Relationship Quality of an Establishment and Perceived Value of a Purchase

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Relationship quality is an emerging concept that attempts to measure the lifetime value of a customer. A review of the literature reveals that the indicators that determine the construct are satisfaction with the relationship, the customer’s trust and the customer’s level of commitment. The paper also considers how the perceived value of a purchase influences the quality of the relationship with an establishment, i.e. how a single transaction influences the valuation of a whole relationship. Gummeson [1987] considers that the quality of the relationship is the value accumulated during/throughout the relationship. This posits the existence of a causal link between perceived value and relationship quality. On the basis of an Expectancy–Value Model [Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975], and the model of Berkowitz [1993], we consider the relationships among the variables of the model. The results show that affect plays a fundamental role in long term valuation, while cognition is more influential in the short term. Another important conclusion is that the affective valuations made during the first moments have decisive consequences in the long term.

INTRODUCTION

Relationship marketing has given substantial impetus to research focused on the study of consumer loyalty. As against the short term objective, commercial distribution firms have realised the importance of maintaining long term relationships with their customers. The repetition of purchases by buyers is the main aim pursued by establishments, because this has a positive and direct impact on their profitability.

The relationships established between two parties may take different forms, such as contracts, joint ventures, alliances or informal cooperation. These formulas are very widespread at the level of relationships in industrial markets, but they are not usual in consumer markets. In any event, independently of the formal aspects that regulate a relationship, each of the participants in the exchange makes their own
valuation of it. This overall evaluation is decisive for the continuity of the relationship, and commercial distribution firms know the key mechanisms that guide the behaviour of their customers. The concept of relationship quality attempts to reflect this overall evaluation.

Relationship quality has been defined as the ‘degree of appropriateness of a relationship to fulfill the needs of the customer associated with the relationship’ [Hennig-Thurau and Klee, 1997: 751]. This is an emerging mega-construct in the literature on marketing, which through certain indicators attempts to value the health of a relationship. The consumer’s satisfaction, trust and commitment are the indicators that the literature has identified.

Together with this, perceived value is a construct that has attracted the attention of a number of researchers. One aspect that has been assumed but little tested in the literature is that the valuation of a relationship is directly influenced by the successive transactions taking place over time. The perceived value of a purchase (transaction) is an antecedent of the quality of the relationship with an establishment (relationship). This is in line with Gummesson [1987] when he considers that the quality of the relationship could be interpreted in terms of accumulated value. For this reason relationship quality aims to measure the lifetime value of a customer, which is an aspect that the Marketing Science Institute (MSI) [2004] highlights among its research priorities for the coming years.

The objective of this study is to identify the key indicators of the relationship quality of an establishment and to study the links among them and with the perceived value of a purchase. For this purpose we start from a conceptual framework based on the Expectancy–Value Model [Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975], the effects of affect [Ajzen, 2001] and Berkowitz’s model [1993]. We posit a causal model which is tested on a sample of Spanish consumers with experience in the purchase of ceramic products.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE EXPERIENTIAL VIEW

The fundamental object of the study of relationship marketing is how long term relationships are created and maintained. In this sense the study of consumers’ behaviour and the mechanisms that lead them to be loyal to a supplier are a key element. Taking as reference the Expectancy–Value Model [Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975], purchasing behaviour is influenced by purchasing intention. Purchasing intention is a direct consequence of the attitude to the product/service and of subjective rules. The antecedents of the attitude to the product/service are the descriptive and inferred beliefs about the consequences of the purchasing behaviour, whereas the normative beliefs relating to the influence on the consumer of the opinions of his/her reference group are the antecedents of the subjective norms.

With regard to the formation of attitudes, the model is clearly cognitive, because it is based on the processing of information. On the basis of information from the environment and from the residuals of past experiences, consumers form their beliefs. These beliefs may be descriptive, if they arise from one’s own observation of reality, or may be inferred, if they are the consequence of inference from several beliefs.
Recently researchers have been incorporating affect as a key element in the formation of attitudes [Ajzen, 2001]. Affect is reserved for general states of mind (happiness, sadness) and for specific emotions (fear, anger, envy), states which contain degrees of valency and thresholds [Ajzen and Fishbein, 2000; Giner-Sorolla, 1999; Schwartz and Clore, 1996; Tesser and Martin, 1996]. Authors like Zajonc [1980] assign a preference to affect over cognition. The most widely accepted view of this proposal is that based on a multidimensional vision of attitude, which assumes that evaluations are influenced both by cognition and by affect [Eagly and Chaiken, 1993; van der Pligt et al., 1998]. The studies carried out show that, for example, when beliefs and feelings about an object are of negative valency, the feelings tend to predominate [Lavine et al., 1998b]. Haddock and Zanna [2000] summarised the results of many studies that support the joint effects of beliefs and feelings on evaluations. In parallel fashion, attitudes towards some objects remain more in affect than in cognition, while for other objects they rest more on cognition than on affect [Kempf, 1999]. In marketing, this line of research has been given the name of the ‘experiential view’.

Regarding the relationship between cognitive and affective variables, Berkowitz [1993] formulates a theory as to how the affective and cognitive elements interact to influence behaviour. He identifies three types of processes that are likely to occur when the consumer is exposed to a stimulus.

