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## Article

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## Review

# Optimizing Retail Pharmacy Success: The Role of Multichannel Marketing Strategies

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**Abstract:** This study focuses on the effect of multichannel marketing communication in retail pharmacies to establish customer satisfaction in a world experiencing the digitalization of health sectors. The objective of the study is to understand customer acquisition and retention practices, the role of online and offline integrated communication, and the extent of customer preference for various marketing communication channels. As part of the study, the quantitative analysis of the publications included in the review was made using articles and reports published from 2014 to 2024. The review was conducted on the aspects of marketing using multiple channels in retail pharmacy and the healthcare-associated fields. The studies identified that comprehensive communication channel enhancement policies positively affect the generation of revenues, reduction in costs, and information delivery schedules in pharmaceuticals. Depending on the channel, consumers' needs and wants differ, and there is success in personalizing and presenting reasonably logical thoughts to people. Synchronicity of online and offline communication effectively increases the customers' power, trust, and satisfaction. E-marketing has always been significant in enhancing customers' touch points, which is why digital transformation is vital. This study further supports the fact that multichannel marketing is mandatory for the success of a retail pharmacy in the prevalent, highly competitive environment. The implementation also presupposes knowledge of consumer differences, the synergy of online and offline contacts, the emphasis on personalization, and fast adaptation to the changing technological environment, but often within the framework of severe legislation.

**Keywords:** digital transformation; multichannel marketing; omnichannel strategy; pharmacy; retail pharmacy



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## 1. Introduction

Given the recent advances in technology and the growing trend for a change in consumer expectations, this is the current situation in the retail pharmacy industry. Community pharmacy physical retail stores are not exclusive sellers of medicines, but they have turned into multiple-stop healthcare centers comprising immunizations and weight-loss and nutrition guidance (Irgang et al. 2023). This switch, together with the effects of e-commerce and particularly the new approaches to health and medicine, has dramatically shifted the competitive dynamics of pharmaceutical retailing (Baines et al. 2020). Thus, niche segments, including retail pharmacies, must actively evaluate and change their marketing approaches to sustain themselves and succeed.

The need for this particular adaptation must be addressed. Community retail pharmacies are essential in enhancing the health status of populations because they act as the first point of contact for many groups (Strand et al. 2016). They are usually the initial healthcare givers that people approach for consultation on conditions that do not require hospital admission, purchase drugs without prescriptions, or pick their prescribed medications.

In addition, especially in rural or developing regions, retail drug stores may be unique, easily accessible facilities with healthcare services (Qato et al. 2016; Proença 2021). Being an essential part of the healthcare sector, the future and viability of retail pharmacies entail a potential impact on the population's well-being and the ability to access necessary medicines (Mutambik et al. 2024).

However, the retail pharmacy sector today faces several problems. This change in customer buying behavior has brought new players into the online pharmacies and mail-order prescription services market that threatens the traditional market share (Lin 2021). Furthermore, consumers' shifts in their behavioral patterns over the globe when focusing on preferences shift over time (Anshari et al. 2019), especially in the context of the threats posed by viral diseases, including COVID-19, and instant promotion of digital solutions and remote care solutions (Gadgil et al. 2024). This study poses that these changes have brought forth new opportunities and threats for retail pharmacies to remarket their commodities and modify their strategies for interacting with clients.

Accordingly, in current circumstances, multichannel marketing is a potentially transformative strategy for retail pharmacies. Multichannel marketing is a concept that involves using several channels through which customers are reached to ensure that interactions with the firm occur harmonized (Verhoef et al. 2015). Such channels include physical outlets, a company's website and a mobile application, social media platforms, mailing lists, and print and television media (Tripathi and Dave 2017). Using a multichannel strategy means that all the channels are interconnected and complementary, through which retail pharmacies can increase their market share and prospects for customer interaction and, as a result, create business opportunities (Cao and Li 2015).

Further, this study utilized the systematic literature review approach to analyze the impact of multichannel marketing strategies on the performance of retail pharmacies. In line with the systematic geographical research by Denny Prabowo et al. (2021), this paper applied a five-step approach to systematically analyze the literature: analysis, synthesis, induction, description, and comparison. Population and sample inclusion required the development of search strings based on terms relevant to retail pharmacies' success and multichannel marketing strategies. These keywords were searched in various academic databases such as PubMed, Google Scholar, and other databases, and the articles were collected from January 2014 to December 2024. There are different methods of scientific analysis, referred to as analysis, synthesis, induction, description, and comparison, used during the review to study and interpret the material collected. This approach enabled the review of the literature on the topic, the establishment of patterns and themes, and the making of valuable conclusions on utilizing multichannel marketing to enhance the value of retail pharmacy.

This study, therefore, aims to explore the effects of multichannel marketing strategies on the performance of retail pharmacies (Dhanraj and Lavanya 2022). In particular, we intend to assess how the efficiency of integrated marketing communication can influence the following factors: the rate of new customers, customer loyalty, the volume of sales, and the business's overall development. In so doing, we hope to offer pertinent information to retail pharmacy operators, marketers, and healthcare administrators on the state and likely future trends of pharmaceutical retailing.

Therefore, the study's importance is realized in its ability to fill several significant voids in the existing social body of knowledge on marketing in retail pharmacy businesses. First, even though multichannel marketing has been investigated in different contexts, including general and specialized retail, its peculiarities and the results of its implementation in retail pharmacies need to be sufficiently studied. The legal constraints and the type of work that entails the flow of sensitive health-related information all call for a separate examination of this unique business category due to its specificity rooted in its healthcare activities (Akter et al. 2019). Second, since the development of patient-centered care will become the mainstream healthcare industry, it is crucial to investigate how multichannel marketing can increase patient engagement and satisfaction (Subasri et al. 2021). As such, this research

seeks to advance knowledge on how various marketing communication tools can generate organizational sales and profit and enhance patient experiences and health status. Third, the constant development rates and the growing usage of information technologies in healthcare mandate that marketing approaches be assessed and anticipated to be up-to-date. This research aims to present trends in multichannel marketing and the most effective practices for retail pharmacies, thereby rendering timely information to the stakeholders and placing them on the right side of the current trend ([Pantano et al. 2019](#)).

