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Satisfaction in Business Relationships Between Companies and Dark Side Behaviour: A Literature Review

Satisfacción en las relaciones comerciales entre empresas y comportamiento del lado oscuro: una revisión de literatura

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Abstract

Buyer-seller relationships play a pivotal role in relationship marketing, as their effective management can yield significant benefits for companies. Satisfaction is the linchpin that sustains these business relationships over time, yet it can be influenced by various factors, particularly negative behaviors known as “dark side” behaviors. These behaviors encompass actions such as concealing information, opportunism, exploiting the counterparty, causing confusion, sharing customer information without consent, providing misleading information, breaching privacy, levying unjustified charges, and withholding information from customers. The primary objective of this research is to explore the link between dark-side behaviors and satisfaction in business relationships among companies. To achieve this goal, we conducted a comprehensive systematic literature review, scrutinizing 43 articles that aligned with our search criteria. After careful selection, we focused on 30 articles published between 2010 and 2023. Within these articles, we identified the prevailing theories, authors, research methodologies, and limitations, and we also unearthed promising avenues for future research. In conclusion, our findings indicate that there isn't a singular interpretation of the term “dark side” in commercial relationships. Thus, there is a pressing need to develop tools and frameworks that can pinpoint specific manifestations of dark side behaviors, especially those driven by personal or corporate gain, regardless of the potential harm they may inflict on a business partner within a collaborative relationship.

Keywords: Relationship marketing; Dark side; Commercial relationships; Satisfaction.

Resumen

Las relaciones entre compradores y vendedores desempeñan un papel fundamental en el marketing relacional, ya que su gestión efectiva puede generar beneficios significativos para las empresas. La satisfacción es el pilar que sostiene estas relaciones comerciales, pero puede verse influenciada por diversos factores, en particular, por comportamientos negativos conocidos como “comportamientos del lado oscuro”. Estos comportamientos engloban

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acciones como el ocultamiento de información, el oportunismo, o sacar provecho del proveedor o del cliente, generar confusión, compartir información del cliente sin consentimiento, proporcionar información engañosa, vulnerar la privacidad, hacer cobros injustificados y retener información de los clientes. El objetivo principal de esta investigación es explorar la relación entre los comportamientos del lado oscuro y la satisfacción en las relaciones comerciales entre empresas. Para lograr este objetivo, se hizo una revisión sistemática de la literatura, examinando 43 artículos que se ajustaban a los criterios de búsqueda. Después de una cuidadosa selección, el análisis se centró en 30 artículos publicados entre 2010 y 2023. En estos artículos, se identificaron las teorías predominantes, los autores, las metodologías de investigación y las limitaciones, también se plantearon vías prometedoras para futuras investigaciones. En conclusión, los hallazgos indican que no existe una única interpretación del término “lado oscuro” en las relaciones comerciales. Por lo tanto, existe la necesidad de desarrollar herramientas y marcos de referencia que puedan identificar manifestaciones específicas de comportamientos del lado oscuro, especialmente aquellos comportamientos motivados por buscar ganancias personales o corporativas, sin importar el daño potencial que puedan causar a un socio dentro de una relación comercial.

Palabras Clave: Marketing relacional; Lado oscuro; Relaciones comerciales; Satisfacción.

1. Introduction

Satisfaction is widely acknowledged as a critical factor influencing repurchase, recommendations, and customer loyalty (Hutchinson *et al.*, 2011; Ranaweera and Prabhu, 2003; Whipple *et al.*, 2010). In the realm of business relationships (BRs), maintaining satisfaction is paramount to ensure their longevity (Ng, 2012). Nevertheless, consensus is lacking regarding the factors that drive, sustain, and impact satisfaction in BRs among companies. Notably, the concept of “satisfaction” often intertwines with “trust” and “commitment,” forming a complex and multifaceted nexus. Some argue that trust influences satisfaction (Ganesan, 1994), while others contend that satisfaction not only affects trust but is also an iterative and cyclical process (Farrelly and Quester 2005).

