



Consumer Loyalty Behavior in the Dermocosmetics Context. A Quantitative Study of the Influence of Satisfaction and the Store Environment Across Different Retail Formats

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KEYWORDS

Customer loyalty
Consumer satisfaction
Dermocosmetics
Store environment
Service quality
Retail distribution
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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the factors that determine consumer loyalty in the purchase of dermocosmetic products and examines the influence of satisfaction generated by interaction, the store environment, and the outcome of the shopping experience across different retail formats. A quantitative methodology was applied through a 60-item questionnaire structured around the three dimensions of service quality, using a sample of 313 consumers. The data were analyzed by calculating mean scores, conducting an analysis of variance (ANOVA), and examining a correlation matrix. The results show that satisfaction associated with the store environment has the greatest capacity to foster consumer loyalty, whereas interaction with store personnel receives a high rating, although the dispersion of the responses reduces its explanatory relevance. By contrast, promotions, price, loyalty programs, and the use of customer databases have neutral or negative effects. The study concludes that consumer loyalty in retail distribution, within the context of dermocosmetics, depends primarily on the physical, functional, and operational experience provided by the retail establishment.

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1. Introduction

Over the past several decades, changes in the business environment have called the traditional concept of marketing into question, underscoring the need for an approach centered on customer relationships rather than on the market in general or on product transactions (Barroso & Martín, 1999; Chiesa, 2005; Barroso, Martín, & Martín, 2007). This approach, known as relationship marketing, seeks to maintain continuous, mutually beneficial relationships between firms and their customers. The underlying premise is that resources should be invested not only in acquiring new customers, but primarily in sustaining existing relationships over time, which may in turn generate

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new customers through recommendations and loyalty (Bolton, Lemon, & Verhoef, 2002; Gupta, Lehmann, & AmesStuart, 2004; Meyer-Waarden, 2007).

2. Value and Satisfaction

Consumer-perceived value reflects a comparison between costs and benefits (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991; Grewal, Monroe, & Krishnan, 1998). Managers must identify what creates value for their customers in order to satisfy them more effectively (Abad, 2004). Value is subjective and depends on each customer's individual perceptions. It is also dynamic and may change over time (Grewal, Levy, & Lehmann, 2004; Mira et al., 2013). For example, a customer may initially value an explanatory brochure; however, if the product proves unsuccessful and the customer returns to the store, detailed instructions may become more valuable.

Customer satisfaction arises from the comparison between what customers perceive they receive and what they perceive they sacrifice (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985). When the outcome of this comparison is favorable, customers perceive value and experience satisfaction, which may influence their future loyalty (Jones & Sasser, 1995). Customer value may be expressed using the equation proposed by Sánchez and Moreno (2003):

$$\text{Value} = (\{\text{Customer outcomes}\} + \{\text{Process quality}\}) / (\{\text{Customer price}\} + \{\text{Access cost}\})$$

Accordingly, perceived value depends both on what the customer receives (product, service, and assistance) and on what the customer sacrifices (price, time, and inconvenience).

3. Loyalty

The relationship between satisfaction and loyalty has been studied extensively. Some studies assume a direct linear relationship between the two constructs (Woodside, Frey, & Daly, 1989; Homburg & Giering, 2001), whereas others suggest a more complex structure in which moderate levels of satisfaction may lead to consumer indifference (Finkelmann & Golland, 1990). In addition, moderating factors such as age, income level, and the shopping environment may affect this relationship (Bloemer & Kasper, 1995, 1996).

Loyalty is not merely repeat purchasing; it also encompasses the customer's attitudes, commitment, and emotions (Smith et al., 2003; Molina et al., 2009). Loyal customers not only make repeat purchases, but also recommend the store, are less sensitive to price changes, and are more forgiving of mistakes (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996; Anderson, 1998).

Customer retention may occur for several reasons even when customers are dissatisfied, including a lack of alternatives, habit, switching costs, or discounts (Hill & Alexander, 2001). Genuine loyalty, however, entails a deeper and more positive relationship with the brand.

4. The Asymmetric Relationship Between Satisfaction and Loyalty

Satisfaction does not invariably lead to loyalty. Achieving customer delight, which results from exceeding customer expectations, is therefore essential (Rust & Oliver, 2000; Füller & Matzler, 2008). The three-factor theory of customer satisfaction identifies basic, excitement, and performance factors, each of which has a different effect on satisfaction and loyalty (Matzler & Sauerwein, 2002).

- Basic factors (dissatisfiers): Minimum requirements whose absence causes dissatisfaction, although their fulfillment does not increase satisfaction.
- Excitement factors (satisfiers): Attributes that generate satisfaction when provided, but whose absence does not cause dissatisfaction.
- Performance factors (hybrid factors): Attributes that generate satisfaction when performed well and dissatisfaction when performed poorly.

