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From the Store to Omnichannel Retail:
Looking Back Over Three Decades of Retail Research

Mikko Hänninen[1], Stephen K. Kwan[2] and Lasse Mitronen[3]

ABSTRACT

The retail sector has gone through major changes over the past three decades. These changes have been made possible by advances in information and communications technology that have enabled new business models, communication tools, technologies, and supply-chain practices to emerge and shape the behavior of actors across the retail value chain. For example, from its initial incarnation as only a separate, albeit small, channel in the retail and marketing mix, e-commerce is now a critical part of a firm's multi- and omnichannel strategy. In this paper, we synthesize current knowledge drawn from academic retail literature and discuss potential directions for future research. This study contributes to research by developing five research propositions, based on our literature review, to guide researchers to better grasp the technological and digital developments across the retail sector over the next decade or so.

Keywords: digitalization, marketing, retail, research, review

INTRODUCTION

The retail sector is undergoing a large digital transformation (Ying et al. 2020). This transformation has over the past three decades radically changed how retailers, customers, and suppliers interact (e.g., Hallikainen et al. 2019; Straker et al. 2015) and transact (e.g., Lee et al. 2019; Farah and Ramadan, 2017). During this era, the role of the physical store has in many contexts begun to change from a primary shopping destination to a showroom, as online retail has increasingly emerged as a tool to build more meaningful customer experiences (e.g., Sit et al. 2018; Daunt and Harris, 2017). At the same time, social media, combined with mobile technology, has revolutionized how retailers reach and understand their customers (e.g.,

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Shanahan et al. 2019; Shareef et al. 2018). Thus, through digitalization, retailers now have much more data at their disposal about the needs, wants, and expectations of their customers, in addition to an influx of new technology, such as robots, drones, and Artificial Intelligence (AI), to automate their supply-chain activities (e.g., Bradlow et al. 2017). These developments have led to the emergence of new retail powerhouses (e.g., Amazon, Alibaba), and the demise of others (e.g., Radio Shack, Toys R'Us) in an era commonly known as the "retail apocalypse" (Helm et al., 2020).

As a result of these changes, retail research has also seen a large conceptual, and empirical transition over the past three decades (e.g., Reinartz et al. 2019). Evident in this transition is the struggle that scholars continue to have in making full sense of what the digital transformation of retail means for customer behavior (e.g., Blom et al. 2017; Pappas, 2016), customer experience (e.g., Paul et al. 2020; Bolton et al. 2018), and supply-chain management (e.g., Ivanov et al. 2019; Kache and Seuring, 2017), to name a few contemporary retail issues. For example, compared to the theorizing and rich empirical work that took place in the early 1990s and early 2000s, today's retail research is much more narrowly sighted, focusing on particular technologies and their impact on the sector, with less empirical and theoretical depth than before (e.g., Roggeveen and Sethuranman, 2019). All of these issues make it difficult to grasp to what extent research is aligned with the large technological and societal changes that are shaping the global retail sector (e.g., Reinartz et al. 2019).

In this paper, we attempt to understand how retail research has evolved over the past three decades. More specifically, we seek to understand how retail research has grasped the changes brought on by digitalization and advances in information and communication technology and adjusted to a more customer and service-driven economy (e.g., Lusch et al. 2007). This

understanding is important as retail continues to be a highly important part of the global economy, and a major employer, for example, for millennials (European Commission, 2020). Based on an analysis of 60 high-impact academic articles on retail published over the past three decades, we show that academic retail research has shifted, from a primary focus in the early 1990s on understanding customer behavior and customer relationships in a physical store to increasing theorizing about digitalization across the retail value chain in the late 2010s. This shift in focus has resulted in more conceptual research about what these changes entail in the retail sector, compared to the rich theoretical and empirical work that characterized retail research still in the early 2000s, an era during which many of the canonical measurement scales and research (still popular in retail and marketing research today) emerged. This study contributes to retail research by providing an overview of the evolution of retail research over the past three decades, and by developing five research propositions to guide researchers to better grasp the technological and digital developments across the retail sector and expand the theoretical and empirical scope of academic retail research. The five research propositions relate to topics, such as the (i) store, (ii) technology (iii) customers (iv) supply-chain management, and the (v) legal and political environment, taking into account both research areas and themes identified in our literature review, in addition to the ongoing issues affecting the global retail sector, for example, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our study has the potential to shape retail research and fuel more rigorous studies about the realities of retailing in the digital age.

Next, we will describe, in more detail, the conceptual background of our study, before moving on to describing the methodology of our literature review and presenting our findings.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

A large enabler of change across the retail sector has been the digital transformation of retailing as information technology has become increasingly pervasive in the sector (Reinartz et al. 2019). Up until the mid-1990s, retail research still focused primarily on the physical store, and all the related activities from store design to optimizing purchasing and distribution (e.g., Mou et al. 2018). Here, the essential theories where still based on many canonical marketing and strategic management theories and concepts, for example, the 4P (McCarthy, 1964) and Ansoff matrix (Ansoff, 1957), as tools for retailers to understand how to find and maintain competitive advantage and differentiate themselves from their competitors.

The mid-1990s, however, marked the beginning of e-commerce, as information and communication technology, and the Internet, were now applied in customer-facing businesses from a prior focus on applying these technologies in B2B transactions, and, for example, supply-chain management (e.g., Chen & Leteney, 2000; Reynolds, 2000). This had a fundamental impact on the retail sector as e-commerce accelerated the popularity of home deliveries, reducing customers need to visit a physical store as they could now make most of their daily purchases from their computer, and later, any mobile device. The late-1990s and early-2000s thus marked a period where retailers were taking their existing business models online, with varying degrees of success (e.g., Souitaris and Balabanis, 2007). To describe these advances, Dutta et al. (1998) introduced the "*marketspace*" term to refer to the real-time interactivity and global connectivity enabled by the Internet. The excitement over the Internet, however, was much tempered after the dot-com crash in the early 2000s that forced many retailers to shift focus from innovation and business development to restoring immediate profitability (e.g., Weitz, 2005).

Advances in service thinking applied to retail in the late 2000s restored focus to e-commerce, and particularly directed efforts towards maximizing customer value (e.g., Chen & Tan, 2004; Levenburg, 2005). E-commerce and the Internet now provided retailers many tools for value co-creation, a central tenet expounded by adopters of the Service-Dominant Logic (Lusch et al. 2007). The customer experience, for example, started to receive increasing interest in both practitioner and academic literature (e.g., Puccinelli et al. 2009), and here mobile apps and other digital touchpoints were critical in order for retailers to build long-term customer relationships (Grewal et al. 2009). For example, research showed that technology at that time enabled retailers to help customers make better decisions, and receive more targeted and beneficial offers, in addition to an overall faster service (e.g., Inman and Nikolova, 2017). Subsequently, these advances led to the further development and dispersion of the concepts multi-channel and omni-channel marketing, describing the joint role that the online and offline retail channels had in the customer experience (e.g., Verhoef et al. 2015). Today, both multi- and omnichannel retail are ubiquitous strategies employed by retailers worldwide.

Today, online retail has evolved from being a novelty to an essential service. This was further evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, when online retail channels were a necessity to deliver goods and services to vulnerable demographics. McKinsey, for example, estimates that only during Spring 2020 retail witnessed an up-to 10-year digital leap in one go (McKinsey, 2020). The role of e-commerce and mobile technology are thus ever pervasive in society, and virtually all retailers have now developed some sort of digital offering (Reinartz et al. 2019). At the same time, we are seeing large trends continue to shape the retail sector, such as the multi-faceted integration of the service system, from the supply-chain to the customer experience (Hänninen et al. 2019), as well as the increasing use of customer data and customer insight to fuel retail businesses (Bradlow et al. 2017). The digital transformation of retail has,

in effect, had a major impact on the retail sector, and on the prevailing theories, and empirical approaches used to examine retailing (Reinartz et al. 2019). At the same time, we are also seeing the arrival of new technologies such as AI and Distributed Ledger Technology and Blockchain (DLTB) already at our doorsteps with potential to have a large impact on retailing within the next decade (e.g., Fildes et al. 2019).

Next, we will describe the methodology of our literature review, including the search and review protocols that were employed to find and analyze the 60 high-impact articles analyzed in this study.

METHODOLOGY

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Our study is based on a systematic analysis of retail research published between 1990 and 2019. We began our analysis by conducting a keyword search of retail research from the SCOPUS database, the largest global database of peer reviewed academic literature. We searched all articles including the keyword '*retail*' in the title, abstract and keyword of the published articles included in the database in March 2020. Figure 1 represents the evolution of the volume of retail research, by year, from 1990 to today across the broad business, management and accounting discipline, based on the number of publications per year[4].

