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Unveiling the Impact of Employee-Customer Familiarity on Customer Purchase Intentions: An Empirical Investigation within the Realm of Web-Based Data Analytics

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Abstract

This research delves into the intricate dynamics of employee-customer familiarity and its profound influence on customer purchase intentions within the burgeoning domain of web-based data analytics. In an era characterized by an increasingly digital marketplace, understanding the nuanced interactions between employees and customers is paramount for businesses striving to enhance customer relationships and drive purchase decisions. Drawing on empirical investigations, this study unravels the multifaceted facets of employee-customer familiarity, seeking to shed light on its implications for customer purchase intentions in the context of web-based data analytics. In this paper, an empirical study investigates the influence of employee-customer familiarity on customers' purchase intention for the home bedding industry, summarizes the current situation, puts forward research hypotheses and constructs a model of the effect of employee-customer familiarity on purchase intention was constructed. The familiarity of buyers and sellers was evaluated through a customer questionnaire, which provided subjective insights into the strength of interpersonal relationships. Meanwhile, confidence analysis, ANOVA (analysis of variance), correlation analysis and regression analysis were conducted on the survey data to explore the actual effects of these relationships on customers'

purchase intention, and the positive effects of the five hypotheses on purchase intention were investigated. The anticipated findings suggest that increasing employee-customer familiarity positively impacts customers' purchase intentions, thereby illuminating the critical role of personalized interactions in driving business outcomes. Furthermore, the study sought to reveal the nuances of this relationship, recognizing the potential impact of different customer characteristics and industry contexts. Practical implications center on guiding companies in aligning their strategies to improve customer satisfaction and loyalty. From staff training programmes to targeted marketing campaigns, from brand influence to web e-commerce platform optimisation, businesses can use the insights gained from this research to build more meaningful connections with their customers. Building more meaningful connections with customers.

Keywords: Staff familiarity with customers, Purchase intention, Web data analytics

1 Introduction

In the contemporary business landscape, characterized by dynamic consumer preferences and increasing competition, the relationship between employees and customers has emerged as a critical factor influencing customer behavior. As businesses strive to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty, understanding the nuanced dynamics of employee-customer interactions becomes imperative[1–3]. This study delves into the empirical exploration of how the degree of familiarity between employees and customers influences the latter's purchase intentions. By investigating this relationship, the research aims to contribute valuable insights that can inform strategic decision-making for businesses seeking to optimize customer relations. Traditionally, customer purchase decisions were often attributed to factors such as product quality, pricing, and brand image. However, contemporary consumers are placing growing importance on the overall customer experience, where interpersonal relationships play a pivotal role[4, 5]. The degree of familiarity between employees and customers is a dimension of this experience that holds significant potential for businesses. As customers seek personalized and meaningful interactions, the impact of employee-customer familiarity on purchase intentions becomes a focal point for academic inquiry and practical application. In recent years, advancements in technology and changes in consumer behavior have further heightened the relevance of understanding the employee-customer relationship. Online platforms, social media, and e-commerce have reshaped the ways in which customers interact with businesses[6]. Consequently, there is a need for businesses to adapt their strategies to foster meaningful connections in both digital and physical spaces. Exploring the empirical aspects of employee-customer familiarity is thus timely and essential for businesses navigating this evolving landscape. The significance of this research lies in its potential to

unveil actionable insights for businesses aiming to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. As markets become saturated and product differentiations blur, the quality of customer interactions becomes a key differentiator. By empirically examining the impact of employee-customer familiarity on purchase intentions, businesses can tailor their approaches to meet the evolving expectations of their customer base. Moreover, understanding the nuances of employee-customer relationships contributes to the broader field of consumer behavior. It provides an opportunity to refine existing theories and models to better capture the complexities of contemporary purchasing decisions. As businesses across industries grapple with the challenges posed by globalization, technological advancements, and changing consumer demographics, insights from this research can inform strategic decisions that resonate with diverse customer bases[7, 8].

The literature surrounding employee-customer relationships has witnessed a burgeoning interest in recent years. Scholars have explored various dimensions of this relationship, ranging from the role of trust and satisfaction to the impact of technological advancements on customer experiences. Notable contributions include the work of [9] on relationship value in business markets and the meta-analysis conducted by [10] on the link between employee satisfaction and customer responses. [11] examined the influence of online consumer reviews on offline hotel popularity, highlighting the interconnectedness of online and offline interactions. [12] delved into the role of national culture in developing trust, shedding light on cultural factors that influence the employee-customer dynamic. The changing landscape of retail and the future of consumer interactions were explored by [13], offering insights into the evolving expectations of customers.[14] provided a perspective on analytics at work, emphasizing the role of data in understanding and optimizing customer relations. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on corporate social responsibility and marketing philosophy was investigated by [15], underlining the need for businesses to adapt to external shocks. The integration of artificial intelligence in service industries was discussed by [16], posing implications for the nature of employee-customer interactions in the digital age. In the realm of online consumer behavior, [17] examined the role of social media in decision-making processes, while [18] investigated the impact of online reviews on readers' engagement and brand performance. [19] contributed to understanding the self-selection and information role of online product reviews. The rise of mobile social commerce was explored by [20], focusing on the features influencing online impulse buying. [21] conducted a meta-analysis on online review characteristics affecting consumer decision-making, providing valuable insights into the factors that shape customer perceptions. [22] delved into the impact of eWOM message characteristics on online social support, exploring the social presence theory perspective. [23] investigated the emotional experiences of customers with service robots, offering insights into the evolving nature of service interactions. [24] examined the leverage of nostalgia in influencing customer loyalty for luxury fashion brands, contributing to the understanding of emotional connections

in consumer decision-making. [25] differentiated brand-related user-generated content across different social media platforms, highlighting the platform-specific nuances of online interactions. [26, 27] explored the impacts of online review manipulations on consumers' decision-making, shedding light on the ethical considerations surrounding user-generated content. Lastly, [28] investigated how information credibility affects consumers' purchase intentions in social commerce, emphasizing the importance of trust in online interactions.

