

Hotel Customer Perspectives Through The Customer Journey On Omnichannel Marketing In 4.0 Era

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Abstract

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The emergence of digitalization and technology has led consumers to utilize various channels and service providers for their purchases. It is undeniable that the market is increasingly shifting towards online channels, creating a hybrid situation where some products exist in an omnichannel environment. This situation gives rise to unique phenomena in the industrial world, which subsequently question the presence and relevance of offline channels in promoting and selling products/services in a company. This research aims to deeply explore how hotel customers' perspectives are viewed from the customer journey in omnichannel marketing in the era of 4.0. This study utilizes primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected through direct interviews with informants. Semi-structured in-depth interviews are conducted with 4 hotel customers from the four largest market segments of the hotel. This study employs a non-probability sampling technique, as in this case, the population is not easily accessible or there is no complete list of the existing population. This method is based on the researcher's discretion in selecting a sample considered representative or relevant. The sample is taken from four respondents representing the four main market segments of the Four Star by Trans Hotel. The research results reveal the stages of the hotel customer journey in an omni-channel environment, from the initial stage to the end. Started from awareness stage, research stage, usage stage, and the final stage. It follows the customer journey mapping which is persona, timeline, touchpoint, channel and emotion. Moreover, this research reveal that All respondent havings the same general factor for choosing the channel by considering how it is easy for them to use.

Kata Kunci:

Customer
Journey;
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Marketing

Abstrak

Digitalisasi dan teknologi yang muncul menyebabkan konsumen menggunakan berbagai saluran dan penyedia layanan untuk pembelian mereka, tidak dapat dipungkiri bahwa kini pasar semakin beralih ke saluran online, ini menciptakan keadaan hibrid, dimana beberapa produk ada di lingkungan omni-channel. Keadaan ini menimbulkan fenomena unik dalam dunia industri yang kemudian mulai mempertanyakan keberadaan dan relevansi dari offline channel dalam mempromosikan dan menjual produk/pelayanan di suatu perusahaan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk Menggali secara mendalam bagaimana perspektif pelanggan hotel ditinjau dari customer journey dalam omnichannel marketing di era 4.0. Penelitian ini menggunakan data primer dan sekunder. Data primer dikumpulkan melalui wawancara langsung dengan informan. Wawancara mendalam semi terstruktur dilakukan dengan 4 pelanggan hotel dari 4 segmen market terbesar dari hotel. Penelitian ini menggunakan teknis non-probability sampling, karena dalam hal ini populasi tidak dapat diakses secara mudah atau tidak ada daftar lengkap dari populasi yang ada. Metode ini didasarkan pada pertimbangan peneliti untuk memilih sampel yang dianggap representatif atau relevan. Sample diambil dari empat orang respondent yang mewakili 4 segmentasi market utama dari hotel Four Star by Trans Hotel. Hasil penelitian didapatkan Tahapan customer journey pelanggan hotel di lingkungan omni – channel mulai dari tahapan awal hingga akhir. Dimulai dari tahap kesadaran, tahap penelitian, tahap penggunaan, dan tahap terakhir. Ini mengikuti pemetaan perjalanan pelanggan yang mencakup persona, timeline, titik kontak, saluran, dan emosi. Selain itu, penelitian ini mengungkap bahwa semua responden memiliki faktor umum yang sama dalam memilih saluran dengan mempertimbangkan seberapa mudahnya bagi mereka untuk digunakan.

INTRODUCTION

The development of technology and the digitalization process have significantly impacted the industrial world, particularly in marketing strategy and consumer behavior. The emergence of digitalization and technology has led consumers to use various channels and service providers for their purchases (Mali, 2021). It's undeniable that the market is increasingly shifting towards online channels, creating a hybrid environment where some products exist in a multi-channel setting (Josephson, 2021). In recent years, advanced technology has enabled people to access goods and services through various channels, including the Internet, mobile devices, social media, and physical stores (Sun et al., 2020). This has led to a unique phenomenon in the industry, questioning the relevance of offline channels in promoting and selling products/services within a company.

