



THE MECHANISM OF BRAND LOYALTY FORMATION THROUGH ONLINE EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL EXPERIENCES:

A CASE STUDY OF BEAUTY BUFFET*

กลไกของการสร้างความภักดีต่อแบรนด์ผ่านประสบการณ์ทางอารมณ์
และพฤติกรรมออนไลน์: กรณีศึกษา BEAUTY BUFFET



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Abstract

This quantitative research aimed to analyze the effects of both emotional and behavioral online experiences on brand loyalty toward Beauty Buffet, emphasizing the mediating roles of trust, brand attachment, and brand satisfaction. The study developed a causal model with emotional and behavioral experiences as independent variables. Data were collected from 380 consumers who had used Beauty Buffet products between June and August 2023, yielding 221 valid responses (valid response rate = 63.14%). Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 4.0 to assess reliability, validity, and test hypotheses through path analysis and bootstrapping.

The results revealed that emotional experiences had neither a direct nor an indirect influence on trust, brand attachment, brand satisfaction, or brand loyalty. In contrast, behavioral experiences significantly influenced trust ($\beta=0.838$), brand attachment ($\beta=0.907$), and brand satisfaction ($\beta=0.703$). Among the mediators, only brand satisfaction had a direct effect on brand loyalty ($\beta=0.639$), acting as a partial mediator, while trust and brand attachment served as full mediators. This study proposes a brand loyalty model in the digital context,

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highlighting that behavioral engagement exerts a stronger impact on satisfaction and loyalty than emotional communication alone. The findings offer strategic insights for digital marketing within the beauty industry.

Keywords: Brand Loyalty; Emotional Experience; Behavioral Experience

บทคัดย่อ

บทความวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์ 1. วิเคราะห์ผลของประสบการณ์ออนไลน์ทั้งด้านอารมณ์ และ 2. พฤติกรรมที่มีต่อความภักดีต่อแบรนด์ Beauty Buffet โดยเน้นบทบาทสื่อกลางของความไว้วางใจ ความผูกพัน และความพึงพอใจในแบรนด์ ใช้การวิจัยเชิงปริมาณเพื่อพัฒนาโมเดลเชิงเหตุและผล โดยมีประสบการณ์ด้านอารมณ์และพฤติกรรมเป็นตัวแปรอิสระ เก็บข้อมูลจากผู้บริโภค 380 คน ที่เคยใช้ผลิตภัณฑ์ Beauty Buffet ระหว่างเดือนมิถุนายนถึงสิงหาคม 2566 ได้แบบสอบถามที่ใช้ได้จริง จำนวน 221 ชุด (อัตราตอบกลับที่ใช้ได้=63.14%) การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลใช้โปรแกรม SmartPLS 4.0 เพื่อตรวจสอบความเที่ยง ความตรง และทดสอบสมมติฐานด้วยการวิเคราะห์เส้นทางและ bootstrapping

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ประสบการณ์ด้านอารมณ์ไม่มีอิทธิพลโดยตรงหรือโดยอ้อมต่อความไว้วางใจ ความผูกพัน ความพึงพอใจ หรือความภักดีต่อแบรนด์ ในขณะที่ประสบการณ์ด้านพฤติกรรมส่งผลต่อความไว้วางใจ ($\beta=0.838$) ความผูกพัน ($\beta=0.907$) และความพึงพอใจ ($\beta=0.703$) อย่างมีนัยสำคัญ โดยมีเพียงความพึงพอใจที่ส่งผลต่อความภักดีโดยตรง ($\beta=0.639$) ความพึงพอใจทำหน้าที่เป็นตัวกลางบางส่วน ขณะที่ความไว้วางใจและความผูกพันเป็นตัวกลางสมบูรณ์ งานวิจัยนี้เสนอโมเดลความภักดีต่อแบรนด์ในบริบทดิจิทัล โดยชี้ว่า การมีส่วนร่วมเชิงพฤติกรรมมีผลต่อความพึงพอใจและความภักดีมากกว่าการสื่อสารทางอารมณ์เพียงอย่างเดียว และให้แนวทางเชิงกลยุทธ์สำหรับการตลาดดิจิทัลในอุตสาหกรรมความงาม