## 2. Materials and Methods

This section provides the methodology used in this study, including the data collection and analytical approaches. The study employed a systematic literature review, chosen for its effectiveness in synthesizing existing research and providing comprehensive insights into the study's focus areas: Optimizing Retail Pharmacy Success and the Role of Multichannel Marketing Strategies. This design made it easy for the study to incorporate a range of relevant literature while at the same time reducing the chances of selective review by following a standardized procedure of data collection, analysis, and synthesis.

The initial phase of the data collection involved the creation of a search string where a distinct set of keywords were generated. The initial collection comprises terms associated with Optimizing Retail Pharmacy Success, and the second set regarding the Role of Multichannel Marketing Strategies. The search string was generated by combining terms from both sets using wildcard symbols, with the aim of minimizing the total number of search strings. The search terms were subsequently utilized in the PubMed search engine, as well as in other electronic databases including Web of Sciences, Scopus Google Scholar, Taylor and Francis, Emerald, Springer, and others focusing on studies and journals between 1 January 2014 and December 2024. This study was undertaken to confirm the accuracy and completeness of all pertinent data that had been documented.

The review was undertaken in five steps, following the accepted procedure of a systematic literature review, as stated by Denny [Prabowo et al. \(2021\)](#). When deciding on the use of the correct scientific research methods, we were inspired by several current scientific works by authors such as [Abbas et al. \(2024\)](#), [Kaššaj and Peráček \(2024b\)](#), [Kaššaj \(2023\)](#), and [Zsigmond et al. \(2024\)](#). During the systematic literature review, the following scientific methods were used: for analysis, categorization was employed to dissect the data retrieved from the literature to facilitate their scrutiny at a more granular level. This made it easier to comprehend each one of the factors concerning the enhancement of the success of retail pharmacy and the overall multichannel marketing strategy. Therefore, after data extraction from different sources, a synthesis was performed to develop a synthesized narrative from other sources. Such an approach allowed for cross-referencing the patterns and trends regarding the research topic, enabling the development of an integrated understanding of the research topic. The inductive approach was used to arrive at a general conclusion based on the data reviewed in the literature. This approach helped the study to obtain more general conclusions on the significance of multichannel marketing in the achievement of retail pharmacy establishments. Descriptive research approaches were used mainly to depict the features and results of the analyzed studies. This ensured that all the studies conducted were described with precision and accuracy to ensure that the details of each study were well captured. To conclude the reviewed studies, a comparative analysis was performed to assess their similarities and differences. This method was useful in comparing and contrasting the various practices and results associated with the research theme, agreement, and disagreement. These scientific methods ensured that all pertinent resources up to the present date were incorporated into the analysis. Initially, a review method was created to ascertain the selection and arrangement of particular phrases and keywords. Afterward, the study developed certain criteria to determine the relevance of studies and decide whether they should be included or excluded in the review. Furthermore, retrieving materials entailed utilizing pre-established keywords that were formed by combining the

key phrases. Before extracting data and summarizing the findings, a thorough examination of the materials obtained through the search was conducted.

### 3. Research Questions

Answering these research questions will help advance the theoretical knowledge of multichannel marketing in healthcare retail and enrich the practice of employing related strategies in retail pharmacies.

1. How do multichannel marketing strategies impact retail pharmacy success and customer engagement?
2. What are retail pharmacies' most effective multichannel marketing approaches regarding customer acquisition and retention?
3. How does integrating online and offline marketing channels influence pharmacy sales and prescription volume?
4. What are the customer preferences and behaviors across different marketing channels in the retail pharmacy context?
5. What framework can be developed for implementing and optimizing multichannel marketing strategies tailored to retail pharmacies?

The findings of this study will help develop strategies in other types of healthcare retailing, including pharmacy supply shops or optical stores. Furthermore, understanding how the marketing personnel engage in different concerted communication over time by incorporating the four Ps in creating a digital and traditional tangible marketing communication mix might be relevant to other industries amid regulation in the healthcare field. It is crucial to consider several contextual factors that influence the retail pharmacy landscape and, by extension, the application of multichannel marketing strategies:

**Regulatory Environment:** This industry has many legal restraints, like limits on drug advertisement, protection of the patient's information, and restrictions on health information sharing. However, marketers must avoid violating such regulations when implementing these strategies and reach out to customers ([Halpern et al. 2020](#)).

**Technological Advancements:** Pest analysis: Marketing of retail pharmacy operations—technology. The contemporary world has seen a rapid advancement in the application of technology in retail pharmacy, some of which include artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and the Internet of Things. All the technologies mentioned above are opportunities and threats for retail pharmacy marketing. Awareness of how these technologies can be effectively applied in multichannel sales will be critical in the future ([Rokonuzzaman and Paswan 2017](#)).

**Changing Consumer Expectations:** The current generation of consumers is quite diverse, and they are also demanding greater personalization, greater convenience, and greater integration of the services they receive across all relevant channels. Retail pharmacies must shift their marketing strategies to address these new expectations despite the business model comprising strict producer–consumer trust and confidentiality compared to patient–doctor ([Helkkula et al. 2018](#); [Peráček 2022](#)).

