

“Educate me (or not)”: Antecedents and Consequences of Customer’s Desire for Educational Support

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Abstract

This research introduces the concept of desire for educational support as a distinct construct that reflects customers’ need for retailer-provided guidance to enhance decision-making. Using survey data from 485 customers of a specialty retailer, the study examines how involvement, learning desire, and expertise shape this desire, and explores its consequences for retailer loyalty and consideration set size. The findings show that while involvement and learning desire positively influence the desire for educational support, customer expertise has a negative effect, highlighting the customer education paradox. Moreover, customers who value educational support explore a wider range of brands, resulting in larger consideration sets. Managerially, the study emphasizes targeting customers’ desire for education to foster loyalty, while cautioning against over-educating them. This research advances understanding of customer learning and its implications for specialty retailing.

Track: Retailing & Omni-Channel Management