In our quest to explore this topic, we uncovered a literature review titled “Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Relationship Marketing: A Meta-Analysis” through an

extensive search for BR literature reviews between 2010 and 2023 on Scopus and Web of Science. The authors underscore the presence of mediating factors that exert intricate and diverse effects on BRs within the context of relationship marketing strategies. They emphasize the significant influence of cooperation and recommendations on BRs, sometimes surpassing the impact of objective supplier performance. Additionally, they discuss the role of dependency in enhancing performance through means like increasing provider-switching costs and exit barriers (Palmatier *et al.*, 2006).

A second literature review on satisfaction in BRs, titled “A Review of Buyer-supplier Relationship Typologies: Progress, Problems, and Future Directions” (Tangpong *et al.*, 2015), delves into the limitations of BR typologies in explaining buyer behavior. The authors propose the creation of different relationship typologies between suppliers and customers based on dimensions such as the level of cooperation, distribution of power, and the degree of mutual knowledge between buyer and seller.

In a third literature review on BRs, titled “The Buyer-seller Relationship: A Literature Synthesis on Dynamic Perspectives,” it becomes evident that most research on dynamic buyer-seller relationships aligns with one of four perspectives: the relationship lifecycle, relationship age, relationship velocity, and the asymmetric-dynamic perspective. The authors highlight the limited exploration of the antecedents and consequences of trust, satisfaction, and commitment, with other constructs like relationship quality, loyalty, recommendations, and commitment receiving even less attention (Hussain *et al.*, 2020).

Within the domain of satisfaction in BRs, there exists a specific set of factors that can adversely affect it—dark side behaviors, a term coined by Frow *et al.* (2011a), referring to actions that undermine or deteriorate BRs. Some of these behaviors originate from providers, such as concealing information from customers, attempting to create confusion (McGovern and Moon, 2007), selling customer information to third parties without consent, providing misleading information, lacking respect for

privacy, imposing unjustified charges, and withholding critical information. On the other hand, customers can also exhibit dark side behaviors when they seek to take advantage of their providers (Frow *et al.*, 2011a).

Despite the prevalence of dark-side behaviors in BRs, they have not received as much scholarly attention as other relationship marketing issues (Frow *et al.*, 2011a). A deeper understanding of these behaviors could pave the way for research proposals with both academic and practical significance, aimed at mitigating their impact on satisfaction in BRs. In line with this, the Marketing Science Institute's 2021 report emphasizes the importance of prioritizing customer value across all firm-customer touchpoints, particularly recognizing the heightened significance of trust in contemporary business relationships. The report posits pertinent questions for future research, including "How can companies foster customer trust?" and "What strategies are most effective in cultivating enduring customer loyalty?" (Marketing Science Institute, 2021).

Studies suggest that negative behaviors may exert a more substantial influence on Business Relationships (BRs) compared to positive actions (Baumeister *et al.*, 2001). Nonetheless, research on these behaviors remains scarce within the context of BR literature. Our literature search for this article did not yield any reviews specifically focusing on the manifestations of dark side behaviors (hereafter referred to as MDSB) and their impact on satisfaction in BRs.

Hence, it is deemed pertinent to conduct a comprehensive literature review to identify existing studies on satisfaction in company BRs, with a particular emphasis on those investigating MDSBs and their implications.

2. Theoretical Contextualization

In a landscape where customers wield increasing power, companies must employ a strategic approach centered on relationships to achieve their business goals. Nurturing strong Business Relationships (BRs) is instrumental in realizing these objectives (Ahmmed *et al.*, 2019).

The term "relationship marketing" was first coined by Berry *et al.* (1995), who defined it as a strategic framework encompassing all of a company's activities aimed at building, sustaining, and enhancing relationships with customers. Relationship marketing represents a resurgence of concepts and practices prevalent in the pre-industrial era (Sheth, 2011; Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995), when suppliers and customers collaborated to establish and maintain BRs.