These factors have important managerial implications because firms must seek differentiation by offering products and services that delight customers, even when doing so requires substantial effort and expense (Füller & Matzler, 2008).

The asymmetry of the satisfaction–loyalty relationship explains the development of numerous loyalty programs in retail markets, which are intended to create customer entry and exit barriers (Meyer-Waarden, 2007). Loyalty depends on the store format and on customer expectations regarding the satisfaction-generating variables associated with each format.

5. Identification and Analysis of Satisfaction-Related Variables in Retailing

Retail firms use a variety of tools to generate satisfaction and loyalty. Perceived service quality is fundamental to this process. Prior research has generally examined satisfaction and loyalty variables in isolation (Macintosh & Lockshin, 1997; Wallace, Giese, & Johnson, 2004; Noble, Griffith, & Adjei, 2006; Meyer-Waarden, 2007; Bustos-Reyes & González-Benito, 2008; Molina et al., 2009; Dorotic, Bijmolt, & Verhoef, 2011; González-Benito & Martos-Partal, 2012; Mira et al., 2013). This study analyzes these variables jointly by applying the three dimensions of service quality defined by Brady and Cronin (2001): interaction quality, physical environment quality, and outcome quality.

5.1. Variables Related to Interaction Satisfaction

These variables concern the relationship between consumers and the service provided and include the following:

- **Customer Service:** The relationship with the salesperson may increase sales and reduce the likelihood that consumers will switch to a competitor (Berry & Gresham, 1986; Crosby, Evans, & Cowles, 1990; Homburg & Giering, 2001; Bodet, 2008; Caruana & Ewing, 2010; Kumar et al., 2013). Customer service is defined as a set of activities designed to improve customer satisfaction before, during, and after a purchase (Turban, 2002). Excellent customer service may foster loyalty because the more important customers perceive their connection with the provider to be, the more reluctant they will be to switch providers (Chiesa, 2005).
- **Staff Service:** The trust and commitment generated by the salesperson are critical to customer loyalty (Crosby, Evans, & Cowles, 1990; Swan & Oliver, 1991; Macintosh & Lockshin, 1997; Homburg & Giering, 2001; Sirdeshmukh, Singh, & Sabol, 2002; Siegrist, Gutscher, & Earle, 2005; Kumar & Medha, 2013). Staff selection and management are therefore essential and encompass such factors as training and motivation. Training may be delivered internally or externally and should address sales-related topics, new product lines, and quality management (Galí, 2005; Johnston & Marshall, 2013). Both intrinsic and extrinsic employee motivation are necessary for staff to provide service oriented toward customer satisfaction (Huete, 2003; Chiesa, 2005; Baporikar, 2013).
- **Responsiveness to Problems:** Effective complaint and claim management may increase customer satisfaction and loyalty (Macintosh & Lockshin, 1997; Ugarte & Martínez-Alcocer, 2005; Brock et al., 2013). A complaint that is managed effectively may convert a dissatisfied customer into a loyal one (Carlson Marketing Group Research, 1999).

5.2. Product- and Service-Related Variables

These variables include the following:

- **Variety of Services:** The provision of additional services may generate satisfaction and loyalty (Morey, 1980; Parasuraman, 1988; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1996; Zeithaml, 2000; Molina et al., 2009; Kumar, Pozza, & Ganesh, 2013). Such services may include free parking, gift wrapping, and home delivery, among others (Beisel, 1993; Molina et al., 2009; Martínez-Ruiz, Jimenez-Zarco, & Izquierdo-Yuste, 2012). Consciously communicating these services (Vargas, 2022) through appropriate signage is critical to generating satisfaction (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996; Zeithaml, 2000; Molina et al., 2009).
- **Availability of an Appropriate Assortment:** An appropriate product assortment has a positive effect on customer behavior (Broniarczyk, Hoyer, & Leigh, 1998; Hoch, Bradlow,

& Wansink, 1999; Noble, Griffith, & Adjei, 2006; Kang, Joo, & Cho, 2014). The combination of brands within a product category may generate satisfaction (Grewall, Levy, & Lehmann, 2004; Sloat & Verhoef, 2008; Mantrala et al., 2009). Effective inventory management and advance procurement of seasonal products are essential to increasing customer confidence (Johnson & Gustafsson, 2000; Gómez, McLaughlin, & Wittink, 2004; Spiller, Bolten, & Kennerknecht, 2006; Martínez-Ruiz, Jimenez-Zarco, & Izquierdo-Yuste, 2012).

