Creating Phygital Towards the Brand Experience of Home Improvement Stores in Thailand

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Abstract

In an era where digital technology permeates all facets of everyday life, customer behavior and requirements have evolved swiftly, compelling businesses to modify their strategies for continuous and seamless communication and service delivery. This research concentrates on synthesizing concepts and theories pertaining to social, behavioral, and emotional experiences, and introduces a novel conceptual framework to create a brand experience that combines the physical and digital realms (Phygital/Omnichannel Marketing Experience) for home improvement stores in Thailand. This study synthesizes and examines concepts from social theory, behavioral theory, and emotional theory to explain how customer-brand interactions across online and offline channels influence brand satisfaction and loyalty. The study identifies limitations in previous research and suggests enhancements to marketing techniques to better fit with customer behavior in the digital era. The research findings will offer directions to create flexible marketing strategies that competently address market shifts, while also serving as a resource for home improvement stores to cultivate engaging customer experiences and distinguish themselves in a highly competitive landscape. This conceptual study proposes a synthesizing theoretical framework indicating that social, behavioral, and emotional experiences collectively influence the formation of a significant phygital brand experience. This synthesis seeks to establish a basis for subsequent empirical evaluation.

Keywords: Phygital, Brand Experience, Omnichannel, Customer Behavior, Home Improvement Stores

Introduction

In recent years, the integration of digital technology into physical retail settings has profoundly transformed the sector. Customers currently anticipate seamless transitions between online and offline touchpoints during their purchase journeys (Verhoef, Kannan, & Inman, 2015). Consequently, businesses must provide consistent omnichannel experiences to maintain competition. Lemon and Verhoef (2016) highlighted that the

contemporary customer journey comprises interconnected experiences that significantly influence brand impression and loyalty.

The advent of "phygital experiences," which integrate physical and digital interactions, has become a strategic need. Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson (2014) highlighted that efficient omnichannel strategies improve customer convenience and satisfaction by providing integrated cross-platform experiences. Therefore, home improvement stores, traditionally dependent on in-person interactions, must implement phygital strategies to satisfy changing customer demands in the digital era.

Comprehending the impact of social, behavioral, and emotional components on phygital experiences is essential, as these elements directly influence brand engagements and loyalty. Previous studies indicate that the combination of digital technology with in-store experiences has transformed customer expectations across several sectors (Verhoef et al., 2015; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016), highlighting the necessity for additional exploration of hybrid environments.

Traditionally, marketing techniques focused on physical stores and traditional media, constraining outreach to customers. The growth of digital technologies has changed customer behavior as current customers explore knowledge and experiences through both online and physical channels. In the current competitive market, businesses must create seamless services to distinguish their brands and improve satisfaction.

The home remodeling market in Thailand has considerable problems due to fast industry changes and shifting customer behaviors. Customers are progressively conducting online research prior to executing in-store transactions. Consequently, providing favorable experiences at each phase—from information acquisition to post-sales support—has become crucial. To maintain competitiveness, home improvement stores must emphasize the development of phygital experiences that correspond with modern customer needs.

Research Objectives

The objectives correspond with the suggested conceptual framework, illustrating the impact of various variables specifically social, behavioral, and emotional experiences on the evolution of phygital and brand experiences in omnichannel environments.

1. The aim of this study is to examine the factors affecting the establishment of physical contexts in home improvement stores in Thailand.

2. The aim of this study is to investigate the developmental methodologies and marketing tactics that facilitate the promotion of physical experiences in home improvement stores.

3. The aim of this study is to provide practical guidance for home improvement stores to modify their marketing tactics in alignment with consumer behavior in the digital age.

