

Cosmetic Industry Sales During and After Covid-19

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ABSTRACT

Despite the COVID-19 outbreak being relatively controlled, the cosmetics industry faces significant implications from the rapid shift towards online sales channels, impacting consumer behavior. This paper aims to identify critical factors influencing consumers during the pandemic, encompassing changes in buying preferences and patterns, with potential insights for cosmetic product sales. The study uncovers that price becomes the primary determinant of consumer spending across pandemic stages, shifting from impulsive buying to more self-centered behaviors. The considerable impact of COVID-19 on consumer decision-making necessitates understanding their behavior and the epidemic's effects to adapt sales strategies accordingly. These findings underscore the need for the cosmetics industry to fine-tune its digital efforts to cater to evolving consumer needs during and after the pandemic. By recognizing the importance of price and understanding the changes in consumer behavior, cosmetic businesses can tailor their sales approaches effectively, securing success in an ever-changing market. As the pandemic's effects continue to linger, comprehending the evolving consumer landscape becomes critical for sustained growth in the digital era. This research offers valuable insights that can guide the cosmetics industry towards adapting and thriving amidst shifting consumer behaviors, ensuring a more resilient and prosperous future.

Keywords: consumer; cosmetic; covid-19; sales

INTRODUCTION

In the two years since the COVID-19 pandemic started, the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on markets worldwide. However, measuring and forecasting the full scope of its social and economic effects is still difficult. Countries all over the world had locked down to safeguard their citizens. Along with slowing economic development, this will compel businesses to expedite their digital transformation to maintain a revenue stream, as during the movement control period, all non-essential stores are forced to close, and customers become less inclined to make in-person purchases as a result (Julia, 2022). It is evidenced that millions of people's daily lives have been dramatically changed, and as a result, consumer behavior and purchasing patterns have also changed significantly. This unprecedented situation has had various effects on various product categories. No doubt about it, this pandemic crisis has stunned the cosmetic industry as well.

The cosmetic industry has also had to change and provide what customers want. The opportunity for cosmetic sales to greet their clients has been limited recently. They had to pay more for cleaning and disinfecting their facility after the post-COVID-19 period reopened. Customers frequently avoid stores out of concern for getting sick, leading them to make hasty purchases of only the items they need (Pudaruth et al., 2015). The majority of the consumer market is made up of e-marketing and online shopping. Additionally, they have concentrated on the complexity and variety of the available products, intuitive shopping, streamlining the purchasing process, and reducing the time consumers need to make decisions (Valaskova et al., 2021).

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Consumer purchasing patterns when purchasing goods and services, consumers engage

emotionally, physically, and psychologically. Additionally, factors like the cost of the product, the alternatives offered, advertising, and the consumer's income impact consumer behavior (Chukwu et al., 2019).

FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR AND PURCHASING PATTERNS

Culture and religion play a significant role in a consumer's life. They impact consumer purchasing behavior, price, and motive (Auf et al., 2018). Price affects customer satisfaction and consumer purchasing decisions for goods and services in all markets and industries (Qalati et al., 2019). Customers have a positive attitude toward various promotional tools, discounts, free samples, buy-one-get-one deals, and coupons that are utilized in marketing and affect both short-term and long-term sales (Ahmad et al., 2015).

According to research, millennials are more likely to choose environmentally friendly products and are willing to spend more even if the product's functionality isn't affected (Chaudhary & Bisai, 2019). Peer pressure, first perceptions of the goods, and consumer personality are perceptual and psychological elements that strongly influence consumer buying behavior in online shopping over other aspects (Rungtornkiet et al., 2019).

FACTORS INFLUENCING COSMETICS CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AND PURCHASING PATTERNS

Consumer Purchasing Patterns for Cosmetics Humans haven't stopped utilizing cosmetics to improve their outward beauty (Anute et al., 2015). In recent years, males have also begun to use cosmetics for purposes like enhancing self-presentation and reducing anxiety related to their appearance (Shimpi & Sinha, 2012). Consumers who purchase cosmetics are heavily influenced by brand name, product accessibility, advertising and promotions, sales service during and after the purchase, product quality, packaging and design, product specs, and product pricing (Alhedhaif et al., 2016).

