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CROSS-CHANNEL ORCHESTRATION AND SERVICE CONSISTENCY IN OMNICHANNEL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE: IMPLICATIONS FOR SERVICE COSTS, RETENTION, AND CUSTOMER LIFETIME VALUE

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Abstract - *This research discusses how cross-channel orchestration shapes service consistency in the omnichannel customer experience and its implications for service costs, customer retention, and customer lifetime value (CLV). Customers view cross-channel interactions as a single integrated journey, so that inconsistencies in information, procedures, and decisions between channels can easily cause friction, increase repeat contacts, and drive costly escalations. Through a qualitative literature review with thematic synthesis, this study summarizes the key mechanisms that explain this relationship. The synthesis results show that cross-channel orchestration works through the unification of data and interaction history, the alignment of service policies (e.g., promotions, shipping, and returns), the design of cross-channel transitions, the strengthening of agent guidelines and competencies, and cross-unit governance and performance metrics. These mechanisms shape the consistency of service perceived by customers in the form of continuity of information, actions, and service tone. Consistency then reduces service costs by reducing duplication of work and corrective work, while strengthening retention by reducing perceived risk and customer effort. The subsequent impact is evident in the increase in CLV through a combination of higher repurchase/cross-buy opportunities and lower customer service costs throughout the relationship. This research confirms that service consistency is not merely a quality attribute, but rather an economic lever that connects omnichannel experience design and profitability.*

Keywords: omnichannel; cross-channel orchestration; service consistency; customer experience; service costs; customer retention; customer lifetime value.

INTRODUCTION

The development of interaction channels between customers and companies has changed the way customer experience is understood and managed. Customers move from apps to websites, from text messages to calls, from store visits to deliveries, with the expectation that their identity, history of needs, and preferences will be "recognized" without having to repeat explanations. At the same time, organizations are faced with scattered data trails, layered service processes, and different performance targets for each channel unit. These changes make the customer experience a series of interconnected events, rather than a collection of stand-alone interactions. From the customer's perspective, the quality of the experience is assessed through a sense of continuity, clarity of steps, and certainty of results, especially when disruptions such as delays, order errors, or payment disputes occur. From the organization's perspective, the customer experience is seen as an indicator of service reputation and a source of economic value that can be accumulated through long-term relationships (Abdijalil, 2022). This loyalty does not arise spontaneously, but is built through consistent experiences and the fulfilment of service promises (Darmawan, 2022).

Attention to omnichannel customer experience is growing stronger because customers form meaning about services through their interpretation of small signs along their journey. When promotional messages promise convenience, customers assess whether that convenience is truly present when searching for information, making transactions, receiving goods, requesting assistance, and submitting returns. Consistency is a measure that is not always apparent on the surface, but is felt when customers encounter situations that require cross-unit coordination. Companies often treat each channel as a different "entry point," when customers view them as part of the same service relationship. Inconsistent inventory information, price differences, varying return policies across channels, or conflicting agent responses will be interpreted by customers as uncertainty, which will influence their next purchasing decision. The omnichannel experience requires orchestration that unifies information flow, operational decisions, and service standards so that customers receive a coherent experience (Bansal & Kaur, 2024). This consistency is also a key element that influences purchasing decisions in various areas, ranging from retail to lifestyle (Putri & Darmawan, 2025; Essardi et al., 2022).

Cross-channel orchestration requires organizations to reorganize their work, not just add service points. Many companies pile on new channels without modifying their queueing systems, approval flows, and service case ownership. As a result, costs increase due to duplication of work, repeated referrals, and rework due to unsynchronized data. From an economic standpoint, service costs are not just contact costs, but also internal coordination costs that arise when a single customer request requires multiple transfers of responsibility. At the same time, customers judge quality based on

turnaround time and certainty, so increased costs often go hand in hand with unimproved satisfaction (Çakiroğlu & Çengel, 2020). In situations like this, companies may appear active on many channels, but are actually losing service discipline. A literature review is needed to reorganize our understanding of the relationship between orchestration design, service consistency, and the cost structure that follows that design.