Literature Review

Social experiences influence the creation of phygital

Mele, Russo-Spena, Tregua, and Amitrano (2021, Abstract) The millennial customer journey: a phygital analysis of emotional, behavioral, and social events. The expanded potential for connectivity provides customers with enhanced chances to engage with value propositions. This study seeks to delineate the phygital customer journey with an emphasis on millennials. The research employed a qualitative methodology to examine 50 millennials from Italy. The millennials' customer journey is a cyclical process comprising four phases: connect, explore, buy, and utilize. Every instant shape the consumer experience as a blend of emotional, behavioral, and social reactions. The lines between the physical and digital worlds are blurred when people interact with each other online and offline (i.e., phygital). Millennials change how they act based on their emotions and interactions.

Liu and Lee (2024, Abstract) Phygital is a methodology that combines digital technology with physical retail environments to deliver creative and dynamic customer experiences. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the aspects that affect cognitive, emotional, technological, sensory, and social experiences in phygital stores. The research examined 380 customers in China who had engaged with phygital stores. This study investigates the influence of sub-dimensions of customer experience on recommendation intentions within a phygital store context. These insights offer significant strategic direction for service-oriented stores.

Johnson and Barlow (2024, Abstract) Phygital marketing examined via the perspectives of neuroscience and phenomenology: an interpretivist analysis. The point of this study is to investigate how neurophenomenology can help us understand, design, and rate phygital consumer experiences. To achieve this, we will talk about interpretivist approaches in customer neuroscience. This field uses cutting-edge neuroimaging methods and theories of individual phenomenology to look for and study first-person accounts of phygital experiences. The argument is theoretical, and it takes a standby combining ideas from phenomenology, digital marketing, theoretical neuroscience, and other relevant fields. The study suggests that interpretivist neuroscience, especially

neurophenomenology, gives us a big new way to look at digital marketing experiences. We contend that the examination of first-person experiences in the phygital realm can be enhanced by embracing this perspective.

In conclusion, social experiences are important in the physical world because they build relationships between people in both real and virtual worlds, increase engagement that leads to brand loyalty, allow people to share their experiences, which promotes word-of-mouth marketing, provide opportunities for learning and growth, and allow businesses to easily adapt their strategies to meet the needs of customers in the digital age.

Hypothesis 1: Social experiences influence the creation of phygital.

Behavioral experiences influence the creation of phygital

Batat (2024) Editorial by a guest contributor: The phygital research paradigm: conceptual underpinnings for analyzing customer experiences and behaviors in hybrid physical-digital environments. In hybrid physical-digital contexts, the phygital research paradigm provides fresh perspectives on customer behaviors and experiences. This framework presents numerous potential directions for forthcoming research. This approach could entail utilizing liquid philosophy across many contexts to comprehend how the shifting nature of social systems affects customer behavior in phygital environments. Using methods like phygital ethnography or experiential research could help us learn more about how people act and what they experience in these mixed environments. It is important to deal with the problems that arise because of the subjective nature and conceptual flexibility of the digital research paradigm. Determining solutions to address these challenges will be crucial for enhancing methodological rigor.

Lee, Yu, & Sirgy (2024, Abstract) This paper aims to examine the concept of phygital experiences and propose ideas to stimulate future research on phygital customer experiences concerning customer satisfaction through qualitative research methods. As customer contacts both online and offline escalate, marketers must enhance integrated customer experiences. The writers composed this essay utilizing a literature analysis on phygital experiences and customer satisfaction. This article suggests that the idea of phygital experiences should be expanded by looking at how customer phygital experiences affect customer needs, customer satisfaction, and benefits to the company. The commentary additionally presents many methodological recommendations that may inform future qualitative research.

Deng, Xu, and Lei (2025, Abstract) The increasing prevalence of phygital travel, which integrates virtual and real destinations into a singular experience, has initiated dialogues around the phygital tourist experience. This study seeks to examine the impact

of the phygital tourist experience on tourist inspiration and, therefore, behavioral intention. Data were gathered from 947 tourists in the Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes, a cultural heritage site in the study focused on Western China and analyzed the data using structural equation modeling. The results indicated that the phygital tourist experience, which was improved by flow and memorability, had a positive effect on tourist inspiration, which in turn influenced the likelihood of doing virtual travel.

