% aged over 46). Regarding employment, 78% of the participants were employed. Additionally, as far as their omnichannel behavior is concerned, 40% of them often use all the retailer's channels during their shopping journeys, whereas 17% of them use them almost always. Tables 2 and 3 include the descriptive statistics of the study.

**Table 2.** Descriptive Statistics for Concomitant Variables (5-point Interval Scale).

	Positive Attitude for Coupons	Impulse Buying Behavior	Redemption Effort	Economic Benefits	Fear of Spam	Omni Shopping Frequency
<i>Mean</i>	3.60	2.99	2.51	3.04	2.70	3.56
<i>Std. Deviation</i>	0.78	1.17	1.01	1.18	0.83	0.99

**Table 3.** Demographics.

Age Groups	Percentage	Gender	Percentage	Employment	Percentage
18–25	35%	Male	48%	Employed	78%
26–35	31%	Female	52%	Unemployed	22%
36–45	14%				
46–55	10%				
55	9%				

## 4.2. Hypotheses Testing

### 4.2.1. Hypothesis #1

Our first hypothesis was tested with ANOVA. The test determined that there are significant statistical differences between multichannel, offline-only, and online-only social coupon redemption, in terms of consumers' perceived service quality ( $F(2,169) = 106.282$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

However, post hoc comparisons reveal that these differences only exist between multichannel and online ( $p < 0.001$ ), whereas perceptions of service quality between multichannel ( $M = 3.50$ ) and offline-online ( $M = 3.59$ ) coupon redemption are at the same levels (mean of online-only is 2.01), not showing statistically significant differences ( $p = 0.739$ ). Thus, hypothesis H1a is rejected, whereas H1b is not rejected. In other words, it is the option of offline coupon redemption that increases a consumer's perceived service quality.

### 4.2.2. Hypothesis #2

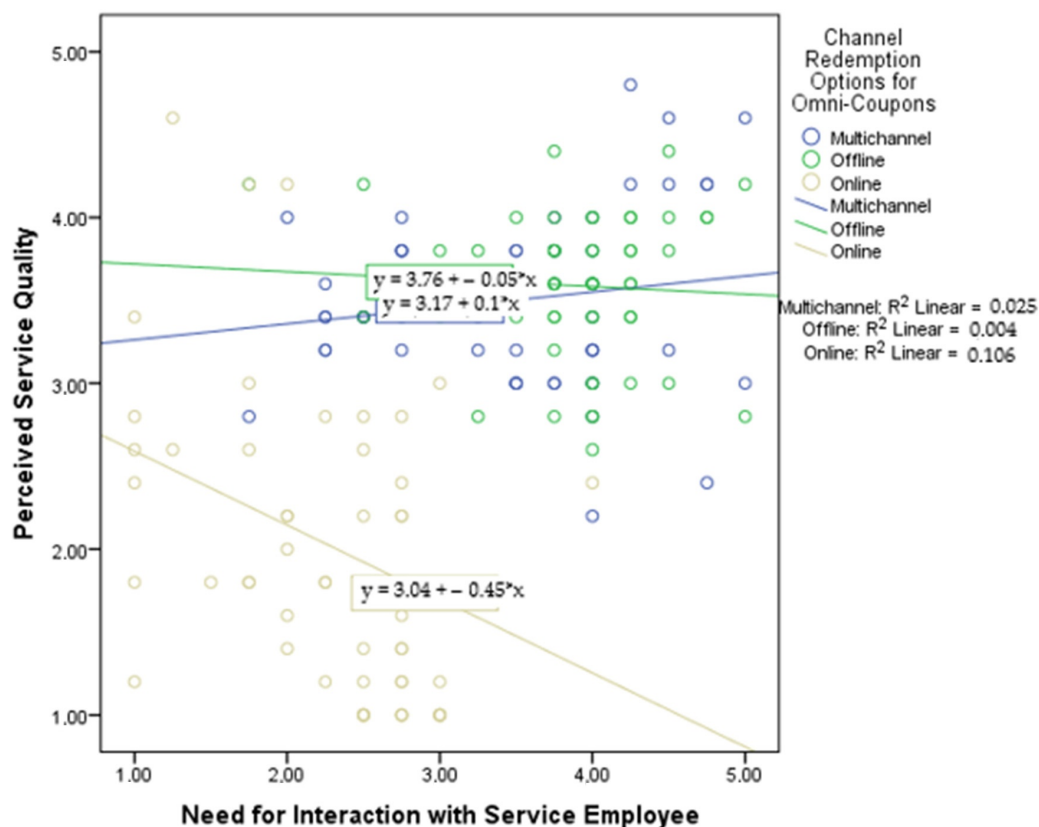
In hypothesis H2, we postulated that perceived service quality acts as a mediator between multichannel redemption options (multi categorical independent variable) and consumer satisfaction. Therefore, this hypothesis was tested with Process Macro (Hayes 2017) Model 4 (5000 bootstrap samples). We first compared multichannel vs offline redemption options, while controlling for demographics, social media habits, fear of spam, coupon economic benefits, redemption effort, coupon attitude, impulse-buying behavior, online/offline/omnichannel shopping frequency, and perceived control. The test revealed relative no-effect non-mediation ( $b = 0.124$ ,  $CI[-0.125, 0.360]$ ), therefore hypothesis H2a is rejected.

