

Fear Appeals – Relevance and Consequences for Relationship Marketing

Marie-Christin Papen

TU Dresden

Alexander Boldt

TU Dresden

Janine Göttling

TU Dresden

Florian Siems

TU Dresden

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Abstract

So far, research on fear appeals rather focuses on classic marketing aspects, e.g. advertising effectiveness. In contrast, the present study focuses on the effect of different intensities of fear appeals on relationship marketing constructs, such as repurchase intention and word of mouth. Related constructs, like trust and sympathy are also tested. A 2x1 between subject experiment was conducted (N = 118). While trust and sympathy show the expected lower values in case of strong fear appeals vs. weak fear appeals, there is a surprising result in the loyalty constructs: contrary to the expectations, higher values of word of mouth intention and repurchase intention were found in case of strong fear appeals. From a practical point of view, this points to a necessary balancing of investigated variables regarding the use of fear appeals. From a theoretical point of view, the study raises the question of why and under which conditions the results for loyalty and trust deviate in this context.

Keywords: *Relationship Marketing; Fear Appeals; Loyalty*

Track: Relationship Marketing