

OMNICHANNEL APPROACH: A UTOPIA FOR COMPANIES?

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INTRODUCTION

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Research shows that 76% of managers consider the omni-channel as a key business priority [Melero et al., 2016], even though only 32% of them consider themselves effective in the coordination of the different channels [Econsultancy, 2012]. Our research goal was to understand the scope of obstacles companies face when trying to launch omnichannel strategy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on literature review we were able to identify two categories of obstacles, all of them internal, and classified them to one of the groups - strategic or operational, as presented on figure 1.

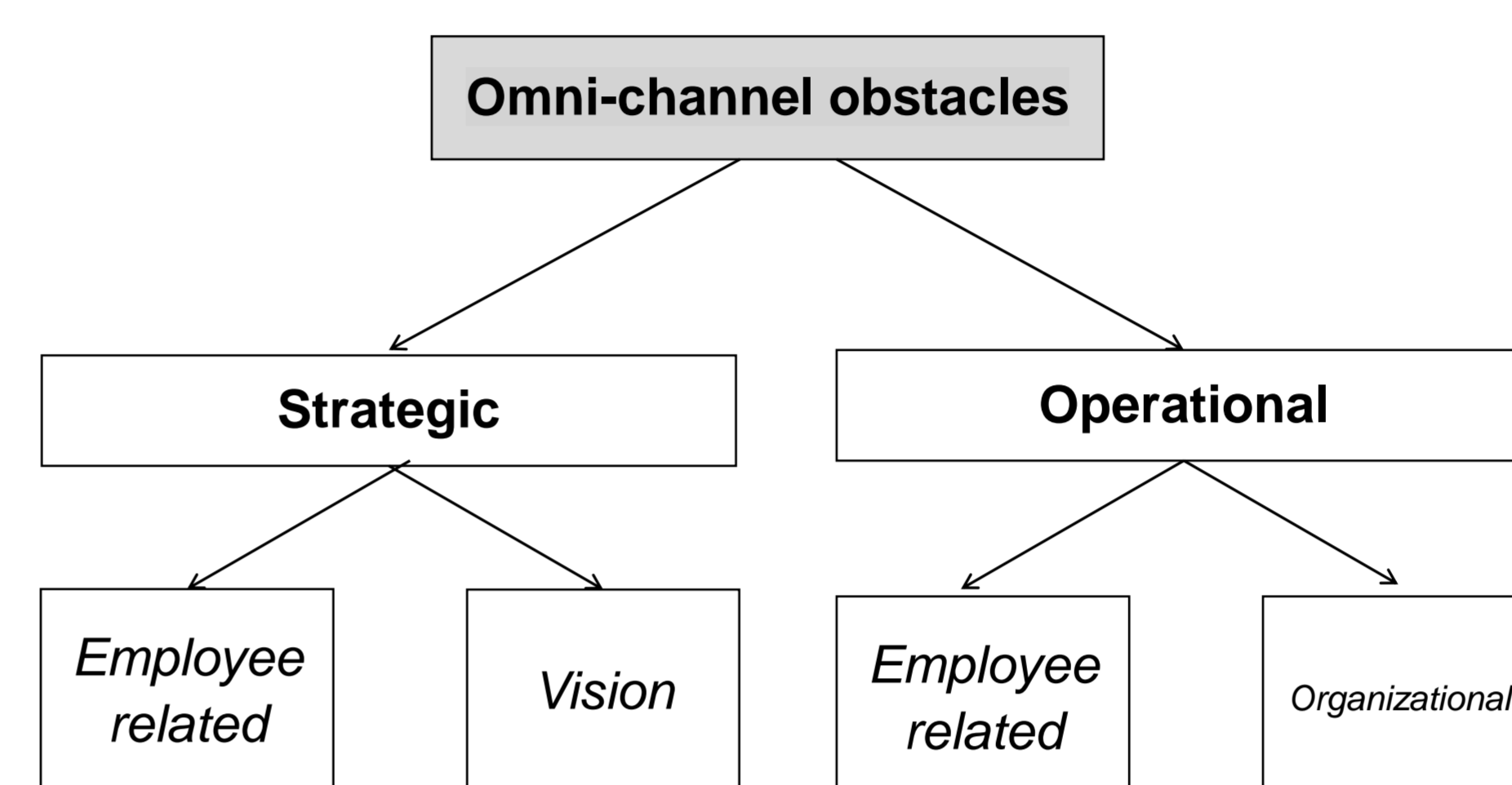


Fig. 1. Internal omni-channel obstacles

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METHOD

We've conducted multiple case research, looking for brands that operate in different industries, represent different levels of channel integration and had different experiences in business retail. We've selected four Portuguese brands: Sonae, Parfois, Bertrand and Vista Alegre. We've conducted in-depth interviews with managers responsible for channel integration strategies, using semi-structured interview scenario.

