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Young (Sally) K. Kim

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The Role of Cognitive Dissonance in a Service Setting
Young (Sally) K Kim

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Abstract

While numerous studies used the theory of cognitive dissonance to explain consumer behavior, there is no study as of today that applied the theory to the service industry to investigate the role of cognitive dissonance in influencing important marketing-related variables such as perceived value and trust. This study examines the relationship between cognitive dissonance and relationship variables (trust and value) and proposes a model to understand how consumers process information facing a negative word-of-mouth message that is incongruent with their existing belief and how cognitive dissonance affects their behaviors. The proposed model is tested using data collected via mail survey on customers of hotel/motel organizations. The study finding suggests that the theory of cognitive dissonance can be extended beyond a post-decision situation to a service context to explain how customers process information facing a word-of-mouth message that is incongruent with their existing belief. It is shown that cognitive dissonance is a predominant predictor of repatronage behavior even for satisfied customers.

Keywords

Cognitive Dissonance, Service Industry, Negative Word-of-Mouth