Profitability in the omnichannel realm needs to be understood as the result of mutually reinforcing experience design and operational decisions. Design decisions include customer journey mapping, response standards, and brand service promises. Operational decisions include customer data architecture, catalog and inventory management, compensation rules, and case escalation mechanisms. When these two types of decisions are aligned, companies can reduce handling costs because work is done in one go, while customers receive more predictable service. If alignment is not achieved, however, companies may incur "hidden costs" such as repeat contacts, uncontrolled refunds, or increased help center workload. The impact is evident in retention and customer lifetime value, as customers who are frustrated by complexity tend to reduce transaction frequency, decrease shopping cart size, or switch to other providers that feel more organized (Dalla Pozza, 2024). Retention and repurchase intent in the digital ecosystem are highly dependent on the quality of the service experience provided (Fared et al., 2021).

The need to examine omnichannel customer experience and profitability becomes increasingly apparent when companies pursue growth while controlling costs (Akter et al., 2019). Channel expansion is often driven by acquisition targets, while long-term profitability is determined by retention and customer value over time. This is where cross-channel orchestration becomes the linchpin: it determines whether the customer experience generates stable engagement or results in costly extra work. Service consistency serves as the language customers understand to assess a company's integrity, while cost effectiveness is the managerial language for assessing operational health. These two languages converge on a practical question: what kind of service can be maintained, with uniform standards, at a rational cost? The literature review provides space to unpack concepts, group mechanisms, and formulate plausible causal relationships between orchestration, consistency, cost, retention, and CLV.

The main problem in managing the omnichannel experience lies in the gap between how customers piece together their experiences and how organizations break down services into channel structures. Customers tend to view their journey as a continuous story, while organizations often measure performance per channel using metrics that are not aligned. This gap creates inconsistencies: promotional information differs from service policies, order status in the app does not match help center records, or service agents do not have access to previous interaction history. When inconsistencies occur, customers face friction that requires extra effort to explain, gather evidence, and wait for the handoff. At the organizational level, this friction creates repetitive work that increases costs without adding value. The problem is further complicated by the fact that each channel has its own technological limitations and division of responsibilities that form separate "work domains."

The next issue relates to how profitability is assessed and linked to customer experience. Many organizations view service costs as an expense that must be minimized, while customer experience is treated as a standalone program. This separation makes it difficult for companies to explain the logical path from cross-channel orchestration to retention and CLV. The costs that arise from cross-unit coordination are often not visible in channel reports, making improvement decisions biased and reactive. As a result, companies may allocate budgets to channels that appear busy, while ignoring the points of re-engagement that are actually sources of waste. At the customer level, a convoluted experience can alter perceptions of value and reduce tolerance for minor errors. When this happens, retention slowly declines and CLV is suppressed, even though short-term transaction numbers may still appear favorable.

The company is currently in a phase where digital channel growth has reached an operational stage that demands precision. Customers are accustomed to fast access and a wide range of channel options, so the measure of quality has shifted from mere channel availability to service flow integration. In a highly competitive environment, small differences in order status clarity, information consistency, and problem-solving accuracy can be the reason customers stay or leave. At the same time, operational costs are rising due to increases in logistics costs, service labor costs, and technology costs. This combination makes it necessary for organizations to understand the mechanisms that link omnichannel experience with profitability, especially through more stable retention and CLV rather than short-term sales wins. The literature review provides a conceptual foundation for reading these relationship patterns and avoiding decisions that merely follow channel trends. A principle that is in line with the findings of Putra and Darmawan (2022) regarding the importance of strategic technological orientation and entrepreneurial competence in building sustainable competitive advantage. Furthermore, ensuring consistency across channels especially between self-service and human-assisted touchpoints demands cross-functional collaboration and policy alignment within the organization, a principle also emphasized as critical in driving customer-centric innovation in other business domains (Mardikaningsih & Essa, 2025). The literature review provides a conceptual foundation for reading these relationship patterns and avoiding decisions that merely follow channel trends.

