An Empirical Study of the Moderation Effects of Commitment, Trust, and Relationship Value in the Relation of Goods and Services Related to Business to Business Brand Images on Customer Loyalty

Authors : Jorge Luis Morales Romero, Enrique Murillo Othón

Abstract : Business to business (B2B) relationships generally go beyond a purely profit-based result, with firms seeking to maintain a relationship for many years because a breakup or getting a new supplier can be very costly. Therefore, identifying the factors which determine a successful relationship in the long term is of great interest to companies. That is why their reputation and the brand image that customers have of them are among the main factors that can achieve a successful relationship; Because of the positive effect which is driven by the client's loyalty. Additionally, the perception that a customer may have about a brand is different when it is related to goods or to services. Thereby, they create in their minds their own brand image of it based on the past experiences they have had; Thus, a positive relationship is established between goods-related brand image, service-related brand image, and customer loyalty. The present investigation examines the boundary conditions of said relationship by testing the moderating effects of trust, commitment, and relationship value in a B2B environment. All the variables were tested independently as moderators for service-related brand image/loyalty and for goods-related brand image/loyalty, as they are assumed to be separate variables. Survey data was collected through interviews with customers that have both a product-buying relationship and a service relationship with a global B2B brand of healthcare equipment operating in the Mexican healthcare market. Interviewed respondents were either the user or the purchasing manager and/or the responsible for the equipment maintenance for the customer organization. Hence, they were appropriate informants regarding the B2B relationship with this healthcare brand. The moderation models were estimated using the PROCESS macro for the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Software (SPSS). Results show statistical evidence that both Relationship Value and Trust are significant moderators for the service-related brand image/loyalty relation but not significant for the goods-related brand/loyalty relation. On the other hand, Commitment results in a significant moderator for the goods-related brand/loyalty relation but is not significant for the service-related brand image/loyalty relation.