Marketers should concentrate on the product's quality, price, and celebrity endorsements to build long-term relationships with customers and win their loyalty to the brand. Customers prefer natural cosmetics; domestic brands are preferred over foreign ones; product quality is a critical determinant in purchasing decisions, and most customers are devoted to a particular brand (Anute et al., 2015). Customers have switched to green cosmetics due to their increased awareness of environmental sustainability and health and are willing to pay more for green products (Kim & Seock, 2009). Inaccurate product information still leaves a gap despite the inclination for green cosmetics, and businesses should work to close it through their integrated marketing channels (Lin et al., 2018). Customers who choose cosmetics with natural ingredients don't mind spending more for the goods (Amberg & Fogarassy, 2019).

Even though the quality of the products may not be so excellent, female consumers are very drawn to the packaging and design of cosmetics (Riaz et al., 2015). When brands and items are heavily advertised, customers respond favourably and have a stronger propensity to purchase them (Koshy & Manohar, 2017). On the other hand, despite the product being heavily advertised and promoted, Gen Y consumers place a high value on the product's quality when making a purchase. This could result in the product losing its target market (Eze et al., 2012). Consumers typically buy cosmetics online only when they have confidence in the development and the website they purchase from (Fogel & Raghupathi, 2013).

Although it cannot replace other promotion channels to expand the consumer base, cosmetics, supported by well-known celebrities and social media influencers, have significantly influenced millennials' purchasing decisions (Cooley & Parks-Yancy, 2019). Online cosmetics purchases are influenced by the product's price, quality, and delivery service (Ma & Yang, 2018). Companies should pay attention to online product reviews, as unfavorable reviews can harm the brand's reputation and negatively affect consumer behavior (Sutanto &

Aprianingsih, 2016).

Women are more likely than males to engage in impulsive purchasing. Thus, marketers are taking advantage of this trend by appealingly presenting their goods to consumers (Atulkar & Kesari, 2018). Additionally, the degree to which it exists is significantly influenced by two key variables: consumer and product attributes (Kolondam, 2016). More women than men buy cosmetics, and the female cosmetics market includes many items.

COVID-19 During A Pandemic Businesses have been forced to reconsider their marketing strategy due to the pandemic, which has presented many opportunities and obstacles. Businesses are struggling financially, and only those with solid financials can survive. In order to survive in the market, businesses urgently need to adapt and innovate (Tanveer et al., 2020).

CHANGES OF THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCING COSMETICS CONSUMER BEHAVIOR AND PURCHASING PATTERNS

Many businesses are compelled to use new technology during and after the outbreak to survive and continue operating. Organizations that formerly resisted adopting new technology have now actively embraced scalability and other accessible technologies to enable their online presence. During COVID-19, digital marketing was widely embraced and spread throughout society. According to Ernst & Young (EY), the five new consumer groups anticipated to emerge following the COVID-19 epidemic are: resuming normal activities, remaining frugal, being both conservative and extravagant, constantly cutting expenses, and drastically cutting costs.

The current new coronavirus outbreak has impacted all facets of consumer behavior, including purchases, investments, financial reserves, and financial and social well-being. Identifying new purchasing habits: Consumers' income, age, and occupation influence new purchasing habits (Valaskova et al., 2021). Consumer concerns continue to center on cosmetics' cost, sustainability, accessibility and availability, offers and discounts, brand loyalty, and product evaluations on social media (Sharma & Mehta, 2020). In addition, personality factors, perceived economic stability, and self-justification of purchases all affect consumer behavior toward necessary and non-essential goods (Di Crosta et al., 2021).

Additionally, due to the epidemic's reality of maintaining physical distance and donning masks, makeup and perfume lost importance in cosmetics products, with consumers focusing more on eye makeup. The skin care, hair care, bath and body care goods appear to profit from the trend of self-care and pampering as products of interest, as opposed to color cosmetics. A new demand for shopping is the "do-it-yourself care" shopping concept.

Behavior before and during the New Crown pneumonia pandemic revealed that gender and education had a higher influence, with female behavior and those with a diploma being the most influenced by (frequency, necessity, payment method, price, and availability of goods/services). Their preferences, motivations, and actions were more likely to involve electronic shopping through a variety of websites and online platforms developed around accepting payments through websites or mobile apps for online buying (Hashem, 2020).

