



The interaction between relational variables (trust, satisfaction and commitment) Using PLS approach in a hotel: the case of Sheraton in Oran (Algeria)

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Abstract	Article info
<p><i>The objective of this study is to demonstrate the positive and significant relationships between three relational variables: satisfaction, trust, and commitment. Using data collected from the hotels Sheraton in Oran (Algeria), a total of 143 surveys were analyzed using Partial Least Square(PLS), the findings indicate that customer satisfaction, trust on hotel and affective, calculated commitment positively correlated between them. One of the main contributions of our study is to highlight that trust plays a more significant mediating role than the direct impact of satisfaction on affective commitment.</i></p>	<p>Received 17/02/2024</p> <p>Accepted 05/10/2024</p>
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1. Introduction

Some authors introduce the firm into the process of developing trust (Doney and Cannon, 1997), others ask whether trust is interpersonal, inter-firm or both, and whether it is an emotion or a calculated cognitive tendency. Although several variables can be used to design the relational approach. Authors who have attempted to identify these variables include Wilson (1995), Morgan and Hunt (1994) and Ricard and Perrien (1999). Nevertheless, it would be important to verify whether these variables are present in the hotel sector (the case of the Sheraton hotel). In fact, the elements involved in the relational approach are likely to vary according to the sector of activity or the context of the exchange (McCort, 1994).

The Problem of the Study

This research aims to analyse the interaction between the three relational quality variables (satisfaction, trust, commitment) in the Sheraton Hotel in Oran (Algeria).

To achieve this, we have developed several hypotheses to fully understand the different interactions of relational quality:

H1: Consumer satisfaction has a positive effect on trust in the hotel.

H2: Satisfaction has a positive influence on the consumer's calculated commitment in the hotel.

H3: Satisfaction has a positive effect on affective commitment in the hotel.

H4: Trust has a positive effect on affective commitment in the hotel.

H5: Trust has a positive influence on calculated consumer commitment in the hotel.

The Importance of the Study:

The aim of our study is to determine the significance of satisfaction and trust, the relationship variables, in explaining the customer's relational commitment in the hotel sector. Previous research has extensively covered the relational aspect (Kumar 1995; Geyskens, 1996; Garbarino, 1999; Verhoef, 2002, etc.), but there is a lack of specific focus on the hotel sector.

Research objective:

The objectives of this research are to (1) study the relational approach in the hotel sector (Sheraton Hotel); (2) verify the relative importance of each of the three relational variables (satisfaction, trust, engagement) in determining the level of relational quality; and (3) verify the mediating role played by trust between satisfaction and affective and calculated engagement.

Study Methodology:

To test our hypotheses and analyse measures of reliability and validity, we followed Churchill's (1979, p.65) general framework and incorporated existing methods in the field.

Additionally, we customised statistical analysis tools, as recommended by Cohen et al. (1990, p.183). Our study utilised the confirmatory analytical approach. The justification for using this approach lies in the necessity to identify the study variables and the statistical methods required to answer the research questions.

2. Review of literature

2. Relationship marketing and relationship quality: An attempt at definition

Palmatier et al. (2006) state that while most research and management practices assume that RM efforts generate stronger customer relationships, some managers have been disappointed with the results of their RM efforts (Crosby, Evans, & Cowles, 1990). Furthermore, researchers have suggested that in certain situations, PM can have a negative influence on performance.

To gain a better understanding of the most effective relationship marketing strategies in building strong relationships, Palmatier et al. (2007) focused on variables centred on salespeople and customers. Most research has conceptualized the effects of RM on results as being completely mediated by one or more relationship constructs, such as trust, commitment, relationship satisfaction, and relationship quality.

2.1 Relationship marketing:

For over thirty years, relationship marketing has been a prominent topic in the marketing discipline (Palmatier et al., 2006). The concept originated in industrial and service marketing (Gronroos, 1994; Parasuraman and Berry, 1991). Relationship marketing is defined as the process of establishing, developing, and maintaining successful business relationships (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). However, it is important to note that the definition of this marketing approach has evolved over time (see table 1). Therefore, the definition has been updated as follows (Durif, 2008, p. 118): Relationship marketing is a strategic perspective that aims to create, develop, consolidate, and maintain relationships based on in-depth knowledge of partners and contractual standards. The goal is to maximize long-term benefits for all stakeholders involved.