Research indicates that in the tourism industry, particularly in the B2B market, the trend is shifting towards online channels. In 2018, online sales represented 12% of all market transactions, projected to reach 17% by 2023, highlighting the growth of the online market in Indonesia (Blonde et al., as cited in (Josephson,2021)). Consequently, many tourism industries, especially in Bali's hospitality sector, have begun increasing their online marketing efforts, even reducing their offline channels' focus to concentrate on online marketing. This shift indirectly raises concerns about the significance of offline channels, particularly offline sales, in the coming years, especially in Bali, the largest tourism industry in Indonesia. This should provide a clear picture of tourism marketing, especially in the hospitality sector, essential for strategic management decisions in hotel companies (Alexios, 2015).

The subsequent question is whether total disruption will occur in online channel marketing or if both online and offline channels will continue to complement each other in the hospitality industry. Observing consumer shopping behavior has dramatically changed due to increased Internet usage, smartphones, and mobile devices (Trenz et al., as cited in (Sumrit & Sowijit, 2023)). Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated the growth of online sales through internet-based marketing channels, enabling customers to access information, place orders, make payments, and receive post-purchase support across multiple touchpoints (Son et al., as cited in (Sumrit & Sowijit, 2023)).

This shift has normalized multi-channel shopping by customers as a new norm in the business-to-consumer retail sector (Mishra et al., as cited in (Sumrit & Sowijit, 2023)). However, multiple channels alone do not necessarily guarantee customer satisfaction. Offering various channels, if coupled with optimal integration, provides the best experience for customers. Conventional wisdom dictates that customers expect the same shopping experience in e-commerce, regardless of the channel they purchase from (Le & Nguyen-Le, as cited in (Sumrit & Sowijit, 2023)). This has led to the emergence of omnichannel retailing, a strategy that combines all customer touchpoints into one channel (Hossain et al., 2020). Unlike traditional shopping, omnichannel allows customers to switch freely from one channel to another without obstacles (Do Vale et al., as cited in (Sumrit & Sowijit, 2023)).

As we have developed a fair understanding of consumers in traditional marketing environments, facing the evolution towards omnichannel, companies and researchers need to reevaluate our understanding of consumers. Consumers still value, if not sometimes prefer, the basics in traditional marketing; therefore, understanding how new technology-based marketing

creates real value is fundamental (Dzyabura & Jagabathula, n.d., 2005) Consumer needs can become increasingly diverse in the context of multi-channel variations due to the level of acceptance of different new marketing channels (Dinner et al., 2011) However, with various marketing channels available and increasing technological capabilities, handling heterogeneity in consumer needs can be better managed (Dinner et al., 2011).

Research by (Josephson, 2021) illustrates the shift trend from offline marketing to online marketing. Another study by (Lesscher, 2021) argues that both online and offline marketing run in parallel and contribute separately to their target markets. Reviewing several studies related to omnichannel marketing across various industries indicates that customer perceptions significantly determine the success of the applied omnichannel marketing. For instance, a study by (Banerjee & Bhardwaj, 2019) suggests differences in outcomes between online and offline channels regarding customer demand. According to (Lee et al., 2019) the optimal success of omnichannel marketing is achieved through periodic measurement and evaluation. This emphasizes not only having multiple channels to reach consumers but also how effectively and periodically the entire channels can be integrated and measured for their effectiveness. Another study by (Gao et al., 2021) reveals that channel variations alone will not offer the best customer experience without receiving feedback from customers. The research findings indicate that both integrating multiple channels and trust significantly influence both online and offline customer loyalty, driving repeat purchase intentions by customers.

Several studies have revealed the tendencies of online channel marketing within an industry, yet there hasn't been specific research targeting omnichannel marketing in the hospitality industry. From the research available, it's evident that companies tend to focus on online channel marketing trends, but there's a lack of specific studies regarding consumer trends and opinions related to omnichannel marketing, especially within the hospitality industry. As we know, it's common for customers to use different channels in making purchasing decisions, such as gathering information online but conducting transactions offline.

By deeply and comprehensively understanding hotel customers' perceptions of omnichannel marketing in the 4.0 era, it's hoped that recommendations can be provided concerning decision-making in appropriate strategic management for marketing hotels in Bali specifically. Moreover, this research aims to fill a gap in literature by offering an empirical model related to factors influencing hotel customers' choices in purchasing channels within omnichannel marketing.

