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Customer Loyalty of Direct Sales Members of Beauty Care Products in the Post-epidemic Period - The Mediating Effects of Consumer Experience and Customer Satisfaction

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between direct sales members on customer experience, purchase intention, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty through the members of a direct sales company of beauty care products in the United States in the post-epidemic period. The results of the study found that purchase intention has a significant positive impact on satisfaction and loyalty, satisfaction and customer experience have mediating effects on purchase intention and loyalty.

Keywords: Beauty Care Product, Customer Experience, Purchase Intention, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty

Introduction

For any business, maintaining a good relationship with customers is a key success factor. Customer satisfaction, retention, and loyalty are critical to the profitability and success of a business. However, service-oriented industries are directly impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic, customer retention is more important than ever for businesses (Singh & Rakshit, 2020). The epidemic had a huge negative impact on the global service industry (Li et al., 2020). After the epidemic, all enterprises are trying to keep in touch with customers and ensure that customers revisit or repurchase services, because retention due to the cost is much lower than the cost of developing new customers (Singh & Agrawal, 2019). Consumer satisfaction shows how consumers feel after comparing what they received with their expectations (Hertati et al., 2019). If a customer is satisfied with the value provided by a product or service, he is likely to become a long-term customer. Satisfying the needs of consumers is the goal of every enterprise. In addition to being an important factor for the survival of the company, satisfying the needs of consumers can also increase the company's advantages in competition. Customers who are satisfied with products and services tend to repurchase products and reuse services when they still have the same demand again in the future, which means that satisfaction is a key factor for consumers to repeat purchases, and repeat purchases also account for the company's most of sales (Hertati & Syafarudin, 2018).

In recent years, the health awareness of the domestic people has risen. Not only have they begun to pay attention to sleep quality, exercise and diet, but their awareness of healthy consumption has also continued to rise. Therefore, more people realize that they can protect their physical and mental health without drugs, and are willing to support this approach. This kind of health prevention work in advance can not only prolong life, but also reduce mortality. There are many ways to maintain good physical and mental health, among which physical daily maintenance is the way most people use, and essential oil products are generally valued by consumers. Generally speaking, the research on customer satisfaction and loyalty mainly focuses on the analysis of external customers. As for direct sales members who are both customers and distributors, few scholars have studied the issue of being both an employee and a customer.

Under the impact of the COVID-19 crisis, customers may experience changes in satisfaction and loyalty due to perceived care, protection or safety considerations, which means that under the impact of the COVID-19 crisis, consumer behavior may show unique Or different dynamics, such as exhibiting higher perceived risk or fear (Rather, 2021a; Ramkissoon, 2020). In order to understand this gap, this paper reviews the literature on the drivers, dynamics, and activity results of some customers' identification with brands and products during the epidemic (Büyükdağ & Kitapci, 2021; Hultman et al., 2016; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012), indicating that the credibility of customers' brand perception will affect customers' attachment and loyalty to the brand. However, given that customers usually pay high attention to safety issues, we also expect to know whether the focus of customers' attention will change after the impact of the epidemic (Itani & Hollebeek, 2021).

After the pandemic, many companies hope to cultivate customer recognition for their brands, expecting sales to slowly increase and thus return to pre-pandemic conditions (Krishna & Kim, 2021; Molinillo et al., 2022; Hollebeek et al., 2021). Most empirical studies view customer experience as a specific driver of impact (Algharabat et al., 2020; Harrigan et al., 2018; Naeem & Ozuem, 2021). However, some scholars believe that the strength of the relationship explored will vary due to the degree of participation in different customer experiences, and if the degree of experience participation is lower than the standard, their repurchase intentions will be reserved (Khan, Hollebeek & Islam, 2020), which in turn affects satisfaction and loyalty. Based on the above factors, this study hopes to understand the correlation between the consumption experience, purchase intention, customer loyalty and customer satisfaction of members of specific essential oil products after the pandemic, and hopes to provide important and novel insights through research and analysis as a reference for the industry.

Literature review and conceptual development

Direct sales

Berry (1997) defined direct sales as the taking of orders and provision of consumer goods at private locations other than normal retail establishments in transactions initiated and/or completed by salespersons. According to the statistics of the World Federation of Direct sales, in 1999, the total turnover of Taiwan's direct sales industry reached NT\$35.7 billion, ranking 10th in the world, with 2.81 million employees, second only to the United States. Such impressive achievements are enough to prove that Taiwan's direct sales business has indeed achieved admirable results and achievements in the past 20 years.