Table 1. Definitions of relationship marketing

Dates	Definitions	Author(s)
1983	Relationship marketing involves attracting, maintaining, and enhancing customer relationships in multi-service organizations.	Berry (p. 25)
1985	Marketing aimed at building strong and lasting relationships with individual customers.	Jackson (p. 2)
1990	Establishing, maintaining, and enhancing relationships with clients and other partners is crucial for achieving mutual goals. This is achieved through mutual exchange and fulfilling promises, all while maintaining a profit-driven approach.	Gronroos (p.138)
1992	Relationship marketing is an integrated effort to identify, maintain, and build a network with individual consumers, and to continuously strengthen the network for the mutual benefit of both parties, through interactive, personalized, and value-added contacts over a long period of time.	Shani and Chalasani (p.34)
1997	The field of relationship marketing aims to provide companies with the means and methods to create and manage an environment dedicated to the creation of mutual value.	Oru en (p. 3 8)
1999	Relationship marketing involves understanding, maintaining, and developing strong relationships with customers and other stakeholders. It is a long-term approach aimed at delivering long-term value to customers, with customer satisfaction as the key measure of success.	Kotler and Armstrong (p.50)
2004	Strategic orientation aimed at establishing, maintaining, and developing long-term relationships with clients to increase mutual benefits. It is based on a set of standards that increase trust between parties.	Graf (p.38)
2007	All marketing approaches that focus on the relationship between a company, its customers and its various stakeholders.	Bonnemaizon, Cova and Louyot (p.50)
2012	A comprehensive strategy and process for acquiring, retaining and collaborating with select customers to create superior value for both the company and the customer.	Parvatiyar, Sheth and Sinha (p.5)

Source: own research (Drawing on a range of authors)

Most definitions agree on three aspects of marketing:

- The provision of engagement activities across the stages of the relationship with the relationship.
- Identifying individual customers, groups of customers, other companies and/or employees as targets for relationship marketing activities,
- Creating value for both parties through a combination of these aspects (superior value creation),

2.2 relational quality:

The concept of relationship quality is a crucial construct in marketing literature. This variable varies depending on the different stages in the development of a relationship between customers and companies (Athanasopoulou, 2009, p.584). Relational quality is described as a mega-construct that integrates a set of key dimensions in the form of relational variables (Smith, 1998, p.3; Moliner, 2009, p.76; Vesel and Zabkar, 2010, p.213).

Previous theoretical developments of this concept have lacked a precise definition and consensus regarding its dimensions (Qin, Zhao and Yi, 2009, p.391). Some authors have shown that the definition of relational quality depends on its dimensions (Wong, A., Sohal, A., 2004, p.35). In contrast, Hennig-Thurau and Klee (1997, p.738) as well as Mimouni and Volle (2003, p.2) demonstrate that relational quality reflects the ability of a relationship to meet customers needs. Similarly, certain study argue that relational quality is a global evaluation and a relevant indicator that describes the intensity and climate of the relationship over time (Smith, J.B., 1998, p.4; Keating, B., Rugimbana, R., Quazi, A., 2003, p.218). In essence, relational quality creates a comprehensive impression for the customer regarding the relationship (Wong, A., Sohal, A., 2002, p.34).

Moreover, relational quality comprises several interrelated dimensions that vary in nature and number depending on the study's context. Table 2 summarizes the primary dimensions developed in relationship marketing for service companies.

Table 2. Dimensions of relational quality

Authors	Dimensions of relationship quality	service sector
Crosby, Evans and Cowles (1990)	Satisfaction, confiance	services
Dorsch, Swanson and Kelley (1998)	Trust, satisfaction, commitment, opportunism, customer focus, ethical profile	The relationship between the seller and buyer in services.
Garbarino and Johnson (1999)	Overall satisfaction, trust, commitment	Services
Mimouni and Volle (2003)	Relational satisfaction, trust, commitment	Air transport
Roberts, Varki and Brodie (2003)	Integrity, benevolence, commitment, conflict, satisfaction	Industrial service
Rauyruen and Miller (2007)	Service quality, trust, commitment, satisfaction	B-to-B in services
Moliner (2009)	Satisfaction, trust, commitment	Services

Source : own research (Drawing on a range of authors)

Table (2) displays a divergence in the nature of services and the number of dimensions of relational quality. However, it is evident that satisfaction, trust, and commitment are the primary dimensions used to operationalize this concept. This finding is consistent with the results of Ulaga and Eggert (2006), Liu, Zeng and Su (2009), and Qin, Zhao and Yi (2009). Furthermore, Athanasopoulou's (2009) synthesis demonstrates that relational quality is comprised of three primary dimensions: satisfaction, trust, and commitment. These dimensions have been validated in various study contexts. As a result, we will outline the three fundamental relational variables below.