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[4] Note that the large growth in the number of publications is largely due to the growing indexing of journals and recent surge in academic publishing.

To examine how various subfields in retailing have gained or lost prominence over time we followed the approach of Lamberton & Stephen (2016), structuring the review according to 6 eras, between 1990 and 2019. Like Lamberton & Stephen (2016) we also chose to categorize the research based on research citations, as they are generally a good, broad indicator of research impact and quality. Accordingly, in each era, we have systematically analyzed the 10 most cited research papers, based on their number of citations as of March 2020. While not conclusive and exhaustive, using citations as an indicator for research quality provides a good general basis for comparing research published across different eras. See Aksnes et al. (2019) for a recent review of the pros and cons of using citations as an indicator of research impact and quality in the social sciences.

The final set of 60 articles were examined through a comprehensive classification framework focusing on broad thematic, theoretical and methodological dimensions. This follows the recommendation of, for example, Abbott & McKinney (2013) to examine communication systematically. The thematic dimension was denoted by the retail context and theoretical focus. The theoretical dimension was denoted by the theoretical contribution. In addition, the methodological dimension was denoted by research design, which enabled us to understand the research designs and empirical data used in retail research in each analyzed article.

Next, we will go over our findings and describe the evolution of retail research from 1990 to 2019.

FINDINGS

Now, we explore the evolution of academic retail research from 1990 to today. This analysis is based on a systematic analysis of the 60 most cited papers on retail during the past 30 years.

Our approach is intendedly general in order to provide a general direction and way of summarizing retail research over different eras in the hopes of stimulating new thinking and research.

In the analysis that follows, we present the 10 most cited articles within each 5-year era, in addition to a discussion over the key thematic, theoretical and methodological features identified in the studies, and the overall developments in the retail sector within that specific time period. In the accompanying tables we summarize all the articles analyzed from each era[5].

1990 – 1994

In the early 1990s information technology was being applied by large retail chains to manage their supply-chain. During this era, retailers like Walmart and Tesco invested heavily in information technology to drive operational efficiency and began to plan for their international expansion. Table 1 shows the 10 most cited retail studies from 1990 to 1994.

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The studies published in this era focused primarily on topics such as understanding customer satisfaction and the store environment and their influence on shopper behavior. The research focused on a number of retail settings from the physical store (e.g., Baker et al. 1994) to

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[5] Note that the tables are slightly abridged in order to help comparatibility within and between each era. For example, a 'multichannel' research context refers to a study focusing on any integration of the physical store and online retail, regardless of whether the authors have actually applied the terms 'multi-' or 'omnichannel' in the paper.

franchising (e.g., Carney et al. 1991), supply-chain (e.g., Chandra & Fischer, 1994) and international retail (e.g., Dawson, 1994) contexts. The research also drew on a number of rigorous research methods and rich sets of data including experiments, quantitative analysis, and interviews. The most cited studies during this era were published in mainstream retail, marketing, operations management, geography, strategic management, and general business journals.

The main conclusion from the studies published during this era was that retail was undergoing a period of change as supply-chain integration was becoming more important, and retailers started to understand the importance of having stronger relationships with their customers in order to increase customer loyalty (e.g.,, Fuller et al. 1993; Zahorik and Rust, 1993; Carney and Gedjlovic, 1991). During this era, retailers also started paying more attention to the store image. For example, Baker et al. (1994) identified the store environment, merchandise quality and service quality as antecedents of store image, while Darden and Babin (1994) discussed how retailers could create an affective retail environment. On the other hand, Goss (1993) argued that retail stores were increasingly dissociated from the act of shopping by, for example, bringing in forms of entertainment to the store environment. Finally, as an example of research on supply-chain management, Chandra and Fisher (1994) identified that more effective supply-chain coordination can significantly reduce operating costs, from 3% up to 20%.

1995 – 1999

During the late 1990s the Internet had become a more business viable, accessible and dependable communication technology platform for all businesses. The first online retail websites on the Internet were launched in this era, expanding the academic and theoretical

interest of researchers towards new electronic business models in retail. As this technology continued to become pervasive across the retail sector, there was also emerging interest towards services and measuring service quality across the customer journey. During this era, companies like eBay, a B2C facilitator, revolutionized the earnings and business model of the retail sector, and the first loyalty cards, such as the Tesco Clubcard, were launched to enable traditional retailers to better understand their customers. The Internet technology that engendered much innovation with hugely anticipated potential also created irrational exuberance in the business sector leading to the so-called dotcom bubble in which the valuations of Internet-based businesses skyrocketed. In addition to the Internet, this era also saw retailers such as Walmart reap competitive advantage through the successful application of information technology in supply chain activities, enabling a shift from a wholesale-retailer model, in which wholesale and retail activities were handled independently, to a chain organizations model, in which centrally managed and controlled chain management was responsible for purchases and co-operation with suppliers. For example, the ECR (efficient consumer response) had gained popularity since the mid-1990s as a practice for retailers and suppliers to jointly coordinate their supply-chain activities and be more responsive to consumer demand. Table 2 shows the 10 most cited retail studies from between 1995 and 1999.

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The studies published in this era focused primarily on building measurement scales to capture service quality, while testing existing marketing concepts and theory in the emerging online retail context. The research focused on both physical stores (e.g., Powell & Dent-Micallef,

1997) and online retailing (e.g., Alba et al. 1997). The research published during this era drew primarily on survey data, with a smaller subset of studies utilizing interviews, experiments, and retailer data. The most cited studies during this era were published in mainstream retail, marketing, and strategic management journals.

The main conclusion from the published studies during this era was the increasing uncertainty resulting from the prevalence of technology across the retail value-chain (e.g., Alba et al. 1997; Powell and Dent-Micallef, 1997). Taking a retail management perspective, Powell and Dent-Micallef (1997), for example, argued that information technology, in itself, had not produced sustainable performance advantages in the retail sector. On the other hand, from a customer perspective, Alba et al. (1997) argued that predictions of the effects of online retail on the sector were risky, despite admitting the potential it had to shape the sector in the long-term. This era also saw interest towards developing theory on service quality (e.g., Svveeney, 1999; Dadholkar and Thorpe, 1996). Along this line of research, Sirohi and McLaughlin (1998) asserted that the service quality could be a cue for the merchandise quality of a retailer, and thus played a role in enhancing or diminishing customer loyalty. This era furthermore saw researchers focus their attention towards retailer's service offerings. For example, Padmanabhan and Png (1997) studied returns policies, concluding that returns policies intensified retail competition and reduced retailer margins.

2000-2004

During the early 2000s the dotcom crash reduced the excitement over online retail, and restored focus once again towards better understanding customers and their motivations to shop with their preferred retailers. Many established retailers also began experimenting with online retail

(albeit, cautiously), either choosing to build their own websites in parallel to their traditional business model (e.g., Walmart, Target), or outsourcing the online retail business completely to a third-party (e.g., Toys R'Us, Barnes & Noble). This era also marked the transformation of Amazon from an online book retailer to a marketplace hosting many product categories i.e. a platform business model (e.g., Hänninen et al. 2019). Here, many retail chains, like H&M and Zara, also continued their rapid international expansion, while some retailers, like Walmart, Tesco and Carrefour, struggled with their global expansion as many local retail concepts and competition continued to prevail. Table 3 shows the 10 most cited retail studies from between 2000 and 2004.

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The studies published in this era focused primarily on understanding the nature of customer behavior in the emerging age of the Internet. The research started to see initial incarnations of the concept 'multichannel retailing', where retailers used a combination of the physical store and online retail channels (Mathwick et al. 2001; Chiang et al. 2003), in addition to some studies focusing exclusively either on the physical store (e.g., Sweeney & Soutar, 2001) or online retail (e.g., Childers et al. 2001). The research published during this era drew again primarily on survey data, with a further subset of studies using experiments, quantitative analysis and mathematical modelling. The most cited studies during this era were published in mainstream retail, marketing, and general management journals.

The main conclusion from the studies published during this era was the growing need to understand the effects of online retail on customer behavior and, for example, why some shoppers preferred online retail to physical stores (e.g., Arnold and Reynolds, 2003; Childers et al. 2001). Scholars also noted that customer behavior was changing, and as a result, there was a continued pressure to develop and verify measurement scales to understand how various factors in the customer journey affected customers' perceived value (e.g., Sweeney and Soutar, 2001). The study by Sirdeshmukh et al. (2002), for example, concluded that it was important to understand the role that trust, value and loyalty play in relational exchanges in the 21st century. A subset of studies focused on increasing understanding of the online retail channel in itself (e.g., Mathwick et al. 2001). Brynjolfsson and Smith (2000) found that prices on the Internet were significantly lower in conventional outlets due to some of the unique aspects of online retail such as the added shipping costs, while Häubl, and Trifts (2000) found that online retail may actually lead to customers making better and more informed purchase decisions with less effort than before.