คำสำคัญ: ความภักดีต่อแบรนด์; ประสบการณ์ทางอารมณ์; ประสบการณ์พฤติกรรม

Introduction

Encouraging the customers to repeatedly buy a product from a specific brand encouraged marketers to study Brand loyalty, which has emotions intricately associated with it, to better understand customer relations. This concept constitutes trust in the brand and business presence in the market. Most of the research study was dedicated to offline brand nurturing, with trust, commitment, and beauty emerging as primary drivers (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). One of the contributions argues that there exists a level of clearly defined brand commitment which defines brand loyalty which is attachment both behaviorally



and attitudinally. That model of multidimensional defines loyalty in touch-mind dimension and remains for inquiry after decades of tributaries. This research seeks to build on their model by explaining the impact of emotional or behavioral online experiences on brand loyalty through trust, satisfaction, and commitment.

With the onset of modern technology and the internet, the use of brands and their interactions with consumers have changed dramatically. Digital media content, be it advertisements, influencer posts, or user-generated content elicits emotions such as social engagement and commenting and shopping which uphold the loyalty illusion (Hollebeek et al., 2014). This is especially true in the cosmetics market, in which consumers' perceptions of the brand image, the associated qualitative attributes of the product, and the overall reliability positively affects customer loyalty tend to matter (Rejitha & Jayalakshmi, 2025).

This study examines Beauty Buffet, the premier Thai cosmetics retailer under Beauty Community Public Company Limited. Buffet-style retailing and the Scentio and Lansley brands have garnered Beauty Buffet widespread recognition throughout Southeast Asia. Its success stems from a strong digital presence and cutting-edge marketing techniques, making it an ideal case for exploring brand loyalty inflicted through online interactions.

Thus, this study aims to analyze the impact of emotional and behavioral experiences with brand-on-brand trust, commitment, satisfaction, and loyalty while exploring the mediating role of these variables. The goals are: 1. measure the effect of emotional experience on the mediating variables of trust, satisfaction, and commitment; 2. evaluate the effect of behavioral factors such as promotional activities and review participations; 3. Appraise the mediating effect of these variables; 4. develop a model of brand loyalty grounded on digital interactions with Beauty Buffet (Tampi et al., 2022). The results will contribute to practical and theoretical frameworks for digital brand loyalty in competitive market environments.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the influence of online emotional and behavioral experiences on brand loyalty in the context of Beauty Buffet.

2. To assess the mediating roles of brand commitment, brand trust, and brand satisfaction in translating these online experiences into consumer loyalty.

Methodology

1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design using a causal modeling approach to examine the effects of emotional and behavioral online brand experiences on brand loyalty toward Beauty Buffet. The research focused on exploring the mediating roles of brand trust, brand commitment, and brand satisfaction in this relationship. A structured questionnaire was developed based on validated measurement scales and distributed to consumers with prior experience using Beauty Buffet products.

2. Populations

The target population comprised consumers residing in four geographically and economically diverse Chinese cities: Shanghai (East, high GDP), Guangzhou (South, high GDP), Chengdu (West, lower GDP), and Harbin (North, lower GDP). These locations were selected to capture varying consumer behaviors across different economic and cultural contexts where Beauty Buffet is marketed through both online and offline channels. All participants were required to have prior experience using the brand's skincare and makeup products.

3. Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire was employed as the primary data collection tool in this study. The instrument was designed to measure six key constructs: emotional experience, behavioral experience, commitment, brand trust, brand satisfaction, and brand loyalty. Measurement items were adapted from the validated framework of Jiayan (2019). All items were rated using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first part collected demographic information about the respondents. The second part measured online brand experiences, both emotional and behavioral. The third part assessed brand commitment, brand trust, brand satisfaction, and brand loyalty. The specific measurement items used in this study are presented in Table 1.