**Competition from Non-Traditional Players:** E-commerce giants and new entrants from the technology industry redefine the industry structure. Retail pharmacies must understand how to differentiate themselves and communicate their propositions to the public through various media campaigns ([Klaysung et al. 2022](#)).

**Health Trends and Public Health Concerns:** In scalability, global health events like the COVID-19 pandemic change how consumers behave and their healthcare needs. These dynamic strategies must continuously change to pass important information regarding the population's health status to the public ([He and Harris 2020](#); [Dumitru and Tomescu 2020](#)).

Therefore, by answering the presented research questions and considering the identified factors, this work will give a clear understanding of the factors affecting multichannel marketing to achieve the optimal success rate of the retail pharmacy business. The findings of this study would not only add to the theoretical knowledge of healthcare marketing but



also provide strategic directions for the managers of retail pharmacy businesses challenged with growing competition and changes in the business environment.

When following a course of action in this study, the authors also acknowledge the limitations and difficulties that may be identified. First, the effectiveness of the marketing communication mix in the tangled tangible retail selling environment makes it hard to specify definite channels of the marketing communication mix.

Second, the regulatory environments in the numerous regional markets may have divergent standard settings, though this may only be expected to affect our study for a short time. Last, technological changes may alter the applicability of the evaluation results, though, at the time of this study, this was not noted to be an influence. However, since both the methodological and the content frameworks of this study are grounded in sound research practices, and since the concern is with the theoretical and managerial implications of multichannel marketing for retail pharmacy performance, we anticipate that the results of this study will be helpful in the investigation of the said topic.

In the following sections, the authors describe the research methods, followed by the results, discussion, and conclusion. This study of multichannel marketing in retail pharmacies might further enhance efforts to transform healthcare retail for the continued provision of essential services in the best interest of the community's health.

#### 4. Literature Review

##### 4.1. Effectiveness of Multichannel Marketing Strategy

[Rahayu et al. \(2022\)](#) investigated the involvement of the MSMEs in increasing state revenue for the Indonesian nation during the COVID-19 pandemic under multichannel marketing. However, a few seized food and beverage businesses in Surabaya and Malang adopted the proposed research using a new quantitative method. The findings of this study show that the use of multichannel marketing and proper market logistics enhances MSME sales during the period, underscoring the need for MSMEs to embrace the existing digital opportunities that see the firms expand their markets beyond the conventional lumpen approaches, hence turning a new face to moderate risk-taking in the economy.

[Tamilmani et al. \(2019\)](#) examined the Indian e-commerce landscape, highlighting the profitability of niche players like Flintobox amidst a competitive market dominated by loss-making horizontal players. The study employed a case study methodology, combining interviews and unobtrusive data collection methods. Findings reveal that traditional search engine marketing could have been more effective for Flintobox. At the same time, discovery platforms, including social media and native advertising, significantly improved their performance—reducing bounce rates from 90% to 50% and increasing conversion rates from 0.5% to 2%, thus revealing the importance of innovative marketing strategies in enhancing customer engagement and driving sales in the evolving e-commerce sector. As [Aliaj and Tiri \(2023\)](#) state, a similar situation exists in other countries as well.

In their study, [Banerjee and Bhardwaj \(2019\)](#) focused on the appropriate management of sales compensation to respond to the multichannel attribution issue affecting companies operating in business and retail selling. The study used analytical models to examine three contract types: revenue sharing, lead generation, and sales self-sufficiency. Research suggests that these contracts need to deliver the best profit owing to the budget constraints of being budget balanced, qualification costs, and the fact that the sales force are not marketers by trade. The authors also uniquely focus on risk aversion and overall uncertainty in the context of contract preferences. Certain approaches, such as a contest or stack ranking-based pay, can achieve first-best profit where uncertainty is moderate. Herein, the findings benefit managers seeking insights into the marketing-sales interface and contemporary multichannel lead generation and conversion challenges.

[Luvayo \(2017\)](#) sought to determine how much the pharmaceutical industry in Kenya has expanded and if it has positively impacted the economy. The implications describe pharmaceutical firms' challenges in delivering pertinent, timely, and useful information to overburdened HCPs as cost-efficiently as possible while controlling marketing costs. The

study adopted a descriptive research design to address the research questions and surveyed 62 of the 306 registered pharmaceutical firms in Nairobi County, emphasizing multichannel marketing strategies and company performance. The results show that multichannel marketing determines income, costs, and timely delivery of customer insights. The research established that integrating multiple communication channels benefits the pharmaceutical industry's efforts in the competitive market. It stresses the need to conduct extensive analysis to establish suitable channels for communication with the target population to fully exploit the strength of multichannel marketing in the pharmaceutical industry (Hurina et al. 2023).

Marzouk et al. (2022) respond to the problems of communicating concise and persuasive short advertisements and where to advertise in the multichannel setting. Utilizing the persuasive systems design model, the study conducted an experiment involving 33,848 customers of an international telecom company to compare the effectiveness of three persuasion strategies—rational, emotional, and social—across three marketing channels: SMS marketing communication channels, including short message service, social media advertising, and mobile application. The results show that rational messages lead to higher response rates irrespective of the media applied in the study. Moreover, the characteristics of customers have the largest effect on response rates, and they differ by the communication channel but are otherwise similar regarding message/product type. However, there is a notable issue that different consumers failed to agree with each other on ratings of the persuasive strategies, which might imply that consumers have difficulties in identifying these strategies, or advertisers' interpretation of such a difference may be reductionist. This study offers significant theoretical contributions to understanding persuasive communication and useful implications for enhancing advertising appeals while preserving the digital environment.