- Satisfaction:

The concept of satisfaction has been extensively studied in services marketing (Béjaoui & M'henna, 2010).

Researchers have provided various definitions for satisfaction, which are summarized in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Definition of the concept of satisfaction.

Authors	Definition
Cardozo (1965) Howard and Sheth (1969) ; Hunt (1977) ; Oliver (1980).	It is important to note that consumer evaluation is a cognitive construct that is not limited to simply assessing the product. It also depends on the consumer's expectations and the effort they allocate to obtain the product.
Ganesan (1994)	A positive emotional response to a previous experience.
Mimouni and Voile (2003)	Relationship satisfaction is the cumulative result of all evaluations of the customer's experience with the company, including products, services, and staff.
Bayart and Brignier (2013)	A post-purchase process in which the consumer evaluates the performance of a product or service.
Ayoubi (2016)	It is a multidimensional and cumulative concept with two facets: affective and cognitive. The concept refers to the total experience of consuming a product, which involves both cognitive and affective processes.

Source : adapted from Volle, P., and Mimouni, A., 2003, p.538; Béjaoui, A., and M'henna, M.A., 2010, p.4 ; Şahin.A, Zehirb.C, and Kitapçı, H., 2011, p.1290; Ben Ammar, S. and Belaid, A.A., 2016, p.61 ; Ayoubi, L., 2016, p.58.

Satisfaction has been the subject of an abundant literature in services marketing (Anderson E. E. et Weitz, B., 1994, p.19; Bardon, M.C., 1993, p.92; Kotler, P., Dubois, B., 1993, p.36; Patterson, P.G., Johnson, L.W. and Spreng, R.A., 1997, p.5; Spreng, R.A., MacKenzie, S.B. and Olshavsky, R.W., 1996, p.31), which largely explains the multiple definitions of this

construct. Serieys concludes that there are essentially two currents (Serieys, M., 2001, p.3): the first considers satisfaction as "a dual feeling or emotion, satisfaction and dissatisfaction" and the second defines satisfaction based on the concept of dissonance. Other authors favor the distinction between two types of satisfaction: relational satisfaction, which is (Mimouni, Z., Volle, P., 2003, p.3) "the consumer's affective state resulting from an overall evaluation of their relationship with the company. It is cumulative, summarizing all the one-off evaluations relating to the customer's experience with the company" and transactional satisfaction defined as "an evaluative judgement following an immediate purchase or an affective reaction to the transaction with the most recent firm" (Clerfeuille, F., Poubanne, Y., 2002, p.2; Garbarino E., Johnson, M.S., 1999, p.83). Geyskens, Steenkemp and Kumar (1999, p.304) suggest that satisfaction, trust and commitment are theoretically and empirically separate constructs and distinguish between economic satisfaction which refers to "the affective and positive response of a member of the relationship chain to an economic reward generated by the relationship with the partner (sales volume, margins). The success of the relationship depends on the level of achievement of the objectives of an economically satisfied member of the chain" and non-economic satisfaction which means "the affective and positive response of a member of the chain to the non-economic or psychosocial aspects of the relationship. A chain member who is satisfied with the non-economic aspects enjoys contact with his partner because he believes that his partner respects him and is willing to exchange ideas with him".

- **Trust :**

The need to build relationships based on trust is now well recognised in the marketing literature, with Ganesan (1994) arguing that trust and dependence play a key role in determining the direction of long-term relationships (Ganesan, S., 1994, p.2). Morgan and Hunt (1994) present it as the most important mediating variable in the exchange relationship (Morgan R.M., Hunt S.D., 1994, p.21). According to Chow (1997), trust is an important element because of its ability to mitigate risk in the buying process (Chow, P.P., 1997, p.277). It allows the buyer to commit to a limited number of sources whose past behaviour has been satisfactory. Trust acts as a control mechanism that reduces opportunistic behaviour in trading contexts characterised by uncertainty and dependence. In the service sector, Sidershmakh et al (2002) have shown that a consumer's trust in a service provider has a positive effect on loyalty (Siderhmukh D., Singh J., Sabol B., 2002, p.2).