Table 1 Measurement Items

Variable	Code	Measurement Items
Emotional Experience	A1	Information about Beauty Buffet (e.g., advertisements, brand history, corporate culture, reviews, etc.) makes me feel happy.
	A2	Beauty Buffet brand excites me and generates enthusiasm (e.g., pre- and post-makeup comparisons, tutorial videos, etc.).
	A3	Beauty Buffet creates an emotional atmosphere and resonance through content like celebrity endorsements and beauty bloggers.
Behavioral Experience	B1	Beauty Buffet emphasizes online communication and interaction with consumers, such as through chats and email notifications.
	B2	Beauty Buffet brand encourages me to participate in online brand activities (e.g., product trials, online raffles, etc.).
	B3	Beauty Buffet brand actively guides me to engage in interactions with the brand (e.g., liking, sharing, or commenting).
Brand Commitment	C1	Beauty Buffet brand holds special significance to me.
	C2	I feel a strong sense of belonging to the Beauty Buffet brand.
	C3	Because I have benefited from the information provided by Beauty Buffet, I intend to pay long-term attention to this brand.
Brand Trust	D1	I feel safe and confident with the information Beauty Buffet brand delivers.
	D2	I trust Beauty Buffet brand to take responsibility for its products.
	D3	I believe Beauty Buffet brand is highly reliable.
	D4	I think Beauty Buffet brand meets my needs.
Brand Satisfaction	E1	After browsing relevant information, I feel very satisfied with Beauty Buffet brand.
	E2	Beauty Buffet brand's displayed information exceeds my expectations.
	E3	Compared to other brands, Beauty Buffet provides reliable quality, reasonable prices, and meets my needs.
	E4	Overall, Beauty Buffet brand's information provides significant value to me.
Brand Loyalty	F1	When buying cosmetics, I prioritize Beauty Buffet brand.
	F2	Compared to other brands, I am unwilling to pay more for Beauty Buffet.
	F3	I actively recommend Beauty Buffet brand to friends and family who want to buy cosmetics.
	F4	I am happy to share the benefits of Beauty Buffet brand with others.

4. Data Collection

Participants were recruited through Credamo, a reputable online survey platform in China. Strict screening criteria were applied to ensure data quality

4.1 Respondents must have completed at least 70 prior surveys

4.2 A credit score of 80 or higher

4.3 A response acceptance rate exceeding 80%



4.4 Residency in one of the four target cities

4.5 Responses were submitted from unique IP addresses with a minimum spacing of one kilometer between respondents to mitigate sampling bias

Only respondents meeting all criteria were randomly selected to complete the questionnaire. The survey was conducted between June and August 2023. A total of 380 responses were collected, of which 221 valid responses were retained for analysis, yielding a valid response rate of 63.14%.

5. Data Analysis Statistics used to Analyzed the Data

Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 4.0, a structural equation modeling (SEM) software suitable for exploratory research with complex models and smaller sample sizes. The analysis involved:

5.1 Reliability testing (Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha)

5.2 Validity testing (Convergent and Discriminant Validity)

5.3 Path analysis to evaluate hypothesized relationships between variables

5.4 Bootstrapping (with 5,000 resamples) to assess the significance of path coefficients and mediating effects

Result

Sample Information

The survey targeted consumers with prior experience using Beauty Buffet products and was conducted between June and August 2024. Out of 380 distributed questionnaires, 253 were returned, and 221 were valid, resulting in a 63.14% valid response rate.

Descriptive Analysis

A descriptive analysis was performed on the demographic characteristics of respondents. Table 2 presents a summary of key statistics related to brand loyalty.