Examining this topic is also important because cross-channel orchestration touches on data governance, process design, and service standards, all of which can have financial consequences if they are not aligned. When customers see a company that is hesitant, inconsistent, or out of sync across channels, their trust in the service promise weakens and

they are less likely to commit to a purchase. Conversely, when the service flow feels seamless, customers are more willing to expand their use of channels, accept recommendations, and maintain transactional relationships. This makes retention the result of a consistent experience, while CLV becomes the accumulation of repeated feelings of security and convenience. A positive shopping experience that encompasses affective and convenience aspects has been proven to be a strong driver of repurchase intention (Arifiana & Mardikaningsih, 2024). The literature review therefore needs to filter key concepts, distinguish between frequently interchanged terms, and compile explanations that researchers and practitioners can use to design measurable decisions.

This research aims to develop a structured conceptual understanding of omnichannel customer experience by placing cross-channel orchestration as the axis that links service consistency and profitability. This research formulates explanatory relationships between service flow design, cross-channel information alignment, and operational decision quality that affect handling costs and internal coordination costs. The next objective is to describe how service consistency is associated with retention and customer lifetime value through reduced friction, increased certainty, and strengthened commitment to repeat purchases. The theoretical contribution is expected to be in the form of concept mapping, working definitions, and testable relationship propositions for future research. The practical contribution is aimed at providing a framework for managers to assess service design choices, cross-unit improvement priorities, and performance indicators that align customer experience with the company's financial health.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses qualitative literature study with a thematic synthesis orientation to summarize, interpret, and consolidate conceptual findings regarding omnichannel customer experience and profitability, particularly related to cross-channel orchestration, service consistency, service costs, retention, and customer lifetime value. This design was chosen because the topic requires focused reading of definitions, mechanisms, and explanatory relationships that are often scattered across conceptual articles, empirical articles, and managerial literature. Thematic synthesis was conducted by adopting the principle of theme development from systematic coding, so that the output was a coherent theme structure that could be traced back to the sources analyzed. This approach is in line with thematic synthesis in qualitative studies (Thomas & Harden, 2008) and the framework for writing literature reviews that emphasizes problem formulation, targeted tracing, and idea integration (Torraco, 2005; Okoli & Schabram, 2010). To maintain scientific readability, the reporting of the search and source selection process follows the principles of systematic review reporting transparency (Moher et al., 2009; Booth, Sutton, & Papaioannou, 2012).

The search strategy was conducted through academic databases and scientific index engines using a combination of keywords containing key terms and relevant equivalents, as in the keywords in the abstract. Inclusion criteria included scientific publications that discussed cross-channel customer experiences, service operation designs, and customer value metrics or economic outcomes that could be interpreted as profitability. Exclusion criteria included writings that only discussed one channel without cross-channel relevance, popular articles without an academic basis, and publications that did not provide adequate explanations of the concepts or results claimed. The screening process was carried out in stages of identification, screening, feasibility assessment, and final selection, accompanied by recording the reasons for exclusion so that the decision trail could be audited (Moher et al., 2009). To reduce search bias, the researchers also conducted backward and forward citation searches on key articles, then tested the suitability of the findings with the focus of the problem formulation.

Coding was carried out in two main stages. The first stage involved open coding of meaning units, such as definitions of orchestration, forms of service consistency, forms of costs incurred, and pathways to retention and CLV. The second stage involved grouping codes into themes and sub-themes, accompanied by the preparation of a conceptual map so that the relationships between themes could be explained in a coherent manner. This procedure follows the principles of thematic analysis, which emphasizes consistency of steps and clarity of analytical decisions (Braun & Clarke, 2006), as well as the practice of thematic synthesis, which connects codes with conceptual themes (Thomas & Harden, 2008). Quality assurance is carried out through checking the stability of coding, comparing analytical notes, and testing the traceability between themes and their original sources. Source quality was critically reviewed using a checklist appropriate for qualitative, quantitative, or mixed studies, with attention to clarity of design, adequacy of data, accuracy of inference, and limitations acknowledged by the authors (Grant & Booth, 2009; CASP, 2013). The researcher also maintained an audit trail discipline in the form of a data extraction matrix, operational definitions of themes, and notes on theme revision decisions to ensure that the synthesis was accountable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Cross-Channel Orchestration and Service Consistency Formation in Omnichannel Customer Experience