Lan (2016) examined the process of network construction and its control effect on distributors through a qualitative study on Taiwan's direct sales industry. The research results pointed out that social networks can not only promote the economy, but also become a medium to penetrate into the lives of distributors. Ferrell (2013) pointed out that the reason for the successful development of the direct sales industry is that in addition to the skills used in sales, the most important thing is to closely connect the company, direct sellers and customers through technology and establish deep interpersonal relationships and friendship.

Purchase intention and customer experience

Since today's world is driven by the experience economy, experience plays a key role in the service sector. The concept of consumer experience first appeared in traditional marketing activities, mainly to meet consumer needs and improve satisfaction (Schmitt, 1999). Subsequently, due to various factors such as technological development, market competition, in order to add value to services, and to optimize brands, research on consumer experience was promoted (Klaus & Maklan, 2007; Kuo et al., 2009; Ren et al., 2016). Therefore, providing perfect customer experience has become the top priority to achieve customer loyalty, gain competitive advantage, create brand equity and generate co-created value (So & King, 2010). From the manufacturer's point of view, customer experience can be defined as the result of customers and services providing different elements and interacting to a certain extent, possibly even knowledge or information sharing (Gupta & Vajic, 2000). From the consumer's point of view, it can be defined as a memory point that consumers can feel and connect it with a lasting memory that consumers will cherish (Larsen, 2007). Godovykh & Tasci (2020) propose a more comprehensive definition, defining experience as the sum of negative to positive. All stimuli encountered in the pre-consumption, consumption and post-consumption stages elicit positive cognitive, affective, and imagery responses, which are filtered through the individual differences of the consumer and ultimately lead to different outcomes associated with the consumer's perceptions. Therefore, this study establishes the research hypothesis:

H1: There is a positive relationship between purchase intention and customer experience
Purchase intention and customer loyalty

Purchase intention is a decision that studies why consumers purchase a particular brand (Shah et al., 2012). Purchasing decision is a complicated process for customers. Usually, purchase intention is related to customers' attitudes, perceptions and behaviors. Purchase intention plays an important role in customers' understanding and evaluation of certain products, and with the value, perceived quality and price influences (Mirabi et al., 2015). In addition, Gogoi (2013) also pointed out that intrinsic and extrinsic motivations also affect consumers in the purchasing process.

Psychological variables determine how the market is determined by group preferences in the market to determine market segmentation, and consumers make corresponding individual decisions based on their cognition of products, personnel, ideology, or other attitudes and media (Alpert & Gatty, 1969; Demby, 1989). Schmitt (1999) pointed out that the senses can stimulate consumers and provide consumers with a sense of satisfaction. At the same time, they also pointed out that the more sensory contact surfaces of a product, the stronger the depth of the product. Solomon (1998) pointed out that hearing in the senses is a kind of word-of-mouth communication, which in turn can create a certain degree of satisfaction. Consumers' knowledge of products comes from actual use experience to some extent, so consumers trust word-of-mouth communication far more than mass media communication.

The Theory of Rational Action (TRA) was proposed by Fishbein & Ajzen (1975), which explains the voluntary behavior of consumers to take activities after systematic and rational thinking through the information they have obtained. Individual behavioral intention is affected by attitude and subjectivity, the more positive the attitude of individual behavior, the higher the behavioral intention. On the other hand, subjective behaviors are affected by factors such as social customs, opinions of others, or pressure. Its research found that consumers' evaluations of related products and brand attitudes, combined with the motivating effect of external factors (such as product experience, etc.), become consumers' purchase intentions. When rational consumers consider buying, they will rationally judge whether the value of the product they believe is higher than the price paid, and make a decision whether to buy (Dickson & Sawyer, 1990). Based on the above literature review data, how the degree of consumer experience involvement affects loyalty is the focus of this study, so this study establishes the research hypothesis:

H2: There is a positive relationship between customer experience and customer
Purchase intention and customer satisfaction

The real purpose of consumer satisfaction research is to predict consumers' behavioral responses to post-purchase. Therefore, people began to study consumer satisfaction from the perspective of behavior. One point of view is that the impact of consumer satisfaction on shopping intention is indirectly through attitude. Oliver (1980) found that a high level of satisfaction can increase consumers' preference for the product, thereby increasing the intention to repeat purchases of the brand's products. Bearden & Teel (1983) found in the study of car service that the influence of consumer satisfaction on purchase intention is mediated by attitude. However, some scholars believe that consumer satisfaction has a direct effect on purchase intention. For example, the survey of TARP (1979) found that a large proportion of dissatisfied consumers are unwilling to buy the same brand of products again.