- **Information Provided to Customers:** The advice and information provided by the retailer contribute to service quality and generate satisfaction (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996; Zeithaml, 2000; Molina et al., 2009). A relationship with a salesperson who provides high-quality service generates customer trust (Brady & Cronin, 2001b; Molina et al., 2009).
- **Order Follow-Up:** Effective order management increases customers' trust in the retailer (Johnson & Gustafsson, 2000; Gómez, McLaughlin, & Wittink, 2004; Spiller, Bolten, & Kennerknecht, 2006; Martínez-Ruiz, Jimenez-Zarco, & Izquierdo-Yuste, 2012). Methods such as an order log, a customer-order module within the management software, and telephone or SMS notifications are useful for managing orders (Sánchez & Moreno, 2003).
- **Product Quality:** Perceived product quality has a positive influence on consumer satisfaction and loyalty (Zeithaml, 1988; Lichtenstein & Burton, 1989; Kopalle & Lehmann, 1995; Molina et al., 2009). Product quality may be subjective (as perceived by the consumer) or objective (as verified through technical assessment) (Méndez, Oubiña, & Rubio, 2008).

5.3. Price and Price Competitiveness

Price-positioning strategies may attract specific customers and encourage repeat purchases (González-Benito & Martos-Partal, 2012; Dickson & Sawyer, 1990; Alba et al., 1994). Consumers may focus primarily on price or on the price–quality trade-off (González-Benito & Martos-Partal, 2012). Special offers and price reductions may generate retention or loyalty depending on the customer profile (Johnson & Gustafsson, 2000; Gómez, McLaughlin, & Wittink, 2004; Spiller et al., 2006; Martínez-Ruiz, Jimenez-Zarco, & Izquierdo-Yuste, 2012).

5.4. Promotions

Promotions and price reductions may increase sales and generate store traffic (Martinez-Ruiz, Jimenez-Zarco, & Izquierdo-Yuste, 2012; Arnold, Oum, & Tigert, 1983; Walters & Rinne, 1986; Blattberg, Briesch,

5.5. Retailer Brands

Retailer brands, which are exclusive to a particular retailer, may foster customer loyalty because of their lower prices (Richardson, Jain, & Dick, 1996; Dhar, Hoch, & Kumar, 2001; Collins-Dod & Lindley, 2003; González-Benito & Martos-Partal, 2012). Consumers who are loyal to these brands tend to exhibit lower loyalty to any specific store (Richardson, 1997). Price is a critical purchase-decision factor for these consumers (Dick, Jain, & Richardson, 1995; Hansen, Vishal, & Chintangunta, 2006; Sethuraman, 2006; González-Benito & Martos-Partal, 2012).

Price-sensitive customers prefer retailer brands associated with low-price strategies (Moore & Carpenter, 2006). The relationship between retailer-brand market share and loyalty follows an inverted U-shaped curve: loyalty is initially low because of limited trust, increases as quality perceptions improve, and subsequently decreases when purchase decisions become primarily price-driven (Ailawadi et al., 2008; González-Benito & Martos-Partal, 2012).

Purchasing behavior varies according to the perceived risk of the product category. Customers prefer major brands for high-risk products (such as cosmetics and intimate-hygiene products) and are more receptive to retailer brands in lower-risk categories (such as household products and food) (Kapferer & Laurent, 1985; Chaudhuri, 2000).

5.6. Waiting Times

Waiting times generate dissatisfaction and may adversely affect consumer behavior (Katz, Larson, & Larson, 1991; Molina et al., 2009; Hui, Laurette, & Chebat, 1997). Effective management of waiting times is essential because it may have positive effects on customer satisfaction (Molina et al., 2009). Retailers are implementing time-saving service resources, such as rapid checkout, which influence consumers' choice of retailer (Lambert, 1979; Bielen & Demoulin, 2007).

5.7. Variables Related to Satisfaction With the Store Environment

Variables related to satisfaction with the store environment concern the extent to which the characteristics of the setting in which the service is provided are made tangible, and they play an important role in consumer perceptions (Brady & Cronin, 2001). These variables include the following:

5.7.1. Store-Related Variables

This group comprises the following variables:

