

SEARCH: AN EXPENSE OR AN EXPERIENCE? EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF SEARCH ON PRODUCT RETURN INTENTIONS

Devdeep Maity, Oklahoma State University, USA

ABSTRACT

Traditionally, search is viewed as an expense or an effort that an individual may resist to waste. In this paper, the author argues that in product-return situations, where consumers are not compensated for the search effort they initially invested towards product acquisition, higher search effort will lower their product return intentions. However, viewing search as an experience or a pleasure activity may have reverse implications, since it is argued that it weakens the negative search – product return intention relationship. The author introduces product satisfaction as a partial mediator between search and product return intentions. Furthermore, the author develops and tests competing hypotheses regarding the interplay between the variables. Results show that search as an expense influences product return intentions positively. Product satisfaction was found to be a significant partial mediator. Furthermore, results show that search as an expense relates negatively to product satisfaction whereas search as an experience relates positively to product satisfaction. . However, the study did not support search as an experience to be a moderator. Implications and directions for future research are discussed.

References Available Upon Request