In the literature, there are multiple definitions given to the notion of trust. Table 4 presents definitions that clarify the concept.

Table. 04: a chronological compilation of definitions of trust.

Authors	Definition
Larzelere, R., Huston, T., 1980, p.596.	Trust refers to an interpersonal relationship based on benevolence and honesty.
Swan, J.E., Nolan, J.J., 1985, p.40	Trust refers to the reliability of an object's characteristics.
Moorman et al., 1992, p.315	Trust refers to the willingness to rely on an exchange partner whom we trust.
Bendapudi, N., Berry, L.L. (1997), p.16	Trust is an exchange with a partner based on integrity and reliability.
N'Goala, G., 2010, p.4	Trust is based on a company's ability to anticipate and meet customer expectations in terms of reliability, credibility, and general reputation.
Gul, R (2014), p.369	It is believed that each party will fulfil the wants and needs of the other.

Source : (Volle, p., Mimouni, A., 2003, p.538; Abbes, M., 2005, pp.13-14; Makaoui, N., 2014, pp.42-43 ; Ayoubi, L., 2016, p.57 ; Gul, R., 2014, p.369).

In marketing literature, three conceptions of trust can be identified (Eddaimi, L., 2012, p.6; Abbes, M., 2005, p.14 and Boughanbouz, Ch., 2015, p.16):

- A unidimensional conception, which refers to the “benevolence” dimension;
- A two-dimensional concept, which includes “credibility” and “benevolence” among other things;
- A multi-dimensional conception, which encompasses various dimensions.

"Competence", "honesty", and "benevolence" are often used to describe a person's character, while "integrity", "credibility", and "benevolence" are also commonly used. Another set of traits that are often used to describe a person's character are "capacity", "benevolence", and "integrity".

- Commitment

The marketing literature provides several definitions for the concept of engagement, which have undergone significant evolution in recent years (Gueye, N.F.B., 2018, p.15). These definitions are compiled in Table 5 below.

Table 05. Definition of the concept of commitment

Authors	definition
Johnson, M., (1973), p.396	The term 'commitment' can refer to a strong personal involvement in a decision to maintain the continuity of a course of action (personal commitment), or a connotation of constraint whereby the individual feels compelled to pursue the course of action, regardless of personal involvement (behavioural commitment).
Dwyer et al., (1987), p.12	Commitment results in continued interactions and further investments in the relationship.
Moorman et al., 1992, p.316	A long-lasting desire to maintain a valuable relationship.
Anderson, E., & Weitz, B. (1992), p.19.	The desire to develop a stable relationship, a willingness to make short-term sacrifices to maintain the relationship, and confidence in the stability of the relationship are necessary for a successful relationship.
Cristau (2001)	The firm intention to maintain a lasting relationship reflects the cognitive aspect of enduring loyalty.
Vivek, S.D., Beatty, S.E., Morgan, R. M., 2012, p.124	The concept of consumer Commitment refers to the level of involvement and interaction between an individual and an organization's products or services. This can include both current and potential customers. Commitment can take various forms, including cognitive, affective, behavioural, or emotional.

Source : Adapted from (Johnson, 1973, pp.395-406 ; Dwyer & al., 1987, pp.11-27; Moorman et al., 1992, pp.314-329; Anderson & Weitz, 1992, pp.18-34) ; Haykel et al., 2016, pp.14-43 ; Morgan, R.M. and Hunt, S.D.,1994, pp.20-38).

According to Morgan and Hunt (1994, p.22), commitment in a relational approach refers to the belief that a long-term relationship with a business partner is important enough to warrant maximum effort to maintain it. The committed partner believes that the relationship is worth working to make it last. For the purposes of this study, it is important to consider two types of commitment found in the literature: **calculated commitment**, which refers to situations where the relationship is a necessity for the consumer, and **affective commitment**, which refers to situations where the consumer desires to be in a relationship (Gustaffsson et al., 2006).

Calculated commitment is caused by the possibility of a cost linked to the interruption of the business relationship. This cost may arise when there is no alternative to the business relationship (Gustaffsson et al., 2006). In essence, an individual's commitment to a relationship is based on the significant investment of value and resources. This investment would be greatly reduced if the individual decided to terminate the relationship and pursue a new one.

