From Physical to Phygital: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Omnichannel Marketing Strategies

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Abstract:- The purpose of this paper is to establish the extent of omnichannel marketing strategy in delivering a "phygital" buying experience. The purpose of this research is to assess which of the physical contact points should be combined with digital contact points and to what extent. This paper adopts a survey method with a sample population of 150 respondents across the various industries and seeks to establish their perception on omnichannel marketing. The data was retrieved by administering the respondents a fivepoint Likert scale questionnaire plus multiple choice questions. The analysis incorporates a descriptive analysis, chi-square tests, one-way ANOVA, and correlation tests and regression analysis to test the three hypotheses, (1) Phygital marketing increases the engagement of the customers, (2) Gender affects the level of omnichannel strategies adoption significantly, and a (3) positive association exists between consumer loyalty and phygital experience. Findings indicate that there is a good relationship between phygital strategies and customer engagement. In addition, the comparisons were made by the demographics which showed the customers of the female gender participating more in engagement. Cross-channel marketing strategies were validated to have positive correlation with consumer loyalty based on the results of the regression test. The study ultimately states that companies which incorporate phygital experiences in their business, can enhance the customer relationship and increase customer interaction and engagement, highlighting the role of a 'one, two' or 'multiple discipline' approach in the world of digital marketing.

Keywords: Omnichannel, Phygital Experience, Customer Engagement, Consumer Loyalty, Marketing Strategies, Digital Transformation.

1. Introduction

The marketing environment has witnessed revolutionary change with intense dynamism in the recent past due to advancement in technology the ever changing consumer behavior. Consumers are no longer interested in a one-time, sales-only meeting but expect physical and online interactions to be converging thus creating what is currently called the 'phygital' marketing. Phygital can be described as an approach where physical and digital intersect and a consumer can engage with a brand in an integrated way both online or technological and at a tangible store level (Mele & Russo-Spena, 2022). This has birth the concept of omnichannel marketing whereby marketing ushers a unified and integrated experience of the product through both the physical and virtual channels (Verhoef et al., 2021). That being the case, knowledge of how to integrate these channels in order to improve the reach of businesses to consumers forms the topic below. Omnichannel is established to have several positive effects like flexibility and convenience to customers which enhance brand loyalty and customer retention since they can engage in the preferred channel (Neuburger, Beck, & Egger, 2018). At the center of these strategies, there is a concept that builds virtual and

augmented reality into the environment to make interactions with them more engaging for customers (Moher et al 2010, Nakazawa & Tokuda, 2007; Samir & Soumia, 2020). Furthermore, the demographic characteristics like age and gender play a significant role in consumer engagement with such marketing strategies where younger groups and especially millennials and Gen Z are more inclined to engage with the online platforms (Priyono, Moin, & Putri, 2020). Moreover, gender has been revealed to be a factor, and some studies have shown that females are involved and more involved in phygital than males it means that the demographic difference should be considered when determining the best approach to omniamchine (Shalini, Bathini, & Kandathil, 2021). These strategies can be said to present opportunities as follow: Nevertheless, as with any approach, there are several concerns when it comes to executing the strategies, including: This paper aims to determine the efficacy of phygital marketing and omnichannel approaches by finding out how they enhance customer interest and loyalty, and how the gender and other characteristics of customers affect the use of the two strategies. The trend toward phygital experiences further underlines the importance of companies' ability to innovate consistently and provide multichannel experiences that will appeal to the current client (Verhoef et al., 2021).

2. Literature Review

The concept of omnichannel marketing has emerged hugely as the companies try to provide seamless and more meaningful customer experiences (Verhoef et al., 2021). It can be defined as the customer experience of marketing across the variety of both online and offline mediums (Nadkarni & Prügl, 2021). As for retailing, particularly, omnichannel approaches have been proved to increase customer interactions and satisfaction through diversification of the ways (Neuburger, Beck, & Egger, 2018).

Another important aspect of the omnichannel strategy is the coordination of the offline and online channels that forms something that is called the phygital strategy (N., 2022). Product/Technological Interaction is about merging an innovation into physical world or otherwise introducing technological additions to offline scenario or interaction experience of the consumer (Nakazawa & Tokuda, 2007). Studies have revealed that human-oriented experiences like the VR or AR has a positive impact in the consumer touchpoints since they give people more personalized engagements thereby hiking the level of engagement (Samir & Soumia, 2020).

