

## A Study on Dealer-Retailer Relationship in Consumer Durables Goods.

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### Abstract:

In India, Dealer Relationship Management (DRM). Has a significant importance due to opening up of domestic economy, as a result of globalization. The consumer durables products industry's complicated dealer-retailer connection is examined in this research. The study examines how trust, communication efficacy, long-term commitment, and service quality affect retailer's loyalty. Interesting insights into these processes are found. While dealer trust and retailer's loyalty are linked, it is not statistically significant, suggesting additional inquiry. However, the study shows that dealers' communication skills greatly affect retailer's loyalty. Transparent, open, and timely communication drives strong retailer's relationships, suggesting that equipping dealers with communication skills might help them last. Dealer devotion is strongly linked to retailer's loyalty, according to the findings. Long-term engagement methods over short-term transactions are important to build deeper and more enduring relationships with retailers because retailers seek stability and continual assistance. Finally, service quality greatly affects retailer's loyalty, according to the study. The study will be depended on primary data. The primary data was collected through a sample survey conducted in Andhra Pradesh state market. Stratified random sampling method was used to pick samples. The sample size was 150. The survey was conducted through personal interview based on a structured questionnaire. Structural Equation Model is used the analyze the data.

**Key Words:** Dealer, Retailer, Trust, Communication efficacy, Long term commitment,

### Introduction

Never before have supply chain operations' efficacy and efficiency been more important than they are in the quickly changing marketplace of today. The complexities of the supply chain multiply when it comes to consumer durables, or items like electronics, furniture, and appliances that are used over an extended length of time rather than being consumed fast. An essential component of this supply chain that is frequently disregarded is the dealer-retailer connection. The purpose of this study is to investigate the intricate dynamics governing dealer-retailer relationships in the consumer durables supply chain.

The successful distribution and sale of consumer durables are largely dependent on the dealer-retailer relationship. Dealers frequently take on the role of intermediaries, obtaining goods from producers and supplying them to retailers, who then resell them to final customers. The symbiosis is complex and includes many different components, including support for promotions, inventory management, delivery schedules, and pricing strategies, among others. The degree to which this relationship is smooth frequently has a major impact on consumer satisfaction, market penetration, and product availability.

In addition to televisions, refrigerators, air conditioners, and washing machines, the Consumer Durables business also sells durable goods and equipment for residential use. Equipment that is used in the kitchen, such as grinders and microwave ovens, is likewise protected under this category. All durable products, or those with a minimum three-year lifespan, are included in this category. These are durable things that must be used gradually. Recent industry reports place the anticipated value of the rapidly expanding consumer durables market at Rs. 300 billion. Consumer Durables Industry

Segmentation: Consumer Electronics and Consumer Appliances are the two main categories into which the consumer durables business may be divided. Similar labels for consumer appliances may be found on Brown Goods and White Goods.

Understanding the dealer-retailer relationship is crucial in a consumer-driven market where needs are always shifting and supply chain resilience is regularly put to the test. The elements influencing this relationship are wide-ranging and complex, ranging from concerns of trust and negotiation to the use of technology and data analytics for more efficient operations.

The manufacturing and distribution of products with an extended lifespan, such as electronics, furniture, and home appliances, define the consumer durables sector. This industry's ability to operate efficiently depends largely on a well-functioning supply chain, where the interaction between retailers and dealers is critical. A vital link in the larger supply chain, the dealer-retailer connection affects not just product availability but also market penetration and customer satisfaction (Smith & Jones, 2018). Dealers play a crucial role as middlemen in facilitating the movement of goods from producers to retailers. They play a crucial role in guaranteeing product diversity, inventory availability, and even promotional activities, which impacts merchants' capacity to successfully satisfy customer expectations. By selling these goods to ultimate customers, retailers serve as the last link in the supply chain (Kumar and Shah, 2017). Attaining economies in inventory management, cost control, and timely delivery requires a synergistic relationship between dealers and retailers (Johnson et al.,2019). However, in the digital age, traditional methods of managing this relationship are changing dramatically. With the advent of e-commerce and digital supply chain management systems, conventional dealer-retailer interaction paradigms are being reconsidered (Williams, 2020). Furthermore, shifting consumer habits and industry trends need a rethinking of long-standing practices (Brown & Green, 2021). For example, the impact of technology on these interactions, such as the usage of Big Data and analytics, has become a research topic (Adams & Klein, 2020).