Affective commitment emerges as a result of emotional feelings between the parties involved (Meyer et al., 1993). It is also the dimension that most strongly influences the consumer's desire to continue a relationship in the future (Roberts et al., 2003).

2-3 Satisfaction / Trust / Commitment

A literature review has shown that previous research on the relationship between satisfaction, trust, and commitment is divergent. Some authors view these three constructs as dimensions of the overall concept of relational quality, measured by calculating an overall index. Others, such as Mimouni and Volle (2003), consider them to be separate and prefer to analyze each concept individually before studying the relationships between the different dimensions. In this study, we align ourselves with the second approach by considering relational quality as a meta-construct. This means that it is a first-order concept composed of different dimensions, which are treated separately and are interrelated.

- Satisfaction / Trust

According to Ganeson (1994), Gronroos (1994/1996), Thorsen-Henning (2002), Garbarino and Johnson (1999), Andaleeb (1996), and Deepack et al. (2002), satisfaction reinforces the perceived security of the firm over time and contributes to the creation of a climate of trust. It is directly linked to expectations.

Geyskens et al. (1999) demonstrated that non-economic satisfaction positively affects trust, primarily due to the service provider's ability to keep promises, credibility, and honesty. Therefore, non-economic satisfaction can be considered an antecedent of trust, particularly through conflict management, which enhances trust levels. Additionally, satisfaction and conflict management contribute to developing trust in the medium term.

On the other hand, service companies aim to develop long-term commitment by satisfying their customers and managing their experience effectively. On the other hand, service companies aim to develop long-term commitment by satisfying their customers and managing their experience effectively. This helps to maintain their trust, create value, and build loyalty.

Selnes (1998) suggests that satisfaction and trust are complementary. Trust is the key variable when decisions are linked to enriching the scope of the relationship, whereas satisfaction is the key variable when the outcome is the continuity of the relationship. The level of trust mainly affects the intensity of the relationship: the higher the level of trust, the stronger and deeper the relationship. The first hypothesis (**H1**) is that satisfaction primarily impacts trust.

- Satisfaction / Commitment

Hennig-Thurau and Klee (1997) propose that relational quality is generally composed of satisfaction and commitment, establishing a direct positive link between these two constructs. The authors suggest that a high level of satisfaction, positively reinforced repeatedly over time, can create a relationship of commitment triggered by emotional bonds. Satisfaction is linked to the fulfilment of consumers' social needs. Repeatedly fulfilling these needs can create emotional bonds that lead to commitment (Hennig-Thurau and Klee 1997; Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner and Gremler 2002).

Some researchers propose that the connection between satisfaction and commitment is not direct, and introduce the concept of trust as a mediating variable in the relationship (Morgan and Hunt 1994). The complexity of the relationships between satisfaction, calculated commitment, and relationship continuity may explain the divergence and contradictions in the results of these studies (**H2 and H3**). If the relationship is no longer satisfactory, both parties will terminate it due to the benefits or value that would be lost from continuing it.

- Trust / Commitment

Morgan and Hunt's (1994) research demonstrates a clear causal relationship between trust and commitment. Andaleeb (1996), Garbarino (1999), Friso (2000), Morgan and Hunt (1994), Geyskens et al. (1996), and Anderson and Weitz (1982) have all explored the impact of trust on commitment, with most presenting it as the ultimate goal of the relationship. Trust primarily affects the relational or affective aspect of commitment (**H4**). Therefore, it enhances the customer's attachment to the company. However (**H5**), it has a lesser impact on the calculated dimension of commitment (Geyskens et al., 1996; Patricia, 2002).

3. Research methodology and measurement scales

This section discusses the selection and description of the study sample, questionnaire construction, and analysis method.

3.1 Choice of sample

To verify our hypotheses and achieve our objectives, we conducted a survey among a representative sample of Sheraton Hotel customers in Oran. Our study aims to determine the significance of satisfaction and trust as relational variables in explaining customer commitment in the hotel sector, specifically at the Sheraton Hotel. The unit of data collection was the hotel customer. The survey was conducted from November 2023 to January 2024. Appointments were made with service providers to collect data from 195 customers, of which

143 responses were received. A non-probability sampling method was used for this research, which involves selecting the most accessible and available individuals.

