

RECONCEPTUALIZING CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF RELATIONSHIP QUALITY: AN EMPIRICAL TEST OF THE CONSTRUCT AND ITS NOMOLOGICAL VALIDITY

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ABSTRACT

Despite conceptual agreement that relationship quality is a higher-order construct, there still remains a gap between such conceptualization and its corresponding operationalization. In this article, we provide conceptual, methodological, and empirical support for modeling relationship quality as a second-order reflective construct consisting of first-order dimensions of trust, commitment, and satisfaction. The second-order reflective model is tested within a hierarchy of models for factor structure comparison and its nomological validity compared with alternative conceptualizations of relationship quality. Based on justice theories, we explain the origins of the second-order construct and provide the methodological rationale for the efficacy of a reflective model. We situate the second-order RQ model in a nomological net in which we model its direct effects and indirect effects, via consumer-company identification, on future patronage and positive WOM promotion. Using surveys in two samples, airline and retail, this study provides sufficient evidence on the reliability, validity, and generalizability of the second-order factor structure of relationship quality. These findings are discussed along with implications and directions for future research.

References Available on Request.