### Objective of the Study

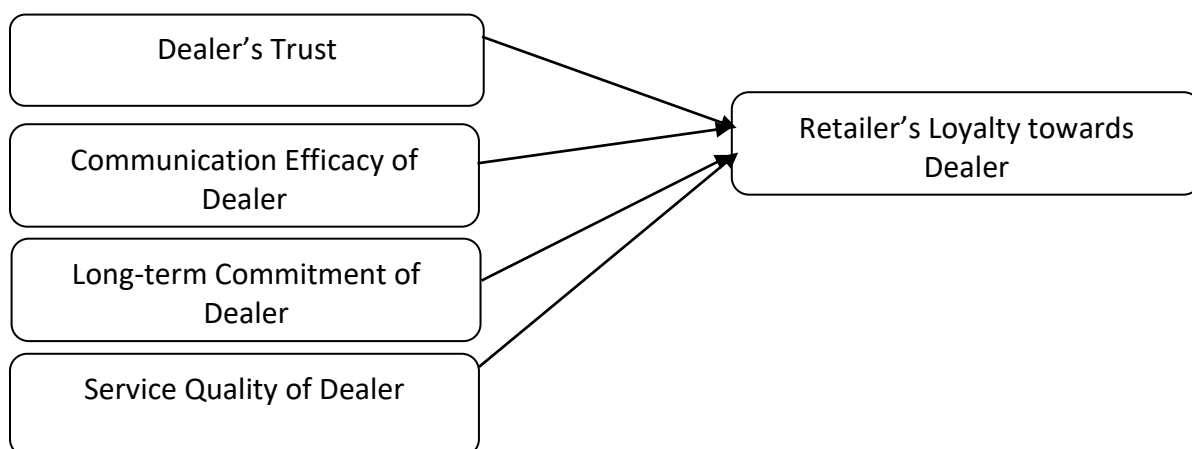
To Investigate influence of dealer trust on the retailer’s loyalty.

To examine communication efficacy of dealer on the retailer’s loyalty.

To investigate long-term commitment of dealer on retailer’s loyalty.

To examine how service quality of dealer influence the loyalty of retailer’s

### Conceptual Framework



(Figure-1: Conceptual Model)

### Literature Review:

#### Dealer trust and Retailer’s Loyalty

A psychological state known as trust is the willingness to tolerate vulnerability in the context of one's favourable expectations about the intentions or actions of another. This basic definition establishes the framework for comprehending the ways in which trust appears in the dealer-retailer relationship (Rousseau et al., 1998).

Dealers that meet their commitments on a regular basis are valued by retailers. In this case, reliability is consistent quality, on-time delivery, and warranty observance (Kumar, 1996). A dealer's commitment to a set of values that the retailer deems appropriate is included in their integrity. This feature is mostly dependent on ethical business practises, fair pricing, and honest communication (Dwyer, Schurr, & Oh, 1987).

The relationship between trust and commitment was demonstrated by this important study, which implies that retailers are more likely to be devoted to their dealers when trust has been built (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). This relates to a dealer's constancy and predictability of acts. Dealers that routinely satisfy their commitments, such as timely delivery and honouring warranty claims, are more loyal to retailers (Anderson & Weitz, 1992). This aspect highlights how a dealer conducts business in an honest and equitable manner.

Retailers frequently have better regard for dealers who maintain moral principles and ethical standards, which encourages greater loyalty (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Delivering items, offering after-sales service, and comprehending market dynamics are all critical skills for a dealer to possess. Retailers are more likely to remain loyal to dealers that indicate competence and mastery in their field (Doney & Cannon, 1997). High levels of trust between dealers and retailers are linked to more enduring business partnerships, according to a study. Long-term partnerships are regarded to have less risk when there is trust (Wilson, 1995)

**H1 Higher levels of loyalty are more likely to be displayed by retailers who have a high degree of dealer trust.**

### **Dealer's Communication efficacy and Retailer's Loyalty**

Determine the relationship between supply chain collaboration and firm performance and collaborative advantage. The authors deliberate on the potential benefits that can result from collaboration among supply chain partners, such as enhanced firm performance and competitive advantages through communication and coordination. Understanding the significance of effective collaboration and communication in supply chain management is facilitated by this research (Cao and Zhang, 2011). Determine whether norms influence the interactions and behaviour of consumers and vendors as they pertain to the role of norms in marketing relationships. This study investigates the importance of social norms and their potential influence on collaboration and communication within marketing relationships. This study enhances the existing body of knowledge regarding the social dimensions of marketing relationships (Heide and John,1992).