At the same time, the non-face-to-face market environment has expanded with the marketing of Netflix Radio, a cosmetic market purchase model following the epidemic. Prior to the pandemic, consumers purchased products through behaviors such as offline observation, and touching and smelling products. After the pandemic, consumers flocked to various social media outlets and changed their buying behavior patterns by referencing reviews and product samples under the influence of influencers. The pandemic drove online campaigns to become more popular than offline campaigns (Ma & Kwon, 2021),

with consumers focusing on a one-on-one customer service marketing approach for cosmetics. With the increase in online shopping due to the new crown pneumonia, the level of active communication between the manufacturer and the consumer is of concern to consumers. This has increased the possibility of producing customized cosmetics to meet consumer needs. The Korean society of non-contact online beauty cosmetics has been moving forward through the personalization of cosmetics; therefore, consumers focus on integrated marketing of online and offline channels (Sharma & Mehta, 2020). In addition, consumers value brand-created websites, purchasable social media platforms, value cosmetic companies to reform product innovation channels, speed up product development online and product innovation, and prefer collaboration between brands (Gerstell et al., n.d.)

Some academics say the epidemic has also increased market value for innovative technology and cosmetics (Ali, B. J, 2020). Additionally, consumers evolved a “minimalist” lifestyle during the epidemic. Purchase only what is essential (Satish et al., 2021). The pandemic influenced a paradigm shift from consumer spiritualism to consumer spiritualism. As consumers are a generation conscious of spiritual and cultural needs and respect the storytelling behind companies' production of new products or services, it is important to be aware of “what is enough” emotions or demands (Mehta and others, 2020).

This study aims to examine the following objectives based on the abovementioned factors. First, to determine the impact of popular cosmetic buying behaviors and patterns of COVID-19. And to propose relevant marketing strategies based on the findings of the study. Therefore, exploring the main factors influencing consumer behavior and patterns before, during and after the epidemic and identifying new changes is crucial for companies to develop appropriate strategies to meet the challenges. Based on the above literature, the important factors influencing cosmetics consumer behavior and purchasing patterns explored so far can be summarized as shown in Table 1. Changes in factors affecting cosmetic consumption behavior and patterns before and after the epidemic is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Changes in factors affecting cosmetic consumption behavior and patterns before and after the epidemic

Changes in factors affecting cosmetic consumption behavior and patterns before and after the epidemic	Authors
1. Consumer income, age and occupation play an important role in new shopping patterns	Valaskova et al., 2021
2. Personality traits, perceived economic stability, and self-justification of purchases play an important role	Di Crosta et al., 2021
3. Price of cosmetics, sustainability of cosmetics, accessibility and availability of cosmetics, offers and discounts, brand loyalty and social media reviews of products remain as factors of concern to consumers	Sharma & Mehta, 2020
4. The “do-it-yourself care” shopping model is emerging as a new shopping need	Hashem, 2020
5. Gender and education have a greater impact, with female behavior and diploma holders being most influenced by (frequency, necessity, payment method, price and availability of products/services)	Hashem, 2020
6. Marketing of internet celebrities, non-face-to-face market environment has expanded	Ma & Kwon, 2021
7. Social media, with the influence of opinion leaders, has changed their buying behavior patterns by referencing reviews and product samples. This pandemic has driven online campaigns to become	Ma & Kwon, 2021

- more popular than offline campaigns.
8. A one-to-one customer service marketing approach. Sharma & Mehta, 2020
With the increase in online shopping due to the new crown pneumonia, the level of active communication between manufacturer and consumer is of concern to consumers. This has increased the possibility of producing customized cosmetics to meet consumer needs. Non-contact online beauty cosmetics have been moving forward through the personalization of cosmetics, so consumers are focusing on integrated marketing of online and offline channels
 9. Brands build websites purchasable social media platforms that value cosmetic companies reforming product innovation channels, speeding up product development online and product innovation, and like collaboration between brands Gerstell et al., n.d.
 10. Innovation in technology and products in the cosmetics industry. Ali, B. J,2020
 11. Consumers developed a “minimalist” style of consumption during the outbreak Satish et al., 2021
 12. Paradigm shift from materialism to consumer spirituality. There is a need to be aware of “what is enough” emotions or needs, as consumers are a generation that is aware of spiritual and cultural needs and values the storytelling behind the creation of new products or services by brands. Mehta et al., 2020
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SAMPLE

The data were collected among 12 cosmetic consumers in China. The sample substructure in Table 2 shows the distribution of observations by gender, age, annual salary and other information.