In conclusion, behavioral experiences influence phygital dimensions, especially with marketing and customer service. The relationship between the physical and digital realms enables customers to attribute their experiences with products or services to digital platforms.

Hypothesis 2: Behavioral experiences influence the creation of phygital.

Emotional experiences influence the creation of phygital

Mele, Di Bernardo, Ranieri, & Spena (2024, Abstract) The study looks at the phygital customer journey (PCJ), which combines digital and physical interactions in customer experience. Input from 60 individuals formed the basis for a qualitative analysis. This approach facilitated an in-depth examination of the PCJ, concentrating on customers lived experiences and perspectives. The study talks about the PCJ's four main parts: hybrid objects (which are tools or interfaces that combine digital and physical elements), blended contexts (which are digital and physical environments that work together seamlessly), circular actions (which are customers' complex emotional responses to physical experiences), and intertwined emotions.

Kumar, Rana, Rani & Rani (2024, Abstract) Intelligent store technologies profoundly influence customers' emotions in a physical setting, such as a smart store. This study evaluated the extent to which these technologies serve as emotional triggers or sources that influence the emotional customer experience (ECX). The study concluded that smart retail technology can enhance customer experience by providing an innovative, seamless approach that saves time and minimizes friction throughout the consumer journey. These elicit feelings such as surprise, delight, or excitement, which induce a general sense of contentment in customers.

Sánchez, Romero & Benhissi (2025, Abstract) This research examines the influence of subjective ambivalence and perceived vulnerability on in-store behaviors, namely choice postponement, store switching, and purchase abandonment. We performed a cross-sectional study including a sample of 290 Tunisian customers and 318 Colombian customers. In the Tunisian sample, subjective ambivalence mediated the effect of human and spatial crowding on in-store behaviors. Subjective ambivalence moderated the impact of spatial crowding on these behaviors in the Colombian sample. In the Tunisian sample,

perceived vulnerability positively mitigated the indirect effects of human and spatial crowding on store switching and purchase abandonment. To enhance shopping safety post-COVID-19, managers may shift to phygital stores to mitigate crowded perceptions and communicate explicit information regarding the safety measures enacted.

Hypothesis 3: Emotional experiences influence the creation of phygital.

Phygital influences omnichannel

Phygital represents an omnichannel component, as the integration of phygital channels enables customers to effortlessly transition between physical and digital experiences. This process includes utilizing an app to order products from an online store and complete payment in-store or employing QR code technology in stores that grants customers immediate access to additional product information. Consequently, customers can select their preferred purchasing method, whether purchasing online or visiting the store to engage with the products directly. Diverse experiences enhance the customer convenience and enjoyment. Furthermore, the utilization of digital technology in physical stores enables businesses to more effectively gather customer behavior data. This data can be examined to enhance the marketing strategy and provide promotions that satisfy customer requirements. Moreover, possessing a distinctive and memorable experience in both digital and physical realms contributes to the enhancement of brand image, fostering customer engagement and increasing the likelihood of repeat purchases. Ultimately, creating a phygital experience can enhance sales potential. This is especially true when promotions connect online and offline channels, such as providing discounts to customers who make purchases through an app and pick them up in-store.

Pangarkar, A., Arora, V., & Shukla, Y. (2022) examine phygital luxury marketplaces to enhance customer engagement. The significance of connections and social interaction in omnichannel shopping has transformed the techniques businesses employ to influence customer purchasing decisions. Phygital is a contemporary omnichannel retail concept that prioritizes the combination of physical and digital components, particularly highlighting the human element to address customers' social and symbolic requirements. The current study has not comprehensively addressed the role of phygital in luxury fashion retailing. 18 in-depth qualitative interviews with senior executives and managers of high-end stores were conducted so that retail managers and practitioners could get advice on how to make growth-oriented plans that take advantage of the opportunities of phygital.

Hypothesis 4: Phygital influences omnichannel.