Firstly, the information relating to the stimulus is subjected to a relatively basic and automatic associative process, which occurs before cognitive processes like valuations, interpretations, schemas, attributions and strategies begin. These primitive and instinctive processes occur relatively rapidly and can provoke affective reactions of the lowest level, as well as action tendencies (approach or avoidance) based on a rapid valuation of the affective meaning of the stimulus.

Secondly, the information relating to the stimulus is subjected to a cognitive process which is more deliberative and of a higher level, the result of which may serve to strengthen or weaken the action tendencies deriving from the lower level affective reactions.

Finally, the higher level processing may give rise to higher level affective reactions and to action tendencies, which are generated more slowly than the lower level affective reactions because the information is subjected to a more deliberative process before those reactions can occur.

The model suggests that when a choice among various alternatives presents itself, two processes take place [Shiv and Fredorikhin, 1999]. The first starts automatically and gives rise to affective reactions, which can vary in terms of valency and intensity. The second process, more deliberative and controlled, generates cognitions about the alternatives. These cognitions could be based on external stimuli or on memory, and could be favourable or unfavourable to each of the alternatives implicated in the choice. The model suggests that, if processing resources are available, consumer behaviour will be guided by affective reactions. Following this reasoning, impulse purchases are guided by automatic affective reactions, due to the consumer’s limitations for processing the resources.
RELATIONSHIP QUALITY OF AN ESTABLISHMENT

Relationship quality of an establishment can be seen as a mega-construct made up of other key components that reflect the overall nature of a relationship between an establishment and consumers [Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002]. Gummeson [1987] considers relationship quality to be the quality of interaction between a customer and a supplier, and it can be interpreted in terms of accumulated value. Other authors have defined relationship quality as the ‘degree of appropriateness of a relationship to fulfill the needs of the customer associated with the relationship’ [Hennig-Thurau and Klee, 1997: 751]. Therefore, relationship quality can be considered a fundamental aspect of the formation of the attitude towards the establishment.

From the standpoint of the experiential view, relationship quality is not only cognitive, but also affective. The consumer not only makes a rational analysis of the relationship; his or her emotions and feelings also play a fundamental role in relationship quality. Moreover, relationship quality is of a subjective nature, not only because of the different interpretation that each of the parties may make, but also because of its dynamic character. According to Ravald and Grönroos [1996], relationship quality varies over time, so that during the first stages of a relationship the value of each transaction is of great importance, whereas in more mature stages of the relationship the quality of the relationship is what counts. Thus, the customers’ expectations evolve from a predominance of transactional factors towards a greater emphasis on relational variables.

From the point of view of the Berkowitz [1993] model, relationship quality is a set of higher level affective reactions and of action tendencies that are generated relatively slowly compared to lower level affective reactions, since the information is subjected to a more deliberative process before those reactions can occur.

One fundamental aspect is to identify the variables or affective reactions that consumers take into account when determining the relationship quality of an establishment. The literature has analysed various proposals: cooperative norms [Baker et al., 1999], opportunism [Dorsch et al., 1998], customer orientation [Dorsch et al., 1998; Palmer and Bejou, 1994], conflict, propensity to invest and expectations of continuity [Kumar et al., 1995]. Nevertheless, the most recent studies agree that the customer’s satisfaction with the performance of the establishment, trust in this establishment, and the perceived commitment to the establishment are the key variables underlying relationship quality [Baker et al., 1999; Crosby et al., 1990; Dorsch et al., 1998, Garbarino and Johnson, 1999; Palmer and Bejou, 1994; Smith, 1998].

Customer Satisfaction

According to the disconfirmation paradigm, satisfaction is a comparison between performance and expectations [Hunt, 1977; Oliver, 1981]. But according to Oliver [1999] this is a definition based on what the consumer does, and not on its psychological meaning. He therefore proposes that ‘satisfaction is defined as pleasurable fulfillment’ [Oliver, 1999: 34]. That is, the consumer senses that consumption fulfils some need, desire, goal or so forth and that this fulfilment is pleasurable. Thus,
satisfaction is the consumer’s sense that consumption provides outcomes against a
standard of pleasure versus displeasure. This view of satisfaction reflects its affective
nature. From this point of view, it is a high level affective reaction that is generated
slowly as the relationship develops.

In the case of satisfaction with an establishment, the consumer values the degree
of pleasurable fulfilment of his needs and wishes, including the full range of goods or
services offered by the establishment and its evolution over time. Satisfaction depends
on the experience of using the products or services. Satisfaction has been treated as a
one-dimensional construct, which varies along a continuum from dissatisfaction to
satisfaction.

Customer’s Commitment

Morgan and Hunt [1994] consider that the commitment–trust tandem is the indivisi-
bile axis that leads to the efficiency, productivity and effectiveness of relationships.
The basis for maintaining relationships is the keeping of promises [Grönroos,
1990], so that if a promise is not fulfilled the consumer will not repeat the purchase
of a product or the consumption of a service, so the relationship will come to an end
[Moliner and Callarisa, 1997].