TABLE 2. Distribution of sample

Attribute	Options	Number of people	Percentage
Gender	Male	5	41.67%
	Female	7	58.33%
Age	Under 18	1	8.33%
	18-30	4	33.33%
	30-40	3	25.00%
	40-50	3	25.00%
	Over 50	1	8.33%
Annual Salary	Under ¥100,000	2	16.67%
	¥100,000-200,000	6	50.00%
	¥200,000-500,000	2	16.67%
	¥500,000-1,000,000	1	8.33%
	Over ¥1,000,000	1	8.33%

Attribute	Options	Number of people	Percentage
Education Level	High school	1	8.33%
	Diploma	2	16.67%
	Bachelor	5	41.67%
	Master	2	16.67%
	Doctor	1	8.33%
	Other	1	8.33%
How much do you spend on cosmetics each year?	Less than ¥1,000	1	8.33%
	¥1,000- ¥5,000	3	25.00%
	¥5,000- ¥10,000	4	33.33%
	¥10,000- ¥20,000	1	8.33%
	¥20,000- ¥50,000	2	16.67%
	Over ¥50,000	1	8.33%

The survey was composed of three sections. The surveys were on consumers' feelings at different stages before, during and after the epidemic. And each section is divided into two parts. The first part included items related to consumer behavior and was based on the findings of previous scholars. Each participant was asked to answer how highly they believed each factor influenced consumer behavior, while selecting the three most important factors. The other part included factors that influence consumer purchasing patterns. Also, each participant was asked to answer how highly they believed each element influenced purchasing habits, and selecting the three most important factors.

MAIN FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

At different stages, factors influencing consumer behavior are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3. Mean Degree of Agreement with Consumer Behavior

Factor	Before COVID-19		During COVID-19		After COVID-19	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Online and offline integrated marketing	3.6667	0.8876	3.9167	0.7930	3.7500	0.7538
Price	<u>4.5000</u>	0.6742	<u>4.5000</u>	0.6742	<u>4.3333</u>	0.88
Advertising and promotion	3.8333	0.8349	<u>4.0833</u>	0.9003	3.9167	0.7930
Brand perception psychology	4.0833	0.7930	<u>4.1667</u>	0.7177	3.7500	0.7538
Personal consumer factors	3.9167	0.9003	3.7500	0.7538	<u>4.0833</u>	0.6686
Visual appeal and physical cues	<u>4.1667</u>	0.7177	3.6667	0.8876	3.8333	0.9374
Belief in green messages	3.7500	0.7538	3.8333	0.9374	3.7500	0.7538
Usage experience	<u>4.5000</u>	0.6742	3.6667	0.8876	3.9167	0.7930
Sales representatives	4.0833	0.9003	3.7500	0.7538	3.8333	0.9374
Social influence	3.8333	0.9374	3.9167	0.7930	<u>4.1667</u>	0.7177

*Likert-type scale: 1 to 5 (1 = Lowest influence; 5 = Highest influence).

*The mean is underlined when it is the highest among the difference stage.

The above statistics show that before the COVID-19 epidemic, the three main factors people considered when purchasing cosmetics were price, visual appeal, physical cues, and usage experience. During the COVID-19 epidemic, the global economic contraction and the decrease in consumer income made customers pay more attention to the promotion of products and the perception of brands. For example, when a cosmetics brand is defined as a luxury cosmetic, customers will spend less on that brand. The impact of the COVID-19 epidemic is gradually decreasing, the MCO policy has been abolished in most countries, and the economy is slowly recovering. In this context, consumers are looking more at the social impact of cosmetic brands. At the same time, survey respondents also indicated that some personal factors largely influence their consumption perceptions, such as increasing spending on cosmetics when their income rises.