LaBarbera & Mazursky (1983) found that customer satisfaction has a considerable impact on purchase intention, but the strength of the impact of customer satisfaction on purchase intention will decrease as the level of customer loyalty increases. Oliver & Swan (1989) indicated that customer satisfaction has a great influence on purchase intention. There are also some experiments in the field of services to prove that there is a direct relationship between customer satisfaction and purchase intention. Cronin & Taylor (1992) found in their research on banking, catering and other service industries that customer satisfaction is one of the important variables affecting purchase intention. Therefore, this study establishes the research hypothesis:

H3: There is a significant positive relationship between purchase intention and customer satisfaction
Customer satisfaction and customer loyalty

Engel (1990) defined the satisfaction of brand products as the result of consumers' subjective evaluation that the selected brand products meet or exceed their expectations. He divides consumers' satisfaction with brand products into obvious satisfaction and potential satisfaction. The former refers to the satisfaction with the product produced by the consumer's comparison of expectations and performance, and the evaluation of product performance. This is the result of brand product evaluation on the basis of fine processing. The latter refers to the impossibility for consumers to make a clear comparison between expectations and performance when lacking the motivation or ability to evaluate the brand's products. This kind of satisfaction that is not realized by consumers is called potential satisfaction, which is the result of implicit evaluation.

Blomer & Kasper (1995) pointed out that obvious satisfaction directly affects brand loyalty, because satisfaction is based on a clear evaluation of brand affirmation, which makes consumers commit to the brand, thus generating brand loyalty, so satisfaction and brand loyalty has a positive correlation. Potential satisfaction is based on the implicit evaluation of brand choice. Consumers just accept the brand and do not necessarily have commitment to the brand. Although there is a positive correlation between potential satisfaction and brand loyalty, there is no obvious strong relationship between satisfaction and brand loyalty. In addition, the study also found that the motivation and ability to evaluate brand choices has a direct impact on brand loyalty. Therefore, this study establishes the research hypothesis:

H4: There is a significant positive relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty
The impact of customer satisfaction on purchase intention and customer loyalty

Consumers have a preference to buy a particular brand due to product attributes, image, quality, features, and price, and usually commit to buying it and recommending it to others. Due to the relationship of brand loyalty, they will change from occasional purchases to regular purchases and increase the frequency of purchases. Brand loyalty is very important for organizations to increase sales, command premium prices, and retain customers. There is a significant difference between repurchase rate and brand loyalty because repurchase rate is the result of actions that demonstrate loyalty (Bloemer, 1995). Brand loyalty occurs when customers express a significant relationship with a brand through repeat purchases. This loyalty will be beneficial to the firm as end customers will agree to purchase at a premium price and may also participate in introducing new customers to the firm (Reichheld, 1990). Brand loyal customers do not evaluate brands, they just buy with confidence based on their experience (Sidek, Yee & yahyah, 2008). Some organizations try to get loyal customers by coercing customers or luring customers with low prices, but eventually lose customer loyalty; High customer loyalty (Grönholdt et al, 2010).

Consumers' purchase intentions may be purchased on impulse, partly planned, or completely planned. In impulse buying behavior, the consumer makes an instant decision and buys the product that is more attractive to him. In some programs, the consumer selects a product type and style and selects a brand. In a fully planned purchase, the consumer has already selected the product and brand to purchase (Engel et al, J., 1995). In addition, there are also research literatures mentioning that purchase intention will affect future brand loyalty (Gogoi, 2013). It can be seen from the above that consumers' purchase intention is affected by problem identification, information search, alternative plan evaluation, purchase and post-purchase behavior, and consumers' purchase intention also depends on brand awareness and brand loyalty (Engel et al, J., 1995), in addition, loyalty will also be affected by brand awareness, consumer confidence, satisfaction and consumer purchase intention (Aaker, D., 1990). Based on the above literature review, this study establishes the research hypothesis:

H5: There is a significant positive relationship between purchase intention and customer loyalty

H6: There is a mediating effect of customer satisfaction on purchase intention and customer loyalty
Customer experience and customer satisfaction

Schmitt (1999) proposed that after customers observe or participate in events, they will feel the stimulation to induce their motivation, generate consumption behavior or think and identify, and enhance the value of products as the concept of experience marketing.

What customers want is to make their senses dizzy and touch their hearts, and the products that stimulate their minds, experiences are usually not spontaneous. Gilmore (1998) mentioned the concept of experiential marketing in the book "Experience Economy", pointing out that a company consciously uses services as the stage and commodities as props to integrate consumers into it and create memorable experiences for consumers.