METHOD

The topic of omnichannel is still relatively new and rarely examined from the customer perspective, thus requiring qualitative research to help enhance knowledge about this subject. This research employs a methodology centered on case studies, specifically selected to delve into instances involving the evolution of a luxury sustainable destination. Information was gathered through observations, documentation, and thorough interviews.

The research focuses on room rentals to allow for numerous touchpoints between customers and the hotel. Due to the broad phenomenon of omnichannel, interviews were limited only to room sales. Four Star by Trans Hotel is one of the hotels in Denpasar Bali that caters to various segments or markets encompassing government, corporate, and leisure travel, making it an

excellent example of omnichannel implementation. The company has both offline direct sales channels and digital sales channels, actively engaging in social media.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with hotel customers from the four largest market segments: government, corporate, travel agent, and leisure. This research used a non-probability sampling technique. The method employed was saturation, where interviews were conducted until reaching a saturation point in data collection.

Once data collection concludes, an interactive analysis method consisting of three key components—data reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions—is employed. Following this, thematic analysis techniques are utilized to identify and categorize themes and sub-themes pertaining to the possibilities, challenges, and opportunities associated with hotel management.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Customer Journey Mapping

In customer journey analysis, companies concentrate on how customers engage with various touchpoints, spanning from initial consideration and search to the purchase, consumption, and subsequent engagement or repeat buying. The aim is to outline this journey and grasp the range of touchpoints customers can select across different buying stages as stated in (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

Bitner, Ostrom, and Morgan in (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016) stated that the roots of customer journey analysis lie in both service and multichannel management. However, while multichannel researchers typically follow the traditional purchase funnel and examine the phases from search to purchase, the customer journey's focus is slightly different. It aims to comprehend the various options and pathways customers might take to accomplish their task.

Customer Journey Mapping (CJM) is a design tool used to create a visual presentation that depicts the relationship, interactions, and user journey while using and engaging with both products/services and the company itself (Rahmalia, 2020). The Customer Journey Map combines two instruments: storytelling and visualization to help companies understand and define the needs as well as the satisfaction of customers/users. The Customer Journey Map consists of five crucial components: persona, timeline, channel, touchpoint, and emotion as explained in (Rahmalia, 2020). Therefore, Customer Journey Map is also referred to as an effective tool to overcome the difficulty of creating the perfect Customer Experience.

Table 1.

Profil Responden Penelitian

Kode	Nama	Usia	Profesi
Subject 1	Dessy (DS)	32	Dokter
Subject 2	Devi (DV)	20	Mahasiswa
Subject 3	Mario (MR)	37	Karyawan
Subject 4	Arya (AY)	28	Karyawan

Based on the research from the interview process, several statements were obtained as follows:

- a. Purchasing rooms at Four Star by Trans Hotel is done through both online and offline channels.
- b. All respondents conducted research about Four Star by Trans Hotel through online channels.
- c. Some respondents feel more comfortable viewing information and making purchases online, while others opt for offline purchases to experience emotional closeness to the hotel.
- d. The decision for online or offline purchases is based on the room booking purpose, quantity, and the amount of discounts offered.
- e. During the awareness stage, most users started to become aware of Four Star by Trans Hotel through social media like Instagram, while some respondents' awareness began with recommendations. At this stage, users' emotions are neutral.
- f. During the research stage, users started to become interested and began seeking information about Four Star by Gtrans Hotel by either contacting the hotel directly or searching through online booking channels. At this stage, users experienced positive emotions that influenced their desire to make a booking.
- g. During the usage stage, users experienced good experiences at each touchpoint throughout the process.
- h. In the final stage of the customer journey, users remain loyal and even attempt to provide feedback through online or offline reviews.

TABLE 2.
CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAP FOUR STAR BY TRANS HOTEL.