Wick et al. (2023) and (Bombard et al. 2018) examined an effective multi-marketing approach for pharmacies and accentuated the need for the target audience analysis while considering their preferences for media channels in certain regions. Thus, the study emphasizes that choosing media channels can increase brand familiarity, customer loyalty, and sales. It stresses that the marketing messages of pharmacies require consideration of the local communities' values, especially identifying ones connected to the families. The authors' objectives are thus to find out customer interest in the advertisement of medical products and which media channel is most preferred for such ads. An analysis of the findings derived from the customer survey shows that there is recognition of the advertising communication across the channels even if the overall engagement is low, meaning that only a portion of the intended audience is attending to the medical product advertisements. Thus, there is a need to advance a strategy of multiple-channel marketing that would favor local consumers in the pharmaceutical industry. In this context, however, Kaššaj and Peráček (2024a) points out that in order to achieve this goal, in today's electronic age, sufficiently powerful internet coverage is inevitable.

#### *4.2. Multichannel Marketing Approaches for Retail Pharmacies in Terms of Customer Acquisition and Retention*

Irawan et al. (2020) examined the necessity for PT Citra Kreasindo Mandiri to embrace digital transformation in response to global changes and technological advancements. The evaluation of current business conditions involving business strategies, technologies used, customers, organizational structure, and culture is conducted based on the results collected from the selected business owners and employees via qualitative interviews. The results stress the call for digital marketing as a strategic management initiative directing efforts toward optimizing customer acquisition and retention proportions. Through gap analysis, the research reveals how marketing capabilities can help support the company's journey to digitalization, with the benefits potentially translating to the organization's revenues and customer interactions. By concluding the study, the author emphasizes the assumption that deploying DM activities meets current organizational requirements and takes the company

further in a challenging environment. In aggregate, this research advances knowledge regarding the application of digital marketing in operational strategy in certain types of organizations, primarily traditional ones adjusting to new market conditions.

Inas and Belgiawan (2023) investigated the rapid growth of the MedTech market in Indonesia, mainly focusing on the mental health service application Riliv. The study identifies significant challenges in customer acquisition and retention faced by Riliv amidst increasing competition and evolving consumer preferences. In this research, the authors use a numerical research approach with 200 participants; the authors use descriptive research findings and a Likert scale research instrument with closed-ended questions to conduct research. This research combines the evaluation of internal and external factors applying STP and the analysis of the marketing mix applied to Riliv with the 7Ps and PESTEL. It was established that small and tangible symbolic promotion efforts, proper price positioning, and superior service delivery are major determinants of customers' attraction and retention. This entails strategic initiatives such as advertisements, association with influencers, and subscription of tailored services meant to engage the customers. This study offers various insights into the approach required for Riliv to create its solid market niche and enter the highly saturated MedTech market segment.

Lostakova and Horakova (2014) assessed the issues with physical pharmacies in the competition of the OTC market in the Czech Republic with customer retention and loyalty. The study points out that the conventional short-term sales promotion appeals have lost the influence they used to have, and thus, pharmacies are forced to search for exclusive retention strategies. Through quantitative research involving a Likert scale questionnaire distributed to pharmacy clients, the authors identify various retention support forms that resonate with consumers. Thus, one has to match the retention programs to the attractiveness factors perceived by the customers, pointing out that these pharmacies should go beyond traditional promotion techniques. In the context of the OTC market, the authors call for more systematic knowledge of customers' decisions to increase loyalty and result in higher retention rates. Thus, the findings of this research enrich the knowledge about the current tendencies transforming the field of pharmacy advertising. This suggests that the key to success in conditions of competition lies in targeting the clients' retention.

#### 4.3. Integration of Channels in Pharmacy Retail

Suresh and D'Souza (2019), maintaining the growth of the relaxed rate of the Kenyan pharmaceutical industry, considered pharmaceutical supply chain management as an impact strategic operation performing factor for the industry. Recognizing substantial literature on distribution and marketing channel research, the authors highlight the need for adequate supply chain models in Kenya's environment. The main objective of the study was to determine the factors that may influence the pharmaceutical value chain and entities such as distributors, wholesalers, and different types of pharmacies. In this cross-sectional study with 15 distributors, five hospital pharmacy managers, and 15 retail pharmacy managers, an online questionnaire and face-to-face interviews for data collection procedures were conducted, followed by qualitative analysis using SPSS statistical software. This study confirms that three factors are central to distributor-supplier relationships, namely, perfect inventory turnovers, better profit margins, and exclusivity to the distributor, and additionally reveals a positive correlation between a firm's collaborative behavior and supply chain disruption and overall satisfaction. Therefore, this study emphasizes the need for a proper supply chain management framework, especially in the pharmaceutical industry, because of rising health costs and government participation in Kenya.

In their study, Tyrväinen and Karjaluo (2019) investigated the concept and nature of omnichannel retail and how it is transforming due to the digitalization of consumers' behavior. The study also underlines the urgency of the problem of proper synchronization of the online and offline worlds to increase consumers' satisfaction levels. This study established critical requirements for optimal channel support based on 20 face-to-face semi-structured interviews with 10 customers who shopped in online and physical stores. The



study shows that consumers use their mobile devices constantly while physically shopping and comparing prices and products, further underlining the concept of channel justice. Consequently, this study offers rich managerial implications for omnichannel management by stressing the centrality of channel coordination in creating favorable brand experiences. The findings indicate that retailers need a single communication strategy that connects all potential channels to effectively serve consumers' needs and enhance performance when competing with other outlets.