A series of activities carried out. McLuhan (2000) pointed out that everyone's perception of experience is different, and experience comes from the individual's emotions and interactions with things.

Kotler (1997) pointed out that customer satisfaction comes from the expectations and expectations before the purchase of the product, and the degree of pleasure or disappointment formed after the comparison of the actual performance of the product's functional characteristics or service performance after the purchase. There will be positive satisfaction and negative satisfaction. Tehrani (2002) pointed out that enterprises can continue to build relationships with customers in a humane way to achieve customer satisfaction. Novak (2002) proposed that from an industry point of view, customer satisfaction is a leading indicator of wealth creation. In addition, Swan & Combs (1976) pointed out that product performance includes operational performance and expressive performance of products. The former refers to whether the physical performance of the product meets the actual needs (called physical performance), and the latter refers to the psychological satisfaction brought by the product (called psychological performance). When the operational performance of the product is less than the original expectation, consumers may be dissatisfied; but when the operational performance of the product is greater than the original expectation, consumers are not necessarily satisfied, only when the expressive performance is equal to or exceeds the original expectation. Consumers can only be satisfied when their expectations are met.

Therefore, from the point of view of the operational performance and expressive performance of the product, to satisfy the customer, the product must meet the customer's expectations both in operation and in expression. Whether the degree of involvement in customer experience (including product and service experience) has an impact on customer satisfaction is the focus of this research. Therefore, this study establishes the research hypothesis:

H7: There is a significant positive relationship between customer experience and customer satisfaction

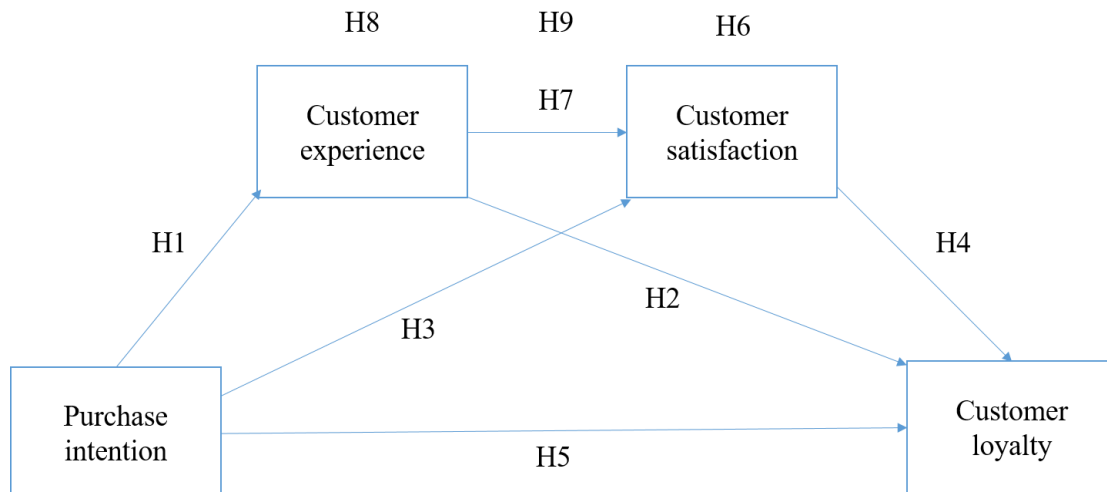
H8: There is a mediating effect of customer experience on purchase intention and customer loyalty

H9: There is a mediating effect of customer experience and customer satisfaction on purchase intention and customer loyalty

Methodology

Proposed research framework and assumptions

This study explores the relationship between the purchase intention and loyalty of beauty care product direct sales members after the pandemic, and proposes a research framework (Figure 1) based on the research purpose and related literature, and uses Pearson product difference correlation analysis to understand the situation, and The situation of the tested samples in various aspects of purchase intention, satisfaction, consumption experience and loyalty after the pandemic. Then, using the PROCESS software developed by Hayes (2013), using the Model 6 in the plug-in model to conduct bootstrap analysis (Bootstrap) repeated 5000 times of sampling analysis, in order to conduct the mediation effect of customer experience on purchase intention and customer loyalty, And the test of the mediating effect of customer satisfaction on purchase intention and customer loyalty. The independent variable is purchase intention, the mediating variables are customer experience and customer satisfaction, and the dependent variable is customer loyalty. The research structure diagram is shown in Figure 1 below.