FIGURE 1. The Three Most Important Influencing Factors of Consumer Behavior

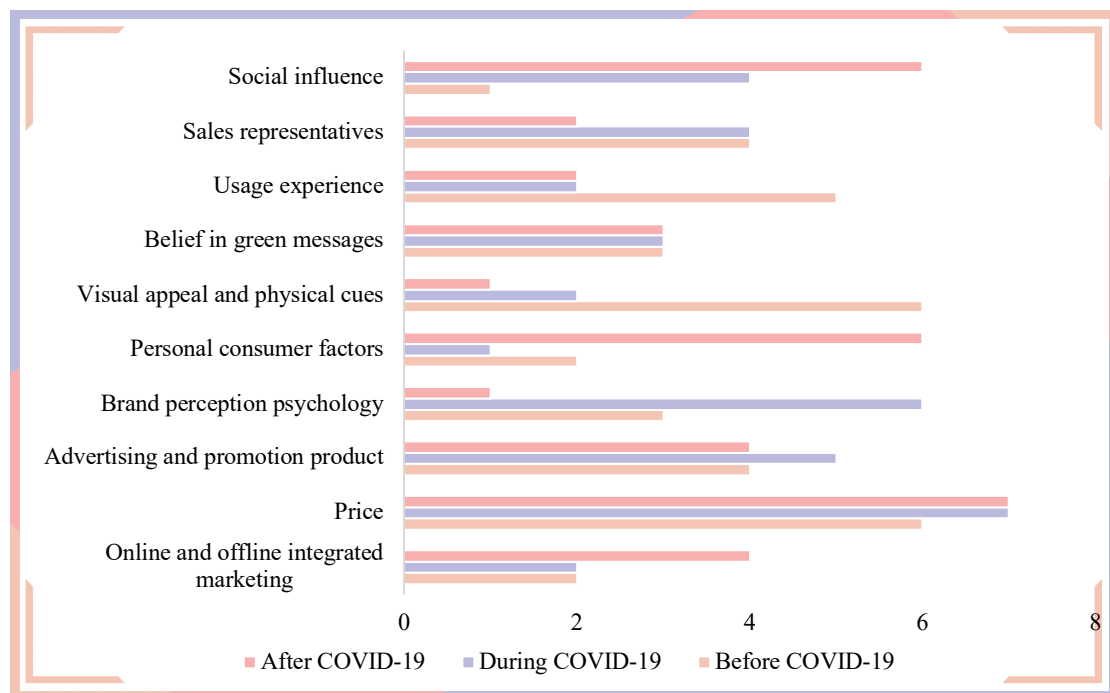


Figure 1 was obtained by counting the most important factors influencing consumer behavior as perceived by the respondents, and the results reached an agreement with the single-factor survey statistics that price is always the biggest factor influencing customer spending, regardless of the time period.

MAIN FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CONSUMER PURCHASING PATTERNS

The average values of the survey of factors influencing consumer purchase patterns are shown in Table 4.