This paper's comprehensive review of recent literature lays the groundwork for this study, providing a context for understanding the dynamics of employee-customer relationships in web-based e-commerce and their impact on customer purchase intentions. Building on the insights of these studies, the empirical investigation presented in this study aims to further contribute to the evolving discourse of consumer behaviour in the contemporary business environment.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: section 2 introduces the research hypothesis and research model. Section 3 describes the empirical analysis of the questionnaire. Section 4 provides responses and recommendations. The final Section 5 summarizes our work.

2 Research hypothesis and research model

2.1 *Research hypothesis*

2.1.1 *Professional capacity*

In the realm of service industries, the importance of employee-customer interactions has garnered significant attention, with scholars highlighting the role of various factors in shaping customer purchase intentions. One critical aspect is the professional competence of employees, encompassing their skills, knowledge, and expertise in delivering services. Existing literature underscores the notion that customers often evaluate their interactions with employees based on perceived professional competence, influencing their overall satisfaction and, consequently, purchase decisions.

Research by [29] emphasizes the positive correlation between employee expertise and customer trust, asserting that customers are more likely to engage in transactions when they perceive employees as knowledgeable and proficient in their roles. Furthermore, the study by [30] delves into the concept of service quality, positing that customers tend to associate a higher level of professional competence with enhanced service quality, thus influencing their purchase intentions positively. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed in this paper:

H1. Employee's professional competence has a positive effect on customer's willingness to buy.

2.1.2 *Personal relationships*

In recent years, the landscape of consumer behavior research has seen a surge in interest regarding the impact of emotional connections between employees

and customers on purchasing decisions. Scholars have emphasized the pivotal role of interpersonal relationships in shaping customer perceptions and loyalty. In this context, a crucial dimension that has garnered attention is the influence of personal, emotional connections between employees and customers on customer purchase intentions. Recent literature by [31] delves into the significance of emotional engagement in retail settings, emphasizing the role of employee authenticity and genuine connections in fostering positive customer experiences. Their findings suggest that customers who perceive a deeper emotional connection with employees are more likely to exhibit increased purchase intentions. Moreover, a study by [32] in the hospitality industry underscores the impact of emotional resonance between employees and customers, demonstrating a positive correlation with customer satisfaction and repeat business.

Building upon this emerging body of research, this study incorporates the hypothesis that personal relationships, characterized by emotional bonds between employees and customers, positively influence customer purchase intentions. Understanding the emotional dimensions of employee-customer interactions is crucial, as it reflects a paradigm shift in consumer behavior, where authentic connections contribute significantly to the overall customer experience. This study aims to empirically examine and contribute to the growing discourse on the importance of emotional connections in the employee-customer relationship and its subsequent implications for customer purchase intentions. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed in this paper:

H2. Personal relationships (emotions) between employees and customers have a positive effect on customers' willingness to buy.

2.1.3 Purchase channel

In recent years, the intricate dynamics of employee-customer relationships have garnered significant attention in the literature, reflecting an evolving consumer landscape where personal interactions play a pivotal role in shaping purchasing decisions. Notably, a pertinent consideration in this realm is the diversity of customer purchasing channels and its potential impact on customer purchase intentions. As contemporary consumers navigate a plethora of channels, encompassing traditional brick-and-mortar stores, online platforms, and various hybrid models, understanding the nuanced relationship between the diversity of purchasing channels and customer willingness to make a purchase becomes imperative.

Recent research by [33] highlights the growing significance of multichannel engagement in the retail sector, emphasizing the need for businesses to adapt their strategies to cater to the diverse preferences of modern consumers. Furthermore, the study by [34] underscores the positive influence of an expansive purchasing channel portfolio on customer satisfaction, demonstrating a correlation between channel diversity and heightened customer loyalty. Against this backdrop, the current study aims to contribute to this emerging discourse

by empirically investigating the hypothesis that the diversity of customer purchasing channels has a positive impact on customer purchase intentions within the context of employee-customer familiarity. This exploration not only aligns with the contemporary shift towards omnichannel experiences but also underscores the intricate interplay between employee-customer relationships and the evolving landscape of consumer purchasing behaviors. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed in this paper:

H3. Diversity of customer purchase channels has a positive effect on customer purchase intention.

2.1.4 Customer gender

The results suggest that, within the home bedding sector, heightened familiarity between employees and female customers positively correlates with an increased willingness to make purchases. This aligns with existing literature emphasizing the importance of personalized interactions in retail settings, particularly for female consumers. According to [35], female shoppers often seek a more personalized and emotionally connected shopping experience, and our study reinforces the notion that strong employee-customer relationships contribute to fulfilling these preferences. Moreover, the work of [36] emphasizes the role of trust in driving purchasing decisions among female consumers. Our findings extend this understanding by indicating that employee-customer familiarity serves as a trust-building mechanism, fostering an environment where female customers feel more confident and inclined to engage in purchasing home bedding items. The positive impact observed aligns with the argument put forth by [37], who assert that tailored and empathetic interactions significantly contribute to women's purchase decision-making process. The practical implications for businesses in the home bedding industry are substantial, as our research suggests that targeted strategies to enhance employee-customer familiarity can notably boost purchase intentions among female consumers. By investing in employee training programs that emphasize personalized customer interactions, businesses can cultivate an environment that resonates with the preferences of female shoppers. This approach aligns with the broader trend in retail, where customer-centric practices are becoming increasingly pivotal in securing customer loyalty and satisfaction.