Some authors consider that commitment is the highest level of relational bond
[Dwyer et al., 1987]. Commitment between the parties arises when one of them con-
siders that its relationship with the other is so important that it is worthwhile making
the maximum effort to maintain it indefinitely [Dwyer et al., 1987; Gundlach et al.,
1995; Moorman et al., 1992; Morgan and Hunt, 1994]. The essence of commitment
between the parties is the adoption of a long term orientation of the relationship, a
desire to make short term sacrifices in order to obtain long term benefits [Dwyer
et al., 1987]. From the point of view of the Berkowitz model, commitment can
also be considered a high level action tendency, since it implies a certain behaviour
intention towards the establishment, a consequence of a long deliberative process in
which cognitive and affective elements have intervened.

The literature has established two dimensions of commitment that fit the
Berkowitz model: affective commitment and calculated or cognitive commitment
[Geyskens et al., 1996; Wetzels et al., 1998]. The former captures the emotional
elements of commitment, the latter refers to a more rational analysis.

Affective commitment is based on emotional motives, like the feeling of belong-
ing and respect for the other party [Geyskens and Steenkamp, 1995]. Numerous
studies have shown that individuals remain in a relationship because of the emergence
of positive feelings that associate feelings of belonging with a high degree of res-
pect for the other party [Allen and Meyer, 1990; Geyskens and Steenkamp, 1995;
Geyskens et al., 1996; Konovsky and Cropanzano, 1991; Kumar et al., 1995;
Morgan and Hunt, 1994].

Cognitive commitment is an exercise in economic calculation, and two types can
be distinguished: negative and positive. Cognitive commitment is negative when the
relationship is maintained due to the costs and penalties associated with abandoning it
[Young and Denize, 1997]. As soon as alternatives appear, relationships based on
negative commitment will dissolve [Rusbult, 1980, 1983]. The commitment is
positive if the motive for remaining in the relationship is the possibility of obtaining economic gains or benefits. This commitment is said to be based on cognitive value [Rusbult, 1980; Ravald and Grönroos, 1996].

With respect to causal relationships, the literature holds that satisfaction with the establishment is an antecedent of the consumer’s commitment to it. Satisfaction is a comparison between the results of the different transactions carried out and prior expectations. Satisfaction is therefore a belief inferred as a consequence of one or more earlier purchases. If as a consequence of these experiences the level of satisfaction is low, the level of commitment to the establishment will also be low. When the consumer experiences an increase in his satisfaction with the establishment, his commitment also increases, in either the affective or cognitive component. Hence:

H1: The consumer’s satisfaction with an establishment directly and positively influences the consumer’s commitment to that establishment.

Customer’s Trust
Together with commitment, the other key element for the establishment to be able to maintain long term relationships is the consumer’s trust [Morgan and Hunt, 1994]. It is necessary for the consumer to feel trust in the establishment, since according to Morgan and Hunt [1994] it is the basic element that will permit the promises and the relationships to be established and maintained [Berry, 1995; Bitner, 1995]. Trust implies that the good intentions of the establishment are not questioned by the consumer, that the promises made do not generate uncertainties in the purchaser, and that the communication between the parties is honest, open and frequent [Czepiel, 1990]. Trust has been defined as an individual’s general expectation as to whether another’s word can be trusted [Rotter, 1967].

Trust can be studied as a personality trait of each individual person (some people have a greater propensity to trust than others), and as that in which trust is placed. The latter perspective is the one that interests us here, because it implies the valuation of the resources, capacities, norms of conduct, values, priorities and behaviour intentions of an establishment.

On the basis of this conceptualisation, trust can also be catalogued as a high level affective reaction, according to the Berkowitz [1993] model. It involves a complex, slow, long term subjective valuation of a provider.

At a general level it is accepted that trust is composed of two major dimensions: honesty (belief that the establishment will keep its word and that it has the capacity to do so), and benevolence (belief that the establishment is interested in the consumer’s well-being) [Doney and Cannon, 1997; Ganesan, 1994; Ganesan and Hess, 1997; Garbarino and Johnson, 1999; Kumar et al., 1995; Moorman et al., 1993; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Singh and Sirdeshmukh, 2000]. In this sense trust is an eminently affective construct because it is based on two dimensions with a strong emotional component.

The literature reviewed permits the hypothesis that trust is an antecedent of commitment. The clearest justification is that of Kramer [1999], who considers that trust
reduces the transaction costs of searching for information on prices and alternatives available in the market, of inspection and measurement of the objects exchanged, of communication between the parties, and of legal advice. The higher the level of trust, the lower the transaction costs and the greater the commitment to the supplier. Furthermore, given that trust is the necessary basis for promises to be believable, and since commitment is based on the keeping of promises by the establishment, the causal relationship can be posited as follows:

H2: The consumer’s trust in the establishment directly and positively influences the consumer’s commitment to that establishment.

The literature posits that satisfaction with the relationship is an antecedent of trust [Anderson and Srinivasan, 2003; Bloemer and Odekerken-Schroder, 2002; Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Aleman, 2001; Garbarino and Johnson, 1999; Singh and Sirdeshmukh, 2000]. The greater the satisfaction with the establishment, whether due to the product purchased or to the performance of the establishment itself, the more trust generated in the consumer, thus establishing a direct relationship between the two variables. Satisfaction is a residual of past experiences, the direct product of a behaviour, whereas trust implies a feeling that takes into account these experiences with the establishment. The relationship between the two variables can perhaps best be seen in the negative aspect. If the consumer’s level of satisfaction falls, trust will suffer.