Modern marketers face the challenge of not only interpreting customer needs based on their purchasing behavior but also anticipating future requirements to ensure brand loyalty (Ahmmed *et al.*, 2019). Grönroos (1994) defines relationship marketing as the process of identifying, establishing, maintaining, and enhancing relationships with customers and other stakeholders, ultimately leading to profit generation and the achievement of mutual goals. Additionally, Johanson (1982) posit that exchange is fundamental to understanding marketing, underscoring the interdependency among parties within a relationship. For this article, we adopt the following definition of a BR: "the exchange of goods or services between a supplier and a client mediated by economic remuneration" (Bagozzi, 1975, p. 36). BRs require sustained exchanges, and adherence to specific patterns (Ford *et al.*, 2003) and are characterized by unique feelings, attitudes, and behaviors (Piwoni-Krzyszowska, 2014).

BRs serve as the cornerstone of relationship marketing, and their creation hinges on numerous factors, including the cultural environment, the capacity of the relationship to deliver value to all parties, resource balance, two-way communication, reciprocity, trust, commitment, cooperation, adaptability, negotiation skills, risk management, empathy, and the quality of social interactions emanating from the BR (Ahmmed *et al.*, 2019).

Various descriptions of contentment in BRs encompass cognitive aspects. One such interpretation characterizes BRs as a comprehensive evaluation of their adherence (Dwyer *et al.*, 1987). Other definitions emphasize affective components, like the definition proposed by Anderson and Narus, which views satisfaction as a positive emotional state arising from the evaluation

of all aspects within a BR between a supplier company and a customer company (Anderson and Narus, 1990).

Certain authors suggest that satisfaction acts as a precursor to other BR factors such as continuity and cooperation (Mysen and Svensson, 2010). Additionally, satisfaction is viewed as an “iterative and cyclical process” (Farrelly and Quester, 2005, p. 213). Geyskens and Steenkamp (2000) argue that satisfaction serves as a precursor to BR success and mediates the impact of other factors on relationship outcomes (Davis-Sramek *et al.*, 2009; Hutchinson *et al.*, 2011). It is also considered an ongoing assessment influenced by the exchange’s characteristics (Dou *et al.*, 2010; Mysen and Svensson, 2010). Roberts-Lombard *et al.* (2019) assert that satisfaction is an outcome of commitment and trust.

It is worth noting that the concept of the “dark side” in BRs emerged in the late 1990s (Hakansson and Snehota, 1995). In addition to the meanings attributed to this term by McGovern and Moon (2007) and Frow *et al.* (2011b), “dark side” is also used within the context of BRs to denote:

- Challenges, difficulties, and inconveniences stemming from structural issues in BRs, such as disparities in size or power imbalances, creativity, or performance issues (Abosag and Naudé, 2014).
- Uncharted aspects of BR dynamics (Miocevic, 2020).
- Negative consequences result from excessive collaboration between partners in a BR (Homburg and Tischer, 2023; Villena *et al.*, 2020).

- Negative behaviors occurring within a BR can spill over into other business relationships (Zhang *et al.*, 2021).

3. Theoretical development

In this article, we have employed the principles outlined by Tranfield *et al.* (2003) to conduct a comprehensive literature review. Our focus has been particularly on adhering to the protocol and steps delineated for conducting the review, carefully selecting appropriate keywords and search terms, and establishing clear criteria for the exclusion of articles. Additionally, our approach aligns with the content analysis parameters set forth by Duriau *et al.* (2007) to ensure the rigor of our literature review process. We have also conformed to the criteria specified by the Universidad de Sevilla (2019) for journal inclusion and exclusion. Furthermore, we have taken into consideration the guidelines provided by Pérez-Rave (2018), especially in terms of selecting relevant study topics and eliminating redundant content.

To execute our comprehensive literature search, we have utilized the robust Scopus and Web of Science databases. Our search has encompassed papers published within the timeframe spanning 2010 to 2023. Detailed information regarding our criteria and search terms is presented in Table 1.

The Table 2 shows the results of the literature review conducted in Web of Science on July 23, 2023. The following terms were used: *factors, determinants, aspects, predictors, drivers, regressors, relationships, association, link, relation, dealing, ties, business, commercial, “Buyer-Seller”, trade, trading, industrial, and “Dark side”*.