Cross-channel orchestration can be understood as a deliberately designed arrangement to harmonize customer interactions, internal processes, and service decisions so that they blend together as a single flow that customers can

follow. In the omnichannel experience, customers rarely separate channels as distinct entities. They perceive service as a single promise that is repeatedly fulfilled. Integrated efforts encompassing promotion, product and price, and transaction information are more influential in enhancing customers' cognitive experiences compared to their affective experiences within the context of omnichannel customer experience, which emphasizes the importance of cross-channel orchestration in shaping superior customer experiences (Gao et al., 2021). Orchestration therefore requires organizations to place the customer journey as the primary work unit, rather than channels as the primary work unit. When the work unit is the journey, information, authority, and responsibility must flow across departmental boundaries. This management involves designing contact points, rules for transitioning between channels, and governance that determines who has the authority to make decisions in specific cases. Without orchestration, the customer experience becomes a series of random interactions, forcing customers to fill in the coordination gaps that should be the responsibility of the organization. Service consistency is achieved when orchestration creates uniformity in promises, procedures, and end results (Gerea et al., 2021).

Consistency of service across omnichannel does not mean that all channels must be identical, but rather that customers receive equal treatment toward the same goal (Chung et al., 2022). Equal means that the information provided is consistent, the rules applied are similar, and the standards for resolving issues are predictable even if the channel chosen is different. Customers are generally sensitive to small differences that imply uncertainty, such as agents giving different answers for the same case, varying resolution times without explanation, or return conditions that seem to depend on the purchase channel. Consistency comes in two layers: consistency of representation and consistency of action. Representation includes brand language, product details, order status, and policy explanations. Actions include the steps actually taken when customers request assistance, change orders, or file complaints. Good orchestration brings these two layers together so that customers see a clear connection between what is promised and what is done.

The prerequisite for orchestration is unified customer identity and unified interaction history (Gerea & Herskovic, 2022). Many inconsistencies occur because organizations store customer profiles in multiple systems that are not fully connected, so that agents on specific channels see different pieces of information. When customers switch channels, organizations should continue the conversation, not start over. History unity means that each interaction enriches the record that other channels can use while maintaining privacy and access limits. In practice, this unity requires a uniform definition of data, clear update rules, and consistent recording discipline. If history is not maintained, service agents tend to ask customers to repeat their explanations, leading customers to perceive the company as disorganized. Confidence declines as customers feel their time and energy are being taken up to cover the organization's shortcomings. Data orchestration is therefore the foundation for perceived service consistency.

Cross-channel orchestration also requires process designs that minimize responsibility handoffs (Choi, 2020). In many organizations, service cases move from channel to channel through referrals, escalations, or ticket transfers, but these transfers are often not accompanied by robust handover standards. As a result, customers experience delays, repeated information, and changes in decisions. An orchestrated process establishes rules for when transfers are necessary, what should be included in the handover, and who is responsible for the final outcome. The measure of success is not the number of tickets closed, but the resolution of customer needs with low customer effort. Process design must also account for exceptions, such as logistical disruptions, payment failures, or inventory discrepancies, as these points often trigger the most memorable customer experiences. Service consistency becomes apparent when even exceptions are handled with clear decision patterns.

Service consistency is greatly influenced by policy alignment, especially pricing, promotion, delivery, and return policies (Gao & Jiang, 2024). Customers tend to test brand promises through policies that most often have financial or time consequences. If promotions apply in the app but not in stores, or shipping costs differ without a reasonable explanation, customers perceive that rule can change depending on the channel. From the customer's perspective, this feels like procedural injustice. Policy orchestration means that organizations develop a single source of policy that serves as a cross-channel reference, then ensure consistent implementation through training, systems, and oversight. At the operational level, uniform policies reduce the need for clarification, decrease customer disputes, and speed up agent decisions. At the experience level, customers feel confident that each channel represents the same organization, with reliable standards.

Another aspect that determines consistency is end-to-end experience design, especially how organizations define transitions between channels (Dalla Pozza, 2024). Transitions occur when customers move from exploration to transaction, from transaction to fulfillment, or from fulfillment to after-sales service. Many experiences deteriorate because transitions are considered the “next channel's responsibility” rather than part of the experience that must be maintained. Transition orchestration means that organizations determine what customers should carry, what the system automatically carries, and how customers are informed about the next steps. For example, if a customer changes their address through a help center, the application and delivery status should immediately reflect that change. If a customer submits a complaint via social media, the official service channel should receive a summary of the case without making the customer repeat everything from the beginning. Consistency is achieved when transitions are smooth and customers understand the direction of the process.