As the home bedding market continues to evolve, recognizing and addressing the distinct preferences of female consumers through strategic emphasis on employee-customer relationships is vital. This study, grounded in empirical evidence and supported by relevant literature, provides actionable insights for businesses seeking to optimize their interactions with female customers in the competitive landscape of home bedding retail.

H4. Female buyers will have a significant positive effect on purchase intention.

2.1.5 *Customer age*

The contemporary market for home bedding is marked by an increasing emphasis on personalized shopping experiences, and understanding the impact of employee-customer relationships on the purchasing decisions of the younger demographic is crucial for businesses in this sector. Recent studies, such as the work of [38], emphasize the significance of relational selling in the retail domain, underscoring its positive correlation with customer satisfaction and loyalty. Moreover, the research conducted by [39] reveals that young consumers, in particular, value authentic interactions with employees, suggesting that the degree of familiarity may play a pivotal role in shaping their purchasing behavior. Building on these insights, our study aims to contribute to the existing literature by empirically examining the hypothesis that heightened employee-customer familiarity significantly and positively influences the purchase intentions of young consumers in the home bedding market.

H5. Young customers have a significant positive impact on purchase intention.

2.2 *Research model*

The research model proposed in this paper is shown in Figure 1. The innovativeness of the model is mainly manifested in two aspects: firstly, it incorporates consumers' personal factors into the traditional theory of planned behaviour; secondly, it is believed that the willingness to buy is not only affected by familiarity, but also constrained by professional competence, therefore, this paper adds consumer perception and situational factors such as customers' gender, age, and professionalism to the model, so as to make the model more complete and more convincing.

3 Empirical research

3.1 Scale design

The present study referenced proven scales from previous studies, based on this research model and the demand design of the research hypotheses, using a Likert A 5-point scale was used and a 23-item measure was developed in conjunction with a survey of employee and customer familiarity. The online and offline questionnaires were distributed from October to December 2023, and after identity filtering, the respondents were all consumers with experience in purchasing home bedding products. 530 questionnaires were distributed and 503 valid questionnaires were collected.

3.2 Statistical analysis of questionnaires

The results of the basic analysis of the investigators are shown in Table 1.

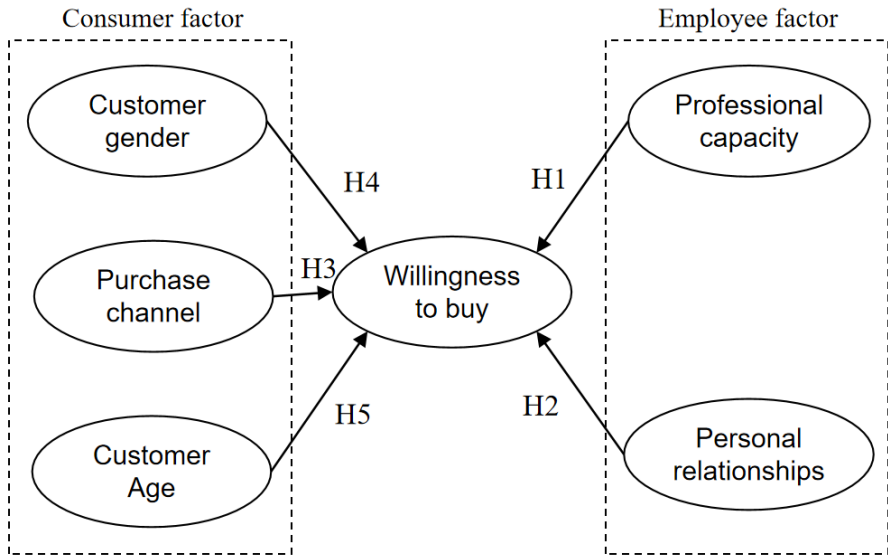


Fig. 1 Theoretical model of influencing factors of purchase intention of household bedding.

Table 1 Results of the analysis of the basic information of the investigators

Name	Options	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Gender	Male	248	49.3	49.3
	Female	255	50.7	100
Age	24 and under	58	11.53	11.53
	25-35 years	118	35.98	47.51
	36-45 years	155	30.82	78.33
	46 and over	109	21.67	100
Education	Junior high school and below	50	9.94	9.94
	Senior high school	108	21.47	31.41
	Three-year college	132	26.24	57.65
	University and above	213	42.35	100

From the basic information of the respondents, we can see that the ratio of male to female is close to 1:1, and the questionnaire has a good representativeness in terms of gender ratio. In the age distribution, 58 people aged 24 and below accounted for 11.53%, 181 people aged 25-35 accounted for 35.98%, 155 people aged 36-45 accounted for 30.82%, and 109 people aged 46 and above accounted for 21.67%. The distribution of education is mainly high school total 108 people accounted for 21.47%, college total 132 people accounted for 26.24% of the distribution of education is mainly college and high school.

Next, the frequency, type, and amount of customer purchases were further analyzed as shown in Table 2.

