Emotional versus Functional Attributes of Delight- and Satisfaction-Mediated Effects on Customer Loyalty

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Abstract

This study presents a model in which delight and satisfaction mediate the effects of store characteristics on store outcomes. It is proposed that the impacts of hedonic stimuli and utilitarian stimuli on attitudinal and behavioral loyalty intentions are mediated by customer delight and customer satisfaction simultaneously in a dual process model. To represent various retail-store categories based on the North American Industry Classification of retail categories, data were collected from 8 types of retail stores located in the Northeast United States. Using multi-group structural equation modeling, the author examines the mediating effects of delight and satisfaction on loyalty outcomes. The results largely favor a multicomponent dual-mediated model with delight having a greater impact on willingness to pay higher prices and satisfaction having a greater impact on customer share and purchase intentions. All exogenous variables examined in this study are controllable by the retail manager hence’ managerial implications of the findings are discussed in detail.

Keywords: attitudinal versus behavioral loyalty, customer delight, satisfaction

Relevance to Marketing Educators, Researchers and Practitioners:

Since one of the primary objectives of relationship marketing is to increase customer loyalty by consistently offering better value, the manner in which customers make tradeoffs between value offerings when deciding where to shop, and the underlying motives which trigger approach behaviors related to shopping, needs to be better understood. The present study addresses this gap by including eight different retail store categories with the purpose of establishing delight and satisfaction as pivotal intermediate variables that have differential impact on attitudinal and behavioral loyalty.

About the Author

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