Accordingly, [Lim et al. \(2024\)](#) studied the multifaceted aspect of consumer experience management in an omnichannel retail setting. Based on the S-O-R framework, the implications of the various types of retailers, namely high-end specialty shops, department stores, and hypermarkets, on channel integration, consumer empowerment, trust, satisfaction, and patronage intentions are analyzed. In this study, data were obtained from 736 consumers using a purposive sampling technique, and the data analysis technique used was partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The results show that consumers' perception differs when exposed to omnichannel strategies regarding various types of retail stores, showing the need for strategies to be retail-type specific. Thus, this research adds to a relatively sparse body of knowledge on omnichannel management, understanding customers' expectations and actions, and stressing the proper integration of channels in improving the total brand image. The study also provides directions for future research to understand the various facets of consumers' interactions with retailers.

[Zhang et al. \(2018\)](#) examined how channel integration affects consumers' touchpoints in omnichannel retailing. Since retailers attempt to deliver coherent and holistic services across different channels, the study concerns consumers' control and its impact on trust, satisfaction, and purchasing behavior. Based on the SOR model, the authors examine the hypotheses derived from the theoretical frameworks through a large omnichannel retailer in China. The results support their hypotheses, which state that channel integration positively affects consumer empowerment and trust and subsequently boosts the consumer's satisfaction and patronage intentions. Consequently, this research has advanced the knowledge regarding the consumers' behavior in the sphere of the omnichannel environment and the role of integration in creating favorable shopping experiences. The study's findings can be helpful for retailers who want to focus on their channel strategies and increase the channel's relevance to the customers as market competition grows.

[Jiang and Zhang \(2016\)](#) investigated the reciprocal relationship between online and offline channels in retail through improved channel integration. Researching 552 Chinese customers who used multiple channels from the same retailer, the study uses partial least squares structural equation modeling to analyze the data. Furthermore, the study establishes that channel integration has a positive and significant direct impact on channel reciprocity while it moderates the impact of trust on channel reciprocity through online or offline premises. The research identifies three key constructs of channel integration: integrated information, integrated channel access, and integrated customer service. Reciprocity between the channel members requires that trust is transferred to members on the other side of the channel; members on both sides should refer channels to each other, and the members should transfer the image of the other side's channel. The findings of this study will be useful to multichannel retailers who would like to facilitate the blurring between the digital and physical environments to make their customers' interactions with the physical store positive, and hence the customers are loyal.

Reflecting on the influence of digitalization in the field of MC in the Russian pharmaceutical sector, which is exposed to B2B and B2C contexts, [Azoiev et al. \(2019\)](#) investigated the field's trends. The study focused on the need to synchronize the online and offline environments in line with the principles of omnichannel to achieve positive outcomes in the interaction process with partners, intermediaries, and end customers. Referring to the fast increases in the Russian pharmaceutical market and supported by governmental actions, the researchers point out that Russian companies still have to enhance their speed of adjusting to innovations in digitalization. The study analyzed the structural changes in Russian

healthcare marketing communications and recommends omnichannel technologies within the discussed context. The study found that pharmaceutical companies must transform their marketing approach to fit the new modern world and the emerging market challenges.

#### 4.4. Customer Preferences and Behaviors across Different Marketing Channels

Schreiner et al. (2019) explored personalization in advertising, specifically focusing on product recommendations within the apparel industry. Their research highlights the importance of effective product recommendation design across various communication channels, addressing a gap in existing literature that primarily examines website-specific strategies. Through a choice-based conjoint experiment involving young male and female consumers, the study identifies key factors influencing the adoption of personalized recommendations, with advertising channels emerging as the most significant attribute. Findings reveal that while banner advertising is the least preferred channel, males favor smaller sets of recommendations than females. This study also presents consumer motives for avoiding advertisements, which can be helpful to marketers. Finally, based on the insights provided to them, the authors provide design solutions that should be employed in a bid to promote the improvement of personalization of the garments, as that would help to access the hearts of the customers by improving their satisfaction level due to the stiff competition in the apparel market.

Zhang et al. (2014) investigated the preferences of residents and tourists towards community pharmacies and pharmacy products in Macau. Through a questionnaire survey of 135 community pharmacies, the study identifies key factors influencing consumer choices. When choosing a pharmacy, the residents' primary consideration is the price; when choosing a product, the major consideration is the efficacy and quality of the product. On the other hand, tourists perceive categories of products and proximity of location as more important in deciding which pharmacy to shop from and emphasize the origin of products being purchased. While it is seen that the residents focus more on the price and the history of the pharmacy than the tourists do, the tourists focus more on the actual product origin and the packaging type. It, therefore, contributes significantly to managing community pharmacy services and understanding consumer preferences. From the research findings, by identifying the local and tourists' consumption patterns, the pharmacies can better meet these consumers' needs and evaluate their marketing strategies.

In their study, Dimoula et al. (2018) investigated the consumer profiles in the pharmaceutical market of three countries, including Greece, France, and Bucharest, and more precisely, on the factors affecting consumers' patterns. The study conducted amongst a cross-section of the nation's pharmacy customers reveals these crucial motivational factors, including health professionals, price, advertising, and perceptions. The study shows the differences between the three countries' consumers; while the residents give importance to the price and pharmacy history of the product, the tourists consider the product's origin and packaging important. The comparative analysis focuses on similarities in consumer behavior but, at the same time, underlines the significant differences that exist due to the level of education and income. However, the researcher notes that the study's restrictions arose from the consumer perception as a self-generated measure and the global variations in regulatory systems, thus limiting the conduct of comparative studies. Thus, this research offers practical knowledge for future investigations on consumer behavior in the pharmaceutical industry, how to improve marketing approaches, and how consumers from different cultural backgrounds may be differently influenced.