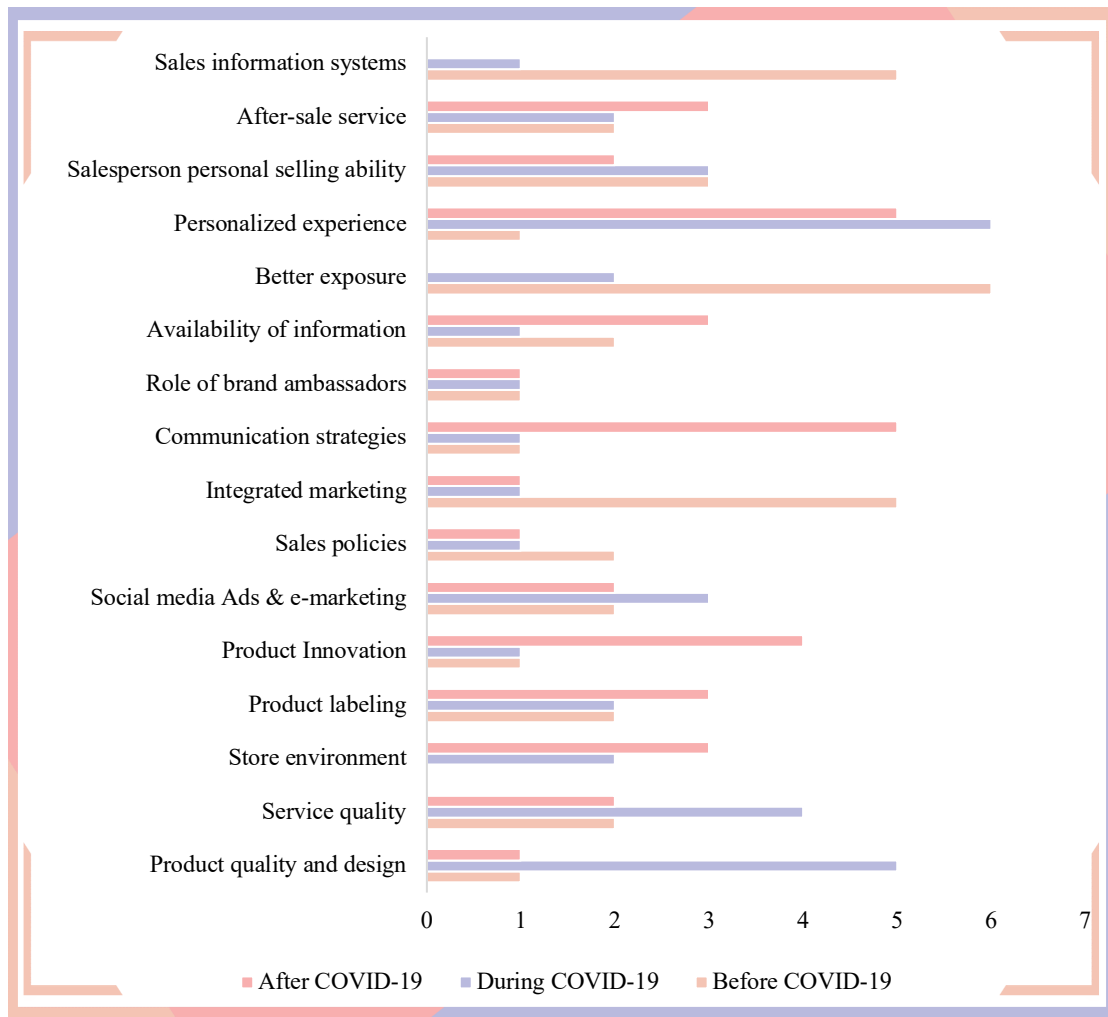
TABLE 4. Mean Degree of Agreement with Consumer Purchasing Patterns

Factor	Before COVID-19		During COVID-19		After COVID-19	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Product quality and design	4.1667	0.8349	<u>4.1667</u>	0.7177	3.9167	0.7930

Factor	Before COVID-19		During COVID-19		After COVID-19	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Service quality	4.1667	0.8349	<u>4.0833</u>	0.6686	3.8333	0.9374
Store environment	4.0833	0.6686	4.0000	0.8528	3.9167	0.7930
Product labeling	<u>4.3333</u>	0.8876	3.7500	0.6216	3.9167	0.7930
Product Innovation	4.1667	0.7177	3.6667	0.8876	<u>4.5000</u>	0.6742
Social media Ads & e-marketing	4.0833	0.7930	3.8333	0.9374	3.8333	0.9374
Sales policies	3.7500	0.6216	3.9167	0.7930	3.7500	0.6216
Integrated marketing	4.2500	0.7538	3.7500	0.6216	3.9167	0.7930
Communication strategies	3.9167	0.7930	3.6667	0.8876	<u>4.1667</u>	0.7177
Role of brand ambassadors	4.0833	0.7930	3.9167	0.7930	4.0833	0.6686
Availability of information	3.6667	0.8876	3.7500	0.6216	3.6667	0.8876
Better exposure	<u>4.3333</u>	0.8876	3.6667	0.8876	3.9167	0.7930
Personalized experience	4.0000	0.8528	<u>4.5000</u>	0.6742	<u>4.5000</u>	0.6742
Salesperson personal selling ability	3.7500	0.8660	3.8333	0.9374	3.8333	0.9374
After-sale service	4.1667	0.8349	4.0000	0.8528	3.8333	0.9374
Sales information systems	<u>4.3333</u>	0.7785	3.7500	0.6216	3.7500	0.6216