2005-2009

During the late-2000s the increased consumer adoption of mobile technology resulted in the exponential growth of interest towards online retailing and e-commerce. The concept of multi-channel marketing now became widely used in academic and practitioner literature to describe the strategic role of online retailing in the marketing mix. Here, retailers also increasingly realized the need to revamp existing supply-chain technologies and capabilities to enable them to support online retailing more efficiently, along with a focus on customer experience and customer experience management as customers were now increasingly using digital channels to interact with their preferred retailers. During this era, online retail started to again grow in

popularity and many traditional retailers, such as video rental stores, succumbed as profitability fell in light of their new online competition. The financial crisis of 2008 also led many large retail chains to amass a huge amount of debt (e.g., Sears, Toys R'Us), with disastrous consequences on their success and innovation. Also, many start-ups, such as companies like Groupon offering flash or daily deals, entered the sector and amassed interest from practitioners and academics towards their unique business model and earnings potential. Table 4 shows the 10 most cited retail studies from between 2005 and 2009.

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The studies published in this era focused primarily on building new understanding and knowledge about the customer and supply-side demands of multi-channel retailing. Research also focused on the supply-chain (e.g., Savaskan and Van Wassenhove, 2006), in addition to multi-channel (e.g., Verhoef et al. 2009), physical store (Cachon and Lariviere, 2005) and online retail (e.g., Ahn et al. 2007) contexts. The research published during this era incorporated more mathematical modelling as well as conceptual analysis, in addition to surveys and quantitative analysis, showing the shift from measuring impacts to modelling potential paths forward. The most cited studies during this era were published in mainstream retail, management science, IT, and general management journals.

The main conclusion from the studies published during this era was the growing urgency to understand how retailers can best combine and integrate their offline and online offerings (Gacon and Lariviere, 2005). From a supply-chain management perspective the growing

abundance of multi-channel retailing necessitated a focus on supply-chain coordination and integration facilitated with information technology (Sayaskan and Van Wassenhove, 2006; Rai et al. 2006). Customer experience also received increasing interest during this era, as retailers were more concerned with creating engaging customer experience regardless if customers use online or offline channels to shop (e.g., Verhoef et al. 2009; Grewal et al. 2009; Puccinelli et al. 2009). Grewal et al. (2009) identified several ways, such as price, promotion, merchandise, supply chain and location, to deliver the retail customer experience. This era also saw interest in further understanding customer shopping values and motivations. For example, Jones et al. (2006) found that both hedonic and utilitarian shopping values influence key retail outcomes. In addition, scholars were interested at understanding how new communications tools and formats that are characteristics of online retail, such as word-of-mouth, affected retail sales (e.g., Duan et al. 2008).

2010 – 2014

During the early 2010s social media and mobile technology continued to bring new avenues for brands and retailers to reach and interact with their customers. This meant ratings and reviews started to increasingly drive purchase and consumption decisions. At the same time concerns for sustainability started to arise at both the customer and supply-chain level. Retailers started to become increasingly interested in mapping the customer journey and understand both their pre- and post-purchase interactions with customers. During this era, retailers, for example, started to use social media to actively communicate with their customers and use it to share special deals and discounts with customers. This meant that expectations towards retailers started to grow, and many physical stores started to see declining footfall, as they were continuing to rely on traditional means to drive traffic to the store (e.g., mass marketing), rather

than using digital channels, such as social media, to connect directly with their customers, and at an individual basis. As consumer-to-consumer (C2C) commerce grew in popularity, consumers were also now able to trade used products, such as accessories, clothing and electronics with other consumers through dedicated retailers (e.g., Swap.com). Table 5 shows the 10 most cited retail studies from between 2010 and 2014.

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The studies published in this era focused on understanding how new communication channels, such as social media, and new interaction points, such as mobile technology, were changing the retail customer experience. Research focused primarily on multi-channel retailing, in addition to supply-chain (e.g., Liu et al. 2012), physical store (e.g., Gleim et al. 2013), multi-channel (e.g., Patricio et al. 2011), and social media (e.g., Smith et al. 2012) contexts. The research published during this era was increasingly conceptual, drawing on conceptual analysis and meta-analysis, in addition to case studies, qualitative and quantitative analysis, surveys, and mathematical modelling. The most cited studies during this era were published in mainstream marketing, services, operations management, retail, and IT journals.

The main conclusion from the studies published during this era was that the retail business model was undergoing change due to changing customer priorities, and the advent of new technologies that revolutionized how retailers and brands communicated with their customers (e.g., Sorescu et al. 2011; Zhang et al. 2010). Scholars tried to understand how social media is affecting communications with customers (e.g., Smith et al. 2012), and how online reviews influenced purchase behavior and retailer sales (Floyd et al. 2014). The service system

approach also emerged in literature as a way to account for the increasingly complex service systems now in use across the retail value chain (Patricio et al. 2011). Sustainability also started to receive increasing interest during this era (e.g., Gleim et al. 2013; Liu et al, 2012; Walkart et al. 2012). In particular, scholars were interested in understanding the implications of more environmentally conscious customers (Liu et al. 2012). The growing reliance on home deliveries also encouraged research looking at pricing and lead times across the retail value chain (Hua et al. 2010).

2015-2019

During the late 2010s online retail had established itself as a popular retail channel. As an evolution of multi-channel retailing, the concept of omnichannel retailing now became widely used in academic and practitioner literature to describe the integration of the online and offline channels in the marketing mix, as retailers aimed to offer a seamless customer experience regardless of whether the eventual purchase was made online or offline. Retailers began to be increasingly interested at understanding customer behavior across different channels, and for example, how mobile shoppers compared with other customers. Critical to this revolution in marketing practices was that marketing communications were now targeted to the individual customer, rather than a segment of customers, e.g., through the more systematic analysis of customer data. During this era, Amazon became a driving force of online retail, and accounted for almost half of all e-commerce sales in the US by 2019. At the same time, many traditional retailers, such as Walmart, piloted new business and potential by launching their own marketplaces to enable third-party suppliers to sell on their websites. This era also marked the bankruptcy and insolvency of many iconic retailers, such as Radio Shack, who struggled to remain competitive and endure the digital transformation. At the same time many retailers

continued to struggle to find profitable ways to manage their supply-chain, and particularly the last mile in delivery. Table 6 shows the 10 most cited retail studies from between 2015 and 2019.

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The studies published in this era focused primarily on grasping the implications of digitalization and omnichannel retailing. Research focused mostly on multi-channel retailing (e.g., Verhoef et al. 2015), with some research on mobile shopping (e.g., Wang et al. 2015). The research drew again largely on conceptual analysis, and literature review, in addition to a subset of studies using surveys, quantitative analysis and mathematical modelling. The most cited studies during this era were published in mainstream retail and operations management journals.

The main conclusion from the studies published during this era was the emergence of the term omnichannel, used in retail studies to describe the seamless integration of all the retailers customer touchpoints, and the resulting need to learn how to manage associated behavior, such as showrooming (e.g., Rapp et al. 2015; Verhoef et al. 2015). The research published during this era did not have many straight answers, but rather, studies attempted to come to grips with the ongoing digital transformation and its implications for the sector. Hagberg et al. (2016) concluded that digitalization transforms retail exchanges, retail offerings, retail settings, and retail participants, while Beck and Rygl (2015) categorized multi-, cross and omni-channel

retail formats. Similarly, Hübner et al. (2016) conceptualized a framework about last-mile order fulfillment. In addition to the conceptual research, some interesting empirical research was also carried out during this era. Wang et al. (2015) studied the motivations for using mobile shopping, Cao and Li (2015) studied the sales benefits of cross-channel integration, and Melis et al. (2015) investigated the role of online experience in the choice of online retailer.

Synthesis

Overall, the research shows a significant progression from the early 1990s to the late 2010s from the initial theorizing on customer loyalty and satisfaction in retail, towards research on the applications of digital technology across the retail value chain. During this period, retail channels have also seen an evolution from the physical store to platform and O2O (online-to-offline) business models. This evolution has been aided by digitalization, and the increasing application of information technology in supporting customer-facing activities, a large shift from its initial application primarily in supply-chain management and related activities.