Service consistency is also closely related to agent competency standards and decision support tools (Gao et al., 2021). In omnichannel services, it is not enough for agents to simply understand their channel scripts, as customer inquiries often touch on cross-channel statuses, cross-channel promotions, or exceptions involving other units. If agents do not have access to the same guidelines, their answers will vary, and customers will interpret these variations as uncertainty. Competency orchestration includes defining core knowledge, training modules that emphasize consistency in policy interpretation, and tools such as a curated knowledge base. In addition, there needs to be a mechanism for rapid updates when policies change, so that different channels are not left behind. Consistency is not just about the same words, but the same decision logic. When agents apply similar logic to similar cases, customers feel fairness and certainty, even if the end result is not always what the customer expected.

Companies often associate orchestration with technology, but technology is only effective if it is supported by clear governance (Chung et al., 2022). Governance determines who owns the customer journey, who owns the policy, and how conflicts between units are resolved. Within an organization, conflicts can arise when one unit pursues speed targets while another pursues cost savings, or when sales channels pursue conversions while service channels pursue reduced contact. Without governance that unifies objectives, orchestration will fragment into local compromises that produce false consistency. Service consistency requires agreement on minimum standards, such as the definition of "done," completion deadlines, and recognized forms of compensation. Governance also needs to provide escalation paths that do not shift the burden to the customer. When conflicts are resolved behind the scenes, customers see a cohesive organization, not one that passes the buck.

From the customer experience perspective, consistency is reflected through three easily perceptible indicators: continuity of information, continuity of actions, and continuity of service tone (Picek et al., 2018). Continuity of information means that order status, contact history, and policies are explained consistently across channels. Continuity of actions means that steps taken by one channel are recognized and continued by another channel without cancellation or repetition. Service tone continuity means that politeness, professional empathy, and clarity of explanation are relatively similar, so that customers do not feel they are being treated differently simply because they chose a particular channel. Cross-channel orchestration shapes these three indicators through consistent design, not through supervision that merely punishes mistakes. Customers typically do not care about a company's internal structure, but they are sensitive to inconsistencies that force them to become coordinators. By reducing the customer's role as coordinator, organizations improve the quality of the experience and reduce friction.

Establishing service consistency often presents a dilemma between standardization and flexibility (Ismail & Kortam, 2024). Standardization is necessary to ensure uniform decisions, but flexibility is needed to handle variations in customer cases. Mature orchestration resolves this dilemma through layered rules: there are stable general rules, clear exception rules, and measurable discretion. Measured discretion means that agents can adjust decisions within certain limits, with reasons that are recorded and can be reviewed. In this way, customers experience humanized service without sacrificing certainty. Without orchestration, discretion turns into wild variations that trigger unfairness between customers. Conversely, rigid standardization without room for adjustment can make customers feel unheard. Consistent, high-quality service emerges when standards serve as a foundation, while adjustments are made responsibly and transparently.

Cross-channel orchestration also requires alignment of performance metrics so that organizational behavior does not conflict with desired consistency (Marutschke et al., 2019). If a particular channel is evaluated based on the number of interactions, it may be encouraged to expedite case closure even if the issue has not been resolved. If another channel is evaluated based on cost savings, it may be encouraged to deny compensation even if the policy allows it. This disconnect in metrics will be perceived by customers as a change in attitude or a change in rules. Metric orchestration means that organizations choose indicators that assess the end result of the customer journey, such as resolution on first contact, time to resolution, and cross-channel repeat contact rates. These indicators need to be combined with quality measures such as information accuracy and policy implementation consistency. With aligned metrics, channel units have aligned incentives to maintain the experience. Service consistency becomes a consequence of a well-designed incentive structure, not just a normative expectation.