FINDINGS

Our research confirmed the scope of internal obstacles found in literature (fig.1). However, the results also revealed some new insights, highlighting external, industry-specific obstacles (fig. 2).

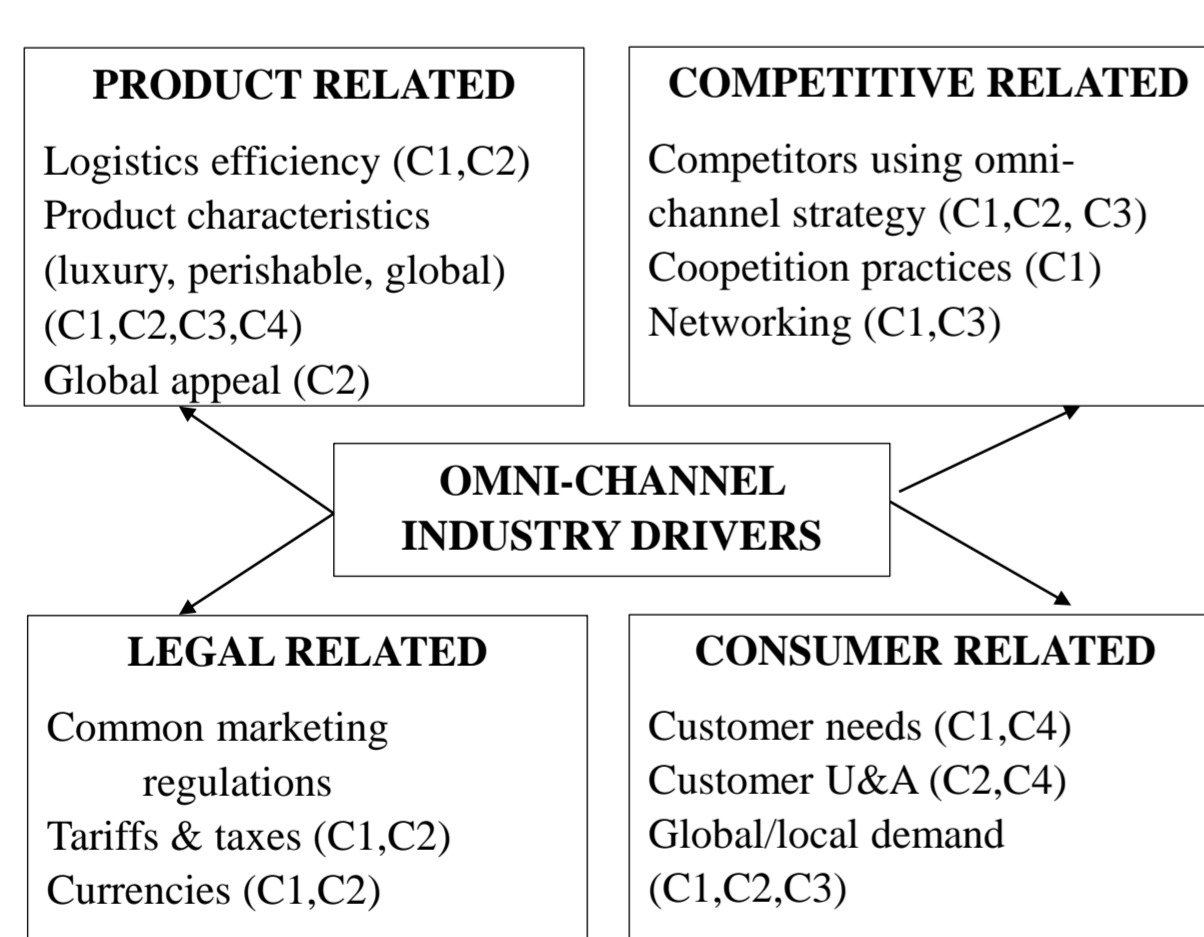


Fig. 2. Industry drivers affecting implementation of omni-channel strategy

Based on both types of obstacles we propose the model showing how external and internal factors affect the evolution of channel integration (fig. 3).