Suppliers to conventional retail establishments deliver service quality that is remarkably high, as evidenced by the average response score exceeding four. Additionally, satisfaction, trust, and commitment all receive an average score of four or higher. Despite this, there is still room for development in the quality of merchandise and the website in B2B relationships with traditional retailers, particularly with regard to merchandise, which includes incomplete products, less competitive prices, and out-of-stock availability (Mujianto et al., 2023). A conceptual structure comprising a shared dealer and two retailers, wherein the retailer's return action and sharing action with the dealer are taken into account. Under a consignment agreement, retailers procure products from the merchant and are solely obligated to remunerate for the used items upon the conclusion of

the consignment cycle. Upon demand realisation, retailers have the option of either returning the unused items to the vendor in exchange for a return charge, or sharing them with another retailer (Zhang et al., 2022)

**H2: There exists a favourable correlation between the effectiveness of communication by dealers and Retailer's loyalty.**

### **Dealer's Long term Commitment and Retailer's loyalty**

How firms exert influence over one another through distribution channel strategies and tactics. The authors investigate the intricacies of interfirm relationships and the tactics implemented to mitigate uncertainty and enhance collaboration. The research paper offers significant insights into the subject matter, with a particular focus on effective communication and influence strategies within distribution channels (Frazier and Summers, 1984). The notion of cultivating and maintaining consumer loyalty in the contemporary day, specifically within the realm of retail. The study predominantly focuses on the concept of customer loyalty, but it also addresses the significance of enduring commitment in the interactions between merchants and their customers. This aspect holds relevance in comprehending the dynamics of retailer loyalty as well. This study offers valuable insights regarding loyalty tactics that may be implemented across several settings, such as dealer-retailer relationships (Kumar and Shah, 2004). The inquiry pertains to the utilisation of loyalty programmes as a means to augment the worth of engagements with clients in the retail sector. The research primarily centres around loyalty programmes, but it also has the potential to offer valuable insights into the strategies and methods for establishing and sustaining long-term commitment and loyalty within the retail industry. This knowledge can be applicable to comprehending the dynamics of dealer-retailer relationships and their influence on retailer loyalty. This research provides significant insights into loyalty initiatives and their impact on consumer interactions (Bello et al., 2003).

**H3: A dealer's long-term commitment to a business relationship is positively related to the loyalty of their retailers.**

### **Dealer's service quality and Retailer's Loyalty**

Jordanian laptop makers must address all three areas of service quality, particularly safety, in order to retain their consumers' loyalty. Only the demographic parameters used to characterize the respondents are relevant to the conclusions of this article. Based on these findings, the research recommended that laptop companies in Jordan address all three service quality aspects, particularly safety, in order to retain their consumers' loyalty( Al-Harith et al., 2023). Consumer satisfaction and service quality have a direct impact on corporate branding, reputation, and customer loyalty. Dealers must maintain meaningful consumer connections as a conduit between manufacturers and customers in order to promote customer happiness and adherence. A critical concern for the company's service excellence is a lack of comprehensive measurement and standardization of service quality. As a result, defining and classifying service quality performance results in useful contributions to decision-making to regulate and improve the company's intention. The K-Means Algorithm is used in this study to assess dealer service quality performance by optimizing the number of clusters (Wella et al., 2023). Customers are extremely satisfied with the service quality of solar product merchants in town. In addition, clients enjoyed features such as environmental conservation and effective and fast service activities. While dealers are attentive to complaints, inquiry, security, and proper transactions, staff reaction and willingness to handle concerns are unsatisfactory. While customers have demonstrated good responses to other aspects, such as timely services, further details are needed (Vikas Kumar et al., 2019). The level of service quality provided by the dealer

falls short of the anticipated standard, highlighting the need to address the correlation between customer expectations and staff perceptions (Yan and McLaren, 2010)