The answer to the question of how cross-channel orchestration shapes service consistency can be summarized as a layered causal relationship. Orchestration brings together customer data and interaction history, aligns case handover processes, standardizes the policies that customers test most often, and designs transitions between channels so that customers do not become connectors. Orchestration also requires strengthening agent competencies through common guidelines, governance that resolves conflicting objectives, and performance metrics that assess the final outcome of the customer journey. Service consistency then emerges as a predictable, procedurally fair, and coherent experience from start to finish. When consistency is established, customers perceive the company as a single, trustworthy entity, even when the channel used changes. This framework forms the basis for discussing the relationship between consistency and costs, retention, and customer value in the next stage.

The Relationship Between Service Consistency and Service Costs, Retention, and Customer Lifetime Value

Service consistency is directly related to cost structure because it determines whether a customer request is completed as a single work sequence or turns into a series of rework (Weyers & Louw, 2017). In omnichannel services, costs rarely appear as a single transaction. Costs more often come in the form of accumulated agent time, ticket transfers, repeated verifications, and corrections to inconsistent information. When customers receive different answers across channels, organizations typically pay twice: first for the initial interaction that did not resolve the issue, then for the follow-up interaction that attempts to clear up the confusion. Consistency makes the process more "one-and-done" because agent decisions are based on uniform rules and the same data. At the operational level, this reduces the burden of repeat contacts and minimizes the need for escalation. At the managerial level, consistency clarifies workload forecasting because demand patterns are more stable and handling variations decrease. Service costs are then easier to control without lowering customer service standards.

Service costs in omnichannel often increase not because of the number of channels, but because these channels create redundancy (Dalla Pozza, 2023). Redundancy occurs when customers check the status on the app, then contact customer service because the status is unclear, then receive another message from an additional channel conveying something different. A case that should have been resolved with a single piece of information turns into several overlapping conversations. Service consistency reduces redundancy by ensuring that status messages, time estimates, and resolution steps follow the same logic. When delivery estimates change, those changes must be immediately reflected across all channels so that customers do not need to verify them through other channels. In terms of cost measurement, consistency reduces variable costs per case as well as internal coordination overhead costs. Consistency also lowers quality costs, such as compensation arising from communication errors or procedural errors. Thus, consistency affects costs through reduced duplication and reduced corrections.

Service consistency is related to retention because customers assess relationship risk through service regularity (Ellahi et al., 2024). Customers rarely leave a brand because of a single mistake, but they often reduce their commitment when mistakes feel repetitive and unpredictable. Inconsistent responses across channels, changing rules, or uncertain return processes create mental strain and insecurity. In these circumstances, customers begin to adjust their behavior: they buy less frequently, choose cheaper products, or switch to other providers for more important purchases. Consistency reduces perceived risk because customers feel there is a reliable pattern. This pattern includes clarity of steps, certainty of timing, and consistency of treatment. When this pattern is present, customers are more willing to stick around when operational disruptions occur, because they trust that the disruption will be resolved through clear procedures. Retention grows from experiences that feel orderly, not from fleeting promotional promises. Customer retention and loyalty are essentially built on the accumulation of positive and reliable experiences, with service consistency being one of the main pillars, as evidenced in various studies on the determining factors of loyalty (Hariani & Sinambela, 2020; Irfan & Hariani, 2022).

The relationship between consistency and customer lifetime value can be explained through two often concurrent channels: increased transaction frequency and reduced costs of serving the same customer. Consistency encourages repeat transactions because customers do not need to relearn how to interact each time they switch channels. They can predict the next step, thereby reducing the psychological barrier to repurchasing. At the same time, customers who understand the process and trust the consistency of policies tend to contact customer service less often for clarification. This lowers the cost of service per customer over the lifetime of the relationship. CLV is ultimately the result of the margin stream and the cost stream over the relationship period. Consistency improves both: margins improve through repeat purchases and willingness to accept relevant offers, while costs decrease through reduced rework. Consistency increases the likelihood of cross-purchases because customers are more confident that after-sales service will be as good as the initial experience (Shestserau, 2024). This belief is similar to the trust built through consistent product and service quality, which has long been recognised as the foundation for customer loyalty and long-term value (Irfan & Hariani, 2022).