Table 2 Measurement Items

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	33	14.9%
	Female	188	84.7%



Table 2 Measurement Items (Next)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	Under 18	10	4.5%
	18-29 years	163	73.4%
	30-39 years	25	11.3%
	40-49 years	11	5.0%
	Over 50	12	5.4%
Education Level	High school or below	25	11.3%
	Diploma	159	71.6%
	Bachelor's degree	20	9.0%
	Master's degree or above	17	7.7%
Have you browsed online information about cosmetics?	Yes	202	91.0%
	No	19	9.0%
How long have you been using the Internet?	Less than 1 year	6	2.7%
	1-2 years	25	11.3%
	3-5 years	56	25.2%
	More than 5 years	134	60.4%
Frequency of browsing online cosmetic-related information	Daily	38	17.1%
	Weekly	81	36.5%
	Monthly	43	19.4%
	Quarterly	31	14.0%
	Semi-annually	15	6.8%
	Annually or longer	13	5.9%
Monthly spending on online cosmetics shopping	Below 100 RMB	53	23.9%
	100-500 RMB	108	48.6%
	500-1000 RMB	38	17.1%
	1000-5000 RMB	16	7.2%
	Above 5000 RMB	6	2.7%

This study calculated the mean and standard deviation of the variables investigated in the research survey. Table 3 presents the mean and standard deviation of the variables associated with brand loyalty in the survey.

Table 3 Mean and Standard Deviation of Each Item

Variable	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
Online Emotional Experience	A1	5.12	1.407
	A2	5.01	1.408
	A3	5.03	1.368
Online Behavioral Experience	B1	4.98	1.414
	B2	4.94	1.468
	B3	5.01	1.414
Brand Commitment	C1	4.95	1.371
	C2	4.93	1.405
	C3	4.93	1.368
Brand Trust	D1	4.95	1.399
	D2	5.05	1.356
	D3	4.94	1.421
	D4	5.05	1.334
Brand Satisfaction	E1	5.00	1.348
	E2	4.96	1.379
	E3	5.04	1.321
	E4	4.96	1.370
Brand Loyalty	F1	4.87	1.479
	F2	4.95	1.436
	F3	4.90	1.460
	F4	4.92	1.415

Data Validation and Results Analysis

Reliability Test

Using SmartPLS 4.0, reliability was assessed via Cronbach's α , CITC, composite reliability (CR), and item loadings. All constructions demonstrated strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.8$, CITC > 0.4 , item loadings > 0.80 , and CR > 0.5 , indicating suitability for structural model analysis.

Table 4 Reliability Analysis Table

Variable	Item	Corrected Item- Total Correlation (CITC)	Item Loading	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability (CR)
Brand Trust	D1	0.945	0.969	0.933	0.976	0.982
	D2	0.939	0.966			
	D3	0.938	0.964			
	D4	0.935	0.964			



Table 4 Reliability Analysis Table (Next)

Variable	Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation (CITC)	Item Loading	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability (CR)
Brand Loyalty	F1	0.913	0.952	0.906	0.965	0.975
	F2	0.892	0.939			
	F3	0.902	0.945			
	F4	0.942	0.970			
Brand Commitment	C1	0.958	0.981	0.958	0.978	0.986
	C2	0.969	0.968			
	C3	0.929	0.987			
Brand Satisfaction	E1	0.935	0.964	0.929	0.974	0.981
	E2	0.951	0.972			
	E3	0.942	0.968			
	E4	0.913	0.951			
Emotional Experience	A1	0.891	0.949	0.914	0.953	0.969
	A2	0.917	0.964			
	A3	0.892	0.955			
Behavioral Experience	B1	0.934	0.971	0.940	0.968	0.979
	B2	0.919	0.963			
	B3	0.941	0.974			

Validity Test

Convergent validity was confirmed as all constructs had AVE values above 0.50. Discriminant validity was also established, with the square roots of AVE for all six latent variables exceeding their inter-variable correlations, as shown in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 5 Correlation Matrix of Latent Variables and Square Roots of AVE

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Brand Trust	0.966					
2. Brand Loyalty	0.912	0.952				
3. Brand Commitment	0.960	0.916	0.979			
4. Brand Satisfaction	0.930	0.941	0.936	0.964		
5. Emotional Experience	0.904	0.850	0.861	0.882	0.956	
6. Behavioral Experience	0.961	0.914	0.932	0.920	0.919	0.970

Additionally, the study assessed discriminant validity through a cross-loading analysis. Each item showed a significantly higher loading on its designated latent variable compared to others, reinforcing the model's convergent and discriminant validity. Detailed item loadings and cross-loadings are presented in Table 6.