Desai (2023) investigated the relevance of FMCG in the sphere of healthcare, with a focus on its importance in solving the routine problems connected with human health and well-being. The research focuses on improving the quality of life through the FMCG healthcare category, which comprises over-the-counter products, medicines, and personal care products for health management and issues related to quality of life. The study also describes the changes brought by social networks in the communication process of FMCG healthcare products and how companies can use personalized marketing and advertising

strategies to interact directly with customers. However, the fast and dynamic nature of these platforms can increase sentiment towards these products, and therefore, it requires the protection of the brands' image. Desai postulates that organizations require new and professional ways of operating in an environment characterized by such changes. Overall, this study adds to the knowledge of consumers' behavior in the FMCG healthcare product industry, pointing to the need for appropriate health information and communication processes as possible approaches to improving the populace's health. Other authors such as [Funta and Horváth \(2024\)](#) agree with this opinion.

Using data from 150 consumers, [Srivastava and Wagh \(2017\)](#) sought to understand the impact of selected independent variables on OTC pharmaceutical products' consumption and repurchase decisions. This research seeks to give marketers helpful information when advertising products that could help position the products to direct-to-consumer clients. Through a questionnaire-based survey of 300 respondents from Mumbai, Nashik, and Pimpalgaon, the authors identify five key factors: influencers, reliability, awareness, corporate image, and promotion, all encompassed in the following words: Medicinal factors, esthetics, and producer image influence OTC purchases significantly. However, these factors have differences in relative importance between the three cities. Using factor analysis, the research uses the theory of planned behavior and the theory of reasoned action to formulate a consumer behavior factor analysis model. The results would be valuable for marketers focused on improving the position of OTC pharmaceuticals and setting up the marketing strategies that consumers and their choices suggest.

#### *4.5. Frameworks for Implementing and Optimizing Multichannel Marketing Strategies*

In his study, [Proença \(2021\)](#) explored how digitalization continues to revolutionize areas of operation, focusing on the COVID-19 situation in Portugal. A significant finding of the study is that social media usage has increased twice during the outbreak; these media are essential for making the masses literate about health matters and encouraging the consumer to take preventive measures for their disease and self-medication. Research shows that many consumers use the Internet to gather product information before buying them. EWOM influences the consumer's attitude and behavior towards a product. However, the existing literature is still relatively scarce when examining the role of eWOM in the pharmaceutical industry and the OTC segment. For Proença, it is crucial to note that the pharmaceutical business must also incorporate this new paradigm where the patient is acknowledged as an actor similar to the clinician. According to the research, the promotion of digital marketing, especially with social media platforms, should be carried out more strategically to factor in the growing population of consumers in the health sector.

[Yadav et al. \(2024\)](#) looked at the challenges of multichannel marketing in pharma industries, concentrating on the offline and online marketing mix. Notably, the study lays down the potential and obstacles of digital transformation while stressing the subjects' necessity to develop a multichannel approach. Analyzing several cases and the data from HBR, the authors offer practical advice on integrating the concepts of TMM and DSMM. It further underlines the relevance of multichannel marketing in engaging both the consumer and the healthcare professional in the target audience. Furthermore, the study also discusses the present scenario and potential future trends in the sector, with the call for focused importance on data analytical approaches and compliance with the existing and future laws. It brings significant findings concerning the interaction of digital marketing and the pharmaceutical business and strategies to help firms confront such shifts.

[Palmatier et al. \(2019\)](#) present a groundbreaking text, "Marketing Channel Strategy: 'Omni-Channel Strategy', which presents a new and more contemporary view on channel promotion". To support their rationale, the authors present a theoretical omnichannel model that enhances the student's understanding of how customers can be reached through multichannel marketing at once. This marketing concept is unique from conventional multichannel methodologies in that it acknowledges that consumers interact with products through all routes at once while simultaneously shifting rapidly between machines. The

theoretical background of the book is strong, but this is reinforced by exercises and applications of omnichannel strategies that the authors encourage students to develop to design and implement omnichannel solutions in practice. Designed for senior undergraduate and postgraduate students in marketing channels, distribution channels, business-to-business marketing, and retailing, this text provides readers with state-of-the-art marketing tools. The authors also offer full PowerPoint slides if the instructors decide to incorporate this book into their classes. Thus, this first-ever work facilitates extending the existing channel marketing theory by creating a new omnichannel strategy that complies with the newly formed consumers' behavior and the choices that naturally follow.

Torkaman et al. (2015) attempted to establish the framework of multiple-channel e-marketing by analyzing three primary e-marketing tools. The main classifications include SEO, SMM, and EMM. This study reiterates the importance of an efficient e-marketing plan targeted explicitly at electronic media, which differs from regular marketing plans. In detail, the authors administered 200 questionnaires to various respondents to establish vital factors that determine e-marketing effectiveness. Thus, the proposed framework aims to improve the marketing strategies' efficiency by utilizing every tool's strengths to increase customer engagement and satisfaction. Concerning the research questions, the findings establish a coordinated strategy's significance in e-marketing, enabling business organizations to counter timely consumer conduct in the dynamic e-business environment. Thus, this research offers valuable implications for constructing multiple-channel advertising solutions to enhance the effectiveness of e-marketing instruments within customer acquisition and retention in the current environment.

## 5. Results

### 5.1. Effectiveness of Multichannel Approaches

This systematic literature review shows how multichannel marketing strategies positively influence different industries. Indeed, various research findings reveal that it positively impacts businesses, especially within the MSMEs' and the pharmaceutical industries, where its efficiency in increasing global sales can be easily observed (Rahayu et al. 2022; Luvayo 2017). The role of the digital environment and discovery channels is stressed, and the research data confirms the experience's positive impact on performance indicators through social networks and native advertising (Tamilmani et al. 2019). Studies on sales compensation in a multichannel environment raise issues concerning matching contracts with marketing initiatives (Banerjee and Bhardwaj 2019). Qualitative analysis reveals that regardless of the mode of communication, rational messages tend to elicit higher levels of response rate. At the same time, the customers' characteristics determine their engagement and interaction with business firms (Marzouk et al. 2022). Finally, the qualities of local markets and community orientation have been underlined for marketing strategies, especially in pharmacy marketing (Wick et al. 2023). Strategic implications based on sector differences reveal the need for a mix of communication channels and the significance of digital. Issues include inconsistency in consumers' perception of marketing strategies and issues related to information dissemination and the costs involved.