Unlike the factors that influence consumer behavior, among the many factors that influence customers' purchasing patterns, the main influencing factors have changed considerably at different stages. Statistics show that before the COVID-19 epidemic, people were still mainly stimulated to consume cosmetics through external information when shopping for cosmetics. When a product was advertised overwhelmingly or with a unique label, customers would buy cosmetics according to how they received the information. During the COVID-19 epidemic, when people's income sources were reduced, they were more concerned about the quality of the product and the quality of the service, and they wanted to ensure that the product was intact regardless of the mode of purchase of cosmetics. At this time, personal experience also impacts customers' purchasing patterns, and similar to previous studies, women with higher education are more likely to accept new purchasing patterns. With the development of the times, people's perceptions of products are also changing. There are some similarities between this survey and existing studies. After the epidemic, customers pay more attention to product variety and innovation and hope to experience a perfect service, so product innovation and communication strategies will influence customers' purchasing patterns.

FIGURE 2 The Three Most Important Influencing Factors of Purchasing Patterns

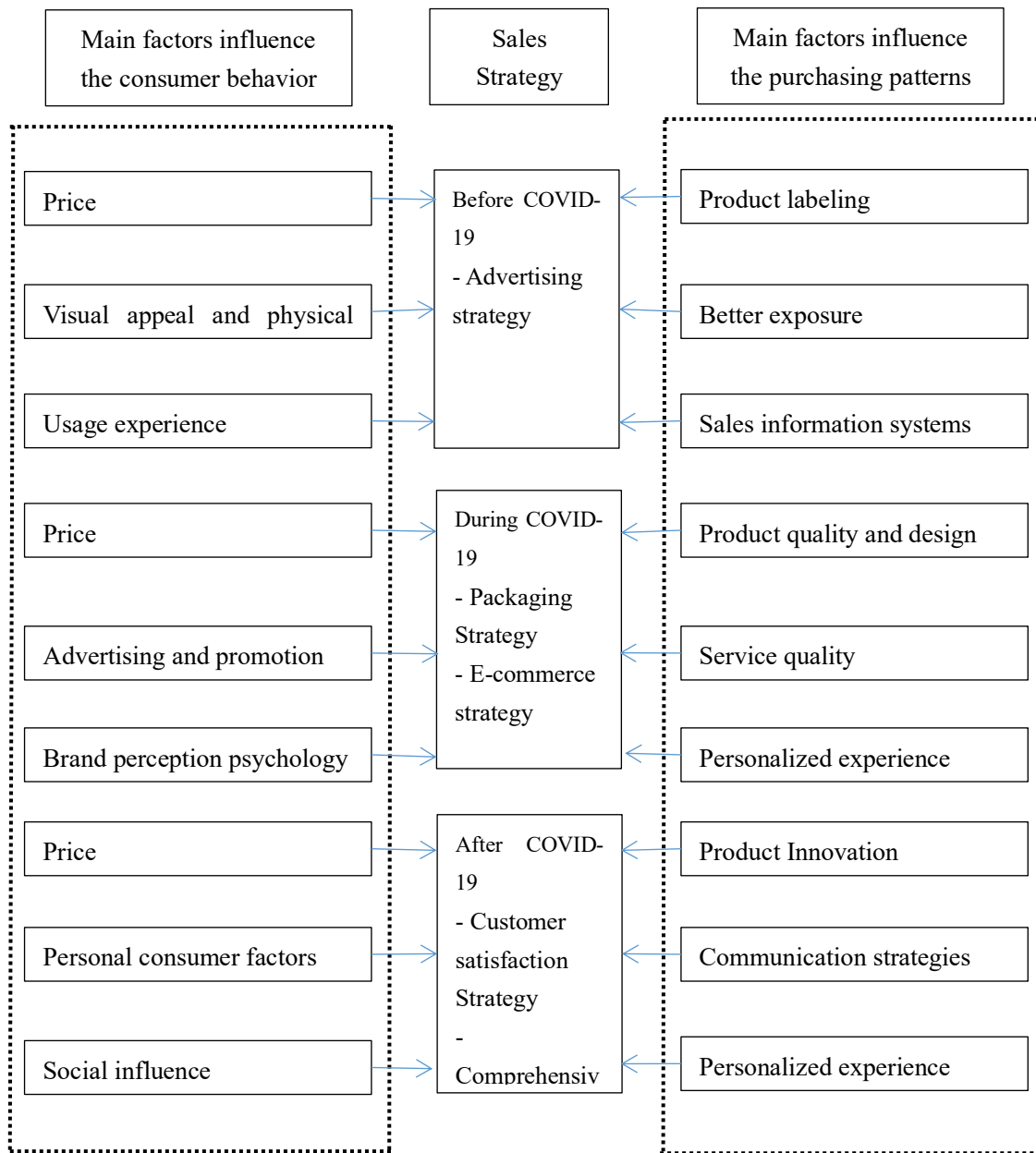


The COVID-19 epidemic has, to a certain extent, contributed to the development of purchasing patterns, which have evolved from spontaneous purchases to self-centered: purchasing patterns are based on perceived economic stability, necessity, product innovation, and self-satisfaction.

EVOLUTION OF SALES STRATEGY

Based on the survey we analyzed the most important factors influencing consumer behavior and consumer buying patterns at different stages. Based on this, we can make appropriate adjustments to the sales strategy of the cosmetics industry to meet the needs of customers at different stages in order to promote the development of the cosmetics industry. Figure 3 shows the sales strategy map based on the above findings.

FIGURE 3. Sales Strategy Map of the Cosmetic Industry



Through the above analysis, before the epidemic, cosmetic sales were mainly based on promotional channels, promoting sales through visual effects and labeling effects; after the epidemic began, sales models gradually increased and online shopping became more popular after receiving the influence of MCO policies, etc. In the post-epidemic era, customers showed more rational consumption concepts. To expand market share, cosmetic brands needed to strengthen consumers. In order to grow market share, cosmetic brands need to enhance consumer satisfaction and enrich sales methods to gain more significant market share.

IMPLICATION

Before the epidemic, individuals mainly considered pricing, visual attractiveness, tactile cues,

and user experience when making cosmetic purchases. Additionally, advertisements and packaging for cosmetics are crucial because customers are primarily motivated to purchase cosmetics by external information.