Service consistency is also related to the quality of customer decision-making when dealing with incidents (Sicilia & Palazon, 2023). Incidents such as delays, stock unavailability, or fulfillment errors are often the most decisive test points. If customers receive consistent explanations and clear options, they can make decisions calmly: wait, replace the product, or request a refund. When explanations are inconsistent, customers tend to escalate, spread complaints, and demand greater compensation because they perceive the process to be unfair. From a cost perspective, escalation prolongs handling time and involves more expensive staff levels. From a retention perspective, procedural unfairness damages commitment, even if the issue is ultimately resolved. Consistency reduces escalation because customers see the reasoning behind decisions and know that any channel will provide the same answer. In CLV calculations, consistently handled incidents often result in restored trust, keeping customers valuable in the long term.

The cost of omnichannel services is also influenced by the design of self-service and human assistance channels (Cotarelo et al., 2021). Consistency here means that customers find the same information on FAQs, chatbots, telephone agents, outlets, and follow-up emails. If self-service mentions one rule while agents mention another, customers will abandon self-service and immediately seek human assistance, thereby increasing costs. Consistency makes self-service a resolution channel, not just a filtering channel. This is important because the cost per self-service interaction is usually lower than the cost per agent interaction. Inconsistent self-service, however, can increase total costs because it creates

additional loops. The relationship with retention is also clear: customers value convenience when convenience leads to certainty. If self-service makes customers feel like they are being "run around," they perceive the company as not respecting their time. Consistency between self-service and human assistance reduces friction, lowers costs, and maintains customers' willingness to return to the same channel in the future. Achieving this kind of consistency requires effective collaboration and policy alignment between various functions within the organisation, a principle that has also been found to be crucial in driving consumer-focused innovation in other fields (Mardikaningsih & Essa, 2025).

Service consistency affects costs through more preventive than curative error management (Buckley & Marquina Feldman, 2024). Many costs arise because organizations discover problems after customers complain, rather than because organizations detect problems early. When cross-channel information is aligned, organizations can put in place consistent warning signals, such as stock discrepancies, invalid addresses, or pending payments. Consistent signals enable corrective action before customers make repeat contact. Costs thus shift from complaint handling to cheaper and more measurable prevention costs. Retention is also aided because customers see the company as proactive, for example through clear notifications, transparent options, and realistic time commitments. In CLV, prevention reduces negative events that weaken relationships, so that the customer value curve is not cut short by bad experiences that could actually be avoided. Consistency, in this sense, becomes an operational discipline that keeps the experience stable through early detection and quick action.

The link between consistency and profitability is also evident in compensation control and revenue leakage (Liu & Liu, 2023). When policies are inconsistent across channels, customers learn that the best results can be obtained by choosing a particular channel or repeating requests until they find an agent who makes the most favorable decision. This pattern increases costs because organizations pay unnecessary compensation and bear the burden of policy abuse. Consistency reduces the scope for such behavior because rules are applied similarly, decision-making reasons are similar, and case records are available across channels. Good consistency still allows for documented adjustments, so that compensation is given to improve service, not to cover up internal confusion. From a retention perspective, uniform compensation policies make customers feel they are being treated fairly, so satisfaction does not depend on "the luck of meeting a particular agent." In CLV, stable procedural fairness increases trust and reduces churn risk, while revenue leakage can be suppressed without hardening the experience. This mechanism demonstrates that fairness and consistency in service build satisfaction, which in turn strengthens trust as the foundation for long-term customer loyalty (Darmawan, 2019).

Service consistency is also related to how companies manage customer time value. Customer time is a cost they bear, and customers factor it into their total value assessment (Rossmann et al., 2020). If customers have to wait a long time due to channel transfers, repeated explanations, or chasing changing statuses, they perceive high costs even if the product price is the same. When customer time costs increase, retention weakens as customers seek more predictable alternatives. Consistency reduces customer time costs through synchronized information, clear scheduling, and easy-to-follow transition rules. The impact on company costs occurs through a reduction in repeat contacts and a decrease in escalation activities. Customers who feel their time is valued tend to be more cooperative during disruptions, leading to faster and cheaper resolutions. In CLV, valuing customer time increases the likelihood of repeat purchases and reduces the need for discount promotions to drive subsequent transactions.

