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# Aplicação de modelos aos canais de distribuição: o caso do sector automóvel espanhol. Um estudo exploratório

Palavras-chave: Dependência, Poder, Variáveis mediadoras, Satisfação, Variáveis latentes, PLS

## *Applying some models to marketing channels of distribution: the case of the Spanish car industry, an exploratory study*

*Keywords: Dependence, Power, Mediating Variables, Satisfaction, Latent Variables, Partial Least Squares*

### Resumo

Embora os investigadores tenham examinado os temas de Dependência, Poder Coercivo e Não-Coercivo, Conflito, Cooperação e Satisfação, se exceptuarmos os EUA, a indústria automóvel tem prestado pouca atenção ao constructo Satisfação. Baseada em anteriores modelos descritivos dos canais de marketing para a distribuição de carros americanos, esta investigação testa diferentes modelos de distribuição aplicados à indústria automóvel de Espanha. Este artigo é parte integrante de uma investigação mais aprofundada realizada para outros países. Os modelos aqui apresentados baseiam-se em constructos latentes como: Dependência, Poder Coercivo e Não-Coercivo como variáveis independentes; com a Cooperação e Conflito como variáveis intermediárias latentes; e a Satisfação como a variável distal. Os modelos teóricos prévios não testaram as relações directas entre as variáveis latentes proximal e distal, que desenvolvemos aqui (ver modelo 2), e também não testaram a relação entre as variáveis intermediárias latentes Conflito e Cooperação e a transformação do conflito em cooperação. As relações entre

### Abstract

*Although researchers have examined issues of Dependence, Coercive and Non-Coercive power, Conflict, Cooperation, and Satisfaction, little attention has been paid to the Satisfaction construct in settings other than in the US car industry. Based on previous descriptive models of marketing channels for distribution of American cars, this research will test some different distribution models applied to the Spanish car industry. This research is part of a more extensive research made for more other countries. The models presented here are made of independent latent constructs such as; Dependence, Coercive power and Non-Coercive power as independent variables; with cooperation and Conflict as intermediary latent variables; and, Satisfaction as the distal variables. Previous models in the theory did not test the direct relations between proximal and distal latent variables what we do here (see model 2), and as a matter of fact they also do not test the relationship between the intermediary latent variables Conflict and Cooperation and the transformation of conflict in cooperation. Relations between manufacturers and distributors have been the*

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fabricantes e distribuidores têm sido o ponto central da gestão dos canais de distribuição; este estudo abrange os efeitos Coercivo e Não-Coercivo do poder nas variáveis intermediárias, tais como a Cooperação e o Conflito. Também analisará os efeitos da Cooperação e Conflito nos distribuidores americanos em Espanha. Devido ao pequeno número da amostra (46 distribuidores), o modelo baseado na causa levou-nos a usar o método de optimização baseado nas técnicas de regressão PLS de modo a permitir generalizações dos resultados. Esta apresentação testa 2 modelos, o primeiro baseado no modelo teórico (modelo 1) e, o segundo, relacionado com o primeiro mas fundamentado em hipóteses mais pragmáticas. Esta investigação baseada em hipóteses teóricas demonstra que, tendo em conta o tipo de relação escolhida pelo fabricante, o impacto na satisfação do distribuidor será positivo ou negativo.

*center point of the distribution channel's management; this study covers the Coercive, as well as Non-Coercive, effects of power on intermediary variables such as Cooperation and Conflict. It will also analyze the effects of Cooperation and Conflict vis-à-vis the American cars dealers' Satisfaction in Spain. Due to the small sample size (46 dealers), the model based on causal modeling compelled us to use the optimization method based on the partial least squares (PLS) regression techniques coupled with a bootstrapping to enable some generalization of the results. This presentation will test two models, the first one is based on a theoretical model (basis model 1), and, the second one issued from the first model, but based on more pragmatic hypothesis. This research based on theoretical hypothesis demonstrates that taking in account the type of power chosen by the manufacturer, the impact on the dealer satisfaction will be positive or negative.*

## INTRODUCTION

Currently, because of an apparent power shift away from the manufacturer to the dealer the nature of the manufacturer-dealer relationship times become very important within channels of distribution. As a result the negotiating position of dealers becomes more comfortable for, and it improves with their competitive position. This is mainly due to integration tendencies and policies at the dealer's level (mainly for purchasing purposes). Such changes brought improvement of the dealer's negotiation capacity offsetting a significant and sustainable growth of sales by the franchise system (Stern et El Ansary, 1993).

Another significant reason for the power shift between manufacturers and the dealerships is the longevity of the vehicles. Today's cars last twice as long as the ones built 20 years ago, hence the dealers capture a much higher percentage of the total car ownership costs as maintenance, both warranted and subsequent become a more important component of total expenditures. Higher margins lead to better long-term profitability for the dealers and also a more prominent recognition in the customer satisfaction surveys. These dual factors lead, in turn, to a stronger negotiating position for the dealerships.

The levers of negotiating power are inexorably tilting in favour of the distribution channels. In the long run the stronger levers will allow the dealers to extract even more concessions and margins from the manufacturers. One of these concessions may be mixed sales at the dealer level, where even the manufacturers' competitor products could be sold under the same dealership roof to fill the channel. The fact that some manufacturers are losing market share and are designing poor products that do not move fast enough off

dealer's lots will accelerate this trend.

Since 1960 American car companies based in Detroit have experienced good years and bad years. Relations with dealers were based more so on power than on other concepts like quality of products, or on the relentless pursuit of quality and development of technically superior products (Maynard, 2003).

During the most recent years, the American car builders have lost substantial market share to Japanese, Korean and European manufacturers. In 1960, General Motors had 60% of the total automotive market share in North America. Today's market share is barely rated at 40%, and is still decreasing. However, this does not seem to be the Spanish experience where American brands seem to be still appreciated. GM, Ford and Daimler Chrysler are the three American car manufacturers that have building and selling operations in Europe, and more especially in Spain.