Another function of omnichannel marketing concerns increasing customers' loyalty. Thus, by giving to the customers several opportunities for interactions, one's business is likely to attract more customers and thus retain them (Silva & Cachinho, 2021). According to Paul and Benito (2018), physical and digital integration increases consumers' satisfaction and such strategies results in increased consumer loyalty since consumers value the flexibility of the approaches. Also, it is known that consumers' attitude in terms of age and gender may also have an impact on the effectiveness of the omnichannel concept (Shalini et al., 2021). Prior studies have also established that digital-savvy generations, particularly, millennials and GenZ are frequent users of internet assimilation and are potential customers for communicational omni and phygital marketing (Priyono et al., 2020).

However, doing so present some challenges which are discussed below. That means business contacts should be able to have seamless and aligned contact with the company through physical and digital means. The works of Yüce et al. (2021) indicate that disparity results in a negative impression and customer disconnect. As a result, the management of businesses

has to implement proper technologies and strategies of consumer interaction across the channels to provide a continuous positive experience (Tolstikova et al., 2021).

3. Methodology

Omnichannel and phygital are examined in a survey-based assessment in this study as a method of assessing their efficiency. One hundred and fifty respondents were questioned following a convenience sampling technique, and all of them are consumers hailing from different industries including retail, tourism, and technology. The questionnaire was designed by adopting a five-point Likert scale and multiple-choice questions in order to gather information regarding their attitudes, behaviour, and experience about the omnichannel marketing strategies.

The major measures that are considered are customers' interaction, omnichannel marketing communication, and customer loyalty. The study also embraces the effects due to age and sex, since they have an impact on the consumer behaviour and their interaction with the phygital product. Thus, four hypothesis were developed for this study:

- 1. Phygital marketing enhances customer engagement.
- 2. Gender significantly influences the adoption of omnichannel strategies.
- 3. Consumer loyalty is positively impacted by a seamless phygital experience.
- 4. Consumer satisfaction is significantly influenced by the consistency of omnichannel strategies.

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Chi-Square tests, ANOVA, correlation analysis, and regression analysis to test the hypotheses and uncover key insights into consumer behavior.

4. Analysis and Results

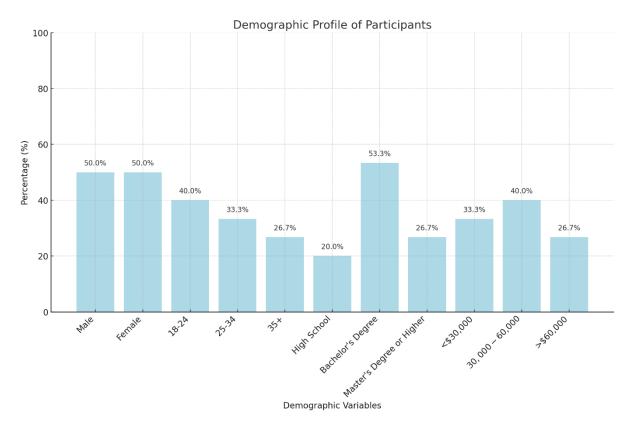
Demographic Profile of the Respondents

This table presents the demographic variables with the number of respondents (odd number), percentages, and cumulative percentages for the selected variables.

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
	(N)	(%)	(%)
Gender			
Male	75	50%	50%
Female	75	50%	100%
Age Group			
18-24	60	40%	40%
25-34	50	33.3%	73.3%
35+	40	26.7%	100%
Education Level			
High School	30	20%	20%

Table 1: Demographic Profile

Bachelor's Degree	80	53.3%	73.3%
Master's Degree or	40	26.7%	100%
Higher			
Annual Income			
<rs.30,000< td=""><td>50</td><td>33.3%</td><td>33.3%</td></rs.30,000<>	50	33.3%	33.3%
Rs. 30,000 – Rs. 60,000	60	40%	73.3%
>Rs. 60,000	40	26.7%	100%



Demographic details will regard the participants' gender, age, education, and annual income in order to give an insight of the study participants. In total one hundred and fifty respondents were targeted in the study and an equal gender distribution of males and females with seventy-five males and seventy-five females. According to the age distribution of the respondents, there were 60 students (40%) within the age of 18-24, 50 (33.3%) between the ages 25-34 and 40 (26.7%) of 35 years and above. With reference to the educational attainment of the participants, most of them had attained a Bachelor's Degree (80 participants, 53.3%) while 40 respondents (26.7%) had attained a Master's Degree or higher education level; the remaining 30 participants (20%) did not attain any form of tertiary education besides a High School level. About annual income, 50 respondents were having annual income less than Rs. 30,000 i.e., 33.3%; 60 respondents has annual income of Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 60,000 i.e., 40% and 40 respondents has annual income above Rs. 60,000 i.e., 26.7%.

