
The effect of customer reciprocity on e-loyalty through relationship quality: an international perspective.

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Abstract

One of the key questions facing e-tailers centres on how to keep customers loyal when competitors are only a 'click away'. In addressing this question the reciprocal behaviour of customers is investigated in response to retailer investments online. This paper puts forward the argument that online retailer investments or 'efforts' perceived to have been made by the consumer will positively affect the strength of the relationship between retailers and consumers through relationship quality and so in turn e-loyalty.

This paper further proposes that the strength of the relationship will vary amongst the individual dimensions of relationship quality (online ongoing trust, online relationship satisfaction and online affective commitment). Empirical data is collected from four significant retail e-commerce markets; China, India, UK and US to provide an international perspective. The apparel and consumer electrical sectors have been chosen due to their popularity as online product categories and competitive market structures. Findings show strong support for this argument across China, India, UK and the US. Positive relationships are found between investments retailers make online and the individual dimensions of; online trust, satisfaction, and commitment. The weakest relationship across all four countries is found between online retailer investments and online relationship satisfaction. Slight variations have been found between the product sectors suggesting affective commitment is more significant in the apparel sector. The strongest relationships are found between online retailer investments and trust in China, India and the US, and with affective commitment in the UK. Data was collected from 1011 usable online surveys.