In that context, the purpose of this research is to apply a general marketing model to Spanish channels of distribution. This model has been tested before in different settings and is applied in order to analyze the nature of the relationship between the American car manufacturer (GM Opel Chevrolet, Ford and Daimler Chrysler) and its Spanish dealership, with special focus on the dealer's Satisfaction with the manufacturer. The basis model exclusively based on theory (Skinner, S, Gassenheimer, J, Kelley, S, 1992, Gassenheimer, J, Calentone, Schmitz and Robicheaux, 1994, Gassenheimer, J, Baucus, D, Baucus, M, 1996) will be tested and analysed; it will integrate intermediary latent variables and distant variables (Model 1). Based on theory but also on professional advice, a second model with all direct and indirect relations to Satisfaction will also be tested (model 2). This is a particular new

concept of the relations tested in this second model. These two models will be competitive and the R<sup>2</sup> will measure which one of them has the best performance.

Dealer Satisfaction is one of the most important motivations of the product sale, it should be one of the most important concepts of our model and it is the dependent latent variables we wish to explain.

The model will be made up of six latent variables (factors) with their own indicators. The latent variables under analysis are: Dependence, Power sources, Coercive power and Non-Coercive power, Cooperation, Conflict, and Satisfaction. All of these latent variables will be analyzed from the dealer's point of view.

The sample size is very small, out of 400 questionnaires originally sent; only 46 questionnaires were returned properly filled out. For that reason the research should be considered mainly as an exploratory research and not confirmatory. The analysis will be based on a regression of latent variables (or factor variables) using the Partial Least Squares optimisation method.

This study, proposes to test and analyse two conceptual models (Model 1 and an extended Model 2) based on a complete theoretical framework with hypothesis, a complete description of the methodology, an analysis of the results with theoretical and management implications, and conclusions with future research avenues.

**CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Channels of distribution are economic and social systems (Stern et Reve, 1980) managed as super organizations (Stern et El Ansary,

1992), which include Dependence Emerson 1962, Frazier 1983, Gill and 1989, Stern and El Ansary 1993, Skinner, Gasseheimer and Kelley 1992) and the basis of power (Hunt et Nevin 1974 et Gaski 1983, 1984).

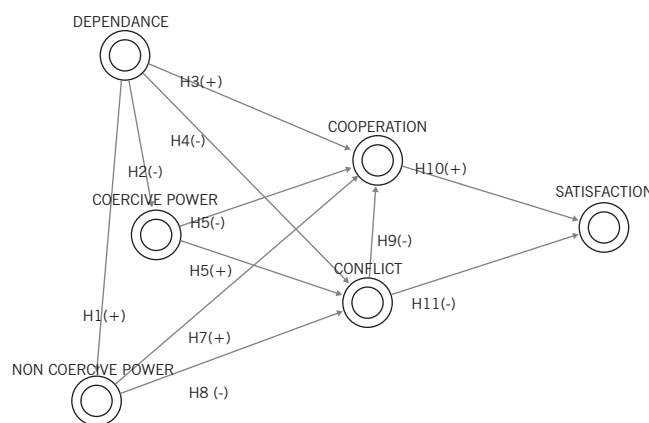
The concepts of Dependence and the basis of power constitute the fundamental structure of the model, which is represented by the nature of the relations between different parts (Andersus et Narus 1984, 1990) that could lead to dealer's Satisfaction (Robicheaux and El Ansary, 1975, Frasier 1983a, 1983b, Andersus and Narus 1984, 1990).

Conflict and Cooperation correspond to dominant feelings, which regulate exchanges between manufacturer and dealer. The first one refers to all moves that impede the dealer to attain the identified objectives, and the second refers to all actions that favour the attainment of these objectives. These concepts are distinct but not necessarily opposed; both of them lead to the inter-dependence of exchanges. They are moderating and intermediate latent variables to Satisfaction (Stern et Reve 1980, Brown 1981, Lusch et Brown 1982).

The Conflict and Satisfaction concepts have been used in many researches (Etgar 1979, Lusch, 1976, Dwyer 1980, Brown and Day 1981, Brown, Lusch and Muehling 1983); some of them like Cooperation and Dependence have received a more discrete attention in the marketing literature. This was a supplementary reason for including them to our model.

Our structural model has six latent variables issued from these concepts, and eleven hypotheses have been generated from the relations of these six factors (H1 to H11 for model 1).  
 Dependence

**Figure 1. Theoretical model (model 1), relations and hypothesis between different latent variables.**



Emerson was the first author to analyze Dependence (1962) leading him to state that in a relation between two parts, the Dependence of B over A increases when A integrates the B's objectives. Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) suggest that Dependence depends on the total resources invested by A and, that allow B to attain its own objectives.

The investment in resources increases the Dependence of B over A. In order to attain its own identified objectives, Frazier, Gill and Kale (1989) determine that dealer's Dependence depends on the necessity and on the will to maintain a relationship with the manufacturer.

When the channel members' objectives are compatible, it results in Cooperation, characterized by high levels of Dependence (Childers and Ruekert 1982, Mohr and Nevin, 1990), the most dependent member trying to preserve the relation (Ross, Lusch and Brown 1982). This effort is called Cooperation. In the case of divergent objectives between members, an open Conflict will result (Robicheaux and El Ansary, 1975 and Frazier et Kale 1990).

Referring to the franchise system as a form of organized interrelation between two businesses, it is absolutely necessary to find convergent objectives between the two companies to maintain the relationship (Spinelly et Burley 1996). The inter-dependence between two companies requires the coordination of tasks between the two parts, with the main objective being the achievement of substantial joint profits.

In the relationship between the two businesses, we analyze some variables such as: the Dependence between the two parts; the sources of power (Non-Coercive and Coercive) and the relation between Non-Coercive power and Dependence; the relation between Dependence and Coercive power; the exercise of power between the manufacturer and the dealer; and, of course, Cooperation, Conflict and Satisfaction observed from the dealer point of view.

We should note some particularities of the Spanish franchised car's system; it is quite different of the North American system of distribution. Spanish dealers and especially those established in big cities like Madrid or Barcelona tend to have multi-product distribution contracts rather than an exclusive distribution contract. This accepted particularity substantially reinforces their power of negotiation with the manufacturer.

Skinner, Gassenheimer and Kelley (1992) have previously tested some of these hypotheses in the farm machinery sector, in the USA. These authors have found that high levels of Dependence lead to high levels of Cooperation and low levels of Conflict.

The first set of hypothesis for this study is stated as follows:

H1: High levels of Non-Coercive power will positively influence the level of Dependence (+).

H2: High levels of Dependence will negatively influence the level of Coercive power (-).

H3: High levels of Dependence will positively influence the level of cooperation (+).