Next, we tested multichannel-online pairwise comparison in Model 4 (5000 bootstrap samples), which showed relative complementary/partial mediation ( $b = -1.489$ ,  $CI[1.871, -1.087]$ ) with direct ( $b = -0.470$ ,  $CI[-0.908, -0.031]$ ) and total effects ( $b = 1.959$ ,  $CI[-2.494, -1.425]$ ). Thus, hypothesis H2b is not rejected. In essence, customer satisfaction increases with higher perceptions of service quality when offline redeeming options are provided.

### 4.2.3. Hypothesis #3

To test hypothesis H3, we employ moderated mediation Model 7 (5000 bootstrap samples) in Process Macro, which revealed that when adding the online option to offline redemption there is no moderated mediation found at satisfaction (index =  $-0.082$ ,  $CI[-0.407, 0.276]$ ). On the other hand, there was an indication that perceived service quality exerts a mediating effect between the multichannel vs online redemption options and customer satisfaction, with this mediating effect being moderated by the need for interaction with service employees (index =  $-0.536$ ,  $CI[-1.016, -0.093]$ ). Again, in both cases, we controlled for demographics, social media habits, fear of spam, coupon economic benefits, redemption effort, coupon attitude, impulse buying behavior, online/offline/omnichannel shopping frequency, and perceived control. Thus, hypothesis H3a is rejected, whereas H3b is not rejected. The negative index, along with the interpretation of Figure 3, shows a negative effect. In other words, when providing the offline channel as an additional social coupon redemption option to the online one, consumer's need for interaction with service employees positively influences perceptions of service quality, which in turn improves customer satisfaction.





**Figure 3.** Perceived service quality concerning the need for interaction with service employees across channel redemption options for omni-coupons.

#### 4.2.4. Hypothesis #4

Finally, to test hypothesis H4, we leveraged one of the latest models of Process Macro which allows serial moderated mediation (Model 83, 5000 bootstrap samples), again controlling for the aforementioned variables. Regarding the comparison of multichannel vs the offline redemption options, again, no moderated mediation was present at revenues (index =  $-0.180$ , CI $[-2.256, 1.725]$ ). Similarly, no moderated mediation was found when adding the offline option to online redemption at revenues (index =  $-1.176$ , CI $[-7.432, 3.449]$ ). Thus, hypothesis 4 is rejected. Therefore, revenues cannot be explained by those moderated mediation effects.

However, although no moderated mediation and even serial mediation occurs, there are direct and total effects when providing both online and offline channels as social coupon-redemption options.