Table 1. Search results for articles in Scopus on July 22, 2023

Description	Amount
#1 Title(factors OR determinants OR aspects OR predictors OR drivers OR regressors)*	633159
#2 Title(relationships OR association OR link OR relation OR dealing OR ties)*	567487
#3 Title (Business OR commercial OR “Buyer Seller” OR Trade OR trading OR industrial OR “Dark side”)*	44
#1 AND #2 AND #3	8
Application of inclusion/exclusion criteria, using the article description sheet proposed in Pérez-Rave (2019, p. 95).	8
Source: Authors’ own elaboration from Scopus data.	

Table 2. Search results for articles in Web of Science on July 23, 2023

Description	Amount
#1 Title(factors OR determinants OR aspects OR predictors OR drivers OR regressors)*	576029
#2 Title(relationships OR association OR link OR relation OR dealing OR ties)*	587823
#3 Title (Business OR commercial OR “Buyer Seller” OR Trade OR trading OR industrial OR “Dark side”)*	153784
#1 AND #2 AND #3	50
Application of inclusion/exclusion criteria, using the article description sheet proposed in Pérez-Rave (2019, p. 95).	22
Source: Authors' own elaboration from WOS data.	

Table 3. Inclusion/exclusion criteria for the studies

Specifications
<p>C1. The studies are from journals indexed in <i>Scopus</i> and <i>Web of Science</i>. This means that these journals at least satisfy conditions such as a peer review system, compliance with academic quality standards, timeliness of publication, and diversity in the editorial team (Universidad de Sevilla, 2019).</p> <p>C2. The article's topic of interest must be satisfaction in business relationships.</p> <p>C3. The article must provide at least one aspect that influences satisfaction in business relationships.</p> <p>C4. Business is the context of observation of the topic. Articles from sectors such as health sciences, education, etc., were excluded.</p> <p>C6. Studies were included only once (repetitions were excluded).</p>
Source: Pérez-Rave, 2018.

The search was conducted for the period 2011 to 2023 and was limited to research articles.

Table 3 presents the criteria used to determine the inclusion and exclusion of articles:

The table below shows the results of the literature review conducted in Scopus on July 23, 2023. The following terms were used: *factors, determinants, aspects, predictors, drivers, regressors, relationships, association, link, relation, dealing, ties, business, commercial, “Buyer-Seller”, trade, trading, industrial, and “Dark side”*.

Once the articles were gathered from Scopus and Web of Science, they were filtered the list using the following criteria:

- The articles had to originate from journals indexed in Scopus or Web of Science.

- The journals had to adhere to specific criteria, including peer review, adherence to academic quality standards, adherence to editing timelines, and diversity in the editorial team, as per the guidelines outlined by the Universidad de Sevilla (2019).
- Business Relationships (BRs) had to be the central focus of each article.
- Each article had to address at least one aspect that influences satisfaction in BRs.
- We exclusively considered primary documents.
- The context of the articles had to be related to business, excluding documents from other areas of knowledge, in line with the recommendations of Pérez-Rave (2018).

By following this procedure, a final list of 30 articles was compiled, as detailed in Table 4.