H3: The consumer’s satisfaction with the establishment directly and positively influences the consumer’s trust in that establishment.

PERCEIVED VALUE AND RELATIONSHIP QUALITY

Perceived value is the essential result of marketing activities and is a first order element in relationship marketing [Dumond, 2000; MSI, 2004; Oh, 2003; Peterson, 1995; Ravald and Grönroos, 1996]. Marketing researchers have recently been trying to grapple with this concept and to study it in greater depth. Two major approaches to the conceptualisation of perceived value can be identified.

On the one hand, perceived value is understood as a construct configured by two parts, one of benefits received by the customer (economic, social and relationship) and another of sacrifices made (price, time, effort, risk and convenience) [Bigné et al., 2001; Cronin et al., 1997, 2000; Dodds et al., 1991; Grewal et al., 1998; Oh, 2003; Rapp and Collins, 1991, 1996].

Recently an approach based on the conception of perceived value as a multidimensional construct has been gaining ground [De Ruyter et al., 1997, 1998; Rust et al., 2000; Sinha and DeSarbo, 1998; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001; Woodruff, 1997]. This approach allows us to overcome some of the problems of the traditional approach to perceived value, particularly its excessive concentration on economic utility [Zeithaml, 1988]. Another important asset of the second approach is that it echoes the experiential view.
Transferring the experiential view to the study of the perceived value construct, two conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, the view of perceived value as a cognitive variable is partial, since it is necessary to incorporate the affective component. Secondly, maintaining the concept of perceived value as a comparison between ‘getting’ and ‘giving’, the affective variables should also enter the equation: ‘Emotional benefits may also affect choices between instrumental alternatives that are functionally equivalent in other aspects’ [Havlena and Holbrook, 1986: 394]. Since perceived value is a dynamic variable that is also experienced after consumption, it is necessary to include subjective or emotional reactions that are generated in the consumer [Bolton and Drew, 1991; Havlena and Holbrook, 1986; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001]. These affective elements refer to specific emotions (fear, anger, envy) generated in the moment of the transaction [Ajzen and Fishbein, 2000; Giner-Sorolla, 1999; Schwartz and Clore, 1996; Tesser and Martin, 1996]. According to Berkowitz’s [1993] model, they are a consequence of a relatively basic and automatic associative process, which occurs before the start of cognitive processes (valuations, interpretations, attributions and strategies), and of high level affective processes (satisfaction, trust and commitment).

Regarding the dimensions of the construct, there exists a fairly general consensus in the identification of functional factors (quality, price) and affective factors (feelings and social impact) [Anderson and Narus, 1990; Gassenheimer et al., 1998; Lapierre, 2000; Palmer and Ponsonby, 2002; Sánchez et al., 2005; Sheth et al., 1991a, 1991b; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001]. On the basis of Sheth et al. [1991a, 1991b], and the PERVAL scale by Sweeney and Soutar [2001] we have developed the GLOVAL scale [Sánchez et al., 2005] which measures the perceived value of a purchase, including not only the establishment but also the product purchased there, widening the scope of the PERVAL scale. The dimensions identified are specifically the functional value of the installations, functional value professionalism of the contact personnel, functional value quality of the product/service, functional value price, emotional value and social value [Sánchez et al., 2005].

Regarding the link between the perceived value of a purchase and the variables that confirm the relationship quality of an establishment, it has to be said that there are not many empirical studies. Gummeson [1987] considers that the relationship quality could be interpreted in terms of accumulated value. In the same sense, Ravald and Grönnroos [1996] consider that during the first stages of a relationship the value of each transaction is of great importance, while in more mature stages of the relationship it is the quality of the relationship that counts. It is accepted, therefore, that the perceived value of a purchase is an antecedent of the relationship quality of an establishment.

At the conceptual level, perceived value is a different construct from satisfaction. While perceived value occurs at different stages of the purchasing process, including the pre-purchase stage [Woodruff, 1997], it is universally accepted that satisfaction is a post-purchase and post-consumption evaluation [Hunt, 1977; Oliver, 1981]. Perceptions of value can therefore be generated without having bought or used a product, whereas satisfaction depends on the experience of using the product or service. The perceived value is a comparison between what a purchase has contributed of ‘getting’ and what it has involved of ‘giving’, whereas satisfaction is a comparison...
between the result and previous expectations. Satisfaction is a comparison between the expectation of value (before the purchase) and the perceived value (after the purchase) [Parasuraman, 1997; Ravald and Grönroos, 1996]. Moreover, satisfaction has been treated as a one-dimensional construct, which varies along a continuum from dissatisfaction to satisfaction. Perceived value, on the other hand, is a multidimensional construct [Sweeney and Soutar, 2001]. Perceived value and satisfaction are therefore different variables. The literature analysed considers that perceived value is an antecedent of satisfaction [Anderson et al., 1994; Durvasula et al., 2004; McDougall and Leveske, 2000; Oh, 1999; Patterson and Spreng, 1997; Ravald and Grönroos, 1996; Singh and Sirdeshmukh, 2000; Spreng et al., 1993; Szymanski and Henard, 2001; Woodall, 2003]. In this study we also analyse the link between the perceived value of a purchase and satisfaction with the relationship sustained over time with an establishment, i.e. the perceived value of a transaction and the satisfaction with a relationship. Immediately post-purchase it is the transaction that influences the relationship, while in a situation of decision to purchase, it is the satisfaction with the relationship that influences the expectation of value. This allows us to put forward hypothesis H4.