3.2 Measurement scales

The survey was conducted using a questionnaire. Prior to the survey, a pre-test was administered to Sheraton Hotel customers, who were asked to provide feedback on their understanding of the items and the relevance of their choices. The items utilised in this study were derived from the literature on satisfaction, trust, and commitment. The sources include Covin and Slevin (1989, 1991), Morgan and Hunt (1994), Lumpkin and Dess (2001), Li, Huang, and Tsai (2009), De Clercq et al. (2010), and Engelen et al. (2014). These sources were referenced throughout the questionnaire.

3.3 Analysis methodology

Before testing our hypotheses, we examined the links between the measurement indicators and the constructs, and the links between the different constructs. Following this sequence will reassure us of the reliability and validity of the constructs before moving on to the conclusions on the moderating role of trust and commitment in the relationship Between Satisfaction and Hotel Guest Loyalty (Valenzuela, A.F., Arturo, V.P., 2006, p.18; [Hikkerova, L., et al., 2015, p.3](#)).

Using the PLS (Partial Least Squares) method, the reliability of the items is examined by means of loadings (or simple correlation) of the measurement indicators in accordance with their theoretical constructs. Referring to Chin (1998), "standardised loadings must be greater than 0.70", in other words, there is slightly more variance shared between the construct and its items than between the variance of the errors (Carmines and Zeller, 1979). The PLS method was chosen for two reasons: the latent nature of our theoretical constructs and the small size of our sample.

Table 5. Results of the PLS analysis (reliability).

Construct	items	Loading	Alpha of cronbach (α)	(α) if item deleted	CR	AVE
Trust	Trst1	.782	.874	.820	.827	.895
	Trst2	.717		.843		
	Trst3	.707		.849		
	Trst4	.744		.841		
Satisfaction	Sat1	.653	.815	.773	.724	.745
	Sat2	.697		.756		
	Sat3	.754		.741		
Affective Commitment	Afec1	.658	.863	.796	.766	.855
	Afec2	.789		.725		
	Afec3	.744		.855		
Calculative Commitment	Calc1	.785	.910	.797	.745	.872
	Calc2	.854		.849		
	Calc3	.521		.841		
The overall value of the scale's reliability (α) = 0.706						

For all constructs, all items had a reasonable loading threshold greater than 0.75. Additionally, the unidimensionality and reliability of each construct were validated by a high level of estimated communality (exceeding 0.7) and a high Cronbach's alpha. Initially, a Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.9 was obtained, which may reflect redundancy between items (Peterson, 1995). Following the recommendations of Carricano et al. (2011), we eliminated one item from each variable to ensure a satisfactory alpha. This resulted in the demonstration of the reliability of our constructs in Table 5.

As recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981), we assessed convergent validity using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Table 5 shows that all AVE measures exceed the 0.5 threshold, indicating

acceptable convergent validity for each factor in this model. The constructs share more variance with their respective indicators than with their measurement errors.

Source: Prepared by researchers using SmartPLS 2

We also verified convergent validity using the composite reliability index (Fornell and Larcker 1981) (Table 5). Nunnally (1978) considered a composite reliability threshold of 0.7 to be a record for earlier stages of research (Lance et al., 2006). All constructs in our instrument have composite reliability values above 0.75, indicating very good reliability for the reflective constructs, according to widely accepted standards (Gefen, Straub et al., 2000; Boudreau, Gefen et al., 2001).

The Root AVE index is suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981) as a means of verifying discriminant validity, which is the traditional methodological complement to convergent validity. The square roots of the AVEs are represented by the bold values in the diagonal of the correlation matrix for the latent variables in Table 6. All of these values are greater than the values below the diagonal. This indicates that the connections between the hidden variables are less strong than those between the concepts and their observable variables. As a result, the distinctiveness of our concepts is confirmed, and the measurement indicators only clarify the hidden variables to which they were assigned.

Table 6. Discriminant validity of concepts

Construct	Correlation matrix (AVE)			
	1	2	3	4
Trust	(0.85)			
Satisfaction	0.354	(0.81)		
Affective Commitment	0.398	0.321	(0.88)	
Calculative Commitment	0.342	0.621	0.345	(0.92)

Source: Prepared by researchers using SmartPLS 2.

3.4 Test of hypothesis

Our research hypotheses were tested using a structural equation model. The significance and strength of the structural links between the latent variables in the model correspond to the hypotheses of our research. We used Smart-PLS software to test our conceptual model. The PLS analysis method has recently been widely used (Linan, 2008). To validate or invalidate the hypotheses, we examined the overall significance of the structural links between the constructs.