- **Store Location:** The store's location and the distance consumers must travel to reach it are fundamental criteria in store selection and in the assessment of the total cost of the purchase (Lin & Zu, 2013; Arnold, Oum, & Tigert, 1983; Kahn & Schmittkein, 1989; Bell, Ho, & Tang, 1998; Meyer-Waarden, 2007). Short distances minimize time costs and maximize shopping opportunities for consumers (Noble, Griffith, & Adjei, 2006). Geographic proximity to the primary store positively affects the duration of the consumer relationship and customer satisfaction (Meyer-Waarden, 2007).
- **Access Facilities and Waiting Areas:** For specific target-market segments, store attributes such as automatic doors, parking facilities, elevators, and ramps may determine the choice of a regular retailer (Füller & Matzler, 2008; Beisel, 1993; Molina et al., 2009). Accessibility is critical to purchasing behavior associated with high levels of product consumption (East et al., 1997a; Bell, Ho, & Tang, 1998; Cortiñas et al., 2000; González-Benito, 2001; González-Benito & González-Benito, 2005). Resources such as waiting areas, cafés near checkout points, effective queue management, and express checkout lanes may transform waiting time into a positive customer experience (Molina et al., 2009). Additional considerations include spaces for parents with strollers and areas for children, which facilitate the shopping process and generate satisfaction within these segments.
- **Store Atmosphere:** The store atmosphere, which is associated with the store's physical attributes, significantly influences purchase decisions (Kotler, 1973; Martínez-Ruiz, Jimenez-Zarco, & Izquierdo-Yuste, 2012). A pleasant atmosphere may increase both the time spent and the amount spent in the store, whereas an unpleasant atmosphere may reduce both (Donovan et al., 1994; Molina et al., 2009). Consumers' evaluation of the store atmosphere affects perceived value and purchase intentions (Grewal et al., 2003).
- **Store Image:** Store image, which is shaped by the combination of national brands, private labels, and the store as a brand, affects consumer behavior (Rao & Monroe, 1989; Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991; Dawar & Parker, 1994). Store evaluations are based on quality, service, effort, and price, producing a perception of value that may influence consumer satisfaction and loyalty (Grewal, Levy, & Lehmann, 2004).

5.7.2. Variables Related to Store Operations

This group of variables includes the following:

- **Business Hours:** Extended business hours may generate consumer satisfaction by increasing perceived convenience (Al-Awadi, 2002; González-Benito & González-Benito, 2005; Martínez-Ruiz, Jimenez-Zarco, & Izquierdo-Yuste, 2012). Retail business hours are regulated by law in many countries. In Spain, Law 1/2004 regulates retail business hours to promote competition, improve the efficiency of retail distribution, and support work-life balance among retail employees.
- **Card Payments:** Credit card use is increasingly common, particularly among younger consumer segments. It facilitates larger purchase volumes, reduces nonpayment, and

provides payment convenience (Ugarte & Martínez-Alcocer, 2005; Zandi, 2013). Convenient payment methods have a positive effect on consumer satisfaction.

5.7.3. Multichannel Presence

The final variable related to the store environment is multichannel presence, with particular emphasis on an Internet presence.

- Internet Presence: A multichannel strategy encompassing stores, catalogs, and the Internet may develop consumer loyalty through satisfaction (Wallace, Giese, & Johnson, 2004). Combining different channels provides customers with a wider range of services (Bucklin et al., 1996; Wallace, Giese, & Johnson, 2004; Cassab & MacLachlan, 2009). Establishing an Internet presence requires vision, resources, and investment in technology (The Standard, 2000). Multichannel competition has eliminated complacency among both brick-and-mortar and online stores (Dholakia, Miao, & Dholakia, 2005; Cassab & MacLachlan, 2009; Brown & Dant, 2014). Consumers value multichannel strategies positively, and such strategies influence customer satisfaction (Yi, 1990). Consumers who use multiple channels generally expect higher quality and a broader range of services (Wallace, Giese, & Johnson, 2004; Maity & Dass, 2014). Loyalty to the retailer is higher among brands that employ multichannel strategies (Wallace, Giese, & Johnson, 2004; Cassab & MacLachlan, 2009; Brown & Dant, 2014).

5.8. Variables Related to Outcome Satisfaction

Variables related to outcome satisfaction are defined as the consumer's evaluation of the outcome of the service encounter (Brady & Cronin, 2001). These variables include the following:

5.8.1. Variables Related to Outcome Satisfaction

Retail firms seek to maximize their relationships with consumers (Molina et al., 2009). Customer databases should constitute repositories of individualized customer information that are available to all store personnel and useful for maintaining customer relationships or securing the sale of a product or service. The information should include sociodemographic data, transactions, products, financial profiles, competitors, commercial and relationship-building initiatives, contacts, satisfaction, and other relevant data (Chiesa, 2005). Customer relationship management (CRM) is manifested in consumer loyalty and in the development of customer relationships (Mithas et al., 2005; Molina et al., 2009; Dorotic, Bijmolt, & Verhoef, 2011). Loyalty-building initiatives may generate substantial amounts of information that enable firms to refine their marketing efforts (Kumar & Shah, 2004; Stone et al., 2004; Berman, 2006).