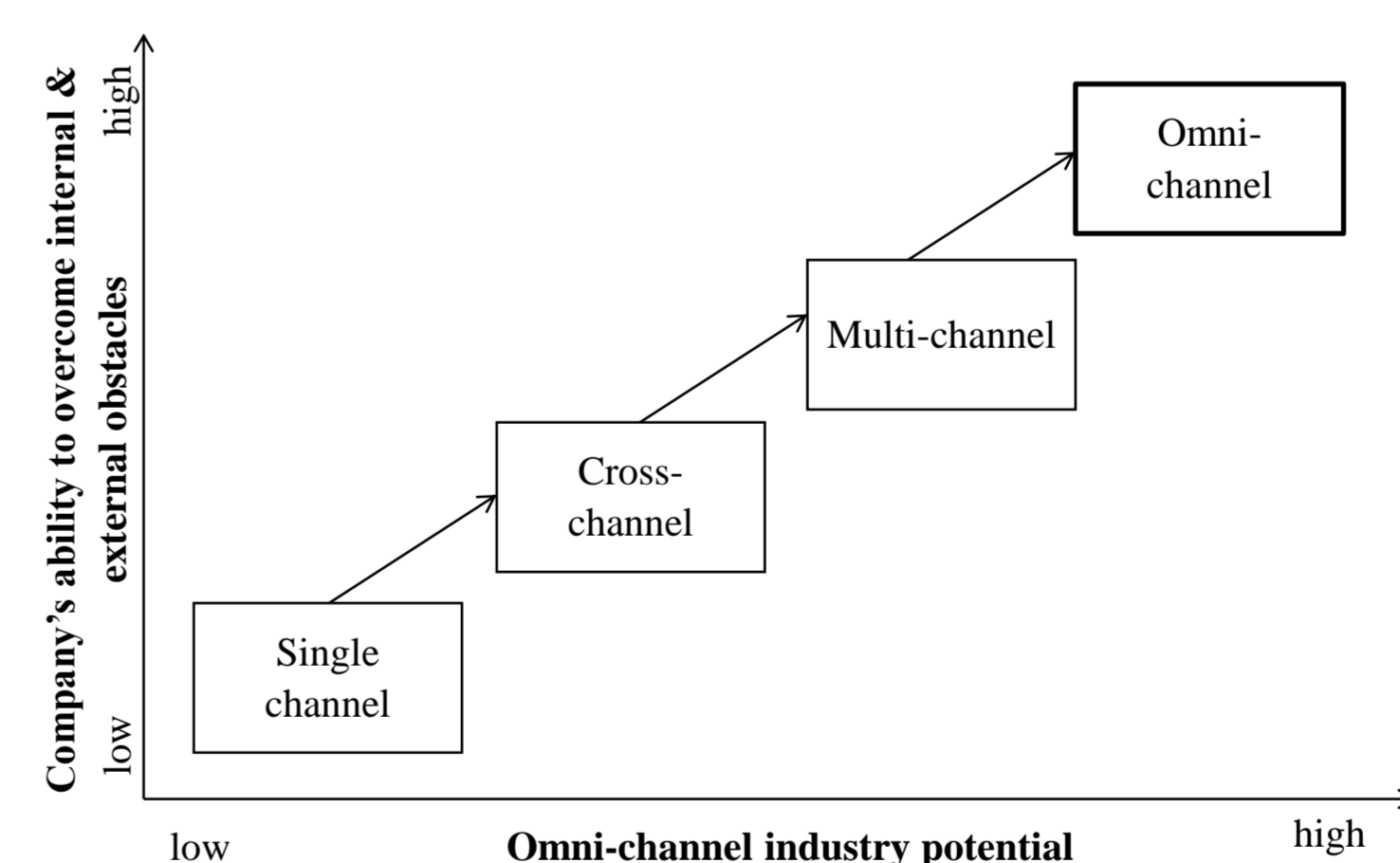


Fig. 3. External and internal factors affecting the evolution of channel integration

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FINAL REMARKS

Our research was dedicated to understanding the scope of obstacles companies face when trying to launch omnichannel strategy. Based on literature review we've identified two categories of obstacles, both of them internal. Our multiple case research revealed new categories of obstacles, external, industry-specific. Our exploratory studies enabled us to propose a theoretical framework showing the scope of industry drivers affecting implementation of omnichannel strategy and the model showing how external and internal factors affect the evolution of channel integration. Both suggested models require verification through future quantitative studies.

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