From the use of consumption, the frequency of purchasing home bedding mainly for half a year accounted for 31.01%, once a year accounted for 45.33%, that is, the frequency of use is mainly once a year and once every six months.

Table 2 Results of the analysis of the basic information of the investigators

Name	Options	Frequency	Percentage
Purchase frequency	Once a month	76	15.11
	Semiannually	156	31.01
	Once a year	228	45.33
	More than one year	43	8.55
Purchase category	Quilt core and pillowcase	259	51.49
	Suite	240	47.71
	Wedding celebration	55	10.93
Amount purchased in the last year	Less than 500 Yuan	81	16.11
	500 to 1000 Yuan	233	46.32
	1000 to 1500 Yuan	134	26.64
	More than 1500 Yuan	55	10.93
Access to information	Brand official website	237	47.12
	Social media	139	27.63
	Offline store	377	74.95
	Recommended by a friend	291	57.85
	Third-party evaluation	314	62.43
Purchase Methods	Online purchase	337	67
	Offline purchase	166	33

From the purchase of home bedding categories, mainly for the quilt core pillow core accounted for the largest proportion of 51.49%, followed by the kit accounted for 47.71, wedding accounted for 10.93%, from the point of view of the use of the purchase is mainly for the daily use of the quilt core pillow core and the kit accounted for a larger proportion. From the point of view of purchase amount, the main consumption amount of 500 to 1000 yuan accounted for 46.32% of the largest, followed by 1000 to 1500 yuan accounted for 26.64%. From the point of view of the acquisition method, offline stores accounted for the largest proportion of 74.95%, followed by third-party assessment accounted for 62.43%. In terms of the main way of purchasing home bedding, online purchases accounted for 67% and offline purchases accounted for 33%, and the e-commerce platform relying on the World Wide Web had a high share, providing support for subsequent sales of home bedding.

3.3 Hypothesis testing

3.3.1 Reliability analysis

Reliability analysis is an analytical method for evaluating whether a questionnaire is reliable or not. It is generally believed that the larger the Cronbach's α coefficient is, the better the reliability of the scale is. If the coefficient of Cronbach's α is greater than 0.9, it means that the reliability is very high; the coefficient of Cronbach's α is between 0.8 and 0.9, it means that the reliability is high; the coefficient of Cronbach's α is between 0.7 and 0.8, it means that the reliability is good, and it is acceptable; the coefficient of Cronbach's α is lower than 0.7, it means that the question items need to be further examined,

so this paper adopts 0.7 as the minimum standard. In this paper, SPSS was used to analyze the reliability of each variable of the questionnaire. See Table 3 for details.

Table 3 Questionnaire reliability analysis

Dimension	Entry	Cronbach's α coefficient
Professional competence of sales staff	4	0.800
Familiarity of sales staff	7	0.911
Willingness to buy	5	0.857
Synthesis	16	0.911

As can be seen from the results of the reliability test, the Cronbach's α of the dimensions of professional competence of home bedding salespersons, the familiarity of salespersons, and the willingness to buy are 0.800, 0.911, 0.857, and the overall reliability is 0.911, which is greater than 0.8, and the questionnaire has a good level of reliability.

3.3.2 Validity analysis

Validity is also known as validity and this study utilized exploratory factors to determine the scientific validity of the variable settings. KMO values and the Bartlett's Spherical Test were used to determine suitability for exploratory factor analysis. If the KMO value is greater than 0.9, it is very suitable; between 0.8 and 0.9, it is suitable; between 0.7 and 0.8, it is fair; between 0.6 and 0.7, it is not very suitable; between 0.5 and 0.6, it is barely suitable; and less than 0.5, it This means that it is extremely unsuitable and factor analysis is not appropriate. See Table 4 for details.

Table 4 KMO and Bartlett's test

KMO values		0.934
Bartlett's spherical test	Approximate chi-square	3846.013
	<i>df</i>	105
	<i>p</i> -value	0.000

In this paper, KMO and Bartlett's test were performed on the data of the dimensions of the scale and the results obtained are shown in the table above. The KMO value of the questionnaire is 0.934, which is greater than 0.7; the approximate chi-square value is 3846.013, the degree of freedom *df* is 105, and the *p*-value is 0.000, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05. The data of the study are very suitable for extracting information, and they have good validity.

3.3.3 Difference analysis

First of all, we analyze the analysis of the difference between the different genders of the investigators on the professional competence of the salesperson, the familiarity of the salesperson, and the willingness to buy. Specifically as shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Results of *t*-test analysis by gender

	Gender (mean \pm standard deviation)		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Male (n=248)	Females (n=255)		
Professional	3.44 \pm 1.10	3.7 \pm 1.09	-2.656	0.008**
Familiarity of sales staff	3.73 \pm 0.97	3.94 \pm 0.88	-2.545	0.011*
Willingness to buy	3.49 \pm 1.13	3.92 \pm 0.90	-4.721	0.000**

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Gender for the professional ability of home bedding sales staff shows a 0.01 level of significance ($t=-2.656$, $p=0.008$), as well as specific comparative differences can be seen, the average value of men (3.44), will be significantly lower than the average value of women (3.70). The familiarity of salespersons by gender is significant at the 0.05 level ($t=-2.545$, $p=0.011$), and the difference in specific comparisons shows that the mean for males (3.73) is significantly lower than the mean for females (3.94). There is a 0.01 level of significance for willingness to buy by gender ($t=-4.721$, $p=0.000$), and the difference in comparison shows that the mean value for males (3.49) is significantly lower than the mean value for females (3.92). To summarize, it can be seen that the samples of different genders show significant differences in the professional ability, familiarity, and willingness to buy of home bedding salespersons.

