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An omnichannel approach for value proposition

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Purpose – Service marketing literature suggests that omnichannel approach (Verhoef et al., 2015) can influence engagement metrics such as, among others, awareness, conversions, cross-channel, customer retention, customer lifetime value (Ailawadi and Farris, 2017; Broussard 2016) and can generate a positive word-of-mouth (advocacy) and a higher revisit rate (Sopadjieva et al., 2017). Starting from the point that "a customer is always a co-creator of value" (Vargo and Lusch 2006), firms are trying to combine physical and digital touch points (Verhoef et al., 2015) with the aim of providing the customer a seamless experience with no barriers between channels (Rodríguez-Torrico et al., 2017 Ailawadi and Farris, 2017; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Beck and Rygl, 2015) which lead to greater engagement and value co-creation (Payne et al., 2017; Nordgren and Johansson, 2017). The aim of this work is to analyse how the omnichannel strategy, as a communication proposition, can influence customers' value through the lens of S-D Logic.

Methodology – We conducted a single exploratory case study (Yin, 2014; Gummesson, 2017) and we chose evidences from cultural heritage context, in particular we analysed National Archaeological Museum of Naples, which is one of the top 15 museums in Italy according to Mibac (2017) and one of the top 10 museums in Italy for customers: in 2018 it received TripdAdvisor Travelers' Choiche (Celani, 2018). This museum is a pioneer in the adoption of an omnichannel approach to share contents with audience. We used a customer survey which is an important support for marketing and decision-making in cultural organisations (Hulland *et al.*, 2018) in order to verify the effectiveness and the impact on customers of this new type of value proposition.

Findings – The evidences show that age is actually a variable able to influence customers' perception of omnichannel communication: going forward with age decreases the cross channel and the number of different channels intercepted. Further, in a cultural heritage context, the most intercepted communication channel is the digital one. Both conversion and engagement increase for omnichannel users compared to not omnichannel users.

Research limitations/implications – Digital technologies are confirmed to be the ones able to facilitate interactions among users and between companies and users (Parise *et al.*, 2016), that may improve marketing activities and engagement which leads to value creation (Hollebeek *et al.*, 2014). Further, age too is confirmed to be an important variable which has to be taken into account (Ziliani et al., 2019). Future research could use narrative interviews (Helkkula & Pihlström, 2010) to going more in depth in understanding which features of the omnichannel strategy are the most appreciate by consumers for satisfaction, value co-creation and a better customer experience (Stein & Ramaseshan, 2016).

Practical implications – Today, museums operate in a context in which everything has become more accessible thanks to digital technologies, so that the audience's expectations on the cultural service experience are increasing (Amitrano et al., 2018; Russo Spena *et al.*, 2017; Mosca *et al.*, 2018). Using an omnichannel approach let managers create a detailed "touchpoint mapping" (Stein & Ramaseshan, 2016, p. 17) and create innovative offerings tailored to customers.

Originality/value – This work offers a better understanding of the impact that omnichannel strategy may have on consumers in the cultural heritage context: through the comparative analysis of omnichannel and not omnichannel users, it clarifies the different behavior and attitude of consumers towards multiple communication integrated channels.

Keywords – Omnichannel, value, engagement, S-D logic, cultural heritage

Paper type – Research paper