
Min-Hsin Huang,
Department of Business Management,
National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan
E-mail: minhsin@faculty.nsysu.edu.tw

Zhao-Hong Cheng,
Department of Business Administration,
Chang Jung Christian University, Taiwan
E-mail: zhceng@mail.cjcu.edu.tw

Jing-Yi Chen,
Department of Finance,
Chang Jung Christian University, Taiwan
E-mail: jy.chen@mail.cjcu.edu.tw

Hsiang-Hua Su,
Department of Business Management,
National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan
E-mail: hsiang2288usa@gmail.com

Abstract

While previous research distinguishes salespeople’s customer orientation (CO) behaviors into relational and functional CO, this study investigates the differential effects of the two types of CO on the effectiveness of relationship marketing. Specifically, we examine which type of CO is more effective with regard to enhancing customer-company identification (CCI) and customer satisfaction (CS) which are recognized as playing a complementary role in the service-profit chain. Nested data consisted of 51 representatives and 298 purchasing agents was collected from a cross-industry survey in Shenzhen, China. By employing a multilevel analysis, we find that while relational CO has a stronger effect on CCI than does functional CO, functional CO has a stronger effect on CS than does relational CO. Based on these findings, we discuss about both the short- and long-term marketing strategies to enhance and maintain customer relationship with a firm.

Key Words: Customer Orientation, Customer-Company Identification, Customer Satisfaction, Multilevel Analysis.