The next section describes the analysis of the variability in the professional competence, familiarity with salespeople, and willingness to buy among respondents of different ages. See Table 6 for details.

Table 6 Results of analysis of variance by age

	Age (mean \pm standard deviation)				<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	24 and under (n=58)	25-35 years (n=181)	36-45 years (n=155)	46 and over (n=109)		
Professional	3.44 \pm 1.18	3.63 \pm 1.05	3.36 \pm 1.18	3.57 \pm 0.96	4.95	0.001**
Familiarity of sales staff	4.12 \pm 0.94	3.93 \pm 0.83	3.71 \pm 0.97	3.72 \pm 0.99	3.035	0.017*
Willingness to buy	4.24 \pm 0.87	3.77 \pm 0.98	3.59 \pm 1.06	3.51 \pm 1.11	6.805	0.000**

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Different age for home bedding sales staff of professional competence showed a 0.01 level of significance ($F= 4.950$, $p=0.001$), as well as specific comparison of the differences can be seen, there is a more significant difference between the group mean scores comparison results for "1.0 more than 2.0, 1.0 more than 3.0, 1.0 more than 4.0, and 2.0 more than 3.0". The familiarity of

the sales force by age shows a 0.05 level of significance ($F=3.035$, $p=0.017$), as well as a specific comparison of the differences can be seen, there is a more significant difference in the comparison of the mean scores of the groups as "24 years old and below more than 36-45 years old, 24 years old and below more than 46 years old and above, and 25-35 years old more than 36-45 years old". Different ages show a 0.01 level of significance ($F=6.805$, $p=0.000$) for willingness to buy, as well as the specific comparison of differences can be seen, there is a more significant difference in the comparison of the mean score of the groups "24 years old and under more than 25-35 years old, 24 years old and under more than 36-45 years old, 24 years old and under more than 46 years old and above, and 25-35 years old more than 46 years old and above;" the results are "24 years old and under more than 46 years old and above". 35 years old more than 46 years old and above". To summarize, it can be seen that there are significant differences in the professional ability, familiarity, and willingness to buy of home bedding salespersons among different age samples. The younger the age of the respondents, the higher the rating of the professional competence of home bedding salespersons, the higher the rating of the familiarity of salespersons, and the stronger the willingness to buy.

Next, it introduces the analysis of the difference between different levels of education in terms of salesperson's professional ability, salesperson's familiarity, and willingness to buy. Specifically as shown in Table 7.

Table 7 Results of analysis of variance by education level

	Education (mean \pm standard deviation)				<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	Middle school and below (n=50)	High school (n=108)	Three-year college (n=132)	University and above (n=213)		
Professional	3.36 \pm 1.18	3.35 \pm 1.16	3.64 \pm 1.01	3.7 \pm 1.09	3.172	0.024*
Familiarity of sales staff	3.13 \pm 1.15	3.60 \pm 1.03	3.78 \pm 1.00	3.81 \pm 1.03	16.461	0.000**
Willingness to buy	3.31 \pm 1.15	3.60 \pm 1.03	3.78 \pm 1.00	3.81 \pm 1.03	3.675	0.012*

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Different academic qualifications for home bedding sales professional ability to show a 0.05 level of significance ($F=3.172$, $p=0.024$), as well as specific comparison of the differences can be seen, there is a more significant difference between the group mean score comparison results for "college and above more than junior high school and below; college more than high school; college and above high school". The familiarity of different educational levels for sales staff shows a 0.01 level of significance ($F=16.461$, $p=0.000$), as well as specific comparison of the differences can be seen, there are more obvious differences in the group mean score comparison results for "high school more than junior high school and below, college more than junior high school and below, college and above more than junior high school and below, and college more than high school". Different education for the willingness to buy showed a 0.05 level of significance ($F=3.675$, $p=0.012$), as well as the specific comparison of the differences can be seen, there is a more obvious difference between the group mean score comparison results for "college more than junior high school and below, University and above more than junior high school and

below. To summarize: different academic samples of home bedding sales staff for professional competence, sales staff, familiarity, willingness to buy all show significant differences.

Next, we will consider the different frequency of purchasing home bedding for the professional ability of sales staff, the familiarity of sales staff, and the difference analysis of purchase intention. Specifically as shown in Table 8.

Table 8 Results of variance analysis for different purchase frequency

	Purchase frequency (mean \pm standard deviation)				<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	Once every month (n=76)	Semiyearly (n=156)	Annually (n=228)	Over one year (n=43)		
Professional	3.66 \pm 1.14	3.50 \pm 1.14	3.67 \pm 1.05	3.23 \pm 1.14	2.308	0.076
Familiarity of sales staff	3.99 \pm 0.87	3.72 \pm 0.99	3.88 \pm 0.91	3.81 \pm 0.91	1.747	0.157
Willingness to buy	3.79 \pm 1.07	3.65 \pm 1.04	3.74 \pm 1.04	3.60 \pm 1.05	0.557	0.644

Different purchase frequency has no significant effect on the professional ability, familiarity and purchase intention of home bedding sales staff ($p_i > 0.05$).

Next, it analyzes the difference of different purchase amounts on the professional ability, familiarity and purchase intention of sales personnel. Specifically as shown in Table 9.

