

The impact of transactional-relational factors on the first commercial exchange episode in business to business relationships

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Abstract:

Whilst a company's future wellbeing is dependent upon its ability to sustain relationships, it must first be capable of creating them. This occurs within the context of the customer-seller dyad. This paper aims to enhance our understanding of how initial commercial exchange relationships (ICERs) occur and how the experience gained of them impact upon the ongoing relationship. We posit that ICERs are a response to both economic and social motivations and our study focuses upon the influence of positive transactional and relational factors on ICERs and the roles performed by actors within the dyad. Our work provides managers from both buyer and seller organisations opportunities to increase the efficiency of decision making related to ICERs.

Key Words: Initial sale, transactional factors, relational factors

Preamble

Making the decision that leads to an initial commercial exchange (ICER) is challenging. The transactional approach to exchange stresses that commercial relationships between companies are initiated by buyers whose purpose is to achieve cost reduction. The activities of buyer and seller, perceived as being free agents, autonomous, driven by rationality and a desire to optimise their personal utility through market mechanisms is perceived as sufficient to explain the decision to engage in the initial commercial exchange (Donada and Nogatchewsky, 2005).

Many authors reinforce this analysis of commercial activity by identifying the effects of transactions built solely on the basis of transactional considerations. Heide and John (1988) highlighted the influence of asset specificity and transaction costs on economic performance. Dahlstrom and Nygaard (1999) were particularly interested in the impact of opportunism and transaction costs on the effectiveness of the sale. Buvik and John (2000) extended this work.

The purpose of this research was to test hypotheses related to the influence of transactional variables on commercial relationships. Our conclusions suggest that these constructs are limited in explaining both the length of relationships (Anderson et Weitz, 1992), or the timing of initial commercial activity (Bergadaà, 2005). Our proposition is that relationships are the sum of a number of transactions that occur over time (Ford 1992) and that these transactions are themselves the sum of both transactional and relational factors. We suggest that this is particularly important as a precondition of the ICER decision because without the interplay of transactional and relational factors, relationships do not develop.

Over time transactions develop into relationships (Bagozzi, 1978) and many authors have explored the transactional-relational dichotomy. Donada and Nogatchewsky (2005), in a meta-analysis on customer-supplier relationships, identify fifteen variables that impact upon relationships that evolve from transactional business decisions. Joshi and Stump (1999) were particularly interested in the determinants of commitment and opportunism. Marion (2001) identified the entanglement of transactional and relational factors in the practices of marketers. Filser (2008), in his study on the purchasing decisions of consumers, developed a model combining transactional and relational constructs to characterize their perceived value. Lefaix -Durand and Kozak (2009) have sought to better understand the coexistence of transactional and relational history and their influence on the effectiveness of relations. Geiger and Finch (2011) measured the effects of these dimensions in the decision-making process within mature industrial markets.

By pondering upon the dyadic nature of the transactional-relational dichotomy we can enrich the debate on the business-to-business decision making process. Exploring the ambivalence of actors involved in commercial decision making exposes a number of perspectives. Dwyer, Schur and Oh (1987) traced the evolution of relationships from initial recognition to dissolution and this evolutionary process provides a useful basis for reflection on the decision making process that moves us beyond the

classical economic (transactional) approach. Being dyadic in nature the decision making process is enriched and characterized by a set of symmetrical cognitive processes, structured and led by the buyer and seller, the two actors in the dyad.

The process of deciding to initiate a commercial exchange is the sum of a number of specific agreements reached through argument, discussion, the granting of concessions and compromise (Barth, 2011). No one party can achieve their "perfect" solution and buyer and seller must achieve an agreement satisfactory to both. A process that is punctuated by a series of minor decisions where each party adopts tactics and normative approaches before reaching the point of commitment (Macquin, 1998). In fact the process adopted by buyers in reaching purchasing decisions are very similar to those employed by sales people seeking to effect a sale (Zeil and Petit 2004). The decision to effect a commercial transaction is a symmetrical process, where the two actors assess their situation through information exchange, the exploration of mutual needs, the definition of content, the planning of implementation, and the expectation and evaluation of outcomes: efficiency, satisfaction and performance.

Economic exchange is characterized by transactional-relational duality which affords a rich debate arguing the relative impact of economic or sociological factors in business relationships. It is our contention that business decisions must be observed from both perspectives. In this context the question posed in this paper is: What is the relative influence of economic and social factors upon the initial decision to enter into a commercial relationship (ICER) and what is the process that leads to the taking of that decision?

Using a survey of 323 sellers and 81 buyers, we explore the process of deciding to enter into a commercial relationship for the first time and validate a number of assumptions about the transactional and relational antecedents of initial commercial relationships built between dyadic partners as they move towards that decision. We also explore the role of « trust » in the process of arriving at a decision beneficial for both buyer and seller. Together these variables allow the definition of our framework of analysis of the ICER decision and aid our understanding of the process of decision making from both perspectives. It allows us to understand the processes employed by both buyer and seller.

The framework of our analysis

The benefits that derive from commercial exchange can be measured in terms of operational efficiency (Bharadwaj and Matsuno, 2006) and competitiveness (Anderson and Narus, 1990). But the gains must be perceived to be mutual (Guay and Lachance, 2000). Economic measures, however (sales growth, lower costs or improved margins), are not sufficient to fully understand the benefits which accrue from a business decision (Gummesson, 2004). Value is also created through the process of interaction (Ballantyne, Christopher and Payne, 2003), arising from human and structural capital (Gummesson, 2004) and is illustrated by the dynamics of skills and resources and competencies displayed in process of decision making (Donada and Nogatchewsky, 2005, 2007).