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Figure 2 summarizes the identified transformations in the literature into a comprehensive framework to account for both the change in retail channels and retail research. From a retail channel perspective, the past three decades have seen a major change in retail channels from the physical store, to O2O business models. In the figure we provide a few examples of retailers adopting these different business models in each era. This change in retail channels has largely been driven by digitalization and advances in information and communication technology that have enabled retailers to embrace a larger number of new retail channels, such as mobile

commerce. On the other hand, from a literature and theoretical contribution perspective, it's evident that retail research has during the past three decades moved from understanding topics such as customer motivations or satisfaction in-store, to account for the impact that digital retail channels have on customer behavior, and retailer profitability in an omnichannel world, and in a more broad sense. The change in research focus from customers to looking at these topics from a retail value chain perspective is possible as, for example, online retailers now accumulate large amounts of data that has enabled more rigorous, and in-depth studies, compared to the previous decades when retail research largely relied on e.g. surveys and student samples, without access to real-world, real-time transaction data for research purposes. Digitalization in its many forms and applications has thus had a major impact on both retail practice and research.

Next, we will provide a discussion on the implications of our research, including five research propositions that take into account the upcoming and ongoing changes across the retail value-chain, including both technological and societal issues.

DISCUSSION

Our study shows that retail research has gone through a major change in the theoretical, methodological and contextual focus of the research over the past three decades to account for the effects that digital transformation and advances in information and communication technology have had across the sector. However, while retail research has evolved significantly over the past three decades, there is still much potential to further grasp the impact of, for example, ongoing and upcoming technological and societal changes on different parts of the retail value chain in order to make more substantial theoretical and empirical contributions to

retail literature. Next, we will introduce five research propositions based on the findings of this study, to help shape and guide the direction of future retail research over the upcoming years.

First of all, our study shows that retail research has shifted its focus during the past three decades from research on physical stores to studying primarily multi-channel retail related topics. While this shift in research focus is natural and welcome due to the increased adoption of multi- and omnichannel business models by retailers lately, it is at the same time, however, not representative of the fact that online retail sales continue to account only for a portion of worldwide retail sales, and the physical store space continues to remain the primary shopping outlet for many. The physical store has, thus, not gone anywhere, and continues to be relevant for customers and retailers alike. However, the entire logic of the store may need to change in the future, and we are already seeing many unique and radical reincarnations of the store to meet the demands of the digital economy (e.g., Alibaba's Hema grocery chain). More research is, therefore, needed to further understand the future role of physical store space, and how physical stores will adjust to the continued growth of digital retail channels, for example, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic that has led to many retail bankruptcies worldwide together with a counter increase in online retail. This is important as many retailers continue to invest in physical store space, including bringing in new tools and technologies (e.g., touch screens, virtual fitting rooms) to engage with their customers, and at a much faster pace than before. In addition, more research is needed to understand the impact that urbanization and demographic changes will have on the future role and identity of suburban retail parks and malls. This research would be a welcome addition to that which has already focused on the impact of digitalization on physical store space to rather consider the broader societal role that physical store spaces continue to play globally in the decades to come (e.g., Hagberg et al. 2017).

Thus, we propose:

Proposition 1: *The future role of the store and physical store space needs to reimagined and defined.*

Second, our study shows that while retail has witnessed a major technological change over the past three decades, the actual definition of technology continues to be relatively vague and slim in the analyzed studies. Here, while there have been some recent studies focusing on topics such as retail data analytics and management (e.g., Bradlow et al. 2017), the vast majority of research has not yet moved beyond the relatively thin characterization of mobile and multichannel technologies. Research on these topics is, however, imperative as in the coming years the next wave of technologies is expected to continue to change how customers interact and transact with their preferred retailers, thus likely bringing radical change to the sector (e.g., Hallikainen et al. 2019). This puts high pressure on researchers to understand and stay on top of digital developments in retailing (Hänninen, 2020). For example, DLTB technology will likely lead to more secure and trackable transactions, while also enabling the traceability of products at unprecedented levels which will provide both new earnings- and business models, as well as the opportunity for new entrants to enter the sector (Attaran and Gunasekaran, 2019). The next wave of technological changes will, therefore, likely result in major changes in the structure of the global retail sector, and the redistribution of competitive advantage. More research is thus needed to better understand the impacts of both new and upcoming technologies across the retail value chain.

Thus, we propose:

Proposition 2: *A more broad understanding of technological impacts (e.g., AI, DLTB) on the retail value chain is needed in retail research.*

Third, our study shows that retail research has moved from a focus on understanding customer behavior, such as customer satisfaction and shopping motivations, to measuring direct impacts of specific retail channels and technologies, such as mobile commerce, and across the retail value chain. Here, besides some research on topics, such as customer experience (e.g., Melis et al. 2015), mobile shopping behavior (e.g., Wang et al. 2015) and online shopping motivations (e.g., Koo & Ju, 2010) in recent years, the analyzed studies are still missing clear profiles and generalizations of the modern customer, and their priorities and values going forward into the 2020s. This understanding is especially important as the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a rapid increase in online purchases, with some estimates indicating that online purchases have taken a major leap, up-to several years, in a relatively short period of time. There is, therefore, a timely and opportune need to understand what this increased adoption of digital retail channels means for customer behavior, and how canonical concepts such as customer loyalty and customer satisfaction are relevant in this increasingly digital age. At the same time, however, it is also important to note the growing importance of sustainability for consumers, and a growing need for retailers to response to these trends through the development of more sustainable consumption practices in the "new normal" after the pandemic. One example of this is the "*White Monday*" movement to promote the circular economy in order to counter the Black Friday and Cyber Monday campaigns (Whitemonday, 2020). Sustainability, combined with increasing demand for organic, local production, will thus likely continue to be a major trend that researchers need to be aware of in the future.

Thus, we propose:

Proposition 3: *The priorities, values and characteristics of the customer in 2020s need to be recognized.*

Fourth, our findings show that retail research now acknowledges the changing role of supply-chain management, as a result of the shift towards multi- and omnichannel retail business models. Here, however, there is a strong need for retail researchers to more specifically identify where supply-chain management is heading, and where the future of deliveries and transportation lies, e.g., with last mile deliveries. All of these are critical to understand how to devise and operate more economical and sustainable supply-chains in the 2020s. For example, as retailers are struggling with the expanding costs of home deliveries, future developments will likely be very much geared towards a balance between cost and environmental footprint in order to guarantee more sustainable supply-chains (e.g., de Kervenoael et al. 2020). While such a discussion is very much ongoing in the supply-chain and operations management journals, for example on the impact that drones and autonomous delivery vehicles will have on contemporary supply-chains (e.g., Aurambout et al. 2019), from a retail perspective research on these fronts is still largely missing and something that should be priority with the expanding impact and scope of the digital economy on the retail sector.

Thus, we propose:

Proposition 4: *The role of delivery and transportation in current and future retail business models needs to be better acknowledged in retail research.*

Finally, fifth, our study shows that to add to internationalization and innovation that were frequent topics in retail research in the 1990s, there is a growing need to further understand the implications of the legal and political environment on the success and failure of contemporary retail business models. This is important because many relatively new and novel players in the retail industry (e.g., Alibaba, Amazon) have become so big that they are changing consumption practices, and the society around us. This is especially relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic, when contrary to the struggles of many large retail chains worldwide, as well as small independent retailers, both Alibaba and Amazon witnessed an upsurge in sales that has further enhanced their dominance and power. Thus, more research is needed on the role that new digital business models, such as digital platforms, play in global retail today, and how the legal and political environment should adjust to their continuing dominance (e.g., Reinartz et al. 2019). From a legal and political perspective, there is also a need for some discussion over the pitfalls of new digital business models. This question is relevant particularly as during the past decade or so we have seen the emergence of new business- and earnings logics that have lowered employee protection and had a lower tax footprint compared to traditional retailers (e.g., Hänninen et al. 2018). At the same time the role of information standards has become critical as retail has become more data intensive (Gallino and Moreno, 2014). Lately, we have seen new retail powerhouses like Alibaba increasingly participate in global standards development bodies which, if succeeding, may have huge implications for the future of retailing. All of these topics should be better grasped by retail research in the future to ensure that retail research also acknowledges the effects that developments in the sector have on public policy and legislation.

Thus, we propose:

Proposition 5: *Retail scholars need to grasp the role of the legal and political environment on the success and failure of contemporary retail business models.*

Next, we will conclude by summarizing the implications of our research, including its limitations and possible future research avenues.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have explored the evolution of academic retail research over the past three decades, concluding with five research propositions to shape and guide the direction of retail research over the upcoming years. As our study shows, retail research has gone through a period of major change recently, driven by digitalization and advances in information and communication technology. Here the prevailing retail channels and customer behavior have seen a large evolution over the past three decades as customer journeys have become more complex. From a primary focus in the early 1990s to understanding customer behavior and customer relationships in physical stores, more recently retail research has incorporated much more discussion and theorizing about digitalization and across the retail value chain.