5.9. The Influence of Store Format

The effect of the variables on customer satisfaction and loyalty varies by store format. The most characteristic store formats are supermarkets, hypermarkets, and neighborhood stores (Bustos-Reyes & González-Benito, 2008; Noble, Griffith, & Adjei, 2006). The dermocosmetics category was selected for this study because of its high perceived value and the similarity of the products offered across different store formats.

Purchase Situations

Different store formats are associated with different purchase situations and with the benefits consumers seek (Morganosky & Cude, 2000; Arrondo et al., 2002; Solgaard & Hansen, 2003; Ehrenberg, Uncles, & Goodhardt, 2004). Consumer attitudes toward each format depend on the purchase context (Bustos-Reyes & González-Benito, 2008).

Convenience Loyalty

A low degree of differentiation among stores within the same format or across different formats may produce convenience-based loyalty behavior grounded in store attributes, functionality, and economic considerations (Cortiñas et al., 2000; González-Benito, 2001; González-Benito & González-Benito, 2005).

Importance of the Variables

Applying the variables examined in this study to a given store format may contribute to customer value creation, thereby generating satisfaction and loyalty (Bustos-Reyes & González-Benito, 2008). The effects of the variables may be moderated by store format because consumers perceive them differently depending on both the format and the individual store.

Empirical Analysis

This study examines the influence of all variables across the most prevalent store formats—supermarkets, hypermarkets, and neighborhood stores—through an empirical analysis and a comparison of the effects of the variables both within each format and across the three selected formats.

6. Proposed General Model and Hypotheses

The preceding sections have emphasized the importance of loyalty to organizations. For customers to become loyal, they must be satisfied with what they receive, which occurs when they perceive value. A range of variables that influence customer satisfaction have been identified, including customer service, personal interactions, responsiveness to problems, service variety, product availability, information provision, order follow-up, product quality, price, promotions, retailer brands, waiting times, store format, ease of access, store atmosphere, store image, business hours, card payments, the use of databases and CRM, and loyalty programs (Bloemer & Kasperl, 1995, 1996; Homburg & Giering, 2001).

Classification of Variables

The variables were classified using Brady and Cronin's (2001) three dimensions of service quality: interaction quality, physical environment quality, and outcome quality. These dimensions are further divided into several subdimensions (Molina et al., 2009).

- Interaction Quality: The relationship between the consumer and the service provided.
- Physical Environment Quality: The tangible characteristics of the setting in which the service is provided.
- Outcome Quality: The consumer's evaluation of the outcome of the service encounter.

Hypotheses

Based on the literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

1. Hypothesis 1: Satisfaction generated by buyer interaction positively influences consumer loyalty.
 - Hypothesis 1.1: Satisfaction with salesperson interaction positively influences consumers' interaction satisfaction.
 - Hypothesis 1.2: Satisfaction with interactions involving products and services positively influences consumers' interaction satisfaction.

- Hypothesis 1.3.1: The product price–quality trade-off has either a positive or a negative relationship with customer interaction satisfaction, depending on the consumer's price sensitivity.
 - Hypothesis 1.3.2: Price has either a positive or a negative relationship with customer interaction satisfaction, depending on the consumer's price sensitivity.
 - Hypothesis 1.4: Promotions have a positive effect on consumers' interaction satisfaction.
 - Hypothesis 1.5: Consumer trust in the retailer brand and the retailer brand's market share are positively related to consumers' interaction satisfaction.
 - Hypothesis 1.6: In-store waiting time is negatively related to consumers' interaction satisfaction.
2. Hypothesis 2: Satisfaction generated by the in-store environment positively influences consumer loyalty.
- Hypothesis 2.1: Store attributes have a positive effect on satisfaction with the store environment.
 - Hypothesis 2.2: The store's operational convenience has a positive effect on satisfaction with the store environment.
3. Hypothesis 3: Satisfaction generated by the sales outcome positively influences consumer loyalty.
- Hypothesis 3.1: The use of customer databases is positively related to consumer satisfaction with the sales outcome.
 - Hypothesis 3.2: The existence of a loyalty program and consumer membership in a loyalty program are positively related to customer satisfaction with the sales outcome.