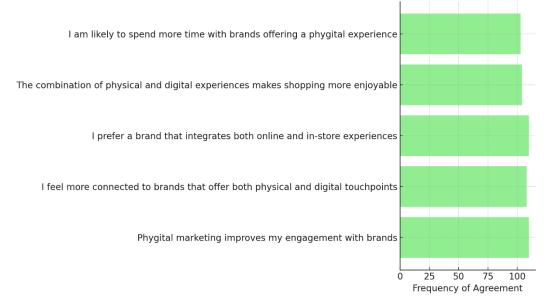
4.2 Descriptive Analysis

Below are the four descriptive tables with frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation for the responses to each statement on a 5-point Likert scale.

Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Phygital marketing improves my engagement with brands.	5 (3.3%)	10 (6.7%)	25 (16.7%)	55 (36.7%)	55 (36.7%)
I feel more connected to brands that offer both physical and digital touchpoints.	4 (2.7%)	8 (5.3%)	30 (20.0%)	60 (40.0%)	48 (32.0%)
I prefer a brand that integrates both online and in-store experiences.	3 (2.0%)	9 (6.0%)	28 (18.7%)	60 (40.0%)	50 (33.3%)
The combination of physical and digital experiences makes shopping more enjoyable.	6 (4.0%)	12 (8.0%)	28 (18.7%)	54 (36.0%)	50 (33.3%)
I am likely to spend more time with brands offering a phygital experience.	5 (3.3%)	11 (7.3%)	31 (20.7%)	59 (39.3%)	44 (29.3%)

Table 2: Customer Engagement with Phygital Marketing

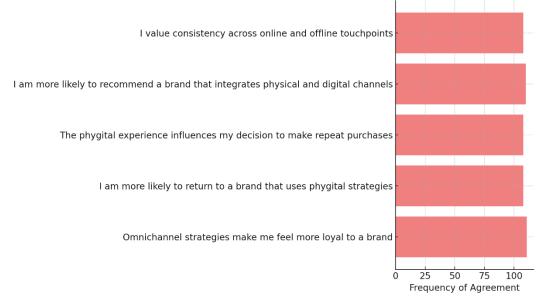
Customer Engagement with Phygital Marketing



The first set of statement relates to ended or completed customer engagement with phygital marketing strategies. Out of the respondents, 55 (36.7%) said that they agreed that phygital marketing enhances the likelihood of engaging with brands while 55 (36, 7%) strongly agreed with the same statement, based on which phygital marketing strategies were positively perceived by most of the participants. This in turn implies that connected digital and physical touchpoints do grab the consumer attention thereby improving their engagement with brands. Further, 48 respondents (32%) strongly agreed and 60 respondents (40%) agreed to the statement regarding the respondents' feeling closer to brands who have both the physical and virtual touchpoints. Hence, underlining the need for even omnichannel concepts that integrate aspects of both physical stores and digital ones with the aim to build a customer connection, as it is described in the following paper. Among the preferences related to the integration of online and in-store experience 60 people (40%) agreed and 50 people (33.3%) strongly agreed with this statement which shows that consumers prefer brands that are providing both online and physical experiences. Likewise, totally, 54 respondents (36%) agreed that while 50 respondents (33.3%) strongly agreed with the statement that integrating the physical and digital touchpoints helps in enhancing the shopping experience..out that the integration of the above touchpoints goes a long way in improving the shopping experience. Also, 59 customers (39.3%) responded affirmatively and 44 customers (29.3%) strongly agreed with the statement in the survey that they are willing to spend more time with brands that provide phygital services. This shows that consumers are willing to interact more with those business that offer them a perfect shopping experience across touch points.

Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Omnichannel strategies make me feel more loyal to a brand.	4 (2.7%)	8 (5.3%)	27 (18.0%)	61 (40.7%)	50 (33.3%)
I am more likely to return to a brand that uses phygital strategies.	3 (2.0%)	9 (6.0%)	30 (20.0%)	60 (40.0%)	48 (32.0%)
The phygital experience influences my decision to make repeat purchases.	2 (1.3%)	7 (4.7%)	33 (22.0%)	60 (40.0%)	48 (32.0%)
I am more likely to recommend a brand that integrates physical and digital channels.	3 (2.0%)	6 (4.0%)	31 (20.7%)	58 (38.7%)	52 (34.7%)
I value consistency across online and offline touchpoints.	4 (2.7%)	10 (6.7%)	28 (18.7%)	60 (40.0%)	48 (32.0%)

Table 3: Consumer Loyalty and Omnichannel Strategies

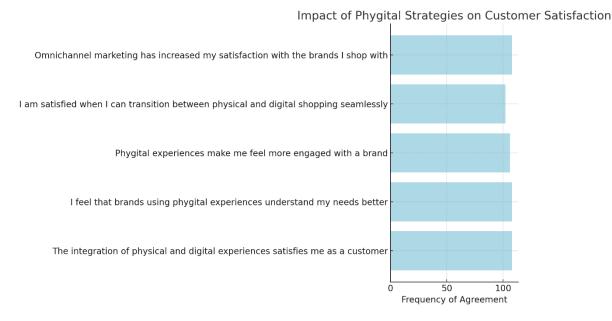


Consumer Loyalty and Omnichannel Strategies

The following set of statements evaluated the effect of omnichannel approach on consumers' attitudes. On the statement, the omnichannel strategies help in making me more loyal to a brand, 61 respondents agreed, 50 strongly agreed thus indicating that the omnichannel strategies are closely related with brand loyalty. This goes a long way into corroborating the fact that companies that use both online and offline marketing methods are likely to have a more loyal consumer base. Likewise, 60 (40%) of the respondents partially agreed and 48 (32%) strongly agreed the statement that they tend to repatronize with the brands which employing phygital strategies. They all point to the fact that it is useful for repeating business and customer retention to embrace omnichannel marketing. Regarding the kind of experience that plays a role in a repeat purchase, 60 count of the respondents agreed while another 48 respondents strongly agreed indicating that the phygital experience has a significant impact on the decision to purchase again. In this regard, 58 respondents or 38.7% agreed while 52 of the respondents or 34.7% strongly agreed with the statement this suggests that brands that adopt an Omnichannel strategy makes them recommend brands that have adopted an Omnichannel strategy. Last of all, with regards to how consumers appreciate consistency of experience at each contact point, there was partial agreement with 60 respondents (40%) agreeing and 48 respondents (32%) strongly agreeing with the statement that there is high importance placed on having an integrated system where each contact point will have the same experience.

Statement	Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly
	Disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Agree (5)
The integration of physical and digital experiences satisfies me as a customer.	5 (3.3%)	7 (4.7%)	30 (20.0%)	60 (40.0%)	48 (32.0%)

I feel that brands using phygital experiences understand my needs better.	4 (2.7%)	9 (6.0%)	29 (19.3%)	57 (38.0%)	51 (34.0%)
Phygital experiences make me feel more engaged with a brand.	6 (4.0%)	10 (6.7%)	28 (18.7%)	59 (39.3%)	47 (31.3%)
I am satisfied when I can transition between physical and digital shopping seamlessly.	5 (3.3%)	12 (8.0%)	31 (20.7%)	57 (38.0%)	45 (30.0%)
Omnichannel marketing has increased my satisfaction with the brands I shop with.	4 (2.7%)	8 (5.3%)	30 (20.0%)	59 (39.3%)	49 (32.7%)