**H4: High service quality provided by dealers is positively associated with increased loyalty among retailers.**

**Research Methodology:**

**Research Design**

The research primarily investigates the link between dealers and retailers of consumer durable goods in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. A quantitative research strategy will be used in this study to examine the hypotheses produced from the research goals. Surveys will be the major technique of data collection. The surveys will be designed using a combination of Likert-scale, rating, and open-ended questions for AC, Refrigerator, Washing Machines, and Electric Fans sellers in various cities around Andhra Pradesh. With a sample size of 100, a stratified random sampling procedure is used to assure representation across different types of retailers.

**Data Analysis**

Structure Equation Model is used to examine the relationships between dealer trust, communication efficacy, long-term commitment, service quality, and retailer loyalty.

**Results and Discussion**

**Cronbach Alpha**

Variables	Numbers of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Dealer’s Trust	4	0.918
Communication Efficacy	3	0.918
Long Term Commitment	3	0.920
Service Quality	3	0.894
Retailer’s Loyalty	4	0.934

*(Table-1: Reliability Analysis of Variables)*

Dealer's Trust, Communication Efficacy, Long Term Commitment, Service Quality, and Retailer Loyalty are all constructs that demonstrate exceptional degrees of internal consistency. All of the Cronbach Alpha values for these constructs exceed 0.89, with the majority exceeding 0.91. This indicates that the items comprising each construct are highly correlated, suggesting that they measure the intended concept consistently.

**Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

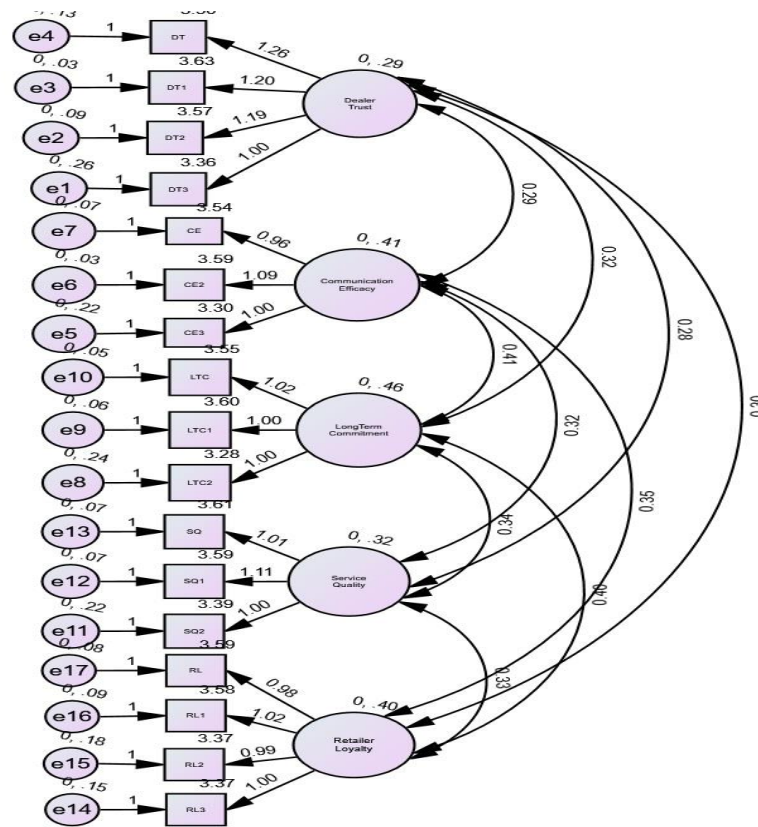
Fit Indices	Recommended	Observed	Result
CMIN	>5 Terrible, >3 Acceptable, >1 Excellent	<b>4.31</b>	<b>Acceptable Fit</b>
CFI	<0.90 Terrible, <0.95 Acceptable, >0.95 Excellent	<b>0.94</b>	<b>Acceptable Fit</b>
TLI	> 0.9	<b>0.927</b>	<b>Good Fit</b>
PNFI	> 0.5	<b>0.552</b>	<b>Good Fit</b>
RMSEA	>0.08 Terrible, >0.06 Acceptable, >0.05 Excellent	.058	<b>Acceptable Fit</b>