Our findings contribute to retail research by providing an overview of the evolution of retail research over the past three decades, and by developing five research propositions to guide researchers to better grasp the technological and digital developments across the retail sector and expand the theoretical and empirical scope of academic retail research. These five propositions relate to topics, such as, the (i) store, (ii) technology (iii) customers (iv) supply-chain management, and the (v) legal and political environment, taking into account both the research areas and themes identified in our literature review, in addition to the ongoing issues affecting the global retail sector. As one of the first studies, at least that we know of, to take a

broad overview of the evolution of retail research over the past three decades, our study has the potential to shape retail research and fuel more rigorous studies about the realities of retailing in the digital age. The overview and discussion presented in this study are thus extremely useful for both academics and managers alike.

As the approach taken in this study was intendedly general in order to provide a general direction and way of summarizing retail research over different eras, our study has some limitations that provide avenues for further research. First, as we used the number of citations to assess the most popular retail studies in each era, we can only retrospectively examine the impact of any single piece of research. Nevertheless, as the citation number is used in several recent studies to compare research published in different eras (e.g., Lamberton & Stephen, 2016), it is suitable for the purposes of this study and its general aim, as well. Second, as the findings emerged specifically from journal articles, and from distinct time periods, the review cannot directly be generalized to the broad retail literature, including non-peer reviewed and unpublished publications such as conferences papers and work-in progress manuscripts that may already be dealing with some of the issues discussed here and, for example, in our research propositions. Overall, however, despite these limitations, we hope that future studies will build on the invaluable insights offered by this review to use a larger number of studies and articles to examine the evolution of retail research time, and, for example, quantitative methods such as meta-analysis to further analyze and quantify retail research and find more distinct trends about the evolution of the field. In addition, future studies may look exclusively at retail specific journals, rather than take such a large snapshot across the social sciences as we do in this study.

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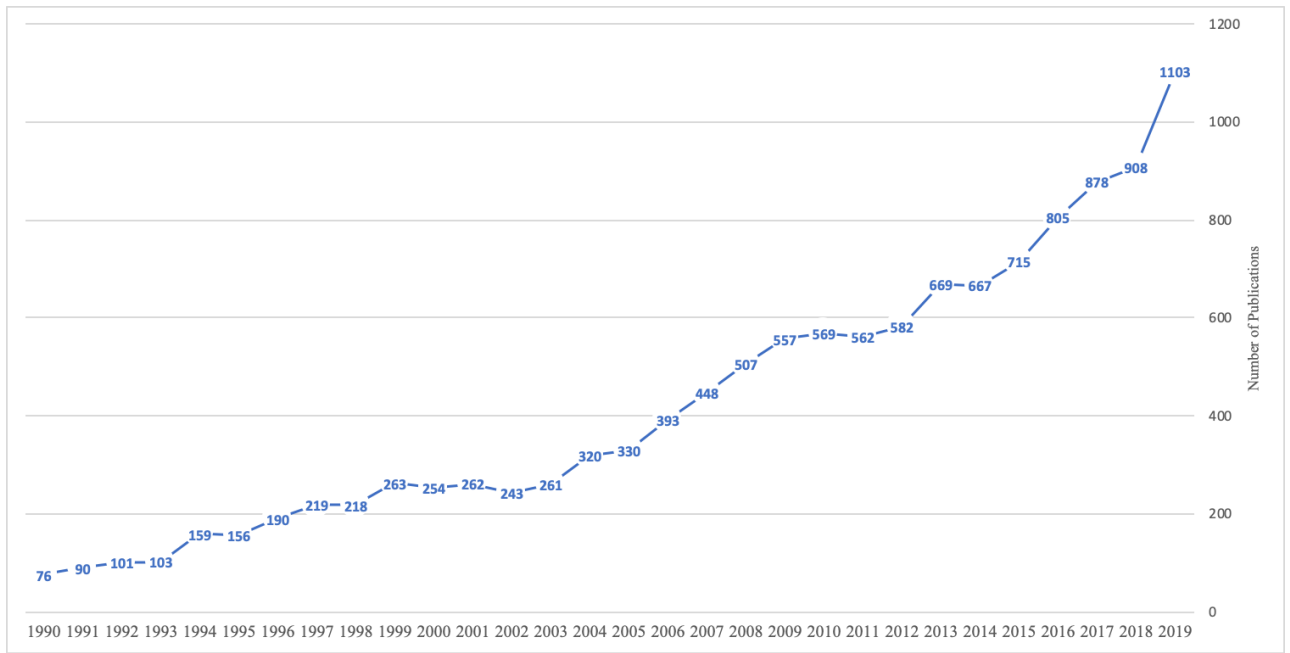
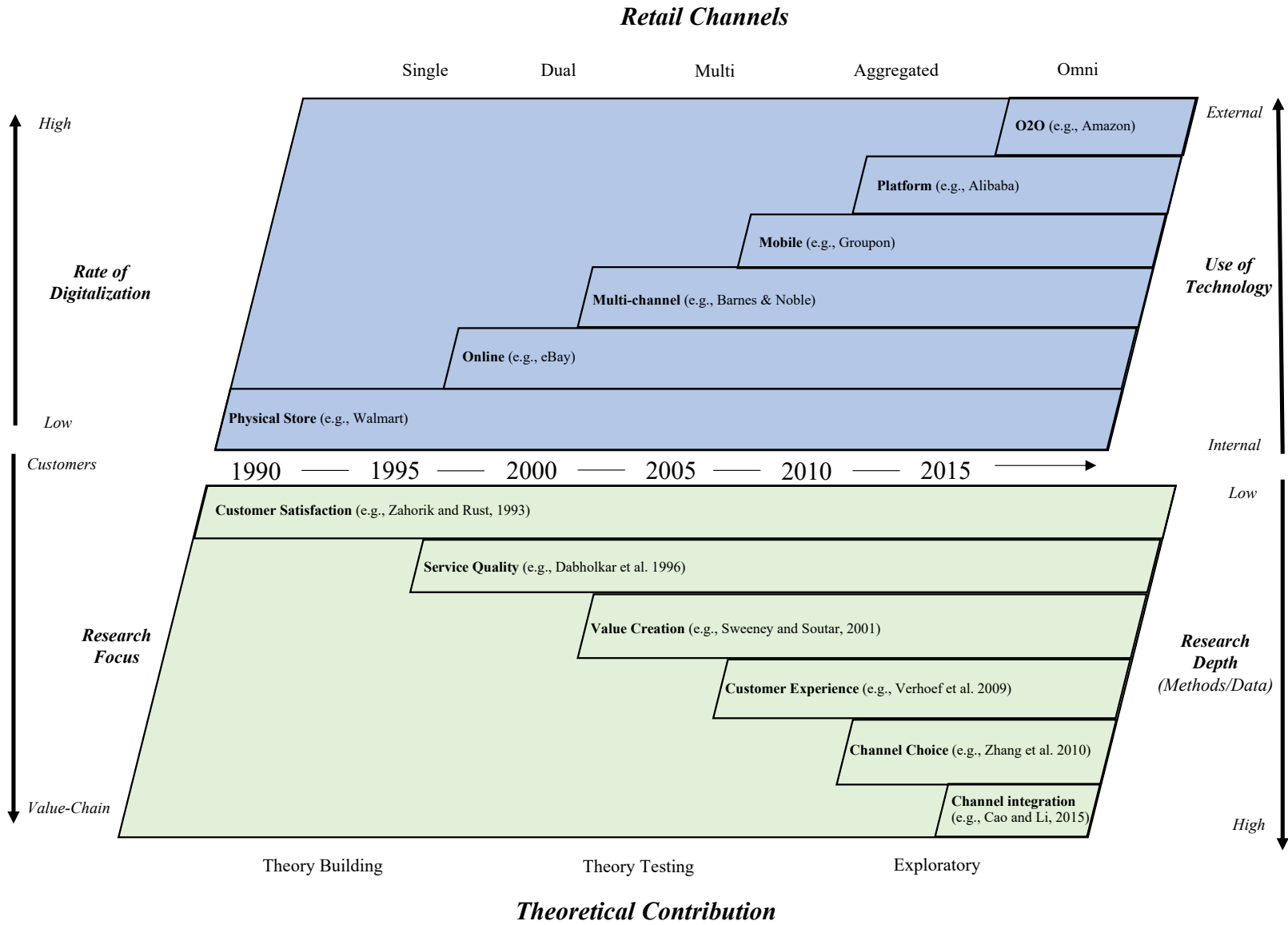**Figure 1.** Publications by '*Retail*' Keyword Per Year

