

The role of store attributes in the formation of consumers' place attachment in offline and online retail stores

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Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between store attributes, place attachment and consumers' behavioural loyalty in the increasingly digitalized retail environment. The effects of tangible and intangible store attributes on consumers' attachment to retail places and positive word of mouth (WOM) are explored. An online survey method is applied, and consumer-panel data employed. The results confirm that store attributes are important antecedents of place attachment in both offline and online retail environments. Place attachment was also found to have a mediating role in the relationship between store attributes and positive WOM. This suggests that the effect of store attributes on consumers' intention to spread positive WOM and advocate the store within their social networks is directed through the formation of relational bonds with the retail store. The results highlight significant differences between the perception of store attributes in offline and online retail stores.

Keywords: *online/offline retail environment; place attachment; store attributes*

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