*(Table- 2: Fit Indices Model of Confirmatory Factor Analysis)*

**Interpretation**

**CMIN (Chi-Square/df)** based on criteria (>3 and <5), the observed value of 4.31 is classified as 'Acceptable'. This indicates that the model fit is merely satisfactory, albeit not exceptional. **CFI (Comparative Fit Index)** is 0.94 as observed. Based on the established criteria, this falls marginally

short of the 'Excellent' threshold ( $>0.95$ ) but surpasses the 'Terrible' threshold ( $<0.90$ ). This attributes the model fit to the category of 'Acceptable'. Comparing the null model to the superb category, the CFI is in proximity to the model, suggesting that it provides a good fit. **The Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)** was calculated to be 0.927, surpassing the established threshold of 0.9, hence suggesting a favourable level of fit. Although the index in question is not expressly classified according to your specified criteria, it does indicate a strong alignment with commonly accepted standards, indicating a favourable model fit. **The Parsimonious Normed Fit Index (PNFI)** was calculated and yielded an observed value of 0.552. This value above the suggested threshold of 0.5. This observation suggests that the model successfully strikes a favourable equilibrium between simplicity and accuracy, implying an effective model architecture. **The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)** value found in this study is 0.058, which is within the 'Acceptable' range (more than 0.06 and less than 0.08), but is in close proximity to the 'Excellent' range (greater than 0.05). Lower values of the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) are indicative of better model fit. In this case, the obtained value of RMSEA reflects a pretty decent fit of the model.



(Figure-2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis)

**Discussion**

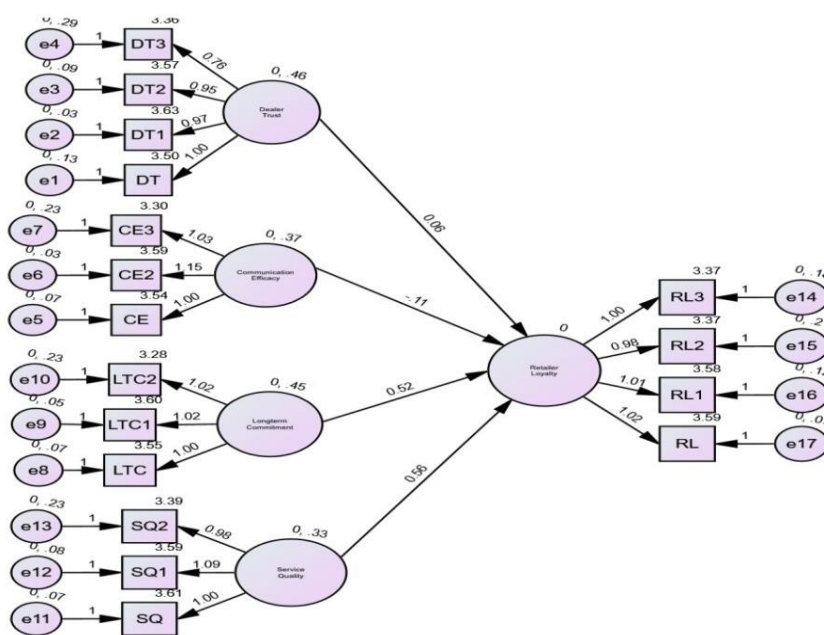
The model has a generally satisfactory level of fit. The CMIN and CFI values fall within the 'Acceptable' range, indicating that the model adequately conforms to the data, but with potential for enhancement. The TLI and PNFI values suggest a strong match, providing more evidence that the model well captures the underlying data structure. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) exhibits a proximity to the category of 'Excellent', indicating that the model effectively approximates the covariance matrix of the population. Although the model does not get a 'Excellent' classification across all criteria, it is generally well-constructed and has an acceptable alignment with the actual data. There is a possibility that more improvement in the fit indices might be achieved by fine-tuning some components of the model.