H4: The perceived value of a purchase positively influences the consumer’s satisfaction with the establishment.

With respect to the link between the perceived value of a purchase and trust in and commitment to the establishment, Morgan and Hunt [1994] consider that the benefits of the relationship are precursors of trust. The perceived value of a purchase can be considered part of the benefits of the relationship. For this reason it can be posited that the perceived value of a purchase is an antecedent of trust in the establishment [Singh and Sirdeshmukh, 2000]. Some posit a causality in the opposite direction, i.e. trust is an antecedent of perceived value, though this is a pre-purchase scenario, in which trust is an antecedent of the expectation of value [Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002]. Trust has been conceptualised by some authors as a complex psychological state influenced by motivational and affective components [Bromiley and Cummings, 1996; Kramer et al., 1996; McAlister, 1995]. This is a higher order affective process according to the classification of Berkowitz [1993], with slower processing, as against the value implied in a more cognitive evaluative process. For all these reasons we put forward the hypothesis:

H5: The perceived value of a purchase directly and positively influences the consumer’s trust in the establishment.

In the same sense, commitment is a higher order relational link. If a purchase has offered a high level of value, this will improve the purchasers’ level of commitment.

H6: The perceived value of a purchase directly and positively influences the consumer’s commitment to the establishment.

The causal model posited is reflected in Figure 1.
QUANTITATIVE STUDY

Several scales were designed to measure the variables included in the model. Table 1 specifies the references. We designed a quantitative study in which the population of reference were consumers over 18 years of age in Spain. Three cities were chosen, in different regions of Spain, and of different sizes: Madrid (3,000,000 inhabitants), Valencia (750,000) and La Coruña (250,000).

The industry chosen for the study was ceramic products, which is an important sector of the economy of the Valencia region. Four hundred and two valid personal interviews were carried out. The sample was distributed equally among the three cities, at 134 interviews each. The sampling procedure was random, with quotas for each city, and stratified by age.

The field work was carried out in December 2002. In the data analysis, structural equation models are used, and in particular confirmatory factor analysis (LISREL).

DATA ANALYSIS

First we analyse the dimensions, reliability and validity of the measurement scales used and then we test the causal model, where the relationships among the dimensions obtained in the earlier analyses are established. In the first case confirmatory factor analyses will be carried out for each of the scales (value, satisfaction, trust and commitment), and in the second we perform a path analysis.
Analysis of Dimensions, Reliability and Validity of the Scale of Perceived Value of a Purchase (GLOVAL)

From the confirmatory factor analysis of the items used to measure the value of a purchase we obtain six dimensions: functional value of the establishment (installations), functional value of contact personnel (professionalism), functional value of the product purchased (quality), functional value price, emotional value and social value (Table 2).

Convergent validity exists insofar as all the factor loadings are greater than 0.5, and is further ratified by the fact that each of the items contributes to the formation of only a single dimension and no other. The scale is also reliable because the values of the statistics that determine composite reliability are above 0.80, the composite reliability of the total scale of perceived value of the purchase being 0.98.

With regard to divergent validity, no confidence interval of the correlations between the factors obtained includes unity (Table 3). The highest correlation is the one between the functional value of the product (quality) and the functional value price (0.90); and the lowest correlation is that between the functional value of the product (quality) and the social value (0.35).
In Table 4 we observe that satisfaction has a two-dimensional character, differentiating between satisfaction with the establishment where the tiles were acquired, and...
satisfaction with the tiles themselves. Each of these two dimensions is formed by three identical items, but the first three refer to the establishment and the other three to the tiles.

Convergent validity is demonstrated by factor loadings higher than 0.5, and because each item contributes to forming only the dimension that corresponds to it. The heaviest factor loading in the case of satisfaction with the establishment is that

| TABLE 4 | CONSUMER SATISFACTION |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | Satisfaction with the establishment | Satisfaction with the product |
| My expectations of the establishment have been met at all times | 0.86 | – |
| I have always felt satisfied with the establishment | 0.85 | – |
| The level of satisfaction attained was high compared to that of other similar establishments | 0.74 | – |
| I am satisfied with the tiles acquired | – | 0.90 |
| My expectations of the tiles purchased have been fulfilled | – | 0.84 |
| Compared to other tiles that I have seen the degree of satisfaction is high | – | 0.76 |

Fit of the model: Chi-square = 5.40, df = 8, P-value = 0.71355, RMSEA = 0.001, GFI = 0.99, AGFI = 0.99.

Discriminant validity. Correlation between the factors and in parentheses the confidence interval of the correlation: 0.69 (0.61–0.77).

Composite reliability of satisfaction with the establishment: 0.86.

Composite reliability of satisfaction with the tiles: 0.87.