Figure 2. Summarizing the Evolution of Retail Research from 1990 to 2019

Study	Citations	Retail Context	Research Focus	Theory	Methodology	Data	Contribution	Main Finding
Zahorik, A.J. and Rust, R.T., 1993. Customer satisfaction, customer retention, and market share. *Journal of retailing*, *69*(2):193-215.	3186	Retail Banking	Customer Satisfaction	Loyalty and Retention	Exploratory Analysis	Customer Interviews	Theory Building	Mathematical framework for making accountable resource allocation decisions
Baker, J., Grewal, D. and Parasuraman, A., 1994. The influence of store environment on quality inferences and store image. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *22*(4):328-339.	2083	Physical Store	Store Environment	Quality and Design	2 x 2 x 2 between-subjects experiment	Student Participants	Theory Testing	Ambient and social elements in the store environment provide cues that consumers use for their quality inferences.
Kelley, S.W., Hoffman, K.D. and Davis, M.A., 1993. A typology of retail failures and recoveries. *Journal of Retailing*, *69*(4), p.429.	1278	Physical Store	Retail Failures and Recoveries	Service Delivery	Critical Incident Technique (CIT)	Customer Interviews	Theory Building	Demonstrates the importance of recovery in the retail industry whenever a retail customer experiences a failure.
Goss, J., 1993. The "magic of the mall": an analysis of form, function, and meaning in the contemporary retail built environment. *Annals of the association of American geographers*, *83*(1):18-47.	929	Shopping Mall	Space Structuration	Spacial Systems	N/A	N/A	Theory Testing	Show how the retail built environment works, and how we might work against it.
Chandra, P. and Fisher, M.L., 1994. Coordination of production and distribution planning. *European Journal of Operational Research*, *72*(3):503-517.	320	Retail Distribution	Coordination	Scheduling	Computational Experiment	Test Cases	Theory Testing	Find that reduction in total operating cost from coordination ranged from 3% to 20%.
Carney, M. and Gedajlovic, E., 1991. Vertical integration in franchise systems: Agency theory and resource explanations. *Strategic Management Journal*, *12*(8):607-629.	233	Franchise	Vertical Integration	Agency Theory	Quantitative Analysis	Archival Ownership Data	Theory Building	Franchiser ownership strategies are more heterogeneous than previously recognized, and that neither explanation, alone accounts for observed ownership patterns.
McDaniel, S.W. and Burnett, J.J., 1990. Consumer religiosity and retail store evaluative criteria. *Journal of the Academy of marketing Science*, *18*(2):101-112.	211	Physical Store	Consumer Religiosity	Store Attributes	Statistical Analysis	Survey	Theory Testing	Suggest that the degree of religiosity should be considered as a possible determinant of the importance of store attributes.

Dawson, J.A., 1994. Internationalization of retailing operations. *Journal of Marketing Management*, *10*(4):267-282.	188	International Retail Operations	Internationalization	Transaction Cost Economics	Theoretical Analysis	N/A	Exploratory	Motives for retailers to operate internationally are considered
Darden, W.R. and Babin, B.J., 1994. Exploring the concept of affective quality: expanding the concept of retail personality. *Journal of Business Research*, *29*(2):101-109.	180	Physical Store	Retail Personality	Affective Quality	Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis	Customers	Theory Building	Affect associated with retail environments is an important element in defining more fully the meaning of an environment in consumers' semantic networks.
Fuller, J.B., O'Conor, J. and Rawlinson, R., 1993. Tailored logistics: the next advantage. *Harvard Business Review*, *71*(3):87-98.	162	Logistics	Tailored Logistics	Services	N/A	N/A	Exploratory	Shows that logistics has become central to a firm's product strategy.

Table 1. 10 most cited studies published between 1990 and 1994

Study	Citations	Retail Context	Retail Focus	Theory	Methodology	Data	Contribution	Main Finding
Powell, T.C. and Dent-Micallef, A., 1997. Information technology as competitive advantage: The role of human, business, and technology resources. *Strategic Management journal*, 18(5):375-405.	1285	Physical Stores	Information Technology	Resource-Based View	Survey	Retail CEO's and Store Managers	Theory Building	ITs alone have not produced sustainable performance advantages in the retail industry, but that some firms have gained advantages by using ITs to leverage intangible, complementary human and business resources such as flexible culture, strategic planning-IT integration, and supplier relationship.
Alba, J., Lynch, J., Weitz, B., Janiszewski, C., Lutz, R., Sawyer, A. and Wood, S., 1997. Interactive home shopping: consumer, retailer, and manufacturer incentives to participate in electronic marketplaces. *Journal of Marketing*, 61(3):38-53.	1202	Online Retail	Manufacturer Incentives	Economic Search Theory	Theoretical Analysis	N/A	Exploratory	Argues that about the ultimate fate and form of IHS are risky.
Dabholkar, P.A., Thorpe, D.I. and Rentz, J.O., 1996. A measure of service quality for retail stores: scale development and validation. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 24(1), p.3.	958	Physical Stores	Service Quality	SERVQUAL	Survey	2 Department Stores	Theory Building	A hierarchical factor structure is proposed to capture dimensions important to retail customers based on the retail and service quality literatures as well as three separate qualitative studies.
Jarvenpaa, S.L. and Todd, P.A., 1996. Consumer reactions to electronic shopping on the World Wide Web. International Journal of electronic commerce, 1(2):59-88.	789	Online Retail	Consumer Reactions	Patronage Behavior	Survey	220 Shoppers	Theory Building	Results suggest that World Wide Web merchants need to think more about how they perform on the factors known to affect consumer behavior; namely, product perceptions, shopping experience, and customer service.
Svveeney, L.C., 1999. The Role of Perceived Risk in the Quality-Value Relationship: A Study in a Retail Environment. Journal of Retailing, 75(1).	730	Physical Store	Service Quality	Perceived Value and Risk	Survey	1068 Shoppers	Theory Testing	Results confirmed that not only do perceived product and service quality lead to perceived value for money in a service encounter but that these quality components reduce perceived risk.
Blodgett, J.G., Hill, D.J. and Tax, S.S., 1997. The effects of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice on	668	Physical Store	Postcomplaint behavior	Distributive, procedural, and interactional justice	Quasi-experiment	265 Students	Theory Testing	Interactional justice had the largest impact on repatronage and negative word-of-mouth intentions.

postcomplaint behavior. *Journal of Retailing*, 73(2):185-210.								
Sirohi, N., McLaughlin, E.W. and Wittink, D.R., 1998. A model of consumer perceptions and store loyalty intentions for a supermarket retailer. *Journal of Retailing*, 74(2):223-245.	463	Physical Store	Loyalty	Value	Interviews	16,096 shoppers	Theory Building	Results highlight the importance of service quality as an extrinsic cue in the formation of perceptions of overall merchandise quality for a supermarket retailer.
Beatty, S.E., Mayer, M., Coleman, J.E., Reynolds, K.E. and Lee, J., 1996. Customer-sales associate retail relationships. *Journal of Retailing*, 72(3):223-247.	462	Physical Store	Customer-sales associate relationship	Relationship	Qualitative	11 sales associates and their customers	Theory Building	Suggest that store associates own customer orientation (which includes elements such as their commitment, motivation, and skills) is dependent upon top management's customer orientation.
Macintosh, G. and Lockshin, L.S., 1997. Retail relationships and store loyalty: a multi-level perspective. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 14(5):487-497.	403	Physical Store	Loyalty	Relationships	Survey	308 Wine Customers	Theory Testing	Results illustrate the existence of multi-level relationships between customers and stores and how those relationships link to store loyalty.
Padmanabhan, V. and Png, I.P., 1997. Manufacturer's return policies and retail competition. *Marketing Science*, 16(1):81-94.	332	Physical Store	Return Policies	Demand Uncertainty	Retailer Data	Department Store	Theory Building	Show that when retailing is competitive and there is no uncertainty in demand, a returns policy subtly induces retailers to compete more intensely.