H4: High levels of Dependence will negatively influence the level of Conflict (-).

### Foundations of power

The powers under scrutiny in this section are those, which characterize the relation between the two parts: the gratification power; the legitimacy power; the reference power; and, the expertise power (Scheer et Stern, 1992). In accordance with previous research studies (Lusch, 1977, Michie 1978, Lusch and Brown 1982) the foundations of power have been split into Coercive power, on the one hand, and, Non-Coercive power on the other. Any increase of the Coercive power may have a positive influence on the level of Conflict between the two parts, and a negative influence on the level of Cooperation. Accordingly, any increase of the Non-Coercive power has a positive influence on the level of Cooperation and a negative influence on the level of Conflict.

### We can state the second set of hypotheses:

H5: High levels of Coercive power will negatively influence the level of cooperation (-).

H6: High levels of Non-Coercive power will positively influence the level of cooperation (+)

H7: High levels of Coercive power will positively influence the level of Conflict (+).

H8: High levels of Non-Coercive power will negatively influence the level of Conflict (-).

### Cooperation and Conflict

Cooperation refers to similar or complementary coordinated actions made by companies having interdependent relations characterized by reciprocal expectations (Anderson and Narus, 1990). Cooperation is an essential component of the distribution channels (Frazier and Rody, 1991), as all parts should know how to develop and maintain good Cooperation for a mutually satisfactory long-term relationship. In our view, this concept seems very important since continuous research has not analyzed it in

depth, preferring to study Conflict or power. Skinner et al (1992) seem to say that many research studies present Cooperation as a form of Satisfaction (Anderson and Narus 1990) or as the inverse of Conflict (Gattorna 1978). Some authors consider Cooperation and Conflict as the two inverted poles of the same concept, which should then be considered an identification error. They are two different concepts (Anderson and Narus, 1984) arising from the interdependent nature of the two parts, which can co-exist both of them in the relationship.

Frazier (1983a, 1983b) says that Conflict could lead to Cooperation when the objectives of the channel members become more compatible. This situation is particularly suitable to the Spanish market as, we mentioned before, some Spanish dealers are being able to run a multi-product distribution franchise.

When different parts have incoherent objectives, the relation will lead to reducing collaboration and to direct Conflict (Mohr and Nevin 1990). In the long run, it should be possible for a process of positive feed-back to result in less intensive Conflict allowing some Cooperation activities between parts.

The next hypothesis will be stated:

H9: High levels of Conflict will negatively influence the level of cooperation (-).

A Conflict exists when one part thinks that the other part does not permit it to attain its own objectives (Etgar 1979, Stern and El Ansary 1993). Nichols, Roslow and Laskey (1993) were first to describe the affective Conflicts and the manifest Conflicts, with the latter, being more dysfunctional than the first (Anderson and Weitz, 1992 and Morgan and Hunt 1994). The affective Conflict is more functional and even more necessary since a relationship without it would lack of vitality and Cooperation could be jeopardized.

Conflict can become a source of renewal and re-sourcing that could facilitate the development of a greater confidence, increased stability and better communication and Satisfaction (Weitz and Jap 1995). So the functional Conflict could become a source of a marketing productivity increase and lead to a more efficient structure of the distribution channel.

### Satisfaction

Satisfaction is a positive affective satisfactory state reached by the unity of the distribution channel. It is the enhanced value of all aspects of work done with another business (Gaski and Nevin 1985, Frazier, Gill and Kale 1989), and constitutes a key variable in the exchange relationship between two or more companies

(Dwyer, 1980, Stern and Reve 1980, Frazier, 1983). Satisfaction affects the morale of the channel members, so it is necessary that different parts get together to preserve the long- term relationship (Churchill and Ruekert 1984, and Dwyer 1980).

This research will study economic and social Satisfaction without making any distinction (same latent variable or same factor). The economic Satisfaction will emphasize in all the economic aspects of the relationship (Gassenheimer, Calantone and Robicheaux 1994, Mohr and Spekman 1994 and Heyskens and Steenkamp 2000). Social Satisfaction will put more emphasis on the social and personal aspects of the relationship and could be understood as the positive affective response to the psychological aspects of the relationship, which is, what a satisfied member appreciates: contacts with the other part, and thinking that the other part will be ready to exchange ideas (Geyskens, Steenkamp and Kumar 1999 (Geyskens et al 2000, de Ruyter et al 2001, Coote et al 2003).

H10: High levels of Cooperation have a positive impact on the level of Satisfaction (+).

H11: High levels of Conflict have a negative impact on the level of Satisfaction (-).

## METHODOLOGY

### Data sample

This research has been carried out among 46 car dealers in Spain, for General Motors and Opel, Ford and Daimler Chrysler brands during the period ranging from September 2004 to January 2005.

The questionnaire was divided in eight sections, each representing a factor or a concept (also called a factor or a latent variable). Four indicators represent the latent variable Dependence: Dgaran, Dmontant, Ddispon, Dmoment. Four indicators also represent the Coercive power construct: Pcviedi, Pcdedis, Pcmenac, Pcretir. Four items also represent the Non-Coercive power factor: Pnobligh, Pnconfi, Pnadmir, Pnfavor; four items represent cooperation: Coopcon, Coopbut, Cooppro, Coopsou; nine items represent Conflict: Confgar, Confgrab, Confffin, Consto, Confdis, Confqua, Confcou, Confpri, Confdec and eight indicators represent Satisfaction: Saticom, Satidel, Satiser, Satirec, Satipri, Satipos, Saticam, Satiniv.

The elaboration of the questionnaire and the item identification were based on many previous research studies, such as: Lambert (1978), Skinner, Gassenheimer and Kelley (1992), Baucus et al (1996), Geykens and Steenkamp (2000).

More specifically the 'power items' measures (Coercive and Non-Coercive) drew their inspiration from the investigation made by Skinner, Gassenheimer and Kelley (1992), while the Cooperation measures drew from Childers, Ruekert, Boush (1984), and the Conflict measures from Brown and Day (1981).

400 Spanish dealers selling American car models have been selected in our sample and contacted. Questionnaires have been sent out by mail, but also by e-mail, internet, telephone and in many cases by personal approach. From 400 questionnaires sent, 46 were properly fulfilled and returned; the return rate is 11.5%.

