

Customers' relationship with their main grocery retail: an empirical study in the Portuguese context

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Abstract

In recent years, the intense competition in the Portuguese grocery retail market has increased the need for retailers to use strategies focused on attracting new customers and retaining current ones. Specifically concerning current customers, in order to provide relevant theoretical and practical contributions to relationship marketing, this research addresses three main points: (1) to characterize the degree of satisfaction, trust and loyalty of the Portuguese customers with their main grocery retailer (2) to analyse some characteristics of the customers that have effect on relationship with their main grocery retailer; (3) to analyse some characteristics of the grocery retailer that have effect on the relationship with their customers.

Exploratory interviews with directors of stores with different formats were used. Collected data were subject to qualitative analysis. Additionally, a convenience sample of 988 Portuguese consumers answered to a questionnaire available online between the 3rd and the 23rd of February 2015. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistical techniques (in SPSS V22.0) and Structural Equation Modelling (in AMOS V 20).

It was found that the majority of the customers has a medium satisfaction level, a high trust level and a medium loyalty level in the relationship with their main grocery. The results suggest that satisfaction of customers with their main grocery has a positive impact on trust and on loyalty. Moreover, trust of customers has a positive impact on their loyalty and, also, satisfaction has an indirect impact on loyalty through trust. Women have a higher degree of satisfaction and loyalty with their main grocery than men, but these gender differences are not evident in the trust. Also, customers living in an urban area are more loyal to their retail grocery than those living in a rural area. Finally, evidence suggests that supermarkets and traditional grocery stores lead to higher levels of satisfaction, trust and loyalty of their customers compared to hypermarkets and the existence of a loyalty card has not a positive impact on customers' loyalty with grocery retail.

Keywords: Relationship marketing, consumer behaviour, grocery retail.