ABSTRACT

Marketing researchers have often cited reciprocity as an important aspect of relational exchange; however the extant research has not conceptualized or measured reciprocity in marketing relationships. This research is a first attempt to explicate the role of reciprocity in these exchange relationships. Reciprocity is first conceptualized as a component of discrete transactions. A theoretical model is built and tested in (a) a laboratory setting and (b) through a survey of car dealership managers. The role of reciprocal debt is established and shown to impact exchange relationships. Next, reciprocity is conceptualized as a multidimensional element of ongoing exchange relationships. Through a survey of business customers of a bank, the existence of relational reciprocity is established and shown to impact numerous indicators of relationship success. Implications for both theory and practitioners are presented, and future research directions are discussed.