Table 4. Articles selected and bibliometric description

ID	Study	Journal	Quartile
1	Leonidou <i>et al.</i> (2017)	Industrial marketing management	1
2	Piricz (2018)	Serbian Journal of Management	3
3	Akrout & Diallo (2017)	Industrial marketing management	1
4	Sharafizad & Standing (2017)	Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship	2
5	Leonidou <i>et al.</i> (2017)	Journal of World Business	1
6	Seres-Huszárik <i>et al.</i> (2017)	Acta Polytechnica Hungarica	2
8	Gao <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and logistics	2
9	Orlova <i>et al.</i> (2015)	Indian Journal of Science and technology	4
10	Corsaro (2015)	Australasian Marketing Journal	2
11	Gërdoçi <i>et al.</i> (2015)	New Medit	2
12	Barnes <i>et al.</i> (2015)	Journal of International Marketing	1
13	Raeside & Khan (2015)	International Journal of Business and society	1
14	Zunk (2015)	International Journal of Engineering business management	4
15	Sellitto <i>et al.</i> (2021)	Sustainable Production and consumption	1
16	McCord & Gunderson (2014)	International Journal of Construction Education and Research	2
17	Poddar <i>et al.</i> (2013)	Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice	1
18	Abdul <i>et al.</i> (2015)	Australasian Marketing Journal	1
19	Visentin & Scarpi (2012)	Industrial Marketing Management	1
20	Leonidou <i>et al.</i> (2011)	Journal of World Business	1
21	Jena <i>et al.</i> (2011)	Journal of Indian business research	2
22	Gërdoçi <i>et al.</i> (2017)	Studies in agricultural economics	3
23	Dutta <i>et al.</i> (2020)	International Journal of Logistics Systems and Management	3
24	Cabral <i>et al.</i> (2019)	RAUSP Management Journal	2
25	Sales Baptista (2014)	Journal of business & industrial marketing	2
26	Chung <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Industrial Marketing Management	1
27	Homburg & Tischer (2023)	Journal of the academy of marketing science	1
28	Miocevic (2020)	Journal of business and industrial marketing	2
29	Villena <i>et al.</i> (2011)	Journal of Operations Management	1
30	Villena <i>et al.</i> (2020)	Journal of Supply Chain Management	1

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on the literature review from WOS and SCOPUS.

4. Theoretical references of the articles

Social exchange theory is used as the main theoretical reference (Chung *et al.*, 2016; Dutta *et al.*, 2020; Leonidou, Aykol, Fotiadis *et al.*, 2017; Leonidou, Aykol, Spyropoulou *et al.*, 2017; Piricz, 2018; Sales-Baptista, 2014; Visentin and Scarpi, 2012; Zunk, 2015; Jena *et al.*, 2011). This theory focuses on the exchange of resources (material and non-material) through social interactions (Emerson, 1976). It asserts that transactional exchange alone falls short of comprehensively elucidating the behavior of parties within an exchange relationship (Cook and Emerson, 1978). Furthermore, beyond the intrinsic value of the items being exchanged, reciprocity emerges as a crucial factor within such relationships (Cook and Emerson, 1978).

Other theoretical frameworks utilized encompass social psychology (Akrouf *et al.*, 2016; Swann Jr. and Gill, 1997), relationship marketing (Dutta *et al.*, 2020; Corsaro, 2015; Gazdecki, 2018; Huderek-Glapska and Nowak, 2016; Poddar *et al.*, 2013; Visentin and Scarpi, 2012), social capital (Miocevic, 2020; Villena *et al.*, 2011), role theory (Gao *et al.*, 2016), economics (Cabral *et al.*, 2019; Raeside and Khan, 2015; Gërdoçi *et al.*, 2017; Dutta *et al.*, 2020), international relations (Barnes *et al.*, 2015; Leonidou *et al.*, 2011), the resource-based view (Chung *et al.*, 2016; Homburg and Tischer, 2023), and Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Homburg and Tischer, 2023).

5. Methodological aspects

This section will address methodological aspects of the analyzed articles, including the unit of analysis, study types, and employed instruments.

5.1. Unit of analysis

In one instance, the focal point of analysis was the social capital of companies. In another case, the duration of business relationships served as the unit of analysis. In seventeen instances, the company itself was the primary unit under scrutiny. In five cases, the analysis centered around the perspectives of company representatives,

while in six cases, the unit of analysis was the business relationship itself.

5.2. Study types

A total of 18 documents utilized a quantitative methodology, while 8 studies adopted a qualitative approach. Additionally, 4 articles employed a mixed methodology.

5.3. Instrument

In 20 articles, the primary data collection instrument employed was a survey. Two articles relied on document analysis, two studies utilized a semi-structured survey, one study employed a semi-structured interview, and in five articles, both surveys and structured interviews were utilized as data collection methods.

6. Aspects affecting satisfaction in companies' BRs

The analysis of the aforementioned documents revealed that satisfaction in business relationships can be influenced by the factors outlined in Table 5.

Furthermore, Table 6 provides a comprehensive list of MDSBs that have the potential to impact business relationships.

Table 7 presents the items from the instruments utilized in the studies chosen for the development of this article.

It is important to clarify the meaning of certain concepts.