### The measurement model (Outer model)

The sample size figures are small (46) yielding a response rate of 11.5%, which is not very high. The number of items is 33. To comply with measurement stability, ten data by item are required (McDonald 1985). For this reason it should be impossible to use an optimisation method based on Structural Equation Modelling. Nevertheless we can use a non-parametric method of causal

modelling (Barclay, Higgins, Thompson 1995) that allows us to evaluate the predictive strength of a model, according the technique of the Partial Least Squares.

This method, based on the regression of latent variables, does not have the same pre-requisites for the sample size, the normality of data or for the scales' validation. The PLS method is more oriented to the model predictability (W. W. Chin 1998, 1999, 2003). The estimates' stability will be measured by the Student T statistic, issued from a bootstrapping made over 500 random samples (Arbuckle 1991).

In this section as well as the next, we will introduce the descriptive analysis of all items for each factor, the validity and the reliability of the measurement model (or Outer model in PLS, Chin 1994), the analysis of the structural model (Inner Model, Chin 1994) and the relations between factors.

Table 2 presents a descriptive analysis of all items and factors for each North American manufacturer distributing its products in Spain.

**Table 1. Sample size for each North American manufacturer in Spain.**

Manufacturer	Number of dealers
Ford España	16
Opel, General Motors España	15
Chrysler España	15
Total	46

**Table 2. Averages for latent variables and items in the model for each American car manufacturer in Spain.**

Latent variables and items	Ford (Average from 0 to 6) N=16	GM, Opel (Average from 0 to 6) N=15	Daimler Chrysler (Average from 0 to 6) N=15	Total (Average from 0 to 6). N=46
<b>DEPENDENCE</b>	<b>4.66</b>	<b>4.76</b>	<b>4.58</b>	<b>4.67</b>
Dgarant	5.13	5.07	5.00	5.07
Dmontan	4.13	4.53	4.07	4.24
Ddispon	4.69	4.80	4.80	4.76
dmoment	4.69	4.67	4.47	4.61
<b>COERCIVE POWER</b>	<b>3.07</b>	<b>2.63</b>	<b>2.55</b>	<b>2.76</b>
Pcviedi	4.12	3.93	3.27	3.78
Pcdecis	3.56	3.20	3.53	3.43
Pcmenac	2.31	1.27	1.47	1.70
Pcretir	2.31	2.13	1.93	2.13
<b>NON-COERCIVE POWER</b>	<b>4.53</b>	<b>4.98</b>	<b>4.49</b>	<b>4.67</b>
Pnobligh	3.62	5.53	4.40	4.50
Pnconfi	4.81	4.80	4.93	4.85
Pnadmir	4.44	4.33	4.33	4.37
Pnfavor	5.25	5.27	4.33	4.96
<b>COOPÉRATION</b>	<b>4.92</b>	<b>4.81</b>	<b>3.96</b>	<b>4.57</b>
Coopcon	5.13	4.67	4.00	4.61
Coopbut	5.31	4.93	4.40	4.89
Coopro	4.44	4.67	3.07	4.07
Coopsou	4.81	5.00	4.40	4.74
<b>CONFLICT</b>	<b>2.93</b>	<b>2.57</b>	<b>2.72</b>	<b>2.74</b>
Confgar	2.87	2.47	2.80	2.72
Conrab	2.81	2.60	2.73	2.72
Conffin	2.88	1.87	2.53	2.43
Confsto	3.25	2.87	2.73	2.96
Confdis	3.06	2.13	2.60	2.61
Confqua	3.12	2.67	2.80	2.87
Confcou	2.88	2.73	2.73	2.78
Confpri	2.44	3.07	2.67	2.72
Confdec	3.06	2.80	2.93	2.93
<b>SATISFACTION</b>	<b>4.56</b>	<b>4.61</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>4.44</b>
Saticom	5.31	5.20	5.00	5.17
Satidel	4.25	4.47	4.27	4.33
Satiser	4.50	4.73	4.20	4.48
Satirec	4.94	5.07	4.27	4.76
Satipri	4.75	4.67	3.60	4.35
Satipos	4.94	4.67	4.40	4.67
Saticam	4.31	3.93	4.00	4.09
Satiniv	3.50	4.20	3.40	3.70

### 1) Block analysis

This section will introduce the details of the convergent validity, the instrument reliability, and the discriminant reliability, which are essential to the model analysis.

#### Convergent validity and reliability of measures

The individual reliability for each item is given by loadings or correlations between the item and the factor ( $\lambda$ ). The convergent

validity of each factor is acceptable for a loading  $> 0.55$  (Falk and Miller 1992), only the items complying with this prerequisite have been incorporated.

The bootstrapping method has been used to test the significance of the path coefficients. To be significant the Student T measure should be  $> 1.96$  or  $< -1.96$  ( $\Pr(1-\alpha) < \text{or} = \text{to } 0.05$ ).

**Table 3. Item's loadings for each factor and T of Student.**

Construct / Item	Loading ( $\lambda$ )	T of Student
<b>DEPENDENCE</b>		
Dgarant	0.6842	1.3493
Dmontan	0.8201	4.9078
Ddispon	-	-
dmoment	0.6788	2.2142
<b>COERCIVE POWER</b>		
Pcviedi	0.8560	3.0690
Pcdecis	0.8281	2.7500
Pcmenac	-	-
Pcretir	-	-
<b>NON-COERCIVE POWER</b>		
Pnoblíg	-	-
Pnconfi	0.8304	1.6474
Pnadmir	0.8984	11.1070
Pnfavor	0.5611	4.5999
<b>COOPÉRATION</b>		
Coopcon	0.8560	11.5585
Coopbut	-	-
Coopro	0.3925	2.0542
Coopsou	0.9169	7.3486
<b>CONFLICT</b>		
Confgar	0.5912	1.9689
Conrab	-	-
Conffin	-	-
Confsto	0.7993	3.2885
Confdis	0.7684	1.8755
Confqua	0.7815	3.4810
Confcou	0.7242	1.0920
Confpri	-	-
Confdec	-	-
<b>SATISFACTION</b>		
Saticom	0.7974	7.9185
Satidel	-	-
Satiser	0.8223	7.6121
Satirec	0.8706	9.9834
Satipri	0.8505	8.6026
Satipos	0.8908	8.6514
Saticam	0.8037	1.6755
Satiniv	0.7168	7.9523

Student T's have been calculated after computing a bootstrap in order to validate all the model's items (Chin and Newsted 1999, Chin and Frye 2004), all referred items are significant for a probability  $Pr(1-\alpha) < \text{or} = \text{to } 0.05$ . The reliability allows measuring internal coherency of all indicators in relation with the factor; it is determined by the measure of Composite Reliability ( $\rho_c$ ) for which 0.7 should be an acceptable

threshold (Nunnally 1978).