Table 9 Results of variance analysis for different purchase amounts

	Amount of purchase (mean \pm standard deviation)				<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	Less than 500 Yuan (n=81)	500 to 1000 Yuan (n=233)	1000 to 1500 Yuan (n=134)	More than 1500 Yuan (n=55)		
Professional	3.86 \pm 1.04	3.50 \pm 1.09	3.55 \pm 1.13	3.56 \pm 1.17	2.163	0.091
Familiarity of sales staff	3.64 \pm 1.14	3.87 \pm 0.88	3.94 \pm 0.84	3.75 \pm 1.01	1.951	0.120
Willingness to buy	3.79 \pm 1.06	3.67 \pm 1.06	3.70 \pm 1.03	3.77 \pm 1.00	0.328	0.805

Different purchase amounts did not show significant effects on the professional ability, familiarity and purchase intention of home bedding salespeople ($p_i > 0.05$).

Finally, it introduces the difference analysis of different purchasing methods on the professional ability, familiarity and purchase intention of sales personnel. Specifically as shown in Table 10.

Table 10 Analysis results of *T*-test for different purchasing methods

	Purchase methods (mean \pm standard deviation)		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Online purchase (n=337)	Offline purchase (n=166)		
Professional	3.56 \pm 1.10	3.61 \pm 1.10	-0.541	0.589
Familiarity of sales staff	3.82 \pm 0.94	3.88 \pm 0.91	-0.647	0.518
Willingness to buy	3.74 \pm 1.01	3.64 \pm 1.11	-1.002	0.317

Different purchasing methods had no significant effect on the professional ability, familiarity and purchase intention of home bedding salespeople ($p < 0.05$).

3.3.4 Related analysis

The relevant analysis is shown in Table 11.

Table 11 Pearson correlation analysis

	Mean	Standard deviation	Willingness to buy	Amiliarity of sales staff	Professional
Willingness to buy	3.709	1.044	1		
Familiarity of sales staff	3.839	0.930	0.534**	1	
Professional	3.577	1.103	0.513**	0.393**	1

As can be seen from the above table, correlation analysis was used to study the correlation between purchase intention, familiarity of sales staff and professional competence of home bedding sales staff, and Pearson correlation coefficient was used to express the strength of the correlation. Specific analysis shows that: the correlation value between purchase intention and salesperson's familiarity is 0.534, and the significance level is 0.01, which indicates that there is a significant positive correlation between purchase intention and salesperson's familiarity. The correlation value between purchase intention and professional ability of home bedding sales staff is 0.513, and the significance is 0.01, which indicates that there is a significant positive correlation between purchase intention and professional ability of home bedding sales staff.

3.3.5 Regression analysis

In this paper, linear regression is used to analyze the influencing factors of purchase intention, as shown in Table 12.

Table 12 Results of variance analysis of different purchase amounts

	Non-standardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient			Covariance diagnosis	
	<i>B</i>	Standard error	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>VIF</i>	Tolerance level
Constant	0.871	0.238	—	3.652	0.000**	—	—
Gender	0.238	0.073	0.114	3.271	0.001**	1.035	0.967
Age	-0.095	0.038	-0.087	-2.479	0.013*	1.039	0.962
Education	-0.022	0.037	-0.021	-0.598	0.550	1.082	0.924
Professional	0.324	0.035	0.342	9.120	0.000**	1.197	0.835
Familiarity of sales staff	0.427	0.043	0.380	9.843	0.000**	1.271	0.787
<i>R</i> ²					0.416		
Adjustment <i>R</i> ²					0.410		
<i>F</i>					$F(5, 497) = 70.896, p = 0.000$		
<i>D - W</i> value					1.815		

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

As can be seen from the above table, gender, age, education, professional competence of home bedding sales staff, the familiarity of sales staff as the independent variable, while the willingness to buy as the dependent variable for linear regression analysis, as can be seen from the above table, the model formula is: willingness to buy = $0.871 + 0.238*1. \text{ gender} - 0.095*2. \text{ age} - 0.022*3. \text{ education} + 0.324 * \text{ the R-square value of the model is } 0.416$, which means that gender, age, education, professional competence of home bedding sales staff, and familiarity of sales staff can explain 41.6% of the variation in willingness to buy. The F -test of the model found that the model passed the F -test ($F=70.896, p = 0.000 < 0.05$), which means that at least one of gender, age, education, professional competence of home bedding salespersons, and familiarity of salespersons will have an impact on the willingness to buy, and in addition, the test of the model for multiple covariation found that the VIF values of all the models are less than 5, meaning that there is no covariation. 5, meaning that there is no problem of covariance; and $D - W$ value is around the number 2, thus indicating that the model does not have autocorrelation, there is no correlation between the sample data, and the model is better.

According to the above analysis results can be obtained:

1) the value of regression coefficient of gender is 0.238 ($t=3.271, p=0.001<0.01$), which means that female purchasers will have a significant positive influence on the purchase intention relationship, and female purchasers have stronger purchase intention.

2) the regression coefficient value of age is -0.095 ($t=-2.479, p=0.013<0.05$), which means that different age will have a significant negative impact on the willingness to buy, and the older the older the willingness to buy the lower.

3) the value of regression coefficient of education is -0.022 ($t=-0.598, p=0.550>0.05$), which means that the education does not affect the relationship of purchase intention.

4) the value of regression coefficient of professional competence of home bedding salesperson is 0.324 ($t=9.120, p=0.000<0.01$), which means that the professional competence of home bedding salesperson will have a significant positive influence relationship on purchase intention.

5) the regression coefficient value of salesperson's familiarity is 0.427 ($t=9.843, p=0.000<0.01$), which means that salesperson's familiarity will have a significant positive influence on purchase intention.