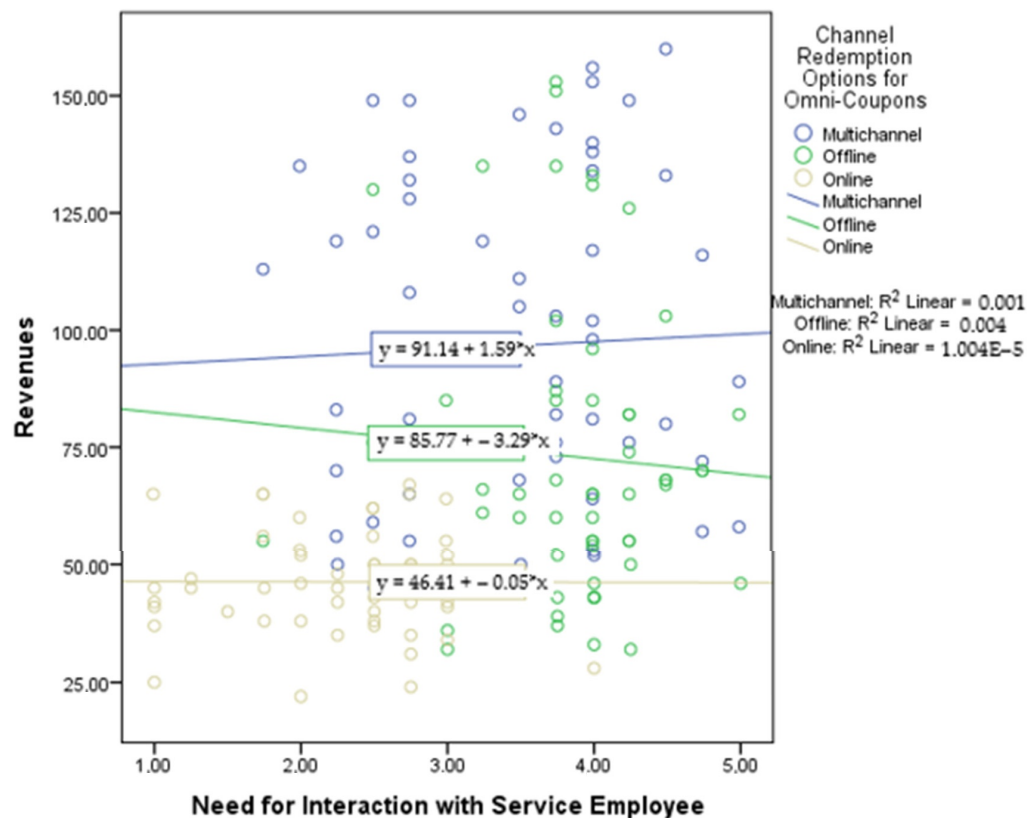
## 5. Discussion

Our first hypothesis-test results indicate that the perception of service quality increased significantly only at the introduction of the offline channel. During omni-coupon redemption, the offline channel provided service quality on par with the multichannel option, indicating that the online channel does not contribute to the perception of enhanced service quality. Indeed, consumers provided a significantly lower rating for perceived service quality during online coupon redemption. Relevant research findings have demonstrated similar results—that adding offline features to the online channel significantly improves the perception of service quality (Herhausen et al. 2015; Emrich et al. 2015). However, perceived service quality in retail heavily depends on sales employees (Jun et al. 2004; van Birgelen et al. 2006). Therefore, the online channel is inferior to the offline one in this matter, providing a possible explanation for our results.

Moreover, allowing for social coupon redemption over the online channel, when already giving the option to redeem offline, does not affect customer satisfaction. In parallel, there is no mediating effect of perceptions of service quality that could improve customer satisfaction while introducing online redemption options (H2a). On the other hand, when the online channel is complemented with the offline one as an option for social coupon redemption, perceived service quality significantly influences customer satisfaction (mean of online-only is 1.84, offline-only = 3.92 and multi = 3.85), as verified by H2b testing results. It seems again that the online channel alone is not satisfying enough to properly redeem coupons. This finding could be attributed to the fact that consumers expect to be able to redeem offline while purchasing products that need physical inspection and trying-on. Thus, customers value the offline channel more in this case in comparison to the online one, which is in line with Schramm-Klein et al. (2011).

Furthermore, when providing the offline channel as an additional social coupon-redemption option to the online one, consumers' need for interaction with service employees positively influences perceptions of service quality, which in turn improves customer satisfaction (H3b). On the other hand, that need does not affect perceived service quality and customer satisfaction when the option of online coupon redemption is introduced (H3a). In addition, it should be noted that as the need for interaction increases, perceived service quality decreases during online-only coupon redemption. That result could be explained by the fact that when consumers need the help of sales associates, they are better served in physical stores, as also discovered by Sharma and Krishnan (2002).