We also tested the direction, value, and significance level of the causality coefficients (gammas) calculated by the PLS method. The Path coefficient table (gamma J) presents the values of the regression. The coefficients of determination R^2 and the significance of the regression coefficients will also be examined to validate the results using the T-Students. Urbach and Ahlemann (2010) state that T-student values are used to test the significance of causal relationships. In the PLS approach, these values are calculated using the bootstrap procedure. Upon examination of the results, it can be concluded that all regressions are significant at the 5% threshold, as the T-statistic values exceed 1.95. The following table presents the regression coefficients between the latent variables for both the original sample and the bootstrap technique. To ensure clarity in the interpretation of the results, each hypothesis of the model is treated separately.

Table 4. Results of the hypothesis test

research hypothesis	Estim.value (β)	T	R ²	Adjus R2	Hypothesis (True/False)
H1: Satisfaction → Trsut	0.745***	2.454	0.752	0.750	True
H2: Satisfaction → Calculative Commitment	0.685***	2.862	0.689	0.687	True
H3: Satisfaction → Affective Commitment	0.722***	2.604	0.796	0.793	True
H4: Trsut → Affective Commitment	0.852***	2.336	0.823	0.819	True
H5: Trsut → Calculative Commitment	0.739***	2.197	0.742	0.740	True

*** $p < 0.01$; (.) = t value

Source: Prepared by researchers using Spss.29

Firstly, we examined the relationship between satisfaction and confidence, in line with our hypotheses. The results analysis showed a positive and significant relationship between satisfaction and trust ($\beta = 0.745$, $t = 2.454$, $p < 0.01$), confirming the literature's postulation that customer satisfaction is a strong means for companies to increase trust. Therefore, H1 is validated. Secondly, we analysed the impact of two moderating variables on the relationship between satisfaction and commitment. To prepare for the mediating effects analysis, we calculated the interaction between the independent variable (satisfaction) and the moderator variables (trust and commitment). We multiplied the standardised scores for each variable to create two variables representing the interaction effects of the moderator variables (Ping 1995). The study found a positive effect ($\beta = 0.685$ $t = 2.862$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.722$ $t = 2.604$, $p < 0.01$) between the variable commitment (calculated; affective) and the independent variable 'satisfaction', thus accepting hypotheses 2 and 3. The structural model, following the recommendations of Chin (1998), explains 68.9% and 79.6% of the variance of the performance variable, respectively. Furthermore, the Beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.685$; 0.722) indicates that trust in the Sheraton hotel can reduce the impact of 'satisfaction' on customer commitment and may even have negative consequences if not properly managed. Therefore, we confirm the hypothesis that trust mediating the positive correlation between satisfaction and commitment, and that this correlation weakens at higher levels of trust.

However, the results indicate that the interaction between 'satisfaction' and 'commitment' led to an increase in the impact of the 'trust' variable on the affective and calculative commitment

of the surveyed customers. The Beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.852$, $t = 2.336$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.739$, $t = 2.336$, $p < 0.01$) indicates a positive and significant relationship between the product (satisfaction / affective and calculative commitment) and trust, suggesting complementarity between the independent and moderating variables. The regression explains 81.9% and 74.2% of the variance in confidence, respectively. This study confirms the hypothesis that the presence of affective and calculative commitment strengthens the relationship between 'trust' and affective commitment and calculation, thus verifying the moderating effect of satisfaction. This study confirms the hypothesis that the presence of affective and calculative commitment strengthens the relationship between 'trust' and affective commitment and calculation, thus verifying the moderating effect of satisfaction. Hypotheses 4 and 5 are validated.

4. Discussion and managerial implications

The study's results confirm the relationships proposed in the conceptual model, specifically the role of trust as a mediating variable in the satisfaction/affective commitment relationship.

The data collected from our sample of consumers of Sheraton Hotel services suggest that satisfaction, trust, and commitment can be considered components of relational quality in this sector. There is partial mediation between these three constructs, with satisfaction directly influencing affective commitment. However, we must note that our proposals Hypotheses (2) and (5) have been accepted based on our study's results, which demonstrate a significant direct and indirect impact of satisfaction on calculated commitment.