The convergent validity represents the common variance between the indicators and their factor, it is measured by the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and the acceptable threshold should be superior to 50% (Fornell and Larcker 1981, Chin 2000, 2003, Vinzi 2003).

**Table 4. Composite reliability and convergent validity of factors according the AVE.**

Latent Variable	Factor composite reliability ( $\rho_c$ )	AVE
DEPENDENCE	0.754	0.513
COERCIVE POWER	0.834	0.716
NON-COERCIVE POWER	0.815	0.598
COOPERATION	0.827	0.624
CONFLICT	0.869	0.574
SATISFACTION	0.893	0.550

**Discriminant validity**

To evaluate any presence of discriminant validity among factors, it is necessary that the AVE square root be superior to the correlation

between factors (Fornell and Larker 1981). The next table shows correlations (between factors) and in diagonal the square roots of the AVE.

**Table 5. Measures of discriminant validity for Latent variables.**

	Dependence	Coercive power	Non-Coercive power	Cooperation	Conflict	Satisfaction
Dependence	0.716					
Coercive power	-0.108	0.846				
Non-Coercive power	0.587	-0.112	0.773			
Cooperation	0.477	-0.184	0.753	0.789		
Conflict	-0.116	0.308	-0.232	-0.169	0.757	
Satisfaction	0.671	-0.228	0.820	0.762	-0.337	0.741

**2) Structural model predictive capability of model 1**

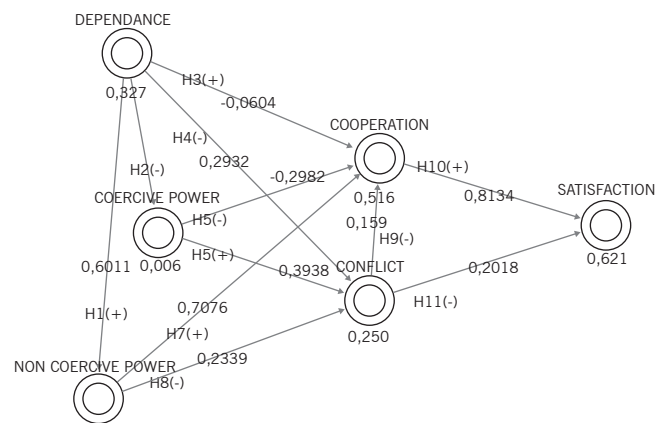
Once the validities and the composite reliability analyzed, the structural model could be tested with the analysis of betas (b) and with the explained variance (R2) of each endogen factor

(Fornell and Cha 1994). The measure of the Average Redundancy explains the prediction capability of exogenous manifest variables on endogenous latent variables (forecasting the endogenous latent variables from exogenous manifest variables).

**Table 6. Explained Variance for each factor (R<sup>2</sup>) and average redundancy for Model 1.**

Endogen Factor	R <sup>2</sup>	Average Redundancy
DEPENDENCE	0.327	0.1756
COERCIVE POWER	0.006	0.0044
COOPERATION	0.616	0.3844
CONFLICT	0.250	0.1431
SATISFACTION	0.621	0.3419

**Figure 2. Regression coefficients (based on a bootstrapping) and Explained Variance for each factor (R<sup>2</sup>) of Model 1.**



### 3) Findings and discussion

#### Descriptive analysis

The descriptive analysis suggests that Dependence is stronger amongst General Motors dealers (4.76 over 6 for an average of 4.67) vis-à-vis other dealers (4.66 for Ford, and 4.58 for Daimler Chrysler). This means, that GM invests enough resources, and helps its dealers to attain their objectives to the extent that it automatically results in a substantial increase in Cooperation (Childers et Ruekert 1982 et Mohr et Nevin 1990). This also accounts for a good level of Cooperation between GM and its dealers (4.81 over 6 for an average of 4.57, Ford outpaced GM in this chapter with 4.92 over 6) and the lower level of Conflict (2.57 over 6 with an average of 2.74). GM wants to keep Conflict under sustainable control, and invests in such factors permitting it to develop Cooperation. When manufacturers help dealers to attain their objectives, they create Dependence, increase Cooperation, lower Conflict and ensure dealer's Satisfaction.

Ford should invest more resources to increase the Dependence level of its dealers (and use less Coercive power, 3.07 over 6 for an average of 2.76). Ford should consider putting some more emphasis on the long-term stability of relations (4.66 over 6 for 4.67 average). The level of Dependence is the lowest for Daimler Chrysler (4.58 over 6 for an average of 4.67).

The Coercive power is the lowest at Daimler Chrysler, and at GM (2.55 and 2.63 respectively over 6, with an average of 2.76). This suggests that DC and GM have a non-authoritarian relationship with their dealers, and leads to indications of fair consultation. A strong Coercive power approach affects the manufacturer-dealer relationship, and, irremediably leads to a power struggle resulting in a dysfunctional Conflict. Coercive power is more used by Ford (3.07 over 6 for an average of 2.76, DC 2.55, and GM 2.63). GM prefers using the expert, the reference, the gratification and the legitimate power (Non-Coercive power) at a higher level (4.98 over 6 for an average of 4.67) compared to Daimler Chrysler (4.49 over 6), or Ford (4.53 over 6).

The dealer's Conflict level handicaps Ford (2.93 over 6) and DC (2.72 for an average of 2.74), in comparison with GM (2.57). GM has the highest rate of Satisfaction (4.61 over 6, global average of 4.44). GM has a strategy that is clear and very focused: a high dealer's level of Dependence coupled with a high level of Non-Coercive power leads to a high level of Cooperation. Conversely, a very low level of Conflict has a substantial impact on Satisfaction.

Ford has a level of Dependence close to the average. It strongly uses Coercive power and practically does not make use of the Non-Coercive power (inferior to the average). Furthermore, Ford has a very high level of Conflict (superior to the average) but has an average level of Satisfaction.