To summarize the analysis, it can be seen that: women, professional competence of home bedding salespersons, familiarity of salespersons will have a significant positive effect on willingness to buy. Age has a significant negative effect on willingness to buy. However, the education level does not affect the willingness to buy.

4 Recommendations for countermeasures

In light of the empirical findings that underscore the significant impact of employee-customer familiarity on purchase intentions in the home bedding

industry, it is imperative to delve into practical strategies that can be implemented to capitalize on this relationship. The following recommendations are designed to enhance the overall customer experience, foster brand loyalty, and differentiate products in a market characterized by increasing competition and product homogeneity.

4.1 Strengthening Employee Training: Elevating Professional Competence and Sensitivity

Strengthening employee training is a pivotal strategy aimed at elevating both professional competence and sensitivity within the workforce of the home bedding industry. In a market where customers increasingly seek personalized and knowledgeable assistance, the effectiveness of employees in understanding and addressing customer needs becomes a critical determinant of success. To achieve this, comprehensive training programs should be designed to cultivate a multifaceted skill set among employees.

Firstly, enhancing professional competence involves providing employees with in-depth knowledge about the diverse range of home bedding products offered by the company. From understanding the intricacies of different fabrics and materials to being well-versed in the latest industry trends, employees should possess a comprehensive understanding of the products they are selling. This knowledge not only instills confidence in customers but also allows employees to offer informed recommendations, addressing the specific preferences and needs of individual clients. Moreover, training should extend beyond product knowledge to encompass sales techniques that foster effective customer engagement. Employees should be equipped with the skills to initiate meaningful conversations with customers, actively listen to their requirements, and communicate product features in a compelling manner. By mastering the art of consultative selling, employees can create an environment where customers feel valued and understood, enhancing their overall shopping experience. Secondly, sensitivity in employee training involves developing an acute awareness of and responsiveness to customer needs, preferences, and emotions. This dimension of training goes beyond the transactional aspects of sales and delves into the realm of emotional intelligence. Employees should be trained to recognize subtle cues indicating customer preferences and sentiments, enabling them to tailor their interactions accordingly. This heightened sensitivity not only facilitates better customer understanding but also fosters the establishment of genuine connections, laying the foundation for long-term customer loyalty. To operationalize these training objectives, a combination of classroom training, role-playing exercises, and immersive learning experiences can be employed. Real-world scenarios, such as simulated customer interactions, can be incorporated into the training curriculum to provide employees with practical insights into applying their knowledge and skills. Additionally, ongoing training sessions and regular updates can ensure that employees stay abreast of the latest industry developments and continually refine their competencies.

4.2 Leveraging Technology to Enhance Interactions: Implementing Smart Solutions

In today's technologically driven landscape, the home bedding industry stands at the threshold of transformative opportunities, particularly in optimizing customer interactions. Harnessing the power of technology through the implementation of smart solutions is not merely a choice but a strategic imperative for companies seeking to elevate their customer experience. One pivotal avenue for innovation lies in the establishment of a sophisticated customer profiling system, driven by data analytics. This system serves as the backbone for understanding and anticipating customer preferences, behaviors, and historical interactions. By leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning algorithms, companies can distill actionable insights from vast datasets, enabling a more nuanced understanding of individual customer needs.

The implementation of a customer profiling system empowers employees to engage with customers on a deeply personal level. Armed with real-time information, employees can provide tailored recommendations, anticipate customer inquiries, and address concerns promptly. This level of personalized interaction not only enhances the efficiency of customer service but also fosters a sense of genuine care and attention, laying the foundation for stronger, more meaningful customer relationships. Moreover, the integration of chatbots and AI-driven communication tools streamlines the customer journey by providing instant, 24/7 assistance. These intelligent systems can handle routine queries, offer product information, and even assist in the decision-making process. By automating these aspects of customer interaction, human employees are liberated to focus on more complex and emotionally nuanced aspects of service provision. The result is a harmonious blend of technology and human touch, where the efficiency of automated responses complements the empathetic and personalized service delivered by human employees. Furthermore, the implementation of smart solutions extends beyond customer-facing interactions to enhance operational efficiency behind the scenes. Inventory management, order processing, and supply chain logistics can all benefit from intelligent automation. Predictive analytics can optimize inventory levels, ensuring that popular products are always in stock, while also minimizing excess inventory costs. This not only improves the overall customer experience by reducing instances of product unavailability but also contributes to cost savings and streamlined operations.

4.3 Brand Marketing Reinforcement: Building a Cohesive Brand Image

In a dynamic market inundated with diverse options, the construction and fortification of a cohesive brand image emerge as linchpins for sustained success in the home bedding industry. A cohesive brand image transcends mere recognition; it encapsulates the essence of the brand, forging an emotional

connection with consumers. Strategic brand marketing initiatives play a pivotal role in this process, weaving a narrative that resonates with the target audience. Employing storytelling techniques, companies can craft a compelling and relatable brand identity that extends beyond the tangible features of their products. Collaborations with influencers or testimonials from satisfied customers contribute authenticity, enriching the brand narrative. The aim is to not merely sell a product but to evoke a sense of identity and aspiration within the consumer. Furthermore, consistency is paramount in brand marketing. Across various touchpoints, from advertisements to social media and product packaging, a unified visual and tonal language should prevail. This consistency reinforces the brand image, ensuring that customers encounter a coherent and memorable representation of the brand at every interaction. The result is a brand that is not only recognizable but also deeply ingrained in the minds and hearts of consumers. This cohesive brand image acts as a powerful differentiator, influencing customer perceptions and fostering brand loyalty. Ultimately, in a market where choices abound, a well-crafted and consistent brand image becomes a guiding beacon, steering customers towards a brand that aligns with their values and aspirations.