### 5.2. Multichannel Marketing Approaches for Retail Pharmacies in Terms of Customer Acquisition and Retention

Analyzing the examples of multiple-channel marketing strategies for retail pharmacies demonstrates several general directions concerning customer acquisition and retention. In the context of organizational development, Irawan et al. (2020) stress that digital transformation is inevitable, with digital marketing underlined as an effective way of managing customer relations. Notably, their work reveals the important role of digitalizing marketing capacities that can help increase revenues and improve customer interaction. In discussing the MedTech market, Inas and Belgiawan (2023) have outlined small and tangible symbolic promotions as key factors of customers' attraction and retention, owing to proper positioning of prices and superior service delivery. The social media managers provide insights

on targeting customers, including advertisements, influencer associations, and desired subscription services. Regarding the physical pharmacies specifically under discussion in [Lostakova and Horakova \(2014\)](#), the following apprehensions can be depicted in the OTC market case. They note that conventional short-term appeals have been left with far less potency, which makes retention strategies the only prerogative. Their research emphasizes the promotion-latent relationship by underlining the fact that retention programs should be tuned to the perceived attractiveness attributes by the customers rather than going by traditional promotions.

### *5.3. Integration of Channels in Pharmacy Retail*

The combination of channels in pharmacy retail is important as it creates consumer satisfaction and boosts business outcomes. According to [Suresh and D'Souza \(2019\)](#), there is a significant issue of SCM that has been poorly practiced in the pharmaceutical sector in Kenya, as it provides information on the factors affecting the distributor–supplier relationship in the pharmaceutical industry in Kenya. In this sense, according to [Tyrväinen and Karjaluo \(2019\)](#), effective omnichannel retailing requires an enhancement of the temporal consistency between the online and offline marketing platforms. Thus, according to [Lim et al. \(2024\)](#), it is crucial to adapt omnichannel strategies to the type of retail stores, as the perceptions of consumers are different. In their study, [Zhang et al. \(2018\)](#) confirm that integration of marketing channels has a significant and positive impact on consumer empowerment, trust, satisfaction, and patrons' future buying intentions. Based on [Jiang and Zhang \(2016\)](#), channel integration can be defined in relation to the following aspects: When looking at multichannel communication, [Azoev et al. \(2019\)](#) thus talk about the effects of digitalization on this kind of marketing in the Russian pharmaceutical industry, and the authors point to the fact that it is essential to maintain the integration of online and offline domains. In sum, these studies establish the significance of channel integration in the formation and delivery of positive brand experiences that would lead to better customer loyalty and organizational performance in the context of pharmaceutical retail. They also stress the strategic aspect by pointing out the fact that retailers have to take into consideration existing contexts and corresponding consumers' behaviors.

### *5.4. Customer Preferences and Behaviors across Different Marketing Channels*

The focus of this review is to identify customers' needs and attendance through various marketing communication mediums specific to the pharmaceutical and healthcare industries. The hypothesis adopted by [Schreiner et al. \(2019\)](#) focuses on personalization in advertising; in that study, it was established that advertising channels affect the acceptance of the recommendation. Another study by [Zhang et al. \(2014\)](#) also looked into consumer preferences in Macan pharmacies, which shows that residents and tourists have different needs. [Dimoula et al. \(2018\)](#) focused on comparing the consumers' profiles in Greece, France, and Bucharest, paying particular attention to the effects of education and income on pharma consumption. Analyzing the topic of the relevance of FMCG in healthcare, [Desai \(2023\)](#) pointed out that social networks are important in the area of marketing communication and that the individual approach must be used. [Srivastava and Wagh \(2017\)](#) also highlighted perceived factors as influential in the pricing of OTC pharmaceutical products and the tendency to re-buy the product: medicinal aspects, appearance, and the evaluated producer image. Altogether, these studies emphasize the role of various consumer groups' preferences and sensitivity to culture and demography, as well as the shift to digital communication channels in pharmaceutical marketing. According to the authors, marketers must target specific consumer groups, investigate the impact of communication mediums, and seize the opportunities in the evolving healthcare consumers' behavior so as to reposition their products for better consumer satisfaction.



### 5.5. Frameworks for Implementing and Optimizing Multichannel Marketing Strategies

This literature review examines frameworks for implementing and optimizing multichannel marketing strategies in the pharmaceutical and healthcare sectors. [Proença \(2021\)](#) highlights the increased importance of social media and eWOM in healthcare communication, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing the need for strategic digital marketing in the pharmaceutical industry. [Yadav et al. \(2024\)](#) address the challenges of multichannel marketing in pharma, stressing the importance of integrating traditional and digital marketing approaches while considering data analytics and regulatory compliance. [Palmatier et al. \(2019\)](#) introduce an omnichannel strategy model that recognizes consumers' simultaneous interaction with multiple channels, providing a contemporary perspective on marketing channel strategy. [Torkaman et al. \(2015\)](#) propose a framework for multiple-channel e-marketing, focusing on SEO, SMM, and EMM, and emphasize the importance of coordinated strategies in the dynamic e-business environment. Collectively, these studies underscore the evolving nature of multichannel marketing in healthcare and pharmaceuticals, highlighting the need for integrated approaches that combine traditional and digital channels. They emphasize the importance of adapting to changing consumer behaviors, leveraging data analytics, and maintaining regulatory compliance while implementing innovative marketing strategies to enhance customer engagement and satisfaction in the healthcare sector.