Consumers paid more attention to product promotion and brand impression during the epidemic because the global economy shrunk and decreased consumer income. No matter how they purchase cosmetics, they are more concerned with the products and service quality and want to ensure that the product is in good shape. At this point, a customer's purchasing habits may also be influenced by personal experience.

In the wake of the epidemic, customers are more interested in the social responsibility of cosmetic companies. Consumers will focus more on product diversity and innovation while also considering the social impact of receiving better services. Therefore, product innovation and communication tactics will impact clients' purchasing habits.

In terms of sales strategy, before the epidemic, visual and OEM effects were used to increase cosmetics sales, primarily based on promotional channels. After the epidemic started and the MCO policy took effect, the sales model gradually improved, and online shopping grew in popularity. Additionally, consumers will have a broader range of domestic and foreign products, thanks to the large selection of online cosmetics. As a result, companies can fully profit from e-electronic commerce's advantages to increase the frequency of their online cosmetics sales and market share.

Consumer behaviour has become more logical following the outbreak. Sales of cosmetics should therefore increase market share. Cosmetics companies must increase consumer market share in order to increase market share. Cosmetics companies must raise customer satisfaction levels and improve their sales strategies in order to increase their market share.

According to the aforementioned findings, the cosmetics industry's sales strategy must be appropriately modified to suit consumer wants at various stages and times while fostering the sector's growth.

CONCLUSION

According to the study, price is usually the primary factor influencing consumer spending throughout the pandemic's early, middle, and late stages. Consumer behaviour has changed from impulsive purchases to "self-centered" behaviours. Additionally, COVID-19 has in some ways encouraged the development of new buying habits, such as online shopping and adjustments in sales methods.

It is recommended that cosmetics sales develop various sales techniques depending on the stage of the epidemic in order to draw in their existing clientele and acquire new ones more successfully. COVID-19 must have had a major impact on a sizable portion of consumer decision-making. In order to adapt sales techniques to changing consumer needs, it is necessary to consider consumer decisions as well as the epidemic's effects. It should be noted that this time, only a total of 12 consumers were polled, limiting the generalizability of the survey results. It is, therefore, necessary to conduct additional studies to examine the shifts in consumer preferences for cosmetics and the sales patterns in the epidemic's early, mid, and late stages.

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