Omnichannel influences brand experiences

Mishra, S., Malhotra, G., Chatterjee, R., & Shukla, Y. (2023) conducted a study on customer retention via physical experiences in omnichannel stores, focusing on the roles of empowerment and customer pleasure. The study findings demonstrate that cross-

channel integration facilitates maintaining customers. The relationship between consumers and stores is reinforced when customers experience empowerment and satisfaction with the products provided and services.

Phongsayam (2023, Abstract) examined the omnichannel factors influencing the word-of-mouth promotion of the 4U2 cosmetic brand among customers in Si Racha District, Chonburi Province. The study revealed that omnichannel elements influenced the word-of-mouth of the 4U2 cosmetic brand, with a forecasting efficiency of 0.654 (R^2 = 65.4%). The omnichannel factors influenced the word-of-mouth for the 4U2 cosmetic brand among customers at a significant level of 0.05. These factors include the connectivity of channels to customers, the comprehension of customer behavior and expectations, the continuous provision of experiences that fulfill customer needs, and the establishment of engagement with customers.

Suwannahong (2024, Abstract) examined the omnichannel factors influencing the purchasing decisions of Makro customers in Phitsanulok Province. The research results indicated that 1) the examination of omnichannel factors and purchasing preference levels revealed that overall marketing factors were exceptionally smooth, and the overall purchasing decision was very high. Research identified multichannel factors influencing purchasing decisions. Omnichannel factors, such as engaging with customers, comprehending customer behavior, and fostering customer relationships, significantly influenced purchasing decisions at Makro department store with a statistical significance of 0.01. Collectively, these factors could predict purchasing decisions independent of purchases from the Makro department store by 100%, equating to 70.0%. Conversely, the factor of delivering a consistently positive experience did not impact purchasing decisions independent of purchases from Makro department store by 100%.

In conclusion, omnichannel is an essential factor influencing brand experiences. Omnichannel is a strategy that integrates all communication and sales channels in a business to deliver an identical and seamless experience for customers in every engagement or transaction. It enables customers to effortlessly obtain information from many channels, fosters trust through consistent messaging, facilitates prompt and efficient responses to requests, tailors the purchasing experience to align with customer requirements, and cultivates a robust relationship between the brand and its customers. Ensure customers that the brand genuinely comprehends and is attentive to their wants.

Hypothesis 5: Omnichannel influences brand experiences.

Phygital influences brand experiences

The abstract from Satchapapichit's study in 2023 looked at how smell perception, experiential marketing, and customer reaction behavior affect people's likelihood to return

to a spa in Bangkok. With a p-value of 0.01, the study showed that how people perceive smell has a direct effect on their intention to use the service again and an indirect effect through experiential marketing and how customers respond. Experiential marketing directly affects the inclination to repeat services and indirectly influences it through customer response behavior. Customer response behavior directly impacts the intention of consumers to repeat services. Consequently, spa operators employ smell, other stimuli, and experiential marketing to elicit customer responses and encourage repeat patronage of their services.

Karagioumlezis, A., & Spais, G. (2024, Abstract) examined the validation of the proposed model regarding the factors that contribute to a distinctive and memorable purchasing experience for customers in phygital stores. Linear regression and confirmatory factor analysis show that there is a positive relationship between what customers want, what they expect, and their experiences in online shopping. The happiness component enhances relationships with customers, particularly in distinctive stores. Furthermore, researchers identified a positive albeit non-linear correlation between cross-channel integration and uniform customer experiences across various ages and genders.

Krtolica-Lukic, A., Polo-López, M., & Ramírez-Pagès, A. (2023, Abstract) examine the combination of physical and digital media to augment customer involvement. The case study shows how interested customers are in interacting with businesses through physical formats and points out important factors that cause these formats to work well together. The conversion data shows that 27.5% of customers are engaged, with a 43.9% completion rate. This result indicates that there is a lot of interest and engagement with the brand through the physical format, even though there are some technological requirements. Different parts of physical experience have been found to increase engagement, such as making it more like a game, letting people interact with it a lot, and adding brand content. However, it is known that the need for certain technologies, the need to register personal data, and the complexity of the game are major issues that make it challenging for brands to use physical formats in their experiences.