Daimler Chrysler is a very interesting case, because its dealers' level of Dependence is the lowest. As well as it has the lowest level of Coercive power, an average level of Conflict, and the lowest level of Satisfaction.

This manufacturer does not seem to have a strong market position in the Spanish car market; its market share has to be consolidated.

All of this confirms that a higher level of Coercive power used by the manufacturer could lead (but not necessary) to a higher level of manufacturer-dealer Conflict. This Conflict could be functional if it starts up some form of Cooperation or completely dysfunctional if it does not.

## HYPOTHESIS TESTING AND DISCUSSION

This model is stable and positively responds to all accepted criteria of composite reliability, convergent and discriminant validity.

According to the bootstrapping parameters and their T of Student value, the hypothesis H1, H5 to H7 and H10 are significant for a  $Pr < 0.05$ , H9 and H11 are significant for a  $Pr < 0.10$ , H2, H3 and H4 are non significant and rejected.

The predictive capability of the model is satisfactory, because all  $R^2$  are  $> 0.10$  (Falk and Miller 1992); 0.327 for Dependence, (Coercive power is not significant as a dependent latent variable  $R^2=0.006$ ); 0.616 for Cooperation; 0.250 for Conflict; and, 0.621 for Satisfaction (see table 6). The Average Redundancy (impact of the manifest exogenous variables on the endogenous factors, Fornell and Cha, 1994) is also satisfactory (but not significant for the Coercive power 0.0044).

### Testing Alternative Model 2

Based on the Model 1, Model 2 deals with almost the exact the same factors and observed variables as were observed in Model 1., The difference being that factors Cooperation and Conflict are not exclusively moderating latent variables any more, and, the factors Dependence, Coercive power and Non-Coercive power have

**Table 7. Test of Model 1 hypothesis, regression coefficients and tests of hypothesis (bootstrapping).**

HYPOTHESIS	Regression coefficients ( $\beta_{\text{bootstrap}}$ )	T of Student (bootstrap)	Significance
H1. Non-Coercive power $\rightarrow$ Dependence	0.6011	5.369	Significant for $Pr (1-\alpha) < 0.05$
H2. Dependence $\rightarrow$ Coercive power	-0.1878	0.422	Non Significant for $Pr (1-\alpha) < 0.05$
H3. Dependence $\rightarrow$ Cooperation	-0.064	0.935	Non Significant for $Pr (1-\alpha) < 0.05$
H4. Dependence $\rightarrow$ Conflict	-0.293	0.841	Non Significant for $Pr (1-\alpha) < 0.05$
H5. Coercive power $\rightarrow$ Cooperation	-0.248	2.353	Significant for $Pr (1-\alpha) < 0.05$
H6. Coercive power $\rightarrow$ Conflict	0.393	2.417	Significant for $Pr (1-\alpha) < 0.05$
H7. Non-Coercive power $\rightarrow$ Cooperation	0.787	7.732	Significant for $Pr (1-\alpha) < 0.05$
H8. Non-Coercive power $\rightarrow$ Conflict	0.234	0.208	Non Significant for $Pr (1-\alpha) < 0.05$
H9. Conflict $\rightarrow$ Cooperation	0.199	1.526	Significant for $Pr (1-\alpha) < 0.10$
H10. Cooperation $\rightarrow$ Satisfaction	0.813	11.900	Significant for $Pr (1-\alpha) < 0.05$
H11. Conflict $\rightarrow$ Satisfaction	-0.218	1.881	Significant for $Pr (1-\alpha) < 0.10$

a direct impact on Satisfaction as well (Figure 3). Based on these premises we can state the next set of hypothesis:

H12: High levels of Dependence have a positive impact on the level of Satisfaction (+).

H13: High levels of non- Coercive power have a positive impact on the level of Satisfaction (+).

H14: High levels of Coercive power have a negative impact on the level of Satisfaction (-).

The new Model 2 sets the new three hypotheses and tests them as well as the hypotheses H1 to H11. The major difference between Model 1 and Model 2 is mainly due to the Explained Variance of the Satisfaction factor in Model 2, which equals 0.781 (in comparison with 0.621 for Model 1). The direct impact of Dependence, Coercive power and Non-Coercive power factors on Satisfaction seriously improved over Model 1.

Hypothesis H10, H11, and the new three ones H12, H13 and H14 have strongly modified the initial model. The impact of Cooperation on Satisfaction has diminished (Table 9), the impact of Conflict on Satisfaction is not significant any more, and the new three hypotheses H12 to H14 are significant for  $Pr(1-\alpha) < 0.05$  or 0.10.

This situation forced us to re-specify Model 2 and eliminate all the non- significant relations between the factors.

### Re-specification and test of the final model

The re-specified Model 2 has been re-designed without non-significant relationships. This is a better performing model

(Satisfaction  $R^2 = 0.781$ ) where all relationships are significant for  $Pr(1-\alpha) < 0.05$  but H9 which is significant for  $Pr(1-\alpha) < 0.10$ . This model is quite interesting because we can find two sub-models in it, one based on Coercive power-Conflict-Cooperation and Satisfaction factors; and, the other one based on Non-Coercive power- Dependence - Satisfaction and Non-Coercive power Cooperation- Satisfaction and Non-Coercive power- Satisfaction.

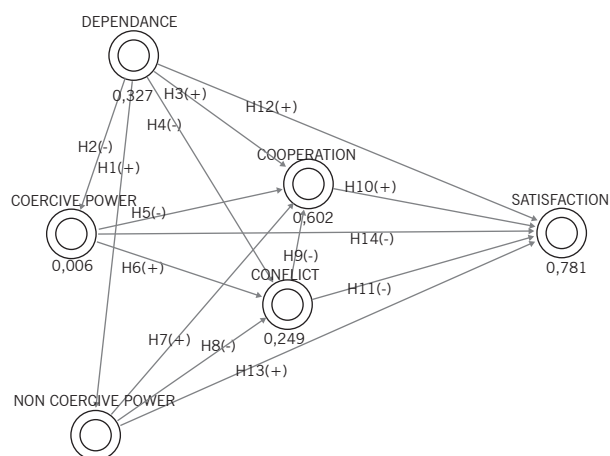
This model seems very powerful and better explains the relations between the dealers and the manufacturer of the American cars in the particular Spanish market.