Finally, revenues increase when proving multiple channels to consumers; however, this increase is not a result of satisfying the need for interaction with employees, or perceptions of service quality and customer satisfaction (H4). Consumers' need for more interaction with employees at physical stores brought in less revenue (Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** Revenues in relation to the need for interaction with service employees across channel redemption options for omni-coupons.

Several studies have demonstrated that adding more channels in the sales process in a complementary way may increase sales (Cao and Li 2015; Avery et al. 2012). Our study verifies that link, although without providing a supporting mechanism through perceived service quality and satisfaction. Nevertheless, these consumers were more satisfied when redeeming at physical stores. Therefore, this may lead to the conclusion that consumers, assisted by employees, may be well served and satisfied because they make better purchasing decisions without spending more money. That evidence may prove to be beneficial for retailers in the long run, since it may increase customer loyalty and lifetime value.

## 6. Conclusions and Implications

### 6.1. Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the extant literature in several ways. It complements existing omni-coupon literature by focusing on consumer behavior during coupon redemption. Exploring cause and effect relationships, it investigates multichannel redemption options following an experimental design while leveraging real sales data. Moreover, it is one of the first studies that utilized the Facebook Offer Ad feature, allowing us to manipulate online, in-store, and dual-channel redemption options.

As far as variables are concerned, it verifies that the need for service-employee interaction may influence coupon redemption if the offline channel is not integrated into the promotional offering. While today's consumers are more omnichannel than ever, perceptions of service quality and satisfaction are still better in physical stores, especially for products that require physical inspection. This finding is in line with Li et al. (2022), who discovered that great service effort when providing omnichannel coupons leads to high retailer profits. Furthermore, this study provides a moderated mediation mechanism that explains how satisfaction during omni-coupon redemption is heavily dependent on the physical store and the sales associate's assistance.

### 6.2. Managerial Implications

The findings of the present study highlight the promising role of the physical store's front-line personnel in the process of e-coupon redemption. Retailers could exploit the results of the present study as a useful guide towards further investing in education and training programs for their customer-facing employees as a promising source for providing high-quality services and satisfying consumers during the e-coupon redemption procedure.

In the context of strategic marketing planning, it seems that e-coupon marketing programs employed to apply promotional mix strategies should not have the direct objective of increasing revenues but satisfying customers, by "protecting" them from spending a high amount of money, especially during a difficult period of economic crisis caused partly by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, due to the pandemic, retailers cannot fully take advantage of the offline channel, or their sales associates. The study implies that retailers may experience not only reduced revenues, since multichannel practices shift solely to online, but also fail to serve and satisfy customers well. Hence, to mitigate these negative effects, they could concentrate on empowering their perception of service quality with digital sales assistance.

Similarly, the findings of the present study may be also attributed to the fact that e-coupons on their own imply cost-savings to consumers and, thus, consumers seem to be satisfied if they spend a low amount of money at the end of their e-coupon redemption journey. Thus, retailers should take this finding into account and avoid cross-sell and/or up-sell initiatives when consumers visit their physical stores to redeem their e-coupons. Besides this, satisfying customers usually leads to trust and loyalty, implying a high potential for revisits and re-purchase rates in the future through building win-win long-term relationships. In other words, as also noted above, retailers must "protect" their customers from spending more money than they really plan to and, thus, help them to buy products they need for the moment. In sum, this implies that retailers should not exploit the

traffic generated in their physical stores (as a result of their e-coupon promotional program) as an opportunity for direct cross- and up-sell efforts.

The present study revealed the promising role of the sales force in the physical store for meeting these objectives, since the “online store only” scenario of this study did not include sales staff. To this end, retailers should consider the option of also providing a humanized shopping experience online, by offering personal selling experiences through alternative online channels like video calls (e.g., live commerce initiatives), call centers, augmented/virtual reality, chat, and other possible options, meeting evolving omnichannel demands through the adoption of such offerings.

Additionally, when providing channel redemption options, omnichannel retailers should include the offline channel, as the online channel alone may not be able to provide comparable levels of perceived service quality. In fact, taking into consideration the results of the present study, offline-only coupon-redemption options perform similarly to multichannel ones, in terms of the perception of service quality.

Finally, some direct implications arise for the Facebook Ads platform regarding the Offer Ads functionality. Although all channel redemption options are available (“online”, “in-store”, and “both”) as illustrated in Figure 2, multichannel retailers should select both channels to optimize their performance.