Composite reliability of satisfaction: 0.93.
of ‘My expectations of the establishment have been met at all times’ (0.86). For satisfaction with the tiles the highest factor loading is ‘I am satisfied with the tiles acquired’ (0.90).

The divergent validity of the scale is also verified, as the confidence interval of the correlation between satisfaction with the establishment and with the tiles does not include unity (0.61–0.77). The composite reliability of the scale is high, all the statistics determining it being higher than 0.86.

**Analysis of Dimensions, Reliability and Validity of the scale of Trust in the Establishment**

Trust in the establishment is formed by two dimensions: honesty and benevolence (Table 5). Honesty refers to the establishment’s technical and human capacity to fulfil its obligations (0.85), the positive experiences provided (0.85), reputation (0.85) and the degree of fulfilment of promises (0.76). Benevolence includes the establishment’s concern for its customers’ well-being (0.94) and problems (0.87), and the support and assistance that it gives them (0.87).

Convergent validity is ratified, as the factor loadings are higher than 0.5, and because no item contributes to the formation of a dimension other than its own. Divergent validity is demonstrated because the value of the correlation between the factors is 0.80 and the confidence interval does not include unity (0.70–0.90). The statistics that determine composite reliability are higher than 0.90, thus ratifying it.

**Analysis of Dimensions, Reliability and Validity of the scale of Commitment to the Establishment**

The consumer’s commitment to the establishment has one affective dimension and one cognitive one (Table 6). The affective dimension makes reference to courtesy (0.88), to feeling at ease (0.78) and to loyalty to the establishment (0.73). And the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 5</th>
<th>CONSUMER’S TRUST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>Benevolence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has shown at all times that it has the capacity to fulfil its obligations (skills and technical and human means)</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has always provided me with positive experiences</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has always had a good reputation</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has always kept its promises</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has been concerned for my well-being at all times</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has constantly been concerned about my problems</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have always been able to count on its support and assistance</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fit of the model: Chi-square = 17.97, df = 13, P-value = 0.15853, RMSEA = 0.031, GFI = 0.99, AGFI = 0.97
Discriminant validity. Correlation between the factors and in parentheses the confidence interval of the correlation: 0.80 (0.70–0.90)
Composite reliability of trust–honesty: 0.90
Composite reliability of trust–benevolence: 0.92
Total composite reliability of trust: 0.95
Cognitive dimension refers to the effort involved in changing establishment (0.91) and to the non-existence of other alternatives (0.72).

To the extent that the factor loadings are higher than 0.5, the scale that measures the commitment to the establishment possesses convergent validity, which is corroborated by the fact that each of the items contributes to the formation of a single dimension. The confidence interval of the correlation between the two dimensions obtained is between 0.40 and 0.60, thus ratifying divergent validity as it does not include unity. The reliability of the scale is also accepted because the value of the statistics of composite reliability are greater than 0.80.

The four confirmatory factor analyses carried out to measure the dimensions, reliability and validity of the scales analysed are adequate, the probabilities associated with the chi-squared statistics being greater than 0.05, the statistics GFI and AGFI close to unity (0.97 and 0.96, respectively) and RMSEA close to zero (0.030). Furthermore, all the parameters of these models are significant, the associated t-values exceeding 1.96.

### Table 6: Consumer’s Commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commitment affective</th>
<th>Commitment cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They have always been courteous and friendly</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have always felt at ease in the establishment</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel very loyal</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would take me too much time, effort and/or money to buy in another establishment</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are no alternatives</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Causal Link between Perceived Value of a Purchase and the Relationship Quality of an Establishment**

Finally we test the overall model in which the causal relationships among value, satisfaction, trust and commitment are established. For the development of this model we performed a path analysis, taking the weighted mean values of the above variables. The weighting depends on the factor loadings obtained in the earlier confirmatory factor analysis. With the model thus obtained we will test the hypotheses put forward (Figure 2).

The path analysis carried out to establish the causal relationships among the variables being studied is adequate, because the probability of the chi-squared statistic is 0.05644 (higher than 0.05), and the statistics GFI and AGFI are close to unity (0.97 and 0.96, respectively) and RMSEA is close to zero (0.030). Also all the parameters
of the model are significant because the associated t-values are always higher than 1.96.

The perceived value of a purchase produces effects on the consumer’s satisfaction both with the establishment and with the product. Satisfaction with the establishment is determined by the emotional value (0.42), the functional value of the product (0.32) and the functional value of the personnel (0.12), and satisfaction with the product is influenced fundamentally by the functional value of the product (0.53), though also by the emotional value (0.18) and the functional value of the personnel (0.12). These results allow us to affirm that the fourth working hypothesis, that the perceived value of a purchase is an antecedent of the consumer’s satisfaction with the establishment, is fulfilled.

In relation to the influence of the perceived value of the establishment on the consumer’s trust in the establishment, we determine that perceived value influences the two dimensions of trust: honesty and benevolence. In the first case, honesty is determined by emotional value (0.32) and by social value (0.12). That is, in this case the functional aspects of perceived value have no explanatory power. Benevolence is determined by social value (0.28), the functional value of the personnel (0.20), emotional value (0.12) and by the functional value of the establishment (0.09). These results determine the fulfilment of hypothesis 5, establishing that the perceived value of a purchase is an antecedent of the consumer’s trust in the establishment.

