

Buyers and Suppliers trust on E-Marketplace in the Context of SMEs Based on Signalling Theory

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Abstract

The objective of the research was to investigate the effects of supplier communication and decision-maker risk propensity on the formation of trust and e-marketplace engagement among Thai SMEs. The study used a signaling theory perspective on communication, testing signal dimensions of consistency and credibility. Trust was proposed as a mediator between signal consistency and signal credibility and e-marketplace engagement. A sample of 302 SME decision-makers was selected using network sampling. A 2x2 (Consistency: Consistent/Inconsistent; Credibility: Absent/Present) vignette-based experiment was then conducted. Results were analyzed using OLS regression and the Hayes process macro to test mediation effects. Findings showed that signal consistency (consistent) and signal credibility (present) did predict e-marketplace engagement. These relationships were partially mediated by trust. The implication of these findings is that signal consistency and credibility is key to establishing trust and e-marketplace engagement, but individual decision-maker characteristics still have an effect that cannot be ignored. Limitations include geographic limitations and firm size limitations.

Subject Areas: *Business-to-Business Marketing, Customer Satisfaction and Delight, Electronic Commerce and Internet Marketing*

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