

The Psychology of Direct and Indirect Sales

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The Psychology of Direct and Indirect Sales

It is well established that selling products directly through a brand's own store versus indirectly through a third-party retailer can provide benefits for the brand. This paper takes a novel perspective on this topic by examining how the sales channel (direct vs. indirect) influences consumers' brand closeness perceptions and future purchase behaviors. Three behavioral studies document that purchasing directly (vs. indirectly) from a brand increases brand preferences. We term this the sales channel effect. The effect emerges because consumers who purchase directly feel closer to the focal brand; we also show that this effect even occurs when consumers only visit a store (vs. making a purchase). Taken together, this research contributes to the literature on sales channel strategy and (dis-)intermediation by uncovering an overlooked aspect of direct purchases, namely the psychological effects on consumers and important downstream consequences.

Consumer-brand-relationships, closeness, direct sales channels

Track: Retailing and Omni-Channel Management