**Structure Equation Model**

<b>Fit Indices</b>	<b>Recommended</b>	<b>Observed</b>	<b>Result</b>
CMIN	>5 Terrible, >3 Acceptable, >1 Excellent	4.041	Acceptable fit
CFI	<0.90 Terrible, <0.95 Acceptable, >0.95 Excellent	0.95	Good fit
TLI	> 0.9	0.91	Good fit
PNFI	> 0.5	0.549	Acceptable fit
RMSEA	>0.08 Terrible, >0.06 Acceptable, >0.05 Excellent	0.055	Acceptable fit

*(Table -3: Fit Indices of SEM Model)***Interpretation**

The **CMIN (Chi-Square/df)** value of 4.041 is considered to have a 'Acceptable fit' as it falls within the range of values more than 3 but less than 5. This implies that the model has a satisfactory level of fit, if not optimal. A lower value of CMIN is often favoured in academic research, since it signifies a more optimal match between the observed data and the proposed model. When the **Comparative Fit Index (CFI)** score is 0.95, the fit of the model is classified as 'Good fit'. This is due to the fact that it surpasses the threshold of 0.95. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) holds significant importance as it serves the purpose of comparing the model's fit to that of a null model. A score in close proximity to 1 signifies a higher degree of concordance, with a value of 0.95 serving as a robust indication of a model that fits well. A **Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)** value of 0.91 signifies a satisfactory level of compatibility. The aforementioned index assesses the adequacy of the model's fit in comparison to a null model, with values exceeding 0.9 generally signifying a satisfactory fit. This further substantiates the sufficiency of the model. The **Parsimonious Normed Fit Index (PNFI)** value for the 'Acceptable fit' category is 0.549, exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.5. This suggests that the model achieves a satisfactory level of parsimoniousness by effectively managing the trade-off between simplicity and data suitability. **Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)** classifies the recorded value of 0.055 as 'Acceptable fit' due to its value exceeding 0.05 but falling short of 0.06. The model's fit per degree of freedom is quantified by this index; a greater number of lesser values signifies a more optimal fit. A value of 0.055 indicates a fit that is merely adequate, not exceptional.



(Figure-3: Structural Equation Modelling)

**Discussion**

The model exhibits a commendable level of fit across a multitude of indices. Strong CFI and TLI values indicate that the model is exceptionally well-fitting. The CMIN, PNFI, and RMSEA values are classified as 'Acceptable fit', indicating that although the model is reasonably well-fitted, slight enhancements could be made to certain details. In general, the findings of this study indicate that the model effectively embodies the fundamental data structure.

**Hypothesis Testing**

Hypothesis	P-Value	Result
H1: Dealers Trust → Retailer’s Loyalty	.066	Not Significant
H2: Dealer’s Communication Efficacy → Retailer’s Loyalty	.003	Significant
H3: Long Term Commitment of Dealer → Retailer’s Loyalty	0.00	Significant
H4: Service Quality of Dealer → Retailer’s Loyalty	0.00	Significant

**H1: Dealers Trust → Retailer’s Loyalty**

Typically, a p-value of 0.066 is regarded as marginally greater than the conventional threshold of 0.05, which is the established standard for statistical significance. The available evidence indicates a weak correlation between Retailer Loyalty and Dealer Trust, which is insufficient to warrant statistical significance.

**H2: Dealer’s Communication Efficacy → Retailer’s Loyalty**

This result, with a p-value of .003, is significantly less than the threshold of 0.05. This finding provides substantial support for the hypothesis that the loyalty of retailers is significantly influenced



by the communication effectiveness of dealers. Since the correlation is statistically significant, it follows that enhancements in the communication effectiveness of dealers almost certainly result in increased loyalty on the part of retailers.

### **H3: Long Term Commitment of Dealer → Retailer's Loyalty**

A p-value of 0.00, which typically represents a significance level below 0.05, signifies exceedingly robust evidence that supports the hypothesis. This implies that there is a strong and statistically significant correlation between the retailer's loyalty and the dealer's long-term commitment. The data provides robust evidence that the dealer's long-term commitment is a substantial predictor of the retailer's loyalty.

### **H4: Service Quality of Dealer → Retailer's Loyalty**

Likewise, the hypothesis's p-value of 0.00 (which typically signifies a significance level below 0.05) signifies an exceptionally robust statistical significance. This substantiates the notion that the level of service provided by the dealer has a substantial impact on the loyalty of retailers. The data provide substantial support for the relationship, indicating that an increase in service quality is probably associated with a rise in retailer loyalty.