Loyalty Analysis

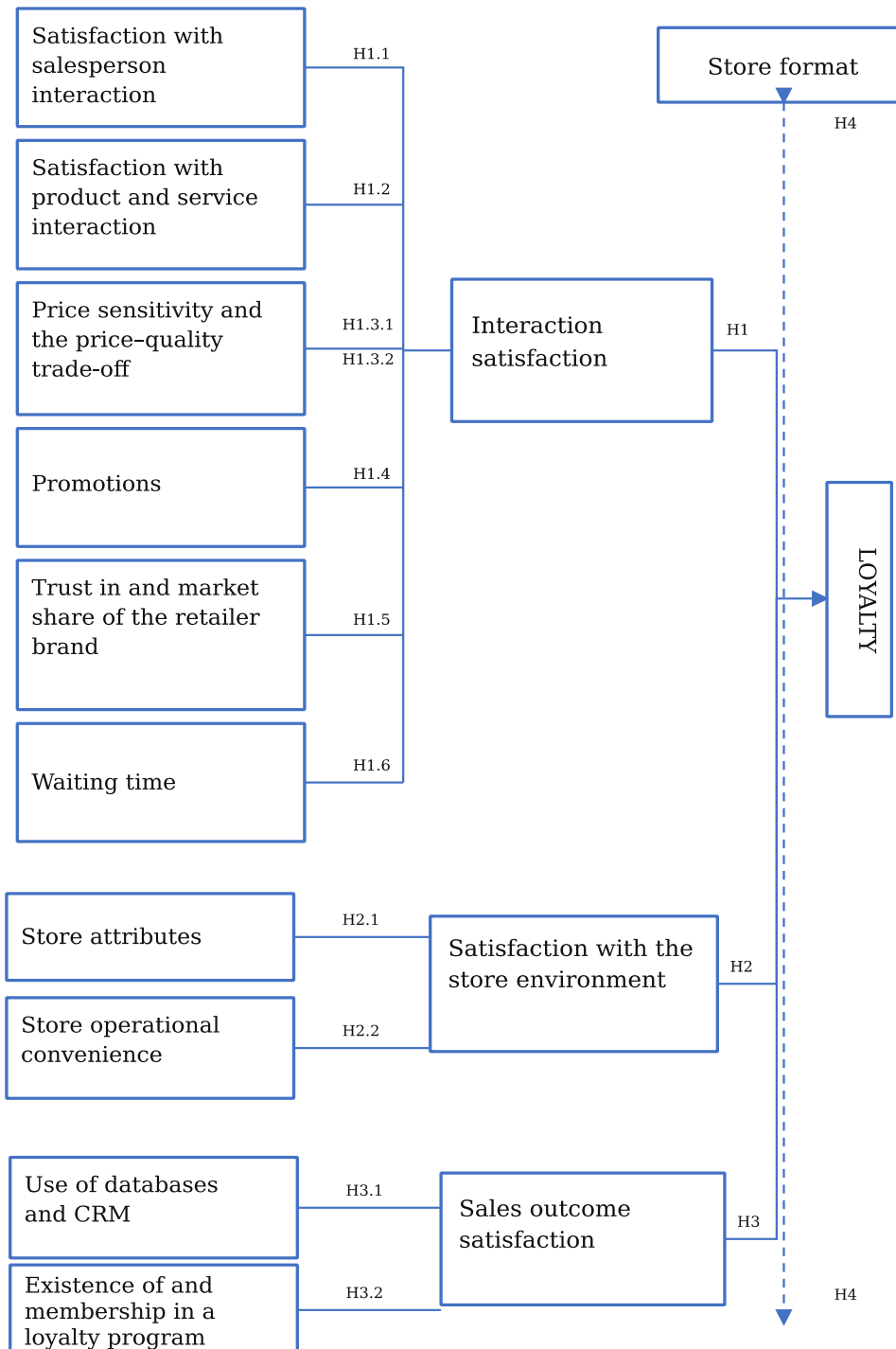
The loyalty analysis will address the following considerations:

- Compile and organize all variables analyzed by the different authors.
- Examine the variables' joint effects on consumers.
- Analyze the variables across the three most prevalent store formats: hypermarkets, supermarkets, and neighborhood stores.
- Determine the effect of the variables on consumers within each format.
- Compare the results obtained across the different formats.

General Model

The proposed general model is presented in Figure 5.1, which illustrates the relationships between the variables and consumer loyalty.

Figure 5.1. General model



7. Methodology

7.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

This section examines how consumers assess the variables that influence their satisfaction across different retail formats, the importance of each variable in their purchase decisions, and their loyalty to each format. Appropriate measurement methods are essential when assessing customer loyalty. Although no consensus has yet been reached regarding the measurement of consumer loyalty, commonly used indicators include customer satisfaction, purchase continuity, and purchase intention (Knox and Denison, 2000). In this study, surveys were used to measure consumer satisfaction through the following stages: questionnaire development, survey administration, quantitative data analysis, and analysis and discussion of the results.