Table 2. 10 most cited studies published between 1995 and 1999

Study	Citations	Retail Context	Retail Focus	Theory	Methodology	Data	Contribution	Main Finding
Sweeney, J.C. and Soutar, G.N., 2001. Consumer perceived value: The development of a multiple item scale. *Journal of Retailing*, 77(2):203-220.	2048	Physical Store	Value Creation	Perceived Value	Survey	Students	Theory Building	The PERVAL measure was developed for use in a retail purchase situation to determine what consumption values drive purchase attitude and behavior.
Sirdeshmukh, D., Singh, J. and Sabol, B., 2002. Consumer trust, value, and loyalty in relational exchanges. *Journal of Marketing*, 66(1):15-37.	1703	Physical Store	Relational Exchange	Trust	Survey	Clothing and Air Travel	Theory Testing	Results support a tripartite view of trustworthiness evaluations along operational competence, operational benevolence, and problem-solving orientation dimensions.
Childers, T.L., Carr, C.L., Peck, J. and Carson, S., 2001. Hedonic and utilitarian motivations for online retail shopping behavior. *Journal of Retailing*, 77(4):511-535.	1398	Online Retail	Motivations	Consumer Motivations and User Acceptance	Experiment	Students	Theory Building	Results support the differential importance of immersive, hedonic aspects of the new media as well as the more traditional utilitarian motivations.
Brynjolfsson, E. and Smith, M.D., 2000. Frictionless commerce? A comparison of Internet and conventional retailers. *Management Science*, 46(4):563-585.	1235	Online Retail	Price	Price Dispersion	Quantitative	Online and Conventional Retailers	Exploratory	Find that prices on the Internet are 9–16% lower than prices in conventional outlets, depending on whether taxes, shipping, and shopping costs are included in the price.
De Wulf, K., Odekerken-Schröder, G. and Iacobucci, D., 2001. Investments in consumer relationships: A cross-country and cross-industry exploration. *Journal of Marketing,* 65(4):33-50.	1036	Physical Store	Relationships	Reciprocity	Survey	Customers (USA, Netherlands, Belgium)	Theory Building	Shows that different relationship marketing tactics have a differential impact on consumer perceptions of a retailer's relationship investment and that perceived relationship investment affects relationship quality.
Mathwick, C., Malhotra, N. and Rigdon, E., 2001. Experiential value: conceptualization, measurement and application in the catalog and Internet shopping environment☆. *Journal of Retailing*, 77(1):39-56.	935	Multichannel retail	Retail Environment	Experiential value	.Survey	1200 catalog and 1000 Internet shoppers	Theory Building	The study evaluates the psychometric properties of the EVS in both samples and tests the hypothesized hierarchical structure.
Arnold, M.J. and Reynolds, K.E., 2003. Hedonic shopping motivations.	862	Physical Store	Shopping Motivations	Hedonic Consumption	Interview and Survey	Customers	Theory Building	Using the six-factor hedonic shopping motivation profiles, a cluster analysis of adult consumers reveals five

Journal of Retailing, 79(2):77-95.								shopper segments, called here the Minimalists, the Gatherers, the Providers, the Enthusiasts, and the Traditionalists.
Häubl, G. and Trifts, V., 2000. Consumer decision making in online shopping environments: The effects of interactive decision aids. *Marketing Science*, 19(1):4-21.	841	Online Retail	Interactive decision-making	Decision aids	Experimenet	Students	Theory Testing	Suggest that interactive tools designed to assist consumers in the initial screening of available alternatives and to facilitate comparisons among selected alternatives in an online shopping environment may have strong favorable effects on both the quality and the efficiency of purchase decisions.
Chiang, W.Y.K., Chhajed, D. and Hess, J.D., 2003. Direct marketing, indirect profits: A strategic analysis of dual-channel supply-chain design. *Management Science*, 49(1):1-20.	805	Multi-Channel Retail	Direct Marketing	Dual Channels	Mathematical Modelling	N/A	Exploratory	Direct marketing, which indirectly increases the flow of profits through the retail channel, helps the manufacturer improve overall profitability by reducing the degree of inefficient price double marginalization.
Elmaghraby, W. and Keskinocak, P., 2003. Dynamic pricing in the presence of inventory considerations: Research overview, current practices, and future directions. *Management Science*, 49(10):1287-1309.	699	Online Retail	Dynamic Pricing	Pricing	Review	N/A	Exploratory	Complements other surveys of the pricing literature from the operations research and management science community that focus on revenue management for fixed, perishable capacity.

Table 3. 10 most cited studies published between 2000 and 2004

Study	Citations	Retail Context	Retail Focus	Theory	Methodology	Data	Contribution	Main Finding
Cachon, G.P. and Lariviere, M.A., 2005. Supply chain coordination with revenue-sharing contracts: strengths and limitations. *Management Science*, 51(1):30-44.	1467	Physical Store	Supply-Chain Coordination	Game Theory	Mathematical Modeling	N/A	Exploratory	Demonstrates that revenue sharing is a very attractive contract.
Rai, A., Patnayakuni, R. and Seth, N., 2006. Firm performance impacts of digitally enabled supply chain integration capabilities. MIS Quarterly:225-246.	986	Physical Store	Supply-Chain Coordination	Supply-Chain Management	Survey	110 Manufacturing and Retail Organizations	Theory Testing	Suggest that integrated IT infrastructures enable firms to develop the higher-order capability of supply chain process integration.
Verhoef, P.C., Lemon, K.N., Parasuraman, A., Roggeveen, A., Tsiros, M. and Schlesinger, L.A., 2009. Customer experience creation: Determinants, dynamics and management strategies. *Journal of Retailing*, 85(1):31-41.	909	Multi-channel	Customer Experience	Social Environment, Self-Service, Retail Branding	Conceptual Analysis	N/A	Theory Building	Propose a conceptual model, in which we discuss the determinants of customer experience. .
Duan, W., Gu, B. and Whinston, A.B., 2008. The dynamics of online word-of-mouth and product sales—An empirical investigation of the movie industry. *Journal of Retailing*, 84(2):233-242.	588	Physical Store	Online Word-of-Mouth	Word-of-Mouth	Dynamic simultaneous equation system	Box Office Data	Theory Building	Show that both a movie's box office revenue and WOM valence significantly influence WOM volume.
Savaskan, R.C. and Van Wassenhove, L.N., 2006. Reverse channel design: the case of competing retailers. *Management Science*, 52(1):1-14.	486	Supply Chain	Product Remanufacturing	Supply-Chain Management	Mathematical modelling	N/A	Theory Building	Show that the benefits of supply chain coordination also drive a manufacturer's decision to indirectly collect used products.
Ahn, T., Ryu, S. and Han, I., 2007. The impact of Web quality and playfulness on user acceptance of online retailing. *Information and Management*, 44(3):263-275.	467	Online Retail	User Acceptance	Technology Acceptance Model	Survey	942 Customers	Theory Testing	Show that playfulness plays an important role in enhancing user attitude and behavioral intention to use a site.
Jones, M.A., Reynolds, K.E. and Arnold, M.J., 2006. Hedonic and utilitarian shopping value: Investigating differential effects on retail outcomes. *Journal of Business Research*, 59(9):974-981.	413	Physical Store	Retail Outcomes	Shopping Value and Satisfaction	Survey	245 Customers	Theory Building	Both hedonic and utilitarian shopping values are found to influence key retail outcomes.

Bernstein, F. and Federgruen, A., 2005. Decentralized supply chains with competing retailers under demand uncertainty. *Management Science*, 51(1):18-29.	387	Supply-Chain	Decentralized Supply-Chain	Demand Uncertainty	Mathematical Modelling	N/A	Theory Testing	Show that a so-called linear "price-discount sharing" scheme can achieve coordination for any problem instance.
Grewal, D., Levy, M. and Kumar, V., 2009. Customer experience management in retailing: An organizing framework. *Journal of Retailing*, 85(1):1-14.	379	Physical Store	Customer Experience	Experience	Conceptual Analysis	N/A	Theory Building	Several ways (e.g.,, promotion, price, merchandise, supply chain and location) to deliver a superior customer experience are identified which should result in higher customer satisfaction, more frequent shopping visits, larger wallet shares, and higher profits
Puccinelli, N.M., Goodstein, R.C., Grewal, D., Price, R., Raghubir, P. and Stewart, D., 2009. Customer experience management in retailing: understanding the buying process. *Journal of Retailing*, 85(1):15-30.	371	Physical Store	Customer Experience	Information Processing	Conceptual Analysis	N/A	Theory Building	Provides an overview of existing consumer behavior literature and suggesting that specific elements of consumer behavior—goals, schema, information processing, memory, involvement, attitudes, affective processing, atmospherics, and consumer attributions and choices—play important roles during various stages of the consumer decision process.