Figur1 Propose framework

According to the above research structure diagram, research background and research motivation, the hypotheses are established as follows:

- H1: There is a positive relationship between purchase intention and customer experience
- H2: There is a positive relationship between customer experience and customer loyalty
- H3: There is a positive relationship between purchase intention and customer satisfaction
- H4: There is a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty
- H5: There is a positive relationship between purchase intention and customer loyalty
- H6: There is a mediating effect of customer satisfaction on purchase intention and customer loyalty
- H7: There is a positive relationship between customer experience and customer satisfaction
- H8: There is a mediating effect of customer experience on purchase intention and customer loyalty
- H9: There is a mediating effect of customer experience and satisfaction on purchase intention and customer loyalty

Sampling and data collection

This study aims to explore the views of beauty direct sales members on customer loyalty after the pandemic. Therefore, a questionnaire is designed and distributed in the form of a Google form. The objects are direct sales members of American multinational companies. Under the constraints of limited manpower, time and budget, this study adopts the convenience sampling method, and distributes questionnaires to the members of the case company. A total of 329 samples were distributed, 309 samples were recovered, and 309 valid samples were recovered, with an effective recovery rate of 94%. The structure of the respondents in this study consists of five items: region, age, marriage, education, and monthly income, and four items of sample characteristics, including the monthly purchase amount of essential oils, membership nature, membership years, and product users. The information is as follows in Table 1:

Table1 Background Information of the Respondents (n=309)

Variables	Item	Samples
Region	Taiwan	287 (87.2%)
	Oversee	30 (12.8%)
Age	Less than 30 years old	33 (10.0%)
	31-40 years old	86 (26.1%)
	41-50 years old	130 (39.5%)
	More than 51 years old	80 (24.3%)
Education	High school	72 (21.8%)
	Bachelor	201 (61.1%)
	Master	56 (17.0%)
Marriage	Single	137 (41.6%)

	Married	192 (58.4%)
Monthly income	Less than 20,000	36 (10.9%)
	20,001-40,000	128 (38.9%)
	40,001-80,000	122 (37.1%)
	80001-120000	28(8.5%)
	More than 120,001	15 (4.6%)
Amount of essential oils purchased per month	Less than 3,000	152(46.2%)
	3,001-4,000	99(30.1%)
	4,001-5,000	41(12.5%)
	5.001-6,000	17(5.2%)
	More than 6,000	20(6.1%)
Types of membership	Full time distributor	28(9%)
	Part time distributor	87(26.4%)
	Customer	214(65.0%)
Years of membership	Less than 1 years	161(48.9%)
	1.1-3	105(31.9%)
	3.1-5	39(11.9%)
	More than 5years	24(7.3%)
Product user	Own	270(82.1%)
	Families	51(15.5%)
	Others	8(2.4%)

Source: Compiled by this study

In addition, in the question of "How to get in touch with and learn about the brands and products of essential oil companies", 90% of the members learned about them through relatives and friends, and only 10% learned about them through advertisements or other channels.

Among the multiple-choice items of "The most important considerations for becoming a full-time or part-time direct sales member", the most important considerations are product use needs and income increase. The details are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Consideration of full-time and part-time job for direct sales members

		Respondents		Percentage of Observations
		N	%	
Factors of part time	start own business	63	10.0%	19.4%
	Product use requirements	269	42.6%	82.8%
	Increase income	131	20.8%	40.3%
	Make friends	55	8.7%	16.9%
	Free working hours	60	9.5%	18.5%
	Inspire your potential ability	37	5.9%	11.4%
	Joined due to human pressure	16	2.5%	4.9%
Total		631	100.0%	194.2%

Source: Compiled by this study

In the multiple-choice item of "The most frequently discussed topics when contacting or meeting senior members", the most frequently discussed topics are product functions, work status, performance progress, and problems faced in order. The details are shown in Table 3 shown.

Table 3 Frequently discussed topics between direct sales members and superior members

		Respondents		Percentage of Observations
		N	%	
Topics most frequently discussed by superior members	Work status	118	16.7%	36.2%
	Performance progress	96	13.6%	29.4%
	Problems faced	89	12.6%	27.3%
	Social current affairs	47	6.6%	14.4%
	Family children	69	9.8%	21.2%
	Competition	12	1.7%	3.7%
	Product Features	276	39.0%	84.7%
Total		707	100.0%	216.9%

Source: Compiled by this study

Survey instrument

Based on the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, this study thoroughly reviewed the previous literature, adopted the relevant theoretical framework of previous studies, and selected key theoretical components suitable for the research background and research scope to form the content of the questionnaire. This study adopts the questionnaire survey method, which has four parts. The first part is purchase intention, the second part is customer satisfaction, the third part is customer experience, and the fourth part is customer loyalty. The first part of the scale of purchase intention refers to the data of Gogoi (2013) and Kotler & Armstrong (2010). The second part of the customer satisfaction scale is modified with reference to the measurement items of Opata et al. (2021) and Parry et al. (2021). The third part of the customer experience scale is modified from the 12-item scale of Kumar & Kaushik (2018). The fourth part of the customer loyalty scale is modified from Kumar & Kaushik (2017). Through exploratory factor analysis on the scale data, after deleting inappropriate items, the Cronbach α values of all dimensions are higher than 0.8 (purchase intention=0.930, customer satisfaction=0.957, customer experience=0.952, customer loyalty=0.962), indicating that its internal consistency is good and belongs to high reliability.