Persona	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 respondents, including a 35-year-old doctor, a 37-year-old entrepreneur, and a 28-year-old, along with a group of students around 20 years old. • The respondents became customers of Four Star by Trans Hotel in 2023, meaning it's been less than a year, so the memories or experiences they had as customers are still vivid. • Respondents are aware that Four Star by Trans Hotel has both online and offline channels for obtaining information and making reservations. • The respondents' reasons for booking a room at Four Star by Trans Hotel include business trips, leisure, and meetings. • Customers' choice of channel is influenced by the number of rooms booked and the abundance of promotions and discounts offered. 		
	Stage	Activity	
	Awareness	Use	Feedback
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Looking at advertisement - Receiving Recommendation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Receiving response from hotel - Confirming the reservation and procesing transaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feeling assisted in shopping online/offline - Recommending to others
Touchpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online: Instagram, Google - Offline: Hotel, Wedding Fair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hotel Gate - Hotel Lobby - Hotel room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Google Review - OTA - Paper form - Email
Channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online: Traveloka, Agoda, tiket.com - Offline: Sales person, direct call to hotel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online travel agent - Website - Sales Person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Google Review - OTA - Paper form - Email
Emotion			

The Factors That Determine Customers' Choice Of Purchasing Channels In Omnichannel Marketing

Apart from providing responses and listing the obstacles faced during the interview process, the interviewees were also asked to provide information regarding the factors that led them, as hotel customers, to choose specific channels (methods). This was an initiative to gather ideas, thoughts, and expectations from users aimed at improving and enhancing user experience both online and offline. The recommendations for improvement were derived from the interviewees' opinions, as seen in Table 3, considering the factors that were most frequently taken into account. These ideas are then recommended by the researcher for consideration by readers and the hotel. Explanations regarding the factors determining hotel customers' choices in channel selection within omnichannel marketing have been summarized in the following table.

Table 3.
Customer's choice on channel booking

Code	Channel	Reason
DS	Offline Sales	Easy Booking : Group booking
DV	Traveloka	Easy Booking : user friendly
MR	Offline Sales	Easy booking: fast response
AY	Booking.com	Easy Booking : efficient and cashless

Based on Table. 3, respondent answering related to their own purpose of stay which is different from one to another. Several statement can be obtained related to the table, such as:

- a. All respondents conducted different purpose of stay and had different background
- b. Some respondents feel more comfortable viewing information and making purchases online through OTA (onlinet travel agent), while others option for offline by communicationg directly with offline sales in charge.
- c. All respondent havings the same general factor for choosing the channel by considering how it is easy for them to use.
- d. Respondent whose purpose of stay is for group booking with meeting will find it easier to contact offline sales directly to discuss about arrangement of the group, so the offline channel is suitable for that type of customer.
- e. Respondent whose purpose of stay is for holiday and typically having short period of stay find online travel agent easier to use because they can cut the unnecessary communication, straightly can book the hotel and process the payment through online.

CONCLUSIONS

The review primarily aims to summarize the peer-reviewed literature that utilizes the concept of the customer journey. The study findings unveil the progression of the hotel customer experience across multiple channels, encompassing stages from the beginning to the culmination. Commencing with awareness, research, usage, and concluding stages, this journey aligns with the mapping of customer experiences, including persona, timeline, touchpoint, channel, and emotion. Furthermore, the research highlights a consistent factor among all respondents in channel selection, emphasizing the ease of use. Its key role is to establish a

foundation for upcoming research and practical applications. Specifically, it focuses on exploring the customer journey perspective, delving into terminology related to customer journeys, and uncovering potential opportunities in customer journey methodologies. Moreover, in industry 4.0 the concept of digitalisation will dramatically increase and somehow create chaos on the omnichannel world which believes offline and online channels can work together integrally. The review's scope was restricted to searching for peer-reviewed journal articles and conference papers focusing on customer journeys, posing a limitation. However, despite this constraint, the review offers valuable insights into potential areas for future research and practical application. Specifically, it highlights the necessity for forthcoming studies addressing methods for data collection and analysis in customer journey mapping, the proposition of customer journey as an approach, and the requirement to adopt a terminology for customer journeys that facilitates both thorough analysis and innovative design practices. The intention is for this review to serve as a foundational reference for future investigations into customer journeys, encouraging their advancement to aid service management and design.

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