Table 4. 10 most cited studies published between 2005 and 2009

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Study	Citations	Retail Context	Retail Focus	Theory	Methodology	Data	Contribution	Main Finding
Smith, A.N., Fischer, E. and Yongjian, C., 2012. How does brand-related user-generated content differ across YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter?. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 26(2):102-113.	342	Social Media	Brand Communications	User-Generated Content	Content Analysis	3 Social Media Sites	Theory Building	Provides conceptual insights into how different social media sites foster User generated content with different characteristics.
Liu, Z.L., Anderson, T.D. and Cruz, J.M., 2012. Consumer environmental awareness and competition in two-stage supply chains. *European Journal of Operational Research*, 218(3):602-613.	300	Supply-Chain	Environmental Awareness	Supply-Chain Management	Mathematical Modelling	N/A	Theory Building	Find that as consumers' environmental awareness increases, retailers and manufacturers with superior eco-friendly operations will benefit; while the profitability of the inferior ecofriendly firm will tend to increase if the production competition level is low, and will tend to decrease if the production competition level is high.
Patrício, L., Fisk, R.P., Falcão e Cunha, J. and Constantine, L., 2011. Multilevel service design: from customer value constellation to service experience blueprinting. *Journal of Service Research*, 14(2):180-200.	256	Multi-channel	Service Experience	Service System Design	Quantitative and Qualitative	Interviews and Survey	Theory Building	Shows that the MSD method enables integrated design of the service offering at its different levels, contributing to the design of complex service systems.
Hua, G., Wang, S. and Cheng, T.E., 2010. Price and lead time decisions in dual-channel supply chains. *European Journal of Operational Research,* 205(1):113-126.	238	Supply-Chain	Price and Lead Time	Supply-Chain Management	Mathematical Modelling	N/A	Theory Testing	Delivery lead time strongly influences manufacturer's and the retailer's pricing strategies and profits.
Walker, H. and Jones, N., 2012. Sustainable supply chain management across the UK private sector. *Supply Chain Management: An International Journal,* 17(1): 15-28.	221	Supply-Chain	Sustainable Supply-Chain	Contingency Theory	Case Study	7 UK Companies	Theory Building	Classifies companies as Internal focusers, Reserved players, External responders, and Agenda setters.
Gleim, M.R., Smith, J.S., Andrews, D. and Cronin Jr, J.J., 2013. Against the green: A multi-method examination of the barriers to green	203	Physical Store	Green Consumption	Consumer Attitudes and Behavior	Qualitative and Quantitative	Interviews and Survey	Theory Building	Suggest that altering the number and form of informational product cues may overcome purchase barriers.

consumption. *Journal of Retailing*, 89(1):44-61.							
Sorescu, A., Frambach, R.T., Singh, J., Rangaswamy, A. and Bridges, C., 2011. Innovations in retail business models. Journal of retailing, 87:3-16.	195	Multi-channel	Business Model	Value Creation and Value Appropriation	Conceptual Analysis	N/A	Exploratory	Propose that innovations in retail business models are best viewed as changes in three design components: (1) the way in which the activities are organized, (2) the type of activities that are executed, and (3) the level of participation of the actors engaged in performing those activities.
Floyd, K., Freling, R., Alhoqail, S., Cho, H.Y. and Freling, T., 2014. How online product reviews affect retail sales: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Retailing*, 90(2):217-232.	193	Multi-Channel	Online Product Review	Word-of-Mouth	Meta-Analysis	26 Studies	Exploratory	Highlight the importance of providing a quality product that delivers on its brand promise and meets or exceeds expectations.
Zhang, J., Farris, P.W., Irvin, J.W., Kushwaha, T., Steenburgh, T.J. and Weitz, B.A., 2010. Crafting integrated multichannel retailing strategies. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 24(2):168-180.	190	Multi-channel	Retail Strategy	Retail Mix	Conceptual Analysis	N/A	Exploratory	Discuss the key issues concerning multichannel retailing, including the motivations and constraints of going multichannel, the challenges of crafting multichannel retailing strategies and opportunities for creating synergies across channels, key retail mix decisions facing multichannel retailers, and the dynamics of multichannel retailing.
Koo, D.M. and Ju, S.H., 2010. The interactional effects of atmospherics and perceptual curiosity on emotions and online shopping intention. Computers in Human Behavior, 26(3):377-388.	159	Online Retail	Online Shopping Intention	SOR Framework	Survey	356 Online Shoppers	Theory Testing	Show that most of human and computer factors such as graphics, color, and links have a positive impact on pleasure and arousal, with the exception of the two links from menu to pleasure and arousal.

Table 5. 10 most cited studies published between 2010 and 2014

Study	Citations	Retail Context	Retail Focus	Theory	Methodology	Data	Contribution	Main Finding
Verhoef, P.C., Kannan, P.K. and Inman, J.J., 2015. From multi-channel retailing to omni-channel retailing: introduction to the special issue on multi-channel retailing. *Journal of Retailing*, 91(2):174-181.	482	Multi-Channel	Multi-Channel Retailing	Retail Mix	Conceptual Analysis	N/A	Exploratory	Discuss the development of omnichannel retailing conceptually and subsequently discuss existing research in this multi-channel retailing.
Li, B., Zhu, M., Jiang, Y. and Li, Z., 2016. Pricing policies of a competitive dual-channel green supply chain. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 112:2029-2042.	156	Multi-Channel	Pricing	Green Products	Mathematical Modelling	N/A	Theory Building	Find that the retail price in the centralized green supply chain is higher than that in the decentralized supply chain, which contrasts with the result of 'double marginalization'.
Wang, R.J.H., Malthouse, E.C. and Krishnamurthi, L., 2015. On the go: How mobile shopping affects customer purchase behavior. *Journal of Retailing*, 91(2):217-234.	143	Mobile Shopping	Purchase Behavior	Habitual Purchases	Quantitative Analysis	US Internet Grocer	Theory Building	Propose that customers utilize mobile devices because the technology provides convenient access, which leads them to incorporate M-shopping into their habitual routines.
Beck, N. and Rygl, D., 2015. Categorization of multiple channel retailing in Multi-, Cross-, and Omni-Channel Retailing for retailers and retailing. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 27:170-178.	123	Multi-Channel	Multiple Channel Retailing	Multi-, Cross-, and Omni-Channel	Literature Review	30 Studies	Exploratory	Identify a taxonomy of multiple channel retailing by means of a literature review.
Cao, L. and Li, L., 2015. The impact of cross-channel integration on retailers' sales growth. *Journal of Retailing*, 91(2):198-216.	108	Multi-Channel	Integration	Cross-Channel Integration	Longitudinal Study	71 US Retailers	Theory Building	Reveal that cross-channel integration stimulates sales growth, but that firm online experience and physical-store presence weaken this effect.
Rapp, A., Baker, T.L., Bachrach, D.G., Ogilvie, J. and Beitelspacher, L.S., 2015. Perceived customer showrooming behavior and the effect on retail salesperson self-efficacy and performance. *Journal of Retailing*, 91(2):358-369.	105	Multi-Channel	Showrooming	Self-efficicacy and Coping Behavior	Survey	Store Managers and Salespeople	Theory Testing	Suggest that the negative effects of showrooming can be combated though specific salesperson behaviors and strategies.

Rana, J. and Paul, J., 2017. Consumer behavior and purchase intention for organic food: A review and research agenda. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 38:157-165.	99	Customers	Organic Food	Purchase Intention	Literature Review	146 Studies	Exploratory	Find that health-conscious consumers show a growing preference for organic food over the conventionally grown food. This shift in the attitude of the modern consumers is greatly influenced by the rising incidence of lifestyle diseases, such as heart disorders and depression.
Melis, K., Campo, K., Breugelmans, E. and Lamey, L., 2015. The impact of the multi-channel retail mix on online store choice: does online experience matter? *Journal of Retailing, 91*(2):272-288.	99	Multi-Channel	Online Store Choice	Online Buying Experience	Quantitative Analysis	UK Household Panel	Theory Testing	Show that multi-channel shoppers, at the start of online grocery shopping, tend to select the online store belonging to the same chain as their preferred offline store, especially when the online store is strongly integrated with the offline store in terms of assortment.
Hagberg, J., Sundström, M. and Nicklas, E.Z., 2016. The digitalization of retailing: an exploratory framework. *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 44(7):694-712.	97	Multi-Channel	Digitalization	Retailer-Consumer Interface	Conceptual Analysis	Literature	Exploratory	Digitalization transforms the following: retailing exchanges, the nature of retail offerings, retail settings and the actors who participate in retailing.
Hübner, A.H., Kuhn, H., Wollenburg, J., Towers, N. and Kotzab, H., 2016. Last mile fulfilment and distribution in omni-channel grocery retailing: a strategic planning framework. *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*. 44(3):228-247.	96	Multi-Channel	Last-Mile Fulfillment	Supply-Chain Management	Meta-Analysis	Literature, 8 Interviews	Exploratory	Omnichannel logistics planning can be structured into back-end fulfilment (e.g. warehouse and in-store picking) and last mile distribution concepts (e.g., attended and unattended home delivery).

Table 6. 10 most cited studies published between 2015 and 2019