Coercive power refers to the perception that one party in a relationship possesses the ability to enforce penalties if their demands are not met, resulting in a tendency for the perceiver to comply with the other party's requests (Leonidou *et al.*, 2011). Opportunism, on the other hand, entails self-interest in exploiting a situation at the expense of the other party (Leonidou, Aykol, Spyropoulou, *et al.*, 2017). Betrayal can manifest in various ways, including deception, the disclosure of confidential information, a failure to assist, or the maintenance of an illicit parallel relationship (Rachman, 2010).

Table 5. Aspects affecting satisfaction in companies' BRs

Author	Aspect
Zunk (2015)	Risk of suffering damage or loss for maintaining the business relationship
Leonidou <i>et al.</i> (2017)	The future probability of the working relationship
Akrout & Diallo (2017)	Calculative trust
Huderek-Glapska & Nowak (2016)	Supplier retention strategies
Zunk (2015)	Good assistance in hard times
Gao <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Business friendship
Cabral <i>et al.</i> (2019)	Volume and value of trade
Miocevic (2020)	Relationship investments and relational capital, knowledge of the partner in a relationship
Corsaro (2015); Abdul <i>et al.</i> (2015)	Trust
Raeside & Khan (2015)	Credibility, benevolence, commitment, integrity
Sales-Baptista (2014)	Adaptation to supplier processes
Barnes <i>et al.</i> (2015)	Communication, personal credibility, and personal affection
Leonidou, Aykol, Spyropoulou <i>et al.</i> (2017)	The exercise of coercive power
Leonidou <i>et al.</i> (2011)	Trust
Piricz (2018)	The ability of supplier and customer to enter into agreements
Visentin & Scarpi, (2012)	Loyalty
Gazdecki (2018)	Contractual conditions
Sellitto <i>et al.</i> (2021)	Gaps between product generation and consumption
Poddar <i>et al.</i> (2013)	Commercial promotions
Visentin & Scarpi (2012)	Negative experiences in young relationships
Leonidou <i>et al.</i> (2011)	Buyer adaptation
Jena <i>et al.</i> (2011)	Product Quality
Gërdoçi <i>et al.</i> (2017)	Uncertainty
Dutta <i>et al.</i> (2020)	Communication, information exchange, uncertainty management, relationship continuity, trust and adaptation
Cabral <i>et al.</i> (2019)	Greater number of transactions, greater volume of assets dedicated to customer service, sale of more than one product
Chung <i>et al.</i> (2016); Villena <i>et al.</i> (2020); Villena <i>et al.</i> (2011)	Excessive exploitation of social ties
Homburg & Tischer (2023)	Effective management of customer contact points

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on the literature review from WOS and Scopus.

Table 6. MDSB impacting satisfaction in business relationships between companies

Author	Aspect
Hallén & Wiedersheim (2003)	Distance, or preventive attitude delaying or distorting the information flow between supplier and customers
Leonidou, Aykol, Spyropoulou <i>et al.</i> (2017)	Opportunism, or the interest to take advantage of a situation at the expense of the counterpart
Payne & Frow (2017)	Sale of customer information to third parties without authorization, giving misleading information, disrespect for privacy, unjustified charges
McGovern & Moon (2007)	Hiding information from a customer and intention to create confusion

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on the literature review from WOS and Scopus.

Table 7. Analysis of the items from instruments used in the above-mentioned research works

Item	Aspects evaluated	Author
Failing to comply with the requests of our firm will result in financial and other penalties against this importer.	Coercive power	Leonidou <i>et al.</i> (2008).
We threaten to withdraw from what we originally promised if this importer does not comply with our requests.		
We threaten to take legal action, if this importer does not comply with our requests.		
We withhold important support from this importer, by requesting compliance with our demands.		
We threaten to deal with another importer, to make this importer submit to our demands.		
We offer this importer specific incentives when it is reluctant to cooperate with us.		
We have the upper hand in the relationship with this importer, due to the power allowed us under the contract.		
We demand the compliance of this importer because we know that it appreciates and admires us.		
We use our unique competence to make this importer accept our recommendations.		
We withhold critical information concerning the relationship, to better control this importer.		
We do not have close relationships with individuals working in this importing firm.	Distance	Hallén & Sandström (1991)
We are not familiar with this importer's business environment.		
We are very familiar with the organizational culture, values, and attitudes of this importer.		
We are not aware of many things about the structural characteristics of this importer's organization.		
We are familiar with the working methods and processes followed by this importer	Opportunism	Yilmaz & Hunt (2001)
This importer alters the facts slightly.		
This importer promises to do things without actually doing them later.		
This importer fails to provide us with the support it is obliged to provide.		
This importer avoids fulfilling its responsibilities unless it is watched closely.		