This study uses SPSS software to conduct confirmatory factor analysis on 309 sample data. The results show that the Bartlett test values corresponding to each dimension are significant at the level of 0.001, and the overall KMO value of the measurement scale is greater than 0.5, indicating that this study of the data are suitable for factor analysis. At the same time, the accumulated variance explained by the common factors extracted by each facet is greater than 50%, which proves that the sample data has good construct validity. The factor standard loads of all measurement indicators on their respective latent variables are between 0.7171 and 0.954, all of which are greater than the requirement of 0.5, indicating that the scale has good convergent validity.

Analysis and results

Case introduction

dōTERRA was established in Utah, USA in 2008, and established a Taiwan branch in 2009. It is a multinational multi-level marketing company dedicated to developing the essential oil industry and promoting aromatherapy. Its product line includes professional pure adjustment grade essential oils, nutritional health products, essential oil skin care products, salon-level hair care products, and household cleaning and daily necessities. Direct sales members are located in more than a dozen countries around the world, with more than 10 million members, including more than 60% full-time and part-time dealers. In 2017, it was selected as the best medium-sized enterprise employer in the United States by Forbes magazine for two consecutive years.

dōTERRA's sales model is based on What (purpose), Why (reason), and How (execution), such as developing customers without a store, making potential customers aware of their needs and creating a buying environment.

At the same time, through users sharing experiences and demonstrating products, help people identify the gap between their current overall health and desired health goals, clearly show that they will be shown something that will change their lives, and let them know that at the end of the demonstration, there will be an opportunity to buy from time to time. According to the International Standard Organization (ISO), SOP has the advantages of operability and transferability. Therefore, in the sales guide of dōTERRA, the standard operating procedure will also be used to allow each member can easily work according to the table to achieve sales goals. For example, start with a strong opening that allows attendees to connect and express their intent to serve them while eliminating external distractions such as turning off the TV and getting everyone in the same room. Then control the mood by getting ready and speaking with confidence and enthusiasm. Avoid filler words like "um," "uh," and "you know," and emphasize selling a solution to a problem, not a product. Finally ask each attendee why they are here and find out what answers they are looking for so that the things that are most important to them can be covered in the presentation.

Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis of variables

Table 4 is the descriptive statistics and correlation analysis of each variable, and the mean, standard deviation, Pearson correlation coefficient and so on of the main variables are obtained. There is a significant positive correlation between purchase intention and customer satisfaction, purchase intention and customer experience, and purchase intention and loyalty. There is a significant positive correlation between customer satisfaction and customer experience, and a significant positive correlation between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Customer experience is significantly positively correlated with customer loyalty. Therefore, the significance of the correlation between the variables selected in this study is consistent with theoretical expectations, indicating that further mediating effect analysis can be carried out. The analysis results show that there is a positive relationship between purchase intention and customer experience (R=0.500), thus supporting the research hypothesis H1. There is a positive relationship between customer experience and customer loyalty (R=0.528), thus supporting the research hypothesis H2. There is a positive relationship between purchase intention and customer satisfaction (R=0.440), thus supporting research hypothesis H3. Customer satisfaction has a positive relationship with customer loyalty (R=0.504), thus supporting the research hypothesis H4. There is a positive relationship between purchase intention and customer loyalty (R=0.521), thus supporting the research hypothesis H5. There is a positive relationship between customer experience and customer satisfaction (R=0.515), thus supporting research hypothesis H7.

Table 4 Mean, standard deviation and correlation coefficient of each variable (n=309)

Dimension	Mean	Standard deviation	Purchase intention	Customer satisfaction	Customer experience	Customer loyalty
Purchase intention	4.1491	0.81336	-			
Customer satisfaction	4.1810	0.76362	0.440**	-		
Customer experience	4.2695	0.74242	0.500**	0.515**	-	
Customer loyalty	3.8556	0.88024	0.521**	0.504**	0.528**	-

Note: two-tailed test, **p<0.01, *p<0.05

Linear regression analysis

The next step is to conduct a stepwise linear regression analysis with purchase intention, customer satisfaction and customer experience as independent variables and customer loyalty as a dependent variable. After the aforementioned data analysis and processing, this study then uses hierarchical regression analysis to further confirm whether the correlation between variables is significant. The demographic variables in this study include region, age, education, marital status, monthly income, and the monthly purchase amount of essential oils, membership nature, membership years, product users as control variables, and purchase intention as independent variables.

