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Initial trust and intentions to buy: The effect of vendor-specific guarantees, customer reviews and the role of online shopping experienceⁱ

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Abstract

This study experimentally investigates the effects of vendor-specific guarantees and customer reviews (1) on the formation of initial consumers' trust—separating institutional and competence trust—and (2) on first-time consumers' intentions to buy. In addition, we examine how differing levels of online shopping experience moderate the relationship between trust and consumers' intentions to buy. The empirical results of the study reveal the relative effectiveness of the two vendor mechanisms, with vendor-specific guarantees having a more positive effect on institutional trust and customer reviews on competence trust. While our results also show that initial trust is a central concept in explaining consumers' intentions to buy, we find that this relationship is more pronounced for competence trust in case when consumers are more experienced with online shopping. Meanwhile, institutional trust seems a necessary prerequisite for both experienced and inexperienced online shoppers to actually buy from an unfamiliar vendor. Our study provides important managerial implications that

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