Table 6 Item Loadings and Cross-Loadings

Item	Brand Trust	Brand Loyalty	Brand Commitment	Brand Satisfaction	Emotional Experience	Behavioral Experience
A1	0.812	0.876	0.884	0.886	0.876	0.963
A2	0.868	0.904	0.912	0.898	0.883	0.974
A3	0.906	0.885	0.917	0.901	0.888	0.943
B1	0.930	0.880	0.936	0.894	0.858	0.929
B2	0.928	0.861	0.920	0.886	0.860	0.919
B3	0.936	0.895	0.935	0.912	0.885	0.921
C1	0.969	0.888	0.879	0.902	0.837	0.906
C2	0.966	0.891	0.888	0.921	0.835	0.900
C3	0.964	0.910	0.926	0.924	0.857	0.932
D1	0.964	0.911	0.913	0.888	0.864	0.895
D2	0.932	0.891	0.981	0.880	0.843	0.879
D3	0.941	0.911	0.968	0.898	0.846	0.881
D4	0.945	0.915	0.987	0.916	0.847	0.892
E1	0.896	0.876	0.887	0.964	0.794	0.867
E2	0.886	0.904	0.852	0.972	0.789	0.842
E3	0.880	0.885	0.863	0.968	0.824	0.885
E4	0.922	0.880	0.883	0.951	0.829	0.884
F1	0.870	0.952	0.884	0.886	0.876	0.963
F2	0.845	0.939	0.912	0.898	0.883	0.974
F3	0.871	0.945	0.917	0.901	0.888	0.943
F4	0.883	0.970	0.936	0.894	0.858	0.929

Model Fit Evaluation

The PLS-SEM model shows a good fit, with SRMR (0.028), d_ULS (0.044), and d_G (0.657) all within acceptable ranges, and NFI (0.918) exceeding the 0.9 benchmark. High R² values for Brand Satisfaction (0.965) and Brand Loyalty (0.973) indicate strong explanatory power, confirming the model's robustness (Table 7).



Table 7 Structural Model Evaluation

Indicator	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.028	0.040
d_ULS	0.178	0.365
d_G	1.12	1.348
NFI	0.857	0.845

Hypothesis Testing

1. Path Analysis Path analysis using SmartPLS 4.0 showed that emotional experience had no significant effect on brand trust ($\beta=0.133$, $p=0.164$), commitment ($\beta=0.028$, $p=0.809$), or satisfaction ($\beta=0.237$, $p=0.090$). These results suggest that emotional engagement alone does not influence key loyalty drivers. In contrast, behavioral experience had a strong and significant impact on all three mediators: trust ($\beta=0.838$, $p=0.000$), commitment ($\beta=0.907$, $p=0.000$), and satisfaction ($\beta=0.703$, $p=0.000$), indicating that active online engagement is crucial. Among the mediators, only satisfaction had a significant direct effect on brand loyalty ($\beta=0.639$, $p=0.000$), while trust ($\beta=0.156$, $p=0.173$) and commitment ($\beta=0.168$, $p=0.180$) did not. This highlights satisfaction as the key driver of loyalty in this model.

2. Mediation Effect Test The mediation effect analysis indicates that emotional experience had no significant effect on brand loyalty, either directly ($p=0.082$) or indirectly through brand commitment ($p=0.830$), trust ($p=0.428$), or satisfaction ($p=0.079$). These results confirm that emotional engagement does not influence loyalty, whether alone or via the three key mediators. In contrast, behavioral experience played a more influential role. While its indirect effects through commitment ($p=0.191$) and trust ($p=0.172$) were not significant, the direct path to loyalty was strongly significant ($p=0.000$), indicating partial mediation. Importantly, the indirect path through satisfaction was also significant ($p=0.000$), with the direct effect remaining significant ($p=0.000$), confirming satisfaction as a partial mediator in the behavioral experience–loyalty relationship.

