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HOW CAN CUSTOMER EDUCATION IN THE COFFEE SECTOR INCREASE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION?

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Abstract

Customer education has been widely recognized to play a key role in client satisfaction, particularly in the context of industrial markets (Business-to-Business or B2B). However, little is known about the effect of customer education on customer satisfaction within the B2D (Business-to-Distributors) sector. To address this gap, the paper develops a comprehensive model of consumer education applied to the mass consumption of coffee and seeks to verify its suitability relative to this industry. After reviewing the international literature on customer education, an analysis of Honebein and Cammarano’s (2011) model allows the development of an adapted framework and then to validate it through a case study of a major private coffee distributor - a pioneer Italian company in the industry. The findings illustrate that this adapted model fits well with the coffee industry and identifies six dimensions of customer education which would lead to increased customer satisfaction. Despite the fact that this is an explorative study and needs to be applied to a larger number of cases, and testing via subsequent regression analysis, some early managerial implications from the retailer perspective are provided. Finally, the conclusion offers avenues for future research.

Keyword: Customer education; Consumer behavior; Customer satisfaction; Customer relationship management; Experience marketing; Coffee sector.