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Ethical business-to-business exchange: A revised perspective

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SUMMARY / KURZINFORMATION

Topic	There is increasing interest in ethical questions in marketing. Most contributions to the marketing ethics literature refer to business-to-consumer situations and take an actor-focused perspective. Ethical issues arising on business markets characterized by inter-organizational exchange and network structures have received much less attention.
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of articles providing sets of criteria for evaluating the ethicality of relational exchange • Case Study for challenging these criteria
Character	Conceptual
Authors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Björn Sven Ivens holds the chair of marketing at Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg • Catherine Pardo is professor of marketing at EMLYON Graduate School of Business
Feedback	Is always welcome! Please address to: Prof. Dr. Björn Sven Ivens at the Marketing Department

Abstract

Purpose of the paper and literature addressed:

There is increasing interest in ethical questions in marketing. Most contributions to the marketing ethics literature refer to business-to-consumer situations and take an actor-focused perspective. Ethical issues arising on business markets characterized by inter-organizational exchange and network structures have received much less attention. This paper attempts to reduce this gap. It focuses on the specific question under what conditions exchange between companies can be qualified as ethical.

Research method:

To achieve the purpose of the paper, the authors review articles providing sets of criteria for evaluating the ethicality of relational exchange. Using a case study they then challenge these criteria.

Research findings:

The authors conclude that concepts such as trust, equity, responsibility, or commitment are not sufficient for judging the ethicality of exchange.

Main contribution:

Propositions are made as to how the current perspective on ethical business exchanges should be revised. The authors suggest going beyond the current thought world by considering externalities, stressing the norm of harmonization with the social matrix, and adopting a stakeholder-network perspective.

Key words:

Marketing ethics, business ethics, case study, exchange norms, externalities, stakeholder-networks