### Theoretical implications

From a dealer point of view, Model 2 based on theory, but also on professional advice, seems clearly superior to model 1 for measuring and predicting satisfaction in marketing channels of distribution for American cars in Spain.  $R^2$  are clearly more significant for model 2 (0,781) than for model 1 (0,621), which means superior predictability, this is mainly due to direct relations between the proximal latent variables and the distal latent variables.

Generally, there is a significant positive relationship between Non-Coercive power and Dependence (H1), as well as a negative relationship between Dependence and Coercive power (Emerson 1962) (H2). When the channel actor's objectives are convergent, the Dependence level with the manufacturer increases (Mohr and Nevin 1990), and the dependent member (in this case the dealer) will invest much more to preserve the relationship (Frazier, Gill and Kale 1989). This will increase the dealer's Satisfaction (H12).

Figure 3. Regression coefficients and Explained Variance for each factor ( $R^2$ ) of Model 2.



**Table 8. Explained Variance for each factor (R<sup>2</sup>) and average redundancy For Model 2.**

Endogen Factor	R <sup>2</sup>	Average Redundancy
DEPENDENCE	0.327	0.1762
COERCIVE POWER	0.006	0.0042
COOPERATION	0.602	0.3746
CONFLICT	0.249	0.1428
SATISFACTION	0.781	0.4309

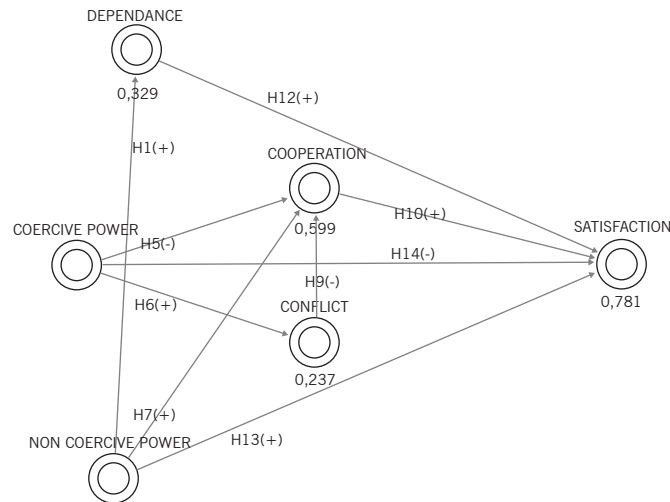
**Table 9. Test of Model 2, regression coefficients and tests of hypothesis (by bootstrapping).**

HYPOTHESIS	Regression coefficients ( $\beta$ bootstrap)	T of Student (bootstrap)	Significance
H1. Non-Coercive power → Dependence	0.6021	5.458	Significant for Pr (1-alpha) <0.05
H2. Dependence → Coercive power	-0.1874	0.451	Non Significant for Pr (1-alpha) <0.05
H3. Dependence → Cooperation	-0.064	0.943	Non significant for Pr (1-alpha) <0.05
H4. Dependence → Conflict	-0.275	0.778	Non significant for Pr (1-alpha) <0.05
H5. Coercive power → Cooperation	-0.256	2.367	Significant for Pr (1-alpha) <0.05
H6. Coercive power → Conflict	0.398	2.466	Significant for Pr (1-alpha) <0.05
H7. Non-Coercive power → Cooperation	0.776	7.502	Significant for Pr (1-alpha) <0.05
H8. Non-Coercive power → Conflict	0.212	0.147	Non Significant for Pr (1-alpha) <0.05
H9. Conflict → Cooperation	0.207	1.492	Significant for Pr (1-alpha) <0.10
H10. Cooperation → Satisfaction	0.374	2.434	Significant for Pr (1-alpha) <0.05
H11. Conflict → Satisfaction	-0.031	0.414	Non significant for Pr (1-alpha) <0.05
H12. Dependence → Satisfaction	0.286	2.260	Significant for Pr (1-alpha) <0.05
H13. Non-Coercive power → Satisfaction	0.322	1.835	Significant for Pr (1-alpha) <0.10
H14. Coercive power → Satisfaction	-0.155	1.822	Significant for Pr (1-alpha) <0.10

**Table 10. Explained Variance for each factor (R<sup>2</sup>) and average redundancy for the re-specified Model 2.**

Endogen Factor	R <sup>2</sup>	Average Redundancy
DEPENDENCE	0.327	0.1776
COOPERATION	0.602	0.3721
CONFLICT	0.249	0.1355
SATISFACTION	0.781	0.4311

**Figure 4. Regression coefficients and Explained Variance for each factor (R2) of the final re-specified Model 2.**



**Table 11. Re- specified Model 2, regression coefficients and tests of hypothesis (bootstrapping).**

HYPOTHESIS	Regression coefficients ( $\beta$ bootstrap)	T of Student (bootstrap)	Significance
H1. Non-Coercive power $\rightarrow$ Dependence	0.606	5.870	Significant for Pr (1-alpha) <0.05
H5. Coercive power $\rightarrow$ Cooperation	-0.272	2.278	Significant for Pr (1-alpha) <0.05
H6. Coercive power $\rightarrow$ Conflict	0.452	2.728	Significant for Pr (1-alpha) <0.05
H7. Non-Coercive power $\rightarrow$ Cooperation	0.726	7.958	Significant for Pr (1-alpha) <0.05
H9. Conflict $\rightarrow$ Cooperation	0.228	1.637	Significant for Pr (1-alpha) <0.10
H10. Cooperation $\rightarrow$ Satisfaction	0.374	2.814	Significant for Pr (1-alpha) <0.05
H12. Dependence $\rightarrow$ Satisfaction	0.312	2.711	Significant for Pr (1-alpha) <0.05
H13. Non-Coercive power $\rightarrow$ Satisfaction	0.303	2.040	Significant for Pr (1-alpha) <0.05
H14. Coercive power $\rightarrow$ Satisfaction	-0.165	2.394	Significant for Pr (1-alpha) <0.05

The dealer's degree of Dependence lowers the Conflict level of the relationship (H2).

Exclusive agreements signed with the manufacturer have important consequences on the relationship; they directly affect the dealer's Satisfaction. Non- exclusive agreements give a strong bargaining power to the dealers. These agreements involve a large number of factors of the relationship (the dealer's degree of involvement, specific investments to be made, development of strict manufacturer-dealer norms) that imply the dealer Cooperation and which affect its Satisfaction.