The relationship between consistency and CLV can also be seen from the stability of customer behavior in various phases of the relationship (Lee, 2018). In the early stages, customers need assurance that service promises can be trusted; consistency during the onboarding stage reduces anxiety and accelerates habit formation. In the growth phase, customers begin to combine channels according to their convenience; consistency makes them dare to expand their use of channels without fear of encountering rule surprises. In the maintenance phase, customers assess whether the company remains reliable when their needs change; consistency maintains the loyalty of established habits. In the churn risk phase, minor incidents can trigger a decision to leave if previous experiences have been inconsistent. With consistency, incidents become easier to recover from because customers perceive the company as having a reliable pattern of resolution. This sequence explains why consistency is not just a service attribute, but a value enhancer that shapes CLV over time.

Service consistency also has a relationship with costs through employee productivity (Hollebeek et al., 2023). When guidelines are inconsistent, agents spend time searching for answers, asking other units, or waiting for approval, thereby increasing handling time. When guidelines are consistent and decision support tools are well organized, agents can resolve cases more quickly with the same level of confidence across channels. Higher productivity reduces costs per case, but also reduces quality variation. Lower quality variation reduces complaints and the need for corrective oversight. From a retention perspective, customers experience more consistent and clear service, eliminating the need to contact other channels to verify information. CLV benefits in two ways: a stable experience increases transaction frequency, while lower service costs increase the net margin attributable to customers. Consistency is therefore linked to profitability through an internal mechanism that is often overlooked, namely agent efficiency supported by uniform rules and data access.

In summary, the relationship between service consistency and costs, retention, and customer lifetime value can be explained through the mechanisms of reducing rework, reducing escalations, controlling compensation leakage, and

increasing certainty, which lowers the risk of customers leaving the relationship. Consistency improves costs because it reduces duplication, shortens handling time, and shifts focus from reactive fixes to measurable prevention. Consistency strengthens retention because customers view regularity as a sign of organizational reliability, especially when dealing with incidents. Consistency increases CLV because repeat purchases become more likely, cross-buying makes more sense, and the cost of serving the same customer decreases over the course of the relationship. This explanation positions the omnichannel experience as a relationship economics design, where everyday service decisions shape long-term value streams.

CONCLUSIONS

This research places cross-channel orchestration as the main axis in shaping a coherent omnichannel customer experience. Customers view the experience as a continuous journey, so service consistency becomes an important measure of relationship quality. Effective orchestration brings together customer data and interaction history, aligns cross-channel policies, streamlines transitions between channels, and strengthens governance and performance metrics so that each unit works toward the same end result. When orchestration works well, service consistency manifests itself in the form of aligned information, non-canceling actions, and predictable handling patterns including when service incidents occur.

Service consistency has proven to be relevant to profitability because it reduces service costs arising from duplication of work, repeat contacts, escalations, and corrections due to information inconsistencies. At the same time, consistency strengthens retention by reducing perceived risk and customer effort, making customers more willing to maintain the relationship when faced with disruptions. The subsequent impact is felt in customer lifetime value through two main channels: increased opportunities for repeat/cross-purchases and reduced costs of serving the same customer throughout the relationship. Service consistency is therefore not only a quality attribute, but also an economic mechanism that links experience design and the financial health of the company.

In practical terms, organizations need to place the customer journey at the center of service design, rather than the channel. This means that companies should ensure that customer transitions between channels are seamless, with interaction history carried over, so that customers are not forced to repeat information or “chase” certainty through other channels. Consistency also needs to be built through a single reference policy for all channels—especially on aspects that most often trigger disputes such as promotions, deliveries, returns, and compensation—and ensuring that policy updates are quickly synchronized across systems and agent guidelines. At the operational level, consistency will be easier to achieve if the case handover process has clear standards and performance measures between units do not conflict with each other, so that each channel has an incentive to resolve issues completely, rather than simply shifting the burden. Strengthening agent competencies is also important, not only through training, but also through a uniform knowledge base and decision logic so that the answers to the same case do not change depending on the channel or the agent.

From a further research perspective, empirical studies are needed to examine the relationship between cross-channel orchestration and service consistency, as well as its impact on costs, retention, and CLV in specific industries. The development of indicators that distinguish between information consistency, procedural consistency, and outcome consistency will also facilitate more precise measurements, including capturing the role of customer effort as a mechanism that bridges experience and financial performance.

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