## **Discussion**

**H1: Dealers Trust → Retailer's Loyalty:** The correlation between the level of trust exhibited by dealers and the loyalty displayed by retailers indicates a possible association, but one that lacks statistical significance. This discovery suggests that although trust in dealers may have an impact on retailer loyalty, the available data is insufficient to definitively establish this relationship. This phenomenon may be attributed to a multitude of causes, including the incomplete representation of trust-building mechanisms or the presence of intervening variables that might potentially impact this association.

**H2: Dealer's Communication Efficacy → Retailer's Loyalty:** This study implies that good communication by dealers, particularly in terms of clarity, openness, and responsiveness, has a substantial impact on fostering loyalty among retailers. One potential use of this concept is to enhance retailer connections by prioritising communication training and implementing effective techniques for dealers.

**H3: Long Term Commitment of Dealer → Retailer's Loyalty:** The observed data suggests a robust and significant association between the enduring dedication of the dealer and the loyalty exhibited by the store. This connection implies that retailers place importance on consistency and the guarantee of ongoing assistance from dealers. This perspective has the potential to inform company strategies that prioritise establishing enduring relationships and commitments with retailers, as opposed to engaging in short-term transactional exchanges.

**Service Quality of Dealer and Retailer's Loyalty (H4):** The findings underscore the significant influence of service quality on customer loyalty towards retailers. This finding supports the concept that the provision of exceptional service by dealers plays a crucial role in fostering loyalty among merchants. This statement underscores the need of continuous enhancements in the quality of dealer services as a strategic approach to fostering and sustaining robust retailer partnerships.

## **Conclusion**

The findings of the study indicate the presence of a potential association between the level of trust exhibited by dealers and the loyalty demonstrated by retailers. However, it is important to note that

this link does not reach statistical significance. The profound influence of dealers' communication effectiveness on retailer loyalty underscores the significance of transparent, candid, and prompt communication. This implies that allocating resources towards the development of communication skills and techniques among dealers has the potential to foster more robust retailer relationships. The robust association between the enduring dedication of dealers and the loyalty exhibited by retailers highlights the significance that retailers attribute to reliability and continuous assistance. This observation holds significant importance for businesses, indicating that strategic efforts should prioritise long-term engagement over short-term transactions, fostering more profound and enduring connections with retailers. The research strongly affirms the substantial impact of service quality on the promotion of store loyalty. This suggests that continuous endeavours to enhance the calibre of services supplied by dealers are vital in establishing and sustaining robust retailer collaborations.

### **Limitations**

The sample size of this study is a major drawback. The range of experiences and elements that affect trust, communication, dedication, and service quality may not be adequately captured if the research included a small number of dealers and merchants. More diversified and larger samples yield better insights. The study looks to be cross-sectional, where data is collected at one time. It may not account for changes in dealer-retailer trust, communication, commitment, and service quality over time. Future research might benefit from longitudinal studies tracking these correlations. The study shows relationships between trust, communication efficacy, commitment, service quality, and store loyalty but not causality. For more rigorous causal studies, experimental or quasi-experimental approaches might be used. Intervening factors may affect the connections under consideration. Further study might discover and analyse these intervening elements to better understand dealer-retailer connections.

### **Scope for Future Research**

Future study should examine mediating and moderating elements that affect trust, communication efficacy, commitment, service quality, and store loyalty. Organisational culture, industry variables, and client demographics might be examined. Longitudinal studies of these interactions would assist establish causation and determine how trust, communication, commitment, and service quality affect retailer loyalty over time. Researchers might analyse dealer-retailer interactions across industries to find loyalty elements that are similar and different. This may lead to industry-specific retailer collaboration initiatives. Businesses may learn from improving dealer-retailer trust-building, communication training, commitment strategies, and service quality and measuring their influence on retailer loyalty. International dealer-retailer connections may reveal cultural variations and worldwide best practises for retailer loyalty. These merchants' consumers may be included in future study to learn how dealer-retailer interactions affect their purchase decisions and brand loyalty.

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