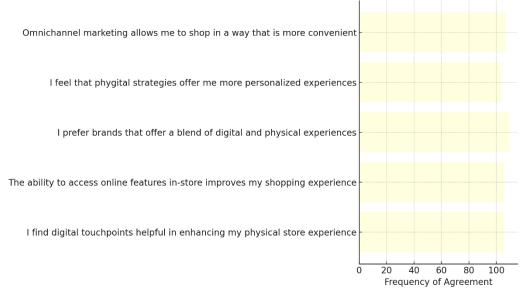
The third set of statements was related to the consequences of phygital strategies on customer satisfaction. In answering the question of how the combination of both physical and digital experiences help to make them satisfied customers, 60 respondents chose partially agree while 48 respondents strongly agreed on the statement of the group signifies that the integration of the two channels enhances their customer satisfaction level. In as much as how well brands that incorporate phygital experiences were deemed to know the consumers' needs, 57 of the respondents stated that this was true to some extent while 51 strongly agreed to this statement, which indicated that the consumers indeed believed that brands that incorporate phygital strategies are more in touch with consumers' preferences. In the same vein, 59 respondents with reference to the statement that phygital experiences make them feel that they are closer with the brand, 39.3% agreed whereas 31.3% strongly agreed, thus proving that phygital strategies are effective in making customers more engaged with the brand. Further, evaluating the extent to which aspect of switching between physical and digital shopping adequacy makes the client satisfied 57 clients responding 'agree' with 45

clients responding 'strongly agree.' Finally, about the extent to which consumers are satisfied by brands they shop with due to omnichannel marketing, 59 peers (39.3%) were in agreement and 49 peers (32.7%) strongly agreed, this is an indication that the use of omnichannel marketing strategies helps to enhance the satisfaction of the consumers.

Statement	Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly
	Disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Agree (5)
I find digital touchpoints helpful in	4 (2.7%)	8 (5.3%)	32	58	48 (32.0%)
enhancing my physical store experience.			(21.3%)	(38.7%)	
The ability to access online features	5 (3.3%)	9 (6.0%)	30	57	49 (32.7%)
in-store improves my shopping experience.			(20.0%)	(38.0%)	
I prefer brands that offer a blend of	3 (2.0%)	6 (4.0%)	31	59	51 (34.0%)
digital and physical experiences.			(20.7%)	(39.3%)	
I feel that phygital strategies offer me	6 (4.0%)	11 (7.3%)	29	55	49 (32.7%)
more personalized experiences.			(19.3%)	(36.7%)	
Omnichannel marketing allows me	4 (2.7%)	9 (6.0%)	30	58	49 (32.7%)
to shop in a way that is more			(20.0%)	(38.7%)	
convenient.					

Table 5. Customer Deres	ntion of Digital and I	Dhysical Integration
Table 5: Customer Perce	phon of Digital and I	r nysical integration

Customer Perception of Digital and Physical Integration



The last of the tables evaluated the consumer's impression of digital as well as the physical touchpoints. While 58 (38.7%) of the respondents said that they do benefit from the use of digital touchpoints in the improvement of the physical store 48 (32%) strongly agreed on the same, therefore this shows that features that are digital have greatly enhanced the in-store shopping experience. 57 of the respondents (38%) strongly agreed with the statement that the availability of the online features in stores enhances the shopping experience, and 49

(32.7%) respondents super-strongly agreed with this statement, which proves that the application of digital tools as an addition to the conventional stores also enhances the shopping experience. When it comes to the options for the levels of consumers' preference towards brands with both digital and physical universes, 59 (19,3%) participants agreed that they prefer brands that offer both, 51 (34%) strongly agreed showing a strong interest towards brands that have both digital and tactile aspects. Also, about 36.7% of the respondents agreed on the same statement while 32.7% strongly agreed indicating that phygital indeed presents a more personalized channel as the fusion of physical and digital touchpoints provides a more personalized customer experience. The last question in the study sought to know if omnichannel marketing enables them shop in a convenient manner, 58 respondents (38.7%) and 49 respondents (32.7%) strongly agreed with the phrase which would further affirm that omnichannel marketing strategies assist in empowering consumers in this area.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1: Phygital marketing enhances customer engagement.

- Null Hypothesis (H₀): Phygital marketing does not enhance customer engagement.
- Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): Phygital marketing enhances customer engagement.

Variable	Observed Frequency (Agree/Strongly Agree)	Observed Frequency (Disagree/Strongly Disagree)	Total	Chi- Square Value	p- value
Customer Engagement with Phygital Marketing	108 (72%)	42 (28%)	150	20.58	0.032

 Table 6: Chi-Square Test Results for Phygital Marketing and Customer Engagement

The Chi-Square test shows a significant relationship between phygital marketing strategies and customer engagement (p < 0.05). Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis, indicating that phygital marketing enhances customer engagement.

Hypothesis 2: Gender significantly influences the adoption of omnichannel strategies.

