



Article Title

Expectations of working relationships in international buyer–seller relationships: Development of a relationship continuum scale

Citation

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Abstract

This study is an attempt to develop a scale to measure expectations of buyer–seller working relationships on a cross-cultural basis in the hospitality industry. The focus is on North American and Asian hotel salespeople. The scale development drew from previous research in guanxi relationships, purchasing, and selling strategies. While the results did not support a reliable unidimensional scale that could distinguish between transactional and collaborative working relationships, the methodology did create a framework for further scale development.

Methods

The methodology in developing the relationship continuum scale is broken down into two areas: the pre-test of the scale items and the final study incorporating the scale detailed hereafter.

Results

The results did not support a reliable unidimensional scale that could distinguish between transactional and collaborative working relationships, the methodology did create a framework for further scale development.

Conclusion

The ability of the hotel salesperson to better understand his/her buyer is an important issue. This is particularly true in today's selling environment, where the concept of building long-term relationships with customers is paramount. As a result, there is a strong need to have a measurement that the salesperson can use to determine just how the buyer wants to structure the working relationship. Recognizing that not all buyers want to establish collaborative, relationaltype buyer–seller relationships is also a factor in focusing the selling resources of the organization into the most productive channels. There are some customers who want only transaction-based relationships, and attempting to add value to achieve a long-term relationship with that customer would be a misallocation of resources. The need for the relationship continuum becomes even greater when the buyer–seller relationship expands to a global level. The additional cross-cultural factor adds to the complexity of the relationship-building effort. It makes the need for tools to identify the buyer's desire for a working relationship even more crucial as the salesperson can no longer rely on intuition alone.

Therefore, further analysis of developing this relationship continuum quantitative measure of the customer's desired working relationship is needed.