Our relationship with this importer is characterized by a great degree of uncertainty.	Uncertainty	Leonidou & Kaleka (1998).
There is adequate information for us to make future decisions regarding this working relationship.		
We face difficulties in monitoring trends concerning the working relationship with this importer.		
We are confident about making future decisions regarding aspects of the relationship with this importer.		
We cannot accurately anticipate how this importer will act in the future in the working relationship.		
Despite its agreement with our company, this importer has been disloyal to us many times in the past.	Infidelity	Mattingly <i>et al.</i> (2010), Kumar <i>et al.</i> (1992).
This importer shows greater motivation to engage in business activities with other exporters, rather than developing business with our company.		
This importer not only does business with other exporting firms selling similar goods but also develops social bonds with them.		
This importer negotiates with other export suppliers of similar goods to obtain better business terms than what we can offer.		
This supplier has a reputation for fairness with its customers.	Reputation	Anderson & Weitz (1992).
We tell each other things we would not want others to know.	Trust	
This seller shares our values.	Shared values	Brashear <i>et al.</i> (2003).
This seller respects the confidentiality of the information we share.		
This seller often behaves in a manner contrary to common rules.		
The supplier realizes that not being opportunistic accords with their interest.	Calculative trust	Shou <i>et al.</i> (2011).
The supplier realizes that violating our trust will certainly be sanctioned.		
When making important decisions, the seller is concerned about our welfare.	Benevolence	Kumar <i>et al.</i> (1995).
It is necessary to be careful with this seller.		
I have great respect for this client and vice versa.	Affective trust	Akrouit <i>et al.</i> (2016).
The supplier is well-known for being sincere in dealing with its customers.	Reputation	Gao <i>et al.</i> (2016).
We accommodate what this supplier would like for us to do.	Adaptation	Gao <i>et al.</i> (2016).
This supplier's representative is not trustworthy.	Credibility	Barnes <i>et al.</i> (2015).
This exporter is not always completely honest with us.	Trust	
We find it necessary to be cautious with this exporter.		
We expect our relationship with this vendor to continue for a long time.	Satisfaction	Poddar <i>et al.</i> (2013).
This vendor does not make false claims.	Trust	
This exporter always keeps a trade secret concerning our business venture.	Trust	Leonidou <i>et al.</i> (2011).
Several times this exporter was caught making false claims.		
We would like to continue our work with this supplier.	Commitment	Roberts-Lombard <i>et al.</i> (2019).
Our firm is comfortable about its relationship with this supplier.	Satisfaction	
This customer hides important information that is of interest to us.	Opportunism	

There is much conflict in the relationship with this customer.	Conflict	
This customer is not always honest with us.	Opportunism	
Our firm is comfortable about its relationship with this supplier.	Satisfaction	Mysen <i>et al.</i> (2015).

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on the literature review from WOS and Scopus.

7. Discussion of the results

The most important finding about dark behavior in commercial relationships between companies is the different ways that the concept of MDSBs is interpreted. While research on business relationships has grown and expanded to examine the interactions of behaviors across relationships, the lack of clarity surrounding the MDSBs concept makes it difficult to classify studies that focus on a specific subtype of MDSBs that has been discussed in the literature. This subtype, as highlighted by McGovern and Moon (2007), Frow *et al.* (2011a), and Frow *et al.* (2011b), calls for the development of a distinct line of research that examines relational behaviors that intentionally pursue self-interest at the expense of harming the partner.