Discussion

The findings indicate that online emotional experiences had no significant effect on brand trust ($\beta=0.133$, $p>0.05$), brand commitment ($\beta=0.028$, $p>0.05$), or brand satisfaction ($\beta=0.237$, $p>0.05$). While emotions such as excitement or

pleasure may enhance brand perception, they are insufficient to foster loyalty-related constructs on their own. In contrast, online behavioral experiences including participation in promotions, content sharing, and digital interaction had strong positive effects on brand trust ($\beta=0.838$, $p<0.001$), commitment ($\beta=0.907$, $p<0.001$), and satisfaction ($\beta=0.703$, $p<0.001$), underscoring the critical role of active consumer participation.

These findings are consistent with Hollebeek et al. (2014), who conceptualized engagement as a multidimensional construct, emphasizing the behavioral dimension's stronger impact. Kim et al. (2020) found behavioral engagement to influence loyalty through trust and satisfaction, while Larivière et al. (2023) and Carpenter (2017) noted that interactive features and user participation better predict long-term loyalty than emotional impressions alone. Mediation analysis confirmed that emotional experience had neither significant direct nor indirect effects on brand loyalty via commitment ($p=0.830$), trust ($p=0.428$), or satisfaction ($p=0.079$). The direct path was also not significant ($p=0.082$), reinforcing Yang & Liu's (2019) argument that emotional effects in digital environments may be too fleeting to sustain loyalty. Conversely, behavioral experience influenced loyalty through all three mediators. Notably, only satisfaction had a significant direct effect on loyalty ($\beta=0.639$, $p=0.000$), while trust ($\beta=0.156$, $p=0.173$) and commitment ($\beta=0.168$, $p=0.180$) did not, indicating satisfaction as a partial mediator and the others as full mediators.

This study contributes to brand loyalty theory by integrating classical model focused on trust, commitment, and satisfaction with contemporary digital engagement perspectives. It refines loyalty theory by showing that behavioral engagement, more than emotional content, drives loyalty through cognitive and affective pathways. The results affirm conclusions from Kim et al. (2020) and Li & Fang (2020) and extend Hollebeek et al. (2014) by showing emotional experience's limited impact in product categories like cosmetics. For practitioners, especially in beauty and skincare, the findings highlight the importance of behavior-based strategies such as product trials, personalized campaigns, responsive service, and interactive platforms. Rejitha & Jayalakshmi (2025) also recommend reinforcing trust through transparency and consistent service.



However, the study's focus on Thai consumers and reliance on self-reported data limit generalizability. Future research should explore broader contexts, behavioral tracking, and emerging engagement forms like AI personalization or immersive storytelling in digital platforms.

Conclusion This study examined how online emotional and behavioral experiences affect brand loyalty in the context of Beauty Buffet. Emotional experience had no significant impact on trust, commitment, satisfaction, or loyalty. In contrast, behavioral experience strongly influenced all three mediators, with only satisfaction directly affecting loyalty. Satisfaction served as a partial mediator, while trust and commitment were full mediators. The findings suggest that active engagement, such as participating in online brand activities, is more influential than emotional content in driving lasting loyalty, emphasizing the need for behavior-focused strategies.

Body of Knowledge

This study offers a concise framework for building brand loyalty through digital engagement. It begins with drawing attention using emotional content like influencer posts, followed by encouraging interaction through reviews and campaigns that strengthen trust, satisfaction, and commitment. Consistent digital experiences clear information, responsive service, and reliable delivery help reinforce these bonds. Loyalty is then sustained through personalization, reward systems, and community engagement. The findings suggest that while emotional content captures interest, it is active behavioral engagement that truly drives long-term brand loyalty in today's competitive online landscape.

Recommendations

Policy Recommendations

Encourage digital marketing strategies that prioritize behavioral engagement (e.g., reviews, interactions, personalized experiences) over solely emotional content to foster sustainable brand loyalty.

Operational Recommendations

Implement community features and personalized interactions within digital platforms to deepen trust, satisfaction, and brand commitment through active consumer participation.

Recommendations for Next Research

Future studies should explore how different types of behavioral engagement (e.g., user-generated content, gamification) contribute to brand loyalty across various digital market segments.

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