

Emergence of Online Relationship Marketing in the Age of COVID-19: Importance of Personalization of Websites Towards Customer Loyalty in Retail e-Commerce Industry

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Online presence and technology have recently altered establishing relationships between businesses and their clients due to the interference of COVID-19. Nonetheless, there is a lack of emphasis and theorization in describing the relationship between Online Relationship Marketing activities and their influence on company relationship marketing objectives in Sri Lanka. As a result, this research aims to examine the signaling impact of Online Relationship Marketing operations such as Personalization, E-Service Quality, and Customer Satisfaction of e-commerce websites towards Customer Loyalty and examine the influence made by Online Trust on the relationship of Online Relationship Marketing and Customer Loyalty. A quantitative study was carried out by gathering data from a sample of 384 e-commerce consumers through an online survey. Hypotheses were tested using SPSS software. The study's findings proved that the Personalization of e-commerce websites has a positive and significant impact on Customer Loyalty, and Online Trust significantly mediates this relationship. Moreover, the indirect impact of E-Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction towards Customer Loyalty through Online Trust is higher than the direct impact. This study highlights the importance of online relationship tools used on e-commerce websites and its need to communicate appropriate signals to influence Online Trust and Customer Loyalty. Further, the other factors influencing Customer Loyalty towards e-commerce websites in the Sri Lankan context have yet to be studied.

Keywords: *Customer Loyalty, e-Commerce, Online Relationship Marketing, Online Trust, Personalization*