The questionnaire was developed using validated scales from previous studies and questions validated by experts (Macintosh and Lockshin, 1997; Wallace et al., 2004; Noble et al., 2006; Molina et al., 2009). The questions were designed to be clear and unbiased. Five-point Likert scales were used to assess satisfaction, with responses quantified from 1 to 5. The questionnaire consists of 60 items divided into sections that measure three dimensions of customer satisfaction: interaction satisfaction ("SI," Items 1–31), environmental satisfaction ("SE," Items 32–52), and outcome satisfaction ("SR," Items 53–60).

After the questionnaire had been developed, the survey-administration stage was undertaken. Interviews were conducted in the different types of stores. In addition, some questionnaires were completed online after being distributed to consumers involved in the study via WhatsApp or email.

The survey materials consisted of the following:

1. Surveys coded according to the type of participating store.
2. An interview script.
3. Instructions or an implementation protocol.

Within one month, a sufficient number of surveys for the analysis was obtained with the assistance of trained personnel. Incomplete questionnaires were excluded, and the remaining valid questionnaires constituted the analytical sample.

After all surveys had been collected and screened, the data were entered into a single database for analysis. The validated model developed by Carvajal Zaera (2015) was used; this model encompasses all variables affecting loyalty in the retail distribution of products and services, irrespective of business format. The data analysis enables the identification of the following:

1. The loyalty results obtained by the stores for each construct
2. An analysis of the results.

The arithmetic-mean method was used for the study's quantitative analysis. This method calculates the mean responses for each study variable, thereby allowing the variables to be evaluated and compared in a straightforward manner. Accordingly, the analysis considered participants' assessments of each component of the SI, SE, and SR constructs and their effects on satisfaction and, consequently, on consumer loyalty, as described in the Carvajal Zaera (2015) model.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was also performed to compare the means of the construct components. The null hypothesis stated that all components had equal means and therefore exerted a similar influence on loyalty. Finally, a correlation-matrix analysis was conducted to determine whether any components were correlated.

The study population consisted of the Spanish population, which, according to data from the Spanish National Statistics Institute (INE) for January 2024, comprised 48,592,909 inhabitants. Given this population, the required interview sample was determined to be $n = 384$, with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error.

The participants were 313 consumers drawn from the three retail formats: hypermarkets, supermarkets, and neighborhood stores. To control for the influence of product category, the study

focused on dermocosmetic products. Of the participants, 108 (34.5%) were hypermarket customers, 106 (33.9%) were supermarket customers, and 99 (31.6%) were customers of small retailers. Regarding demographic characteristics, 80.6% were women, and most participants were 35–49 years of age (52.4%); the remaining participants were 18–34 (20.8%), 50–64 (21.2%), or 65 years of age or older (5.5%).

Thus, for $n = 313$, the margin of error was 5.53% at a 95% confidence level. The sample was considered representative and the results reliable.

The scale-based results for the components of the constructs examined were as follows:

For the SI construct, the result was 3.40 ± 0.28 . This construct comprised the following variables:

- Satisfaction with salesperson interaction, 3.98 ± 0.86
- Satisfaction with product and service interaction, 3.68 ± 0.61
- Price sensitivity and the price–quality trade-off, 3.39 ± 0.37
- Promotions, 3.02 ± 0.69
- Retailer brand, 3.07 ± 0.38
- Waiting time, 3.26 ± 0.51

For the SE construct, the result was 4.21 ± 0.34 . This construct comprised the following variables:

- Satisfaction with store attributes, 4.12 ± 0.48
- Satisfaction with the store's operational convenience, 4.30 ± 0.38

For the SR construct, the result was 2.75 ± 1.16 . This construct comprised the following variables:

- Satisfaction with database use, 2.48 ± 1.73
- Satisfaction with the loyalty program, 3.02 ± 1.49

The SI construct had a value of 3.40. It was therefore considered not to generate customer satisfaction and, consequently, not to promote loyalty. The SE construct had a value of 4.21 and was considered to generate customer satisfaction and thus promote loyalty. Finally, the SR construct had a value of 2.75 and was considered not to generate customer loyalty.

- The variables with the greatest weight in customer satisfaction were those related to the environment—namely, store attributes and the store's operational convenience—with values above 4. Interaction with the salesperson also warrants attention, with a value of 3.98; however, its high standard deviation of 0.86 reduces its relevance. The remaining attributes had a neutral effect on consumer satisfaction, with values near 3, except for the variable related to database use, whose effect may be considered negative, with a value of 2.48 and a high standard deviation of 1.73, indicating substantial dispersion in the survey results. The same pattern was observed for satisfaction with the loyalty program, which had a value of 3.02 and a standard deviation of 1.49, confirming the limited relevance of this variable.
- The ANOVA test yielded an F statistic of 138 and a critical q value of 6.4E-219. The hypothesis that the variables have equal means was therefore rejected at the 95% significance level. This result is consistent with the variable means calculated above.