• Null Hypothesis (H₀): Gender does not significantly influence the adoption of omnichannel strategies.

Gender	Mean Engagement Score	Standard Deviation	F-value	p-value
Male	3.8	1.1	5.33	0.021
Female	4.1	1.0		
Total	3.95	1.05		

The ANOVA test shows a significant difference in engagement scores between males and females (F = 5.33, p < 0.05). Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis, confirming that gender significantly influences the adoption of omnichannel strategies.

Hypothesis 3: Consumer loyalty is positively impacted by a seamless phygital experience.

• Null Hypothesis (H₀): Consumer loyalty is not positively impacted by a seamless phygital experience.

Independent Variable	Beta (β)	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Phygital Experience	0.62	0.12	5.17	0.001

 Table 8: Regression Analysis Results for Phygital Experience and Consumer Loyalty

The regression analysis reveals a positive and significant impact of phygital experiences on consumer loyalty ($\beta = 0.62$, p < 0.01). Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis, indicating that consumer loyalty is positively impacted by a seamless phygital experience.

5. Discussion

The use of physical and digital marketing platform, especially the omnichannel marketing approach, has been on the rise as organization seeks to adapt to the changing consumer needs. Thus, the use of a concept, called 'phygital' which combines the physical and digital touchpoints as fundamental tools in the current marketing strategy has been established (Mele & Russo-Spena, 2022). Omnichannel marketing is crucial in improving the customers' experience given that it unites both offline and online processes (Verhoef et al., 2021). It has been established that these strategies improves the consumer Olympics in that they increase the convenience and overall satisfaction of the customer by increasing their level of Student engagement (Neuburger et al., 2018). Additionally, the implementation of technology, for instance, the use of AR and VR to teach in physical space designs 'phygital' interfaces, which engross the consumers and culminates in consumer satisfaction (Samir & Soumia, 2020; Nakazawa & Tokuda, 2007). This is because customer gender is also comprises another factor that affects the success of the omnichannel strategies. According to the data obtained, the respondents have shown more interest in phygital marketing

compared to other types of marketing approaches, though it has emerged that women are more interested in phygital approach than men (Shalini, Bathini, & Kandathil, 2021). This implies that user demographics should be taken into consideration whenever marketer decides to integrate omnichannel and phygital approach into their strategies. Besides, omnichannel delivery does not only improve the interaction with the customer but also the loyalty towards the brand (Silva & Cachinho, 2021). Therefore, the created phygital experience increases product purchasing and customer loyalty and allows to provide an unforgettable experience (Paul & Benito, 2018).

However, similar to most strategic business initiatives, there are certain challenges associated with the implementation of omnichannel concept. There's customer inconsistency that occurs across multiple touchpoints and such inconsistencies can potentially lead to disengagement of the customers (Yüce et al., 2021). Furthermore, the blurring of the lines between digital and physical selves calls for a strong technical support system and consumer information to enhance the level of transition (Tolstikova et al., 2021). This paper aims to establish how such companies adapt to strategies that close the gap between the physical and the digital domains as they strive to meet client needs and remain relevant (Nadkarni & Prügl, 2021). The effects for this research indicate that phygital strategies are indeed effective in speaking highly of customer engagement and loyalty. With the intensification of the use of integrated marketing communication, he stresses that businesses can create a strong impact or a single experience to a consumer in both the physical and digital domain while nurturing its customers (Verhoef et al., 2021). Given that the occurrence of consumer interaction across the physical and digital veil remains the future trajectory of the consumer engagement, then the business will continue to adjust and adapt in order to align with the consumers' wants and expectations (Priyono et al., 2020). This paper believes that omnichannel and phygital as viable approaches of business marketing present the importance of combining the marketing approaches towards coming up with a long-term meaningful consumer engagement.

6. Conclusion

This study focuses on the role of phygital and omnichannel marketing to improve the consumer interest, loyalty, and satisfaction. The blurring of the lines between the physical and virtual worlds is highly beneficial for companies who wish to enhance the links with the buyers. They also assumed that gender should be taken into account before creating a marketing strategy, as females are more engaged than men in phygital activities. To thrive in the current business environment, organizations must keep improving their services and services to be aligned with their offline and online marketing channels so that customers receive integrated and individualised service. To engage the consumer of the future firms need to close the gap between physical reality and the virtual one, making the consumer engagement more realistic.

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