Two sets of factors influence the potential benefits derived from a commercial decision. The first are economic in nature, specifically relating to the transaction but a deeper understanding of the process may be gained by considering the evolution of trust within the context of the developing relationship (Bergeron and Vachon, 2008).

The effects of transactional factors on the first commercial exchange

The first factor influencing the initial decision to enter into a commercial exchange is the evaluation of transaction costs. Players measure ex ante the economic and psychological efforts that must be deployed to complete the transaction. Transaction costs reflect "running costs of the economic system" or "economic friction costs" (Williamson, 1985 p. 18). Transaction costs are the costs of planning, adaptation and exchange control. These are also the costs of contracting trade. Ex ante costs are associated with the search for a partner, discussion and negotiation and the formalization of guarantees. Ex post costs arise when contracts become break down, leading to renegotiation costs.

The concept of "opportunism" is the second factor influencing the business decision. Opportunism is the "pursuit of self-interest with dishonesty" (Williamson, 1985, p.47). It is better to consider the possibility of opportunistic behaviour on the part of a dyadic partner ex ante, in order to avoid

suffering the ex post consequences. However, where the exchange is complex this may not be possible and then the need arises for adaptive sequential decisions that deal with uncertainty (Williamson , 1985). Players are aware of this potential and thus anticipate it into their management of the process, resulting in "incomplete but farsighted contracting " (Williamson, 1996, p. 9).

The third factor is asset specificity. This refers to assets such as knowledge, experience and resource investments made specifically for a particular exchange relationship. Asset specificity means that individual investments made to complete a specific transaction cannot be redeployable without additional cost. They allow savings in production costs or enhance the effects of product differentiation (Williamson , 1985) and are enhanced in specificity the more idiosyncratic they become to a particular relationship .

The last factor are the contractual terms applied to the transaction, these refer to the basic social and organizational principles which form the basis the commercial relationship. These standards may include reciprocity, implementation planning, reciprocal obligations, cohesive standards of formal expectations the creation and restriction of power (MacNeil, 1978). They describe the relationship between the two parties during the decision process. They structure the content of the moral and legal contract between the two parties. The contract serves three objectives: to provide information, to constitute evidence in case of disagreement , in order to reduce uncertainty, and respect the rule (and Elommal Perrien , 2005). The terms of the contract have an impact on the business decision.

The effects of relational factors on the ICER

Business decisions can be explained by mechanisms that evolve from the process of doing business. Interaction leads to interdependencies within the customer seller dyad (Donada and Nogatchewsky, 2005) caused by four dynamic factors: expected benefits; investment in the relationship; levels of perceived expertise, and ; word of mouth reputation.

The expected benefits are expressed as the gains in utility and value to be realized within the context of the relationship (Henning-Thureau, Gwinner et Gremler, 2002) and these, it is proposed, have a large impact upon the business decision (Palmatier, Dant, Grewal et Evans, 2006).

The investment in the relationship is represented by the time, resources and effort allocated by the seller in order to both secure the transaction and to build the relationship. The relationship is strengthened by expectations of reciprocal investment (Ganessan, 1994). The level of investment (Ring and Van de Ven, 1992) and the « debt of reciprocity » (Palmatier et al, 2006 p 149) have a positive effect upon the outcome of the business decision.

Expertise is measured in terms of knowledge, experience and operational capability (Crosby, Evans and Cowles, 1990 : Lagace, Dahlstrom and Gassenheimer, 1991) and the attributes that have the most potential for value creation are the knowledge and skills of buyer and seller (Vargo and Lusch, 2004 ; Palmatier et al 2007).

Word of mouth recommendation occurs where a supplier is recommended by an existing or potential client to another (Henning-Thureau et al, 2002). Word of mouth recommendation predisposes a potential new client towards the supplier (Palmatier et al, 2007). Bergeron and Vachon (2008) that word of mouth recommendation is a construct that effects the outcome of a business decision.

The role of trust in the Initial commercial exchange relationships (ICERs)

The placing of trust by one party in another is a rational choice based on setting limits to that trust, depending upon circumstances. Williamson (1993) argues that the choice is made for the « good reason » that it affirms the other party's trusted status. Where both parties have a vested interest in establishing and maintaining trust (Ring, 1996). Mutual trust is based upon calculating that the benefits outweigh the risk of trusting. The terms of formal contract can also effect levels of trust and reduce the risk of opportunism (Williamson, 1993). Trust produces visible improvements in economic performance in terms of turnover and market share (Aulakh, Kotabe and Sahay, 1996).

The existence of trust is the factor that explains the paradigm shift from transactional to relational exchange (Gummesson, 1999). Trust provides the buyer-seller dyad with time saving, reduced cost of information transfer and limits the use of guarantees and conflict between buyer and seller (Guilbert,

1999). Trust impacts upon the buyer-seller dyad by enhancing perceptions of reliability, integrity, credibility and good-will (Bergeron and Vachon, 2008).

The concept of trust impacts upon both transactional and relational factors. For a transactional perspective trust can act to reduce transaction costs as it may provide a cheaper alternative to the invocation of contract. In a relational context