The correlation matrix indicates a high correlation ($\rho \geq 0.7$) between “Satisfaction with salesperson interaction” and “Satisfaction with product and service interaction.” Either variable could therefore be removed from the analysis without materially affecting the means. A moderate correlation ($0.7 \geq \rho \geq 0.5$) was found between the following pairs of variables:

- “Satisfaction with salesperson interaction” and
 - “Store attributes”
 - “Database use”

- “Satisfaction with product and service interaction” and
 - “Price sensitivity and the price–quality trade-off”
 - “Promotions”
 - “Store attributes”
 - “Database use”
- “Promotions” and
 - “Database use”
- “Store attributes” and
 - “The store’s operational convenience”

8. Conclusions and Discussion

To analyze the influence of the different constructs and attributes on customer loyalty, the hypotheses were evaluated on the basis of the results obtained, and each was either supported or rejected (Section 2.2).

Hypothesis 1.1: Satisfaction generated by the buyer’s interaction with the salesperson positively influences consumers’ interaction satisfaction.

Satisfaction generated by the buyer’s interaction with the salesperson does not influence consumers’ interaction satisfaction. This result is attributed to the self-service culture established in stores. Although the value of 3.98 indicates customers’ need for human interaction, the variance indicates that this factor has limited relevance. This hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Hypothesis 1.2: Satisfaction generated by the buyer’s interaction with the product or service positively influences consumers’ interaction satisfaction.

Satisfaction generated by the buyer’s interaction with the product or service does not influence consumers’ interaction satisfaction. This result is attributed to the limited differentiation in assortment and services, to which consumers are highly accustomed. In addition, the high correlation between this variable and satisfaction with salesperson interaction indicates that one of the two variables may be omitted from future studies. This hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Hypothesis 1.3: Consumer price sensitivity and the price–quality trade-off influence customer interaction satisfaction.

Consumer price sensitivity and the price–quality trade-off do not influence interaction satisfaction. In the dermocosmetics category, this factor becomes secondary because customers prioritize trust in the product. The hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 1.4: Promotions have a positive effect on consumers’ interaction satisfaction.

Promotions have a neutral effect on consumers’ interaction satisfaction. This result is attributed to the widespread use of promotions and to customers’ familiarity with this type of initiative. The hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 1.5: Waiting time at the clinic is negatively related to consumers’ interaction satisfaction.

In-store waiting time has a neutral relationship with consumers’ interaction satisfaction. Stores have accustomed their customers to self-service and automated checkout systems, which have reduced waiting times. The hypothesis is rejected.

With respect to Hypothesis 1, Interaction Satisfaction, although the components do not influence the construct to the same extent, the final value indicates that interaction satisfaction has a neutral effect on consumer loyalty. The component that may generate consumer satisfaction is interaction with the salesperson, whereas the remaining attributes have a neutral effect.

Hypothesis 2.1: Store premises attributes have a positive effect on satisfaction with the clinic environment or atmosphere.

Proximity, a pleasant atmosphere, accessibility, and a favorable store image appear to be important to customers and have a positive effect on consumers. This hypothesis is therefore supported.

Hypothesis 2.2: The clinic’s operational convenience has a positive effect on satisfaction with the store environment or atmosphere.

The store's operational convenience has a positive effect on satisfaction; the hypothesis is therefore supported.

With respect to Hypothesis 2, Satisfaction With the Clinic Environment or Atmosphere, the construct value indicates that environmental satisfaction has a positive influence on consumer loyalty. The contribution of each attribute received a highly similar assessment.

Hypothesis 3.1: The use of customer databases is positively related to consumer satisfaction with the sales outcome.

The use of customer databases is negatively related to consumer satisfaction with the outcome. This result is attributed to consumers' awareness of the importance of their personal data and the need to protect such data from intrusive and abusive uses. This hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Hypothesis 3.2: The existence of a loyalty program and consumer membership in a loyalty program are positively related to customer satisfaction with the sales outcome.

Loyalty programs are widely used in retailing, indicating that customers are accustomed to this type of initiative. Moreover, the limited differentiation among such programs may cause the reward effect to become secondary. Consequently, loyalty programs have a neutral effect on customers, and the hypothesis is rejected.

Finally, with respect to Hypothesis 3, Satisfaction With the Sales Outcome, the sales-outcome satisfaction construct has a negative relationship with consumer loyalty. Particular attention should be paid to the role of customer database use.

The primary limitation of this study is the need to conduct this assessment separately for each store format. In addition, conducting the study from the perspective of the retail industry would provide further knowledge and contribute to more comprehensive conclusions.

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