Customer loyalty is the dependent variable, customer satisfaction and consumer experience are the mediating variables. Hierarchical regression analysis is carried out, and the analysis results are shown in Table 5.

As shown in the hierarchical regression analysis in Table 5, the purchase intention ($\beta=0.44$, $p < 0.005$) has a significant positive correlation with customer satisfaction, and the purchase intention ($\beta=0.500$, $p < 0.001$) also has a significant positive correlation with customer experience. Customer satisfaction ($\beta=0.515$, $p < 0.001$) has a significant positive correlation with customer experience, and customer satisfaction ($\beta=0.504$, $p < 0.001$) has a significant positive correlation with customer loyalty. In the regression model, the coefficients of the independent variables (purchase intention, customer satisfaction, and customer experience) on the dependent variable (customer loyalty) are significant.

Table 5 Regression analysis of purchase intention on customer loyalty (n=309)

Variables	Customer loyalty					
	demographic variables	A independent variables	B Mediating variable	A*B interaction	C Mediating variable	A*C interaction
Control variable						
Region	-0.024	-0.018	-0.032	-0.056	-0.019	-0.037
Age	-0.028**	-0.073	-0.088	-0.167	-0.044	-0.110**
Education	-0.089	-0.094	-0.090	-0.077**	-0.101	-0.089
Marriage	0.023	0.024	0.014	0.037	-0.008*	0.050
Monthly income	0.049	0.112*	0.049	0.041	-0.015*	0.004
Amount of essential oils purchased per month	0.139*	0.018**	0.171**	0.055	0.150**	0.033
Types of membership	-0.265**	-0.359**	-0.344**	-0.189**	-0.134**	-0.208**
Years of membership	0.255**	0.358**	0.329**	0.220**	0.311**	0.182**
Product user	0.082	0.054	0.065	0.045	0.108*	0.116
Independent variable						
Purchase intention		0.464**	0.391**	0.081	0.268**	0.203**
Mediating variables						
Customer satisfaction			0.298**	-0.313**		
Customer experience					0.539**	-0.098**
R ²	0.302	0.215	0.267	0.340	0.376	0.437
Adj-R ²	0.280	0.213	0.265	0.336	0.374	0.434
F	13.655**	88.771**	118.298**	83.269**	195.113**	125.534**
ΔF		68.133	35.029	57.624	69.579	91.402

Note: two-tailed test, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Analysis of the mediating effect of customer experience and customer satisfaction on purchase intention and customer loyalty

This study uses module 6 (Hayes, 2013; Hayes, 2017) in the SPSS PROCESS macro to calculate the confidence interval obtained by the bootstrap method 5,000 times as the prediction and verification of the mediation effect, and analyzes the hypotheses H6 and H8 of this study to predict customer experience and customer satisfaction will mediate the purchase intention and customer loyalty. The results are shown in Table 6. Customer experience and customer satisfaction have significant indirect effects on purchase intention and customer loyalty. The mediating variable (customer satisfaction) does not contain 0 in the 95% confidence interval, respectively CI = [0.0952, 0.1249], and P=0.000<0.001, showing that customer satisfaction has a mediating effect on the purchase intention and customer loyalty, so it supports the hypotheses H6. The mediating variable (customer experience) does not contain 0 in the 95% confidence interval, respectively CI = [0.1289, 0.1628], and P=0.000<0.001, showing that customer experience has a mediating effect on the purchase intention and customer loyalty, so it supports hypotheses H8. The mediating variables (customer experience and customer satisfaction) does not contain 0 in the 95% confidence interval, CI = [0.0384, 0.0533], and P=0.000<0.001, showing customer experience and customer satisfaction have a mediating effect on purchase intention and customer loyalty, thus supporting hypothesis H9.