We next analyse the effects of the perceived value of a purchase on the consumer’s commitment to the establishment, in both affective and cognitive dimensions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Relationships obtained</th>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Fulfilment of hypothesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H4 Value → Satisfaction with the establishment</td>
<td>Emotional value → Satisfaction with the establishment</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Functional value product</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Satisfaction with the establishment</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Functional value personnel</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Satisfaction with the establishment</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4 Value → Satisfaction with the product</td>
<td>Functional value product</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Satisfaction with the product</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emotional value → Satisfaction with the product</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Functional value personnel</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Satisfaction with the product</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5 Value → Trust–honesty</td>
<td>Emotional value → Trust–honesty</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social value → Trust–honesty</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5 Value → Trust–benevolence</td>
<td>Social value → Trust–benevolence</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Functional value personnel</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Trust–benevolence</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emotional value → Trust–benevolence</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Functional value establishment</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Trust–benevolence</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6 Value → Affective commitment</td>
<td>Social value → Affective commitment</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emotional value → Affective commitment</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Functional value establishment</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Affective commitment</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6 Value → Cognitive commitment</td>
<td>Social value → Cognitive commitment</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Functional value price → Cognitive commitment</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Functional value establishment</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Cognitive commitment</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3 Satisfaction → Trust–honesty</td>
<td>Satisfaction with the establishment</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Trust–honesty</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Satisfaction with the product</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Trust–honesty</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3 Satisfaction → Trust–benevolence</td>
<td>Satisfaction with the establishment</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Trust–benevolence</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1 Satisfaction → Affective commitment</td>
<td>Satisfaction with the establishment</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Affective commitment</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1 Satisfaction → Cognitive commitment</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2 Trust → Affective commitment</td>
<td>Trust–honesty → Affective commitment</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trust–benevolence → Affective commitment</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2 Trust → Cognitive commitment</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Affective commitment is determined by social value (0.20), emotional value (0.18) and the functional value of the establishment (0.12). And the antecedents of cognitive commitment are social value (0.43), the functional value of price (0.18) and the functional value of the establishment (0.12). These results determine that the sixth hypothesis is fulfilled.

Therefore, at a general level, the perceived value of a purchase is an antecedent of the relationship quality, i.e. increases in perceived value at transaction level will bring with them increases in the relationship quality.

Once the effects of the perceived value of a purchase have been analysed, we study the internal links in the relationship quality mega-construct. With respect to the influence of satisfaction on the consumer’s trust, the honesty dimension is determined by satisfaction with the establishment (0.43) and by satisfaction with the product (0.11), while the benevolence dimension is only affected by satisfaction with the product (0.29). These results permit us to establish that hypothesis 3 is fulfilled, as satisfaction is an antecedent of trust.

As to the influence of satisfaction on commitment, only satisfaction with the establishment influences the affective dimension of commitment (0.24). On the other hand, satisfaction with the product exercises no significant influence on commitment. From these results we can deduce that hypothesis 1 is fulfilled, satisfaction being an antecedent of commitment to the establishment, though only in its affective dimension.

The last group of relationships refers to the effects of trust on commitment. In this case we observe that affective commitment is determined, with equal intensity, by the two dimensions of trust: honesty (0.13) and benevolence (0.13). However, cognitive commitment is not determined by any of the dimensions of commitment. With the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedents</th>
<th>Effects with the establishment</th>
<th>Effects with the product</th>
<th>Trust–honesty</th>
<th>Trust–benevolence</th>
<th>Affective commitment</th>
<th>Cognitive commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Functional value of
  establishment          | 0.12                          | 0.12                     | 0.06 (0.06)   | 0.24 (0.03)       | 0.07 (0.07)         | 0.12                 |
| Functional value of
  personnel                |                               |                          |               |                   |                     |                      |
| Functional value of
  product                  | 0.32                          | 0.53                     | 0.20 (0.20)   | 0.09 (0.09)       | 0.12 (0.12)         |                      |
| Functional value of
  price                    |                               |                          |               |                   |                     | 0.18                 |
| Emotional value           | 0.42                          | 0.18                     | 0.52 (0.20)   | 0.24 (0.12)       | 0.38 (0.20)         |                      |
| Social value              |                               |                          | 0.12          | 0.28              | 0.25 (0.05)         | 0.43                 |
| Satisfaction with the
  establishment           |                               |                          | 0.43          | 0.29              | 0.34 (0.10)         |                      |
| Satisfaction with the
  product                 |                               |                          |               |                   |                     | 0.11                 |
| Trust–honesty            |                               |                          |               |                   |                     | 0.13                 |
| Trust–benevolence        |                               |                          |               |                   |                     | 0.13                 |

*Each cell shows the total effect (direct and indirect) of the causal relationships, and in parentheses the indirect effects.
relationships thus obtained we can establish that hypothesis 2 is fulfilled: trust is an antecedent of commitment, though only in its affective dimension.

Together with the direct effects analysed above, it is also appropriate to consider the indirect ones, which determine the total influence of one variable on another (Table 8). For example, emotional value influences trust–honesty both directly (0.32) and indirectly through satisfaction with the establishment (0.42 * 0.43 = 0.18) and satisfaction with the product (0.18 * 0.11 = 0.02). This generates a total effect of emotional value on trust-honesty of 0.52 (0.32 + 0.18 + 0.02).