### 6.3. Limitations and Further Research

Evidently, a major limitation of the present study reflects on the special conditions framing both consumer behavioral patterns and business practices caused by the COVID-19 pandemic at a time when the data-collection phase of the present research was conducted. It should be noted, however, that during the data-collection phase of the present study, physical retail stores were open. Additionally, the e-coupons given to consumers who participated in the present study refer to products of a specific brand offered by a specific retailer and, thus, the results must be interpreted with caution when applied to different brands, products, and retail stores (e.g., grocery retailing, consumer electronics).

Future research should further explore e-coupon redemption options in the context of the evolving nature of omnichannel retailing towards further understanding the mechanisms through which consumers respond to these marketing stimuli. In this context, several variables could well serve as moderating factors (e.g., demographic data like income, behavioral data like frequency of internet use, psychographic data like personality, and situational factors like mood or available time and shopping budget) in corresponding research designs. Personal selling techniques (e.g., order receiving vs. deep selling) could serve as promising treatments in the context of field experimental settings towards further analyzing the role of personal selling in the e-coupon redemption procedure. Similarly, digital technologies could be also employed as treatments in such experimental designs (e.g., personal selling through video calls, chat, and augmented or virtual reality). Finally, future research could also analyze the SARS-CoV-2 virus effects on consumer behavioral patterns under the e-coupon redemption perspective.

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## Appendix A. Questionnaire (Measured in 1–5 Interval Scale)

### Online Redemption Participants

1. Based on your experience using social media please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:
  - Using social media has become a habit for me
  - I am addicted to social media ads
  - I need to leverage social media advertising
2. Based on your experience using social media, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the below views on social media advertising:
  - Using social media has become a habit for me
  - I am addicted to social media ads
  - I need to leverage social media advertising
3. Based on your experience with coupons and redeeming in an online or physical store, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:
  - Online coupons can save me a lot of money
  - I believe the financial benefit of using online coupons is significant
  - It is time consuming to use online coupons
  - It is complicated to redeem online coupons
  - There are a few obstacles for me in using online coupons
  - I have control over the number of coupons I receive
  - I can check when I receive online coupons on mobile/laptop/desktop
4. Please rate your behavior towards the usage of online coupons from worst to best:
  - Foolish—wise
  - Worthless—valuable
  - Bad—good
5. Based on your shopping habits online or in physical stores, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:
  - I'm not willing to put in the extra effort to find lower prices
  - I would change what I had planned to buy in order to take advantage of a lower price on the products
  - I am sensitive to differences in the price of sporting goods
6. Based on your purchasing habits, please answer the following questions:
  - How often do you shop at a physical clothing/shoe store?
  - How often do you shop online for clothing/shoes?
  - How often do you use all of a retailer's available channels combined to shop online or in physical stores?
7. Based on your experience with redeeming coupons, either online or instore, please indicate the level of your agreement or disagreement to the following statements:
  - I was satisfied with the service offered at the store I bought from
  - Risk related to product characteristics (e.g., size and color) was high when I bought products in store
  - I believe this company provides service that is superior in every way
  - The quality of service provided by this company is impressive
  - The service provided by this company is of a high standard
  - I am satisfied with my experience at this place
  - I think I did the right thing by coming to this place/company

- My choice to come here (physical or online store) was a wise one
  - Human contact during the provision of services makes the process pleasant for the consumer
  - I enjoy interacting with the store staff
  - Personal attention from an employee/salesperson is important to me
  - It bothers me to use a machine when I could be talking to a human instead
  - I often buy things spontaneously
  - The range of the store offers a variety of different brands to choose from
  - The store range offers a variety of different sizes to choose from
  - The range of the store offers a variety of different qualities to choose from
  - It was easy to contact the retailer
  - It didn't take me long to get in touch with the retailer
  - My distance from the retailer's store matters to me
8. Please indicate the level of your agreement or disagreement to the following statements:
- When I go shopping, I pay attention to the environment of the store
  - Things like music, colors, lighting in a store make all the difference to me when deciding which store to shop at
  - I find myself making purchasing decisions based on how a store looks
  - Store decor influences my decision about where to shop
9. What's your age?
10. Do you have a job?