In the initial analysis, we examined the relationships between the variables and discovered that satisfaction has a significant and positive impact on affective commitment, which is consistent with the proposals of Hennig-Thurau and Klee (1997) and Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner and Gremler (2002). Additionally, satisfaction has a positive influence on consumer confidence, indicating that it is a crucial factor in the company/customer relationship. By improving customer satisfaction, hotel operators can establish a climate of trust over time due to the perceived increase in safety (H1). This highlights the significance of satisfaction in building a strong relationship between the customer and the Sheraton Hotel.

However, meeting the social needs of consumers can foster a committed relationship based on emotional ties. It is worth noting that satisfaction does not have a significant impact on calculated commitment (Geyskens, 1998). Initially, we posited that mediation could be complete, meaning that the impact of satisfaction on calculated commitment is entirely transmitted through trust. However, this hypothesis was not supported by a subsequent analysis, which revealed that the mediated effect of trust on calculated commitment is not

particularly significant. Instead, we found evidence of partial mediation, whereby the establishment of a climate of trust also fosters affective commitment, which is explained by the emotional bonds created following the fulfilment of social needs (Morgan and Hunt 1994). Another important remark is the high value of (R²). The variance explained in the relationship between satisfaction, trust, and affective commitment is respectively 0.752, 0.689, and 0.796. This result suggests that affective commitment is highly dependent on its antecedents, satisfaction and trust.

Thus, the impact of satisfaction on affective commitment is more significant through trust. Therefore, the relational quality of the Sheraton Hotel is multidimensional due to the presence of three components: satisfaction, trust, and commitment. The mediating role of trust characterises it, and the company can achieve its customers' affective commitment either directly (satisfaction/affective commitment) or indirectly through trust.

Relationships play a crucial role in determining the success of a hotel. Customers interact directly with the hotel's staff, physical facilities, and technologies. Their experience is influenced by two distinct but complementary factors: the quality of service and the quality of the relationship. Guests who do not receive a warm welcome, friendly service, and quality amenities are less likely to return to the hotel. They will only return for economic reasons or out of obligation. This may explain the results obtained in terms of satisfaction, trust, and calculated commitment. This is especially true for monopolies, whether by region (the only 5-star hotel in the region) or by category (the only one that offers a good price/quality ratio). The significance of affective commitment, as opposed to its calculated counterpart, in the hotel sector suggests that hotels should prioritise the relational aspect of their customer interactions. This can be achieved through measures such as staff training, welcoming gestures, and friendliness, in order to establish a climate of trust. Our study indicates that this is a decisive factor in encouraging customer commitment.

5. CONCLUSION

Our study contributes mainly at the empirical level. We tested a model of relational quality in a 5-star Sheraton hotel in Oran, which has not been previously researched as an application market. The theoretical contribution of our study is the distinction we have made in the establishment of the model's relationships between affective and calculated commitment. This distinction is generally ignored by authors who study commitment as a unidimensional construct. The research findings can assist operators in this sector to develop relationship marketing strategies by prioritising satisfaction as a crucial factor in relationship quality.

Our study has several limitations. Firstly, the sample size is limited and not representative. This prevented us from using more effective analysis methods to evaluate our overall model. Additionally, our research only measured overall consumer satisfaction, whereas literature suggests that a distinction should be made between economic and non-economic satisfaction.

In future investigations, we can consider this distinction by testing the relationship between economic satisfaction and calculated commitment. Another promising avenue of research that seems relevant to the managerial implications is integrating the effect of perceived quality into the relational model.

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7. Appendices

Measurement scales for own research

Trust	Code items	Authors
I'm counting on this hotel to live up to its promises.	Trst1	Crosby et al (1990); Gurvey et al (2002)
It's been a long time since I found this hotel to be insincere.	Trst2	
This hotel is trustworthy	Trst3	
I can rely on this hotel to provide good service	Trst4	
Satisfaction	Sat	
Attention from the staff at this hotel	Sat1	Singh(1990); Geyskens et al., (1996)
The quality of service at this hotel	Sat2	
Responding to complaints	Sat3	
Affective commitment	Afec	
I have an emotional relationship with this hotel.	Afec1	Pederson et al (2001); Gilliland et al (2002)
I am proud to be a guest of this hotel.	Afec2	
I feel like a member of the hotel family	Afec3	
Calculated commitment	Calc	
I will remain a guest of this hotel for as long as it benefits me.	Calc1	Geyskens et al (1996); Pederson et al (2001)
I remain a customer of this hotel because I spend much more if I change it.	Calc2	
I remain a guest of this hotel because it would cost me a lot of time and energy to change it.	Calc3	