Table 6 Analysis of the mediating effect between customer satisfaction and customer experience

Mediating variables	Mediating effect	Standard error (BootSE)	P value	Lower limit confident interval (BootLLCI)	Upper limit confident interval (BootULCI)
The impact of customer satisfaction on purchase intention and customer loyalty	0.1098*	0.0075	0.000	0.0952	0.1249
The impact of customer experience on purchase intention and customer loyalty	0.1456*	0.004	0.000	0.1289	0.1628
The impact of customer experience and customer satisfaction on purchase intention and customer loyalty	0.0457*	0.0038	0.000	0.0384	0.0533

Note: Two-tailed test, **p<0.01, *p<0.05

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusion

This study takes the customer loyalty of direct sales members of beauty care products after the COVID-19 pandemic as the research goal. After the aforementioned statistical analysis, the research results are summarized in Table 7:

Table 7 Hypothesis verification results

Hypothesis	Result
H1: There is a positive relationship between purchase intention and customer experience	Supported
H2: There is a positive relationship between customer experience and customer loyalty	Supported
H3: There is a positive relationship between purchase intention and customer satisfaction	Supported
H4: There is a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty	Supported
H5: There is a positive relationship between purchase intention and customer loyalty	Supported

H6: There is a mediating effect of customer satisfaction on purchase intention and customer loyalty	Supported
H7: There is a positive relationship between customer experience and customer satisfaction	Supported
H8: There is a mediating effect of customer experience on purchase intention and customer loyalty	Supported
H9: There is a mediating effect of customer experience and satisfaction on purchase intention and customer loyalty	Supported

According to the research results, the direct effects are as follows: purchase intention has a positive relationship with customer experience; customer experience has a positive relationship with customer loyalty; purchase intention has a positive relationship with customer satisfaction; customer satisfaction has a positive relationship with customer loyalty; purchase intention has a positive relationship with customer loyalty; customer satisfaction has a mediating effect on purchase intention and customer loyalty; customer experience has a positive relationship with customer satisfaction; customer experience has a mediating effect on purchase intention and customer loyalty; customer experience and customer satisfaction have a mediating effect on purchase intention and customer loyalty. From the results of the above collation, it can be seen that the research hypotheses from H1 to H9 are all supported.

Managerial implications

According to the statistical analysis results of this study, there are three management implications and suggestions.

First, after the pandemic, although direct sales members of beauty care products have been affected by the epidemic, for members who are willing to buy, satisfaction and loyalty still have a positive impact, showing the trust of direct sales members in the brand that it will not change significantly due to the impact of the epidemic. This result is the same as that mentioned by Engel et al. (1995) and Gogo (2013), who pointed that consumers' willingness to purchase depends on brand awareness and brand loyalty, and purchase intention will also affect future brand loyalty. Therefore, it is suggested that in addition to paying attention to the existing customers, and also focus on the long-term planning of brand loyalty, pay equal attention to short-term benefits and long-term development, so as to retain consumers.

Second, in the hypothesis that customer satisfaction and customer experience are mediating variables, the study found that customer satisfaction and customer experience have an indirect mediating effect on purchase intention and customer loyalty. The direct effect value of purchase intention on customer loyalty is 0.2804, while the indirect mediation effect value is respectively 0.1456, 0.1098, and 0.0457, indicating that customer believe that customer experience and customer satisfaction will indirectly affect customer loyalty. This result is similar to the argument made by Grönholdt et al. (2010) that organizations put a lot of effort into brand building, but may not get high customer loyalty. In addition, according to the argument by Dickson & Sawyer (1990), rational customer will rationally judge whether the value of the product they believe is higher than the price paid when considering purchasing an item, and make a decision whether to buy or not. McLuhan (2000) proposed, everyone perceives experiences differently, and higher levels of satisfaction can be created when experiences are highly interactive. Therefore, it is suggested that in terms of serving customer, the company should disseminate relevant information in multiple ways, and strengthen customer experience services, and pay more attention to customer satisfaction in order to obtain long-term customer loyalty.

Finally, the research found that direct sales members get more than 90% of the company's information through the introduction of relatives and friends, while the rate of obtaining relevant information through advertising materials is quite low. Therefore, it can be considered to transfer part of the budget for advertising materials to the establishment of interpersonal relationships among direct sales members For the purpose of network expansion. When choosing to join a company as a full-time or part-time direct sales member, the main considerations are product use needs and income increase, while only 10% of them want to start their own business, which is obviously low. Because in order to strengthen the organization's physique and competitiveness, it is necessary to allow members to transform the concept of occupation into the concept of business.

Therefore, it is recommended to establish and strengthen the culture of internal entrepreneurship in order to establish a sustainable business map. When contacting or meeting superior members, the most important topic is product function, followed by work status, performance progress, and problems faced. Competition only accounts for 1.8%. Although confidantes are very important, knowing the enemy is more important, the suggestion should involve more information on the market in order to maintain the best state of competition.

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