4.4 Personalized Customer Engagement: Implementing Tailored Marketing Strategies

In the fiercely competitive landscape of the home bedding industry, where consumer preferences vary widely, the implementation of personalized customer engagement strategies emerges as a pivotal differentiator. Tailored marketing strategies, grounded in meticulous data analysis, enable companies to connect with customers on an individual level. By leveraging customer data, including preferences, demographics, and past purchasing behaviors, companies can craft targeted and relevant marketing campaigns. These initiatives may encompass personalized discounts, exclusive offers, and bespoke recommendations, creating a sense of exclusivity and personalized attention. Furthermore, the deployment of sophisticated customer relationship management (CRM) systems facilitates the segmentation of the customer base, allowing companies to tailor their communications to specific customer segments. For instance, a customer who frequently purchases luxury bedding might receive recommendations for new premium collections, while a customer focused on eco-friendly products may receive information about sustainable initiatives and products. This level of personalization not only enhances the overall customer experience but also significantly influences purchase intentions.

4.5 Establishing Customer Loyalty Programs: Enhancing Retention and Purchase Frequency

Establishing robust customer loyalty programs emerges as a pivotal strategy to fortify brand-consumer relationships, enhance customer retention, and stimulate purchase frequency within the home bedding industry. A well-crafted

loyalty program serves as a dynamic tool to acknowledge and reward customers for their repeated engagements, thereby fostering a sense of loyalty and appreciation. Tiered loyalty structures, offering escalating benefits as customers progress through different levels, create a gamified experience that incentivizes continued patronage.

These loyalty programs can be strategically designed to encompass various elements, such as exclusive access to new product launches, personalized discounts, or even members-only events. By providing tangible incentives aligned with customer preferences, companies not only reinforce loyalty but also elevate the perceived value of their offerings. Personalization is a key element in loyalty programs, ensuring that rewards resonate with individual customer needs and preferences, reinforcing the idea that the brand understands and values its customers on a personal level. Moreover, loyalty programs contribute to increased purchase frequency by capitalizing on the psychological principle of reciprocity. When customers feel acknowledged and rewarded for their loyalty, they are more inclined to reciprocate by making additional purchases. This reciprocal dynamic fosters a continuous cycle of engagement, where customers not only return for repeat business but also become brand advocates, sharing positive experiences with their network. In addition to enhancing customer retention and purchase frequency, loyalty programs provide valuable data on customer behavior and preferences. This data can be leveraged to refine marketing strategies, personalize communications, and introduce new products or features tailored to the evolving needs of the customer base.

4.6 Optimisation and upgrading of e-commerce platforms

In the realm of electronic commerce, where the dynamics of online transactions are continuously evolving, the impact of employee-customer familiarity on customer purchase intentions assumes particular significance. Leveraging the insights derived from our empirical study, tailored strategies for electronic commerce are essential to harness the benefits of enhanced employee-customer relationships. First and foremost, platforms must prioritize the development of personalized user interfaces that foster a sense of familiarity and ease of interaction. This includes integrating personalized recommendations, virtual assistance, and user-centric features that align with individual customer preferences, replicating the personalized experience often associated with in-person interactions. Furthermore, the establishment of secure and transparent communication channels is paramount, ensuring that customers feel confident in sharing their preferences and concerns. This can be achieved through the implementation of secure messaging systems, real-time chat support, and interactive feedback mechanisms that bridge the virtual gap between customers and employees. Embracing technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning can also contribute to the customization of online shopping experiences, tailoring product recommendations and promotions based on the historical interactions and preferences of individual customers. Additionally,

fostering a sense of community through online forums, customer testimonials, and interactive social media engagement can enhance the overall customer experience, cultivating a virtual space where customers feel connected and familiar with the brand. Finally, continuous monitoring and analysis of customer interactions on the electronic commerce platform are essential. This involves leveraging data analytics to gain insights into customer behavior, preferences, and pain points, allowing businesses to adapt their strategies dynamically and further enhance the level of employee-customer familiarity. By integrating these electronic commerce strategies into the online environment, businesses can optimize the impact of employee-customer familiarity on customer purchase intentions, ultimately fostering a more engaging and rewarding online shopping experience.

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this empirical study reveals the intricate interplay between employee-customer familiarity and customer purchase intention in the context of home bedding, relying on a web e-commerce platform. The findings underscore the significant positive impact of heightened familiarity between employees and customers on the latter's willingness to make purchases in the home bedding sector. As customers increasingly seek personalized shopping experiences, our research demonstrates that establishing and nurturing strong interpersonal relationships between employees and customers is instrumental in cultivating a positive buying environment. The study also emphasizes the practical implications for businesses in the home bedding industry, highlighting the potential for tailored training programs and engagement initiatives to enhance employee-customer interactions. Furthermore, by recognizing the pivotal role of employee-customer relationships, businesses can strategically position themselves to cater to the evolving preferences of consumers in the home bedding market. As the market dynamics continue to evolve, the insights derived from this research provide a valuable foundation for businesses aiming to optimize customer satisfaction and loyalty in the competitive landscape of home bedding retail.

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Declarations

Ethical approval Not applicable. I declare that this paper does not involve any human or animal studies, so no ethical issues are involved.

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