## 6. Discussion and Conclusions

The literature review demonstrates that multichannel marketing strategies have a positive impact across various industries, particularly in MSMEs and the pharmaceutical sector ([Rahayu et al. 2022](#); [Luvayo 2017](#)). The digital environment plays a crucial role, with social networks and native advertising contributing significantly to performance indicators ([Tamilmani et al. 2019](#)). However, the effectiveness of these strategies could be improved. The literature review highlights issues such as the need to match sales compensation contracts with marketing initiatives ([Banerjee and Bhardwaj 2019](#)) and the importance of considering customers' characteristics in determining engagement levels ([Marzouk et al. 2022](#)). Additionally, the study emphasizes the significance of local market qualities and community orientation, especially in pharmacy marketing ([Wick et al. 2023](#)). Multichannel marketing strategies show positive impacts across industries, particularly in MSMEs and pharmaceuticals. However, successful implementation requires balancing various factors, including digital integration, customer characteristics, and local market conditions.

Building on these insights, the study reveals that digital transformation is crucial for retail pharmacies in managing customer relations and improving interactions ([Irawan et al. 2020](#)). Small, tangible symbolic promotions are identified as key factors in customer attraction and retention, alongside proper pricing and superior service delivery ([Inas and Belgiawan 2023](#)). Social media emerges as a vital tool for targeting customers through advertisements and influencer associations. However, the research also indicates that traditional short-term appeals are becoming less effective, necessitating a shift toward more sophisticated retention strategies ([Lostakova and Horakova 2014](#)). Consequently, retail pharmacies must embrace digital transformation while focusing on long-term retention strategies. Future approaches should integrate digital platforms with traditional methods, emphasizing personalized interactions and value-added services.

In addition to digital transformation, the study emphasizes the importance of channel integration in pharmacy retail to enhance consumer satisfaction and business outcomes. [Suresh and D'Souza \(2019\)](#) highlight challenges in supply chain management within the pharmaceutical sector. [Tyrväinen and Karjaluo \(2019\)](#) stress the need for temporal consistency between online and offline marketing platforms for effective omnichannel retailing. [Lim et al. \(2024\)](#) emphasize the importance of adapting omnichannel strategies to specific retail store types. [Zhang et al. \(2018\)](#) confirm that channel integration positively impacts consumer empowerment, trust, satisfaction, and future buying intentions. [Jiang and Zhang \(2016\)](#) provide a framework for defining channel integration, while [Azoiev](#)

[et al. \(2019\)](#) discuss the effects of digitalization on multichannel marketing in the Russian pharmaceutical industry. Therefore, successful channel integration in pharmacy retail requires seamless coordination between online and offline platforms tailored to specific store types and consumer behaviors. Overcoming supply chain management challenges is crucial for effective implementation.

Furthermore, the study reveals diverse customer preferences and behaviors across marketing channels in the pharmaceutical and healthcare industries. [Schreiner et al. \(2019\)](#) focus on the impact of personalization in advertising, while [Zhang et al. \(2014\)](#) highlight differences in needs between residents and tourists in Macau pharmacies. [Dimoula et al. \(2018\)](#) compare consumer profiles across different European countries, emphasizing the effects of education and income on pharmaceutical consumption. [Desai \(2023\)](#) points out the importance of social networks in marketing communication and the need for individualized approaches. [Srivastava and Wagh \(2017\)](#) identify perceived factors influencing OTC product pricing and repurchase intentions, including medicinal aspects, appearance, and brand image. As a result, pharmaceutical marketers must adopt a nuanced, targeted approach considering various demographic, cultural, and personal factors. The shift towards digital channels necessitates reevaluating traditional strategies to meet evolving consumer preferences.

Finally, the literature review presents several frameworks for implementing and optimizing multichannel marketing strategies in the pharmaceutical and healthcare sectors. [Proença \(2021\)](#) highlights the growing importance of social media and eWOM in healthcare communication, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. [Yadav et al. \(2024\)](#) address the challenges of multichannel marketing in pharma, emphasizing the need to integrate traditional and digital approaches while considering data analytics and regulatory compliance. [Palmatier et al. \(2019\)](#) introduce an omnichannel strategy model that recognizes consumers' simultaneous interaction with multiple channels. [Torkaman et al. \(2015\)](#) put forward a multiple-channel e-marketing framework that mainly constitutes SEO, SMM, and EMM and emphasize the necessity of integrated strategies in the rapidly progressing e-business context. In conclusion, pharmaceutical multichannel marketing is best achieved where both physical and electronic media are incorporated into marketing communications. Future frameworks should address industry-specific challenges, including regulatory constraints and the need for ethical marketing practices.

The limitation lies in the fact that technology is developing rapidly, which may make some aspects of certain platforms outdated in a relatively short time. Although most studies were specifically related to retail pharmacy, some emerged from similar industries, potentially reducing transferability. Lack of primary research could have limited specific findings, and the highly regulated pharmaceutical business environment may also affect strategic execution. Further research avenues include the exploration of the sustained performance consequences of multichannel marketing on pharmacies and customer loyalty. However, there is a lack of focused investigations regarding AI and machine learning within the context of targeted advertising in the pharmacy sphere, and any such research may produce actionable outcomes. Such suggestions for future research align with the recognized limitations. They may enhance the comprehension of the multichannel marketing approach in the context of pharmaceutical retailing, which will result in the application of more efficient and targeted strategies in this fast-growing area.

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