#### **Offline Redemption Participants**

1. Based on your experience using social media, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:
- Using social media has become a habit for me
  - I am addicted to social media ads
  - I need to leverage social media advertising
2. Based on your experience using social media, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the below views on social media advertising:
- Using social media has become a habit for me
  - I am addicted to social media ads
  - I need to leverage social media advertising
3. Based on your experience with coupons and redeeming in an online or physical store, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:
- Online coupons can save me a lot of money
  - I believe the financial benefit of using online coupons is significant
  - It is time consuming to use online coupons
  - It is complicated to redeem online coupons
  - There are a few obstacles for me in using online coupons
  - I have control over the number of coupons I receive
  - I can check when I receive online coupons on mobile/laptop/desktop
4. Please rate your behavior towards the usage of online coupons from worst to best:
- Foolish—wise
  - Worthless—valuable
  - Bad—good
5. Based on your shopping habits online or in physical stores, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:
- I'm not willing to put in the extra effort to find lower prices
  - I would change what I had planned to buy in order to take advantage of a lower price on the products

- I am sensitive to differences in the price of sporting goods
6. Based on your purchasing habits, please answer the following questions:
    - How often do you shop at a physical clothing/shoe store?
    - How often do you shop online for clothing/shoes?
    - How often do you use all of a retailer's available channels combined to shop online or in physical stores?
  7. Based on your experience with redeeming coupons, either online or instore, please indicate the level of your agreement or disagreement to the following statements:
    - I was satisfied with the service offered at the store I bought from
    - Risk related to product characteristics (e.g., size and color) was high when I bought products in store
    - I believe this company provides service that is superior in every way
    - The quality of service provided by this company is impressive
    - The service provided by this company is of a high standard
    - I am satisfied with my experience at this place
    - I think I did the right thing by coming to this place/company
    - My choice to come here (physical or online store) was a wise one
    - Human contact during the provision of services makes the process pleasant for the consumer
    - I enjoy interacting with the store staff
    - Personal attention from an employee/salesperson is important to me
    - It bothers me to use a machine when I could be talking to a human instead
    - I often buy things spontaneously
    - The range of the store offers a variety of different brands to choose from
    - The store range offers a variety of different sizes to choose from
    - The range of the store offers a variety of different qualities to choose from
    - It was easy to contact the retailer
    - It didn't take me long to get in touch with the retailer
    - My distance from the retailer's store matters to me
  8. Please indicate the level of your agreement or disagreement with the following statements:
    - When I go shopping, I pay attention to the environment of the store
    - Things like music, colors, lighting in a store make all the difference to me when deciding which store to shop at
    - I find myself making purchasing decisions based on how a store looks
    - Store decor influences my decision about where to shop
  9. What's your age?
  10. Do you have a job?

#### **Non-Redemption Participants**

1. Have you run over the below promotion on Converse items that is running on the social media of Cosmos Sport?
  - Yes, I have seen it
  - No, I haven't seen it
2. Based on your experience using social media, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:
  - Using social media has become a habit for me
  - I am addicted to social media ads
  - I need to leverage social media advertising
3. Based on your experience using social media, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the below views on social media advertising:
  - Annoying

- Coercive
  - Interventions
  - Insolent
  - Very annoying
4. Based on your experience with coupons and redeeming in an online or physical store, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:
    - Online coupons can save me a lot of money
    - I believe the financial benefit of using online coupons is significant
    - It is time consuming to use online coupons
    - It is complicated to redeem online coupons
    - There are a few obstacles for me in using online coupons
    - I have control over the number of coupons I receive
    - I can check when I receive online coupons on mobile/laptop/desktop
  5. Please evaluate your attitude towards using a mobile coupon on the following scale:
    - Foolish—wise
    - Worthless—valuable
    - Bad—good
  6. Based on your shopping habits online or in physical stores, please indicate how much you agree with the following statements:
    - I'm not willing to put in the extra effort to find lower prices
    - I would change what I had planned to buy in order to take advantage of a lower price on the products
    - I am sensitive to differences in the price of sporting goods
  7. Based on your purchasing habits, choose the most suited answer:
    - How often do you shop at a physical clothing/shoe store?
    - How often do you shop online for clothing/shoes?
    - How often do you use all of a retailer's available channels combined to shop online or in physical stores?
  8. What's your age?
  9. Do you have a job?

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