Within the analyzed articles, a recurring assertion emerges: specific MDSBs typically have an impact on satisfaction within business relationships (BRs). This has led to calls for further research in this field. Embracing these recommendations through rigorous research efforts may uncover additional MDSBs and shed light on their effects on satisfaction in BRs.

The suggested recommendations advocate for several approaches, including longitudinal studies, investigations in diverse contexts spanning various industries, and the examination of BRs where suppliers and customers coexist in the same space. Furthermore, they emphasize the importance of exploring dimensions such as opportunism and betrayal in BRs, scrutinizing BRs within cross-cultural contexts, considering perspectives beyond those of supplier and customer representatives, and analyzing the dynamics of satisfaction in BRs within emerging economies.

This article focuses on identifying a restricted set of MDSBs: betrayal, disloyalty, and opportunism in business relationships between companies, (Leonidou, Aykol, Spyropoulou *et al.*, 2017; Leonidou, Aykol,

Fotiadis *et al.*, 2017; Corsaro, 2015), In other words, these are the types of behaviors identified by McGovern and Moon (2007), Frow *et al.* (2011a), and Frow *et al.* (2011b). Specifically, these are behaviors characterized by the intent to pursue personal or company benefits on the part of the individual exhibiting these behaviors, while seeking to harm their partner, whether that partner is a supplier or a customer. MDSBs within BRs manifest as intricate social phenomena necessitating extensive assimilation of contextual information to comprehend their origins, mechanisms, and ramifications for the relationships. Notably, the reviewed articles discuss MDSBs in BRs without distinguishing among large, medium, and small companies, despite the distinctive attributes and challenges each company typefaces from a relationship marketing perspective. Tailored strategies, aligned with the peculiarities of individual BRs, are imperative to alleviate the impact of MDSBs on intercompany relationships.

Unexplored within the analyzed research are context-driven variations in MDSBs within BRs. Companies navigating emerging economies frequently grapple with adverse factors like violence and corruption, potentially compelling them or their representatives to resort to dark-side behaviors as adaptive mechanisms. Such behaviors, intended to surmount adversities and thrive, represent a dimension yet unaddressed.

8. Conclusions

Manifestations of dark side behavior (MDSBs) in business relationships between companies (BRs) can take very different forms depending on the size of the companies involved in the BR, their cultural differences, their power asymmetries, or the quality of interpersonal relationships among a supplier's representatives and a customer's representatives. It is necessary to conduct

further research on a specific types of behaviors that in the literature are included in the group of manifestations of dark side behavior, the actions aimed at obtaining personal or corporate benefits while seeking to harm the partner, whether that partner is a supplier or a customer. This will help to enrich the number of existing categories, understand the influence of MDSB on satisfaction in BRs, and facilitate the design of strategies to both avoid their emergence and mitigate their impact.

Self-reported instruments were used as the main information collection mechanism in the studies analyzed here: individuals responsible for maintaining BRs between companies gave *their* ideas; that is, their opinions on the aspects affecting satisfaction in the BRs. Hence, it is necessary to use information collection instruments that prevent biases when information is collected, particularly social desirability bias -typical of self-report measures- as individuals tend to give answers that are liked by the person who is asking the questions (Edwards, 1953).

15 out of the 30 studies analyzed in this article used data coming from self-reports from the individuals who are involved in the BRs between companies to conduct their analysis. The use of self-report measures is a limitation in these studies, as they make it difficult for people involved in business relationships to reveal when they have engaged in unethical or inappropriate behaviors in their interactions with suppliers or customers.

Therefore, it is necessary to counteract biases by making use of different information-gathering tools other than self-reported instruments. Among these tools, it is possible to use observation and documentary analysis. The triangulation of information obtained from different sources may also assist in finding patterns in the emergence and impacts of the MDSBs on the satisfaction of BRs. Thus, it may be concluded that research on MDSB raises methodological challenges that future research works are called upon to face.

Among the most important methodological challenges in the study of MDSBs is the need to create instruments that make it possible to provide evidence of the existence of these

behaviors in suppliers, customers, and other stakeholders interested in a business relationship.

9. Conflict of interest

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