

Understanding Customers' Propensity to Avoid Seeking Assistance: The Role of Individual Differences and Construct Measurement

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Abstract

Over the last decade, consumer products and services have grown in technological and procedural complexity, resulting in a growing need for assistance among customers. Customers however rarely request assistance, a phenomenon not fully understood. This study offers a threefold contribution to address this question by: i) conceptualizing customers' propensity to avoid seeking assistance; ii) developing a scale to measure it; and iii) testing the effect of customers' propensity to avoid seeking assistance on the intention to request assistance. Results suggest that the intention to request assistance is linked to individuals' sensitivity to self-esteem threats and their beliefs about the help provider. This research contributes to the field of relationship marketing by introducing help-seeking socio-psychological theories to frame and explain assistance-seeking avoidance in a consumption context.

Keywords: *Customer assistance; Help seeking; Scale development*

Track: Relationship Marketing