These agreements mean, a higher involvement from the dealer, a higher Dependence towards suppliers (in this case the manufacturer), and the difficulty for the manufacturer to develop an opportunistic behaviour in an asymmetric unbalanced power relationship.

Some Dependence strategies that showed improved results, for instance, the harmonization of advertising norms at GM, where interested dealers make their own commercials according to the national campaigns standards designed by GM.

The efforts made for preserving the relationship and lessening the sources of Conflict, will generate specific joint actions that appear to be a form of Cooperation (H1). The relation between manufacturer attitude and dealer Satisfaction seems clear: the more positive and cooperative the manufacturer's attitude, the more satisfied the dealer will be (Dwyer 1980). Cooperative behavior will lead to better performance and results, and to the dealer's Satisfaction (H10). The Coercive basis of power lessens Cooperation (H5), increases Conflict (H6) and lowers Satisfaction (H14). Some clauses in the franchise agreement, such as vertical restrictions, can change the interest, the motivation and the preferences in the relationship. This could mean important changes in the relationship structure, and in the business process between the actors.

Normally there should not be a significant relation between Conflict and Cooperation (H9) (and it should be negative). We thought that a dysfunctional Conflict between parts would lead to a certain form of problem resolution, and to a relationship based on wisdom, generating problem solving, and leading to a long term form of Cooperation. For its part Conflict will have a negative impact on the dealers' Satisfaction (H11). The Non-Coercive power seen as reference and legitimate power should have a positive and significant impact in the dealer's Satisfaction (H13).

### Management implications

It is important to mention, that among the three American manufacturers, GM seems to have a clear policy of Conflicts' reduction that is, clearly different from the two other manufacturers. Conflict sources on important issues are set to a minimum, as for example, the costs billed to dealers, the products' prices, the design of inventories and the purchases' financing.

Daimler Chrysler does not seem to succeed as well as seen with the example of the number of units ordered by dealers. This leads us to think that the manufacturer could force the dealer to order a minimum of units by contract (and put pressure on dealers to sell out products).

Globally at the beginning of the eighties, GM (Opel and Chevrolet) began a process of change, based on improved relations with dealers, extending the span of life for contracts, improving the discounts on warranties, cancelling threats of contract termination, and negotiating realistic sales objectives with dealers, etc.... GM (Opel) continues to give some freedom to dealers and, particularly in the order of brand new models, new pieces, accessories, etc. In some European countries and particularly in Spain, GM allowed them to make their own local advertising campaigns and helped in relocating and closing businesses. It also took measures for

improving its dealers' economic and competitive positioning.

In the years to come, manufacturers will have to face some challenges. Competition will force them to promote their brand competitive force with technological development of their products (ability to launch new models before their competitors do, constant decrease of costs, technological development, increase in productivity, etc...). This brand competitive force could become dangerous and have a negative dynamic incidence in strengthening the Dependence with the manufacturer. The greater Dependence could have a negative impact on the dealer Satisfaction (Li and Dant, 1997) particularly if the relationship becomes more Coercive, less liberal, more asymmetric and less balanced.

Such a situation could occur for Chrysler and Ford. The manufacturers could work to decrease specific Conflicts and put in place a bilateral government of the relationship without pressure strategies or Coercive measures. A greater level of Cooperation should lead to confidence, the pursuit of more long-term relationships, and a fair share of losses and profits within a relationship of exchange (Li and Dant, 1997).

Coercive power could generate significant Conflict; this Conflict if it is clearly dysfunctional, could diminish the dealer Satisfaction, or lead to specific joint action that could be interpreted, as a form of Cooperation.

To promote Satisfaction among dealers, manufacturers will have the choice to adopt Non-Coercive measures to increase Dependence, Cooperation and Satisfaction. Manufacturers can choose to increase Coercive power and Cooperation through Conflict, the Conflict could be dysfunctional at the beginning but with time and the convergence of interests some actions will be taken and Conflicts will become more functional and lead to some form of cooperation. This Cooperation has a significant impact on the dealer's Satisfaction, but it is our understanding that the higher impact from Cooperation to Satisfaction comes directly from Non-Coercive power.

### CONCLUSION

This study has a number of important implications to researchers and managers alike. Following the recommendations of Skinner, Gassenheimer and Kelley (1992), the model has been successfully tested in another major franchise market other than the Spanish one. The research addresses the concerns of Anderson and Narus (1984, 1990) regarding the moderating variables of Conflict and Cooperation.

These moderating variables have a substantial impact on the dealer's Satisfaction and it is clear that non-Coercive power and Dependence lead to Cooperation, but the Coercive power can also lead to Cooperation as was found in this Spanish case. This point has been clearly highlighted by GM Spain. A good feedback with clear written rules and a continued collaboration should lead to Cooperation in the franchise car channels.

The use of deliberately abusing rules (Coercive power) by the manufacturer could lead to Conflict and to a very negative feeling with decrease in Satisfaction by the same token.

There are some limitations to this study; first of all there is a methodological limitation due to the small sample size (46 dealers) and to the difficulty of obtaining data. For this reason we used the PLS optimization method, more oriented to the prediction than on the indicators stability (Barclay, Higgins, Thompson. 1995, Chin, W.W. 1998).

The second limitation pertains to the fact that the research only involved American car manufacturers in Spain, not European or even Japanese. Future research should expand to include other major manufacturers, not just North American but also European and Asian.

Future research should make comparisons and highlight differences between all manufacturers, and have this model also analyzed from the manufacturer's point of view.

## Future research

The modeling approach we have developed represents a snapshot in time. Some very interesting insights can be gained in examining the evolution of the model relationships over time, in light of changing market fortunes of the manufacturers, reliability and lifecycle of car ownership and commingling of manufacturers at the dealer level [several manufacturers using the same distribution channels].

Furthermore cross-market comparisons can be used to anticipate pending changes in industry value chain.

If younger markets like Spain exhibit markedly different characteristics than, say North American markets, We could extrapolate the future state of model for Spain by benchmarking it against the more advanced version of NA market and making the assumption that markets follow a lifecycle from start up to maturity.

If such a comparison is a feasible, and there's no readily available argument to negate it, then we can progress from explanatory stage to a predictive one, and in one significant step cross the threshold of modeling to the first stage of a theory.

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