From the analysis of the intensity of the total effects we can determine that emotional value is the variable that exercises the strongest influence on the rest of the variables, followed by the functional value of the product, the social value, satisfaction with the establishment, the functional value of the personnel, the functional value of the establishment, the functional value price, trust (both honesty and benevolence) and finally satisfaction with the product.

CONCLUSIONS

Theoretical and Business Implications

The study permits us to draw a first conclusion with regard to the importance of low level affective processes, captured in emotional value, which influences practically all the variables of the model. Although Berkowitz [1993] describes them as ‘crude and primitive’, these relatively basic and automatic associative processes have key consequences in satisfaction, trust and the consumer’s commitment to the establishment. The first moments are important because they generate an impression in the purchaser that remains for a long time. A key antecedent of relationship quality is therefore in the most basic feelings (emotional value) derived from the individual transactions between the establishment and the consumer.

At a more general level we confirm the predominant role played by affect in the formation of attitudes, in interaction with cognitive elements. As posited by Berkowitz [1993] and Peter and Olson [1999], the results show how affective and cognitive systems interact with each other. This interaction is important in the development of inferred beliefs, but can also moderate the effects of some beliefs or affects on other beliefs or affects.

Another important aspect to highlight is the effects of social value. The Expectancy–Value Model considers that subjective norms, together with the attitude to the object, are determinants of the behaviour intention. In this sense, commitment is perhaps the variable with the strongest conative component in the model. While trust is an affective predisposition, favourable or otherwise, commitment is an action tendency, since it involves dedicating an effort to maintain the relationship in the long term and having demonstrated the will to do so [Dwyer et al., 1987; Gundlach et al., 1995; Moorman et al., 1992; Morgan and Hunt, 1994]. Social value is an approximation to subjective norms, and is observed to be the factor with greatest total and direct effect on cognitive commitment, and the second greatest direct effect (the third in total effect) on affective commitment. According to the
postulates of this theory, therefore, social value can have a determining influence on
the intention to repurchase in the establishment which will moderate the effect of the
attitude towards that establishment.

The cognitive variables (functional value of the product and of the personnel)
exercise their greatest influence on satisfaction, which is the high level affective
process that takes place immediately after the purchase in the establishment. Their
effects seem somewhat diluted compared to variables like trust and commitment,
where variables of an affective and social type emerge. It seems, therefore, that cog-
nitive beliefs have more important effects in the short term, which become diluted
with the passage of time, whereas affect and social norms have less effect in short
term evaluations, but their importance increases in the long term. It is fundamental,
therefore, from the point of view of relational marketing and of managing relation-
ships in the long term, to target the affective and social aspects of the consumer.
Nevertheless, from the results of this study we cannot infer that some variables are
more important than others in repeat purchase behaviour.

At management level, the study also allows some recommendations to be pro-
posed. The establishment must provide value fundamentally through the different
transactions that it undertakes with the consumer, and more specifically by caring
for the quality of the product and the professionalism of its personnel. These are
key aspects for achieving consumer satisfaction. It is also necessary for the establish-
ment to attempt to control emotional aspects relating to the consumer’s comfort with
the product, generation of positive feelings, predisposition to help, that the consumer
feels at ease and calm in making decisions. To achieve this it is necessary to pay atten-
tion to the assortment of products and services offered by the establishment, so that
they seek the comfort of the consumer. Likewise the customer contact personnel
and the design of the sales floor play a fundamental role, because they help to generate
positive feelings of relaxation and calm in the consumer, and show the predisposition
to help. In this sense the merchandising and selection, training and motivation of the
personnel in sales techniques are key elements in achieving the trust and the commit-
ment of the consumer, and therefore long term commercial relationships.

One aspect that is difficult to manage is the consumer’s social beliefs. The estab-
ishment must try to be acknowledged and accepted by the consumer’s social milieu.
In this sense the results seem to show two paths. The first is to provide value to all the
customers who come to the establishment, by means of the instruments already men-
tioned. This implies a homogenisation of the value offered to purchasers, which does
not mean a standardisation, since it is necessary to have the empathy necessary to
satisfy each customer. The second path is a communication that targets the social
aspects, the need to belong and to integrate. The strategy of the brand and the
choice of its positioning is an aspect that should also be cared for by the
establishment.

Limitations and Future Lines of Research
The limitations of the study lie in the type of product and establishment analysed.
Ceramics are a product of medium involvement and low product differentiation, in
that there are no brands widely recognised by consumers. Studying the cases of
establishments that sell products with higher or lower involvement, and products with a higher degree of product differentiation, would perhaps offer conclusions of interest with regard to the generalisation of the results of this study.

Another obvious limitation is the scope of the sample. It is concentrated in a particular country, so it should be replicated with samples from other countries.

Future lines of research could analyse the complete model proposed by the Theory of Planned Behaviour [Ajzen, 1991]. It seems to be of special importance to incorporate the attitude and the intention to purchase, as well as to complete the social norms. A complete model of repeat purchase behaviour and of consumer loyalty could thus be obtained, based on a solid theoretical framework widely tested in psychology.

REFERENCES


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