In conclusion, the creation of phygital significantly influences brand experiences by enabling customers to engage with the brand through various online and offline channels, hence enhancing the convenience and fluidity of the customer experience. Utilizing technology to develop suitable experiences that fulfill customer expectations enables brands to cultivate better ties and enhance brand loyalty. Moreover, data derived from monitoring customers across many channels enables businesses to adeptly tailor experiences to fulfill customer requirements. Presenting experiences that integrate both physical and digital elements enhances brand recall among customers. Ultimately,

cultivating a positive experience through phygital integration enhances brand value, leading customers to perceive added benefits from selecting the business's products and services.

<div align="center">Hypothesis 6: Phygital influences brand experiences.</div>

Within this conceptual framework, the phygital experience serves as a mediating variable linking customer experiences—social, behavioral, and emotional—to the outcomes of omnichannel engagement and brand experience. The phygital experience specifically translates customer perceptions and emotions into concrete actions and interactions across physical and digital platforms. It connects early customer experiences with the conclusion brand outcomes, hence augmenting the strategic efficacy of integrated marketing strategies. The phygital experience facilitates these relationships, improving comprehension of how organizations can develop simple and memorable customer journeys that reinforce omnichannel strategy and create sustainable brand loyalty.
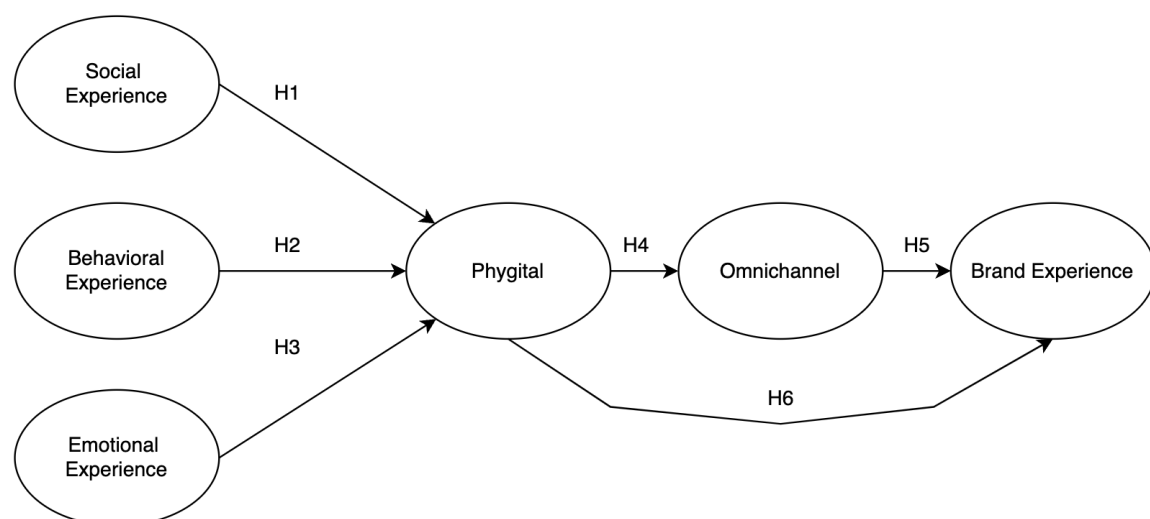
Research Methodology

The proposed conceptual framework indicates that social experience, behavioral experience, and emotional experience each show a direct and significant effect on the development of phygital experiences. Phygital experiences serve as a mediating component that impacts both omnichannel strategy and brand experience. This concept proposes that the omnichannel strategy is both a direct result of the phygital experience and an intermediary conduit that enhances the overall brand experience.

To evaluate the alignment between the theoretical model and empirical data regarding the causal relationship between phygital and brand experience for home improvement stores in Thailand, the researcher employed a quantitative research

methodology to gather comprehensive data that aligns with the research objectives, following these steps:

Step 1: Get ready for the research project by looking at the physical brand experience of home improvement stores in Thailand. This can be done by analyzing and combining ideas and theories, as well as reading relevant literature from textbooks, academic articles, and research done in Thailand and other countries, to create a research conceptual framework.

Step 2: This phase involves the researcher examining concepts and theories and reviewing scholarly literature pertinent to creative innovation management. Thereafter, five experts look over the questionnaire to make sure it is valid in terms of its content, and they also look at the data to find the Item of Objective Congruence index (IOC). The questionnaire is evaluated using a non-sample population of 30 individuals. The data is subsequently evaluated for reliability with Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The questionnaire must get a minimum score of 0.70 to be deemed reliable and acceptable (Cronbach, 1984).

Step 3: Get quantitative research data by sending a questionnaire to 400 people as a sample to learn more about how home improvement stores in Thailand are adding physical elements to the brand experience. The sampling method employed was Convenience Sampling, ensuring a representative distribution of respondents across diverse age demographics and store locations.

Step 4: Verify the gathered data for precision and compliance with the initial agreement. Thereafter, the data is analyzed, and causal research statistics are used to look at the relationships between the cause and outcome variables.

Step 5: Summarize the quantitative research findings, analyze the results, outline the advantages of the research, propose recommendations for future studies, and compose a research report on creating phygital brand experiences of home improvement stores in Thailand.

Step 6: Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will be employed for hypothesis testing to evaluate the correlations among the proposed variables, utilizing the gathered quantitative data. This ensures statistical confirmation of the conceptual framework.

Results

This study is anticipated to produce the following principal contributions:

1. Advancement in Theory

The study presents an innovative conceptual framework that defines the interconnections between social, behavioral, and emotional experiences and their impact on phygital experiences. Consequently, these experiences are asserted to influence omnichannel strategy and brand experience. This approach addresses gaps in existing literature by integrating psychological and experiential aspects into phygital marketing research.

2. Practical Implications for Marketing Strategy

The proposed framework offers practical insights into practitioners of marketing, especially within the home improvement store business. It proposes strategic methods for merging physical and digital touchpoints to establish seamless customer journeys that correspond with modern customer behaviors in the digital age.

3. Foundation for Subsequent Empirical Research

The conceptual model established in this study provides a foundation for subsequent empirical studies. It provides a systematic framework for creating measurement tools and employing statistical techniques, such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), to substantiate the hypothesized correlations among variables.

Conclusions and Discussion

This study presents a conceptual framework that connects customers' social, behavioral, and emotional experiences to the creation of phygital experiences, which then affect omnichannel strategy and brand experience. The framework emphasizes the need to create seamless customer experiences by prioritizing customer-centric aspects. The discussion highlights that businesses proficient in seamlessly merging online and offline experiences can markedly improve customer satisfaction and brand loyalty, particularly in stores, which must perpetually adjust to changing customer behavior.

The proposed framework can effectively inform marketing strategies in the digital age, allowing firms to provide trustworthy multichannel experiences. Formulating plans grounded in multidimensional customer data will enable businesses to address customer demands with more precision. The present study is constrained in scope as it primarily examines the home improvement store business. Consequently, subsequent study ought to encompass more industries and evaluate the model in diverse circumstances to ascertain its precision and relevance on a wider scale.

Recommendations for Subsequent Investigations

To ensure the proposed conceptual framework is comprehensive and efficiently implemented, future studies should concentrate on evaluating and evaluating this framework across other business sectors, beyond just the home improvement store industry. Experiments in many domains will evaluate the reliability and efficacy of the synthesized ideas across diverse situations and can be tailored to address the requirements of each sector. Moreover, subsequent study ought to concentrate on methodically examining the correlation between several marketing channels and client pleasure and loyalty. The application of contemporary data analysis tools and sophisticated analytical methods, including descriptive data analysis and predictive models, will yield insights into customer behavior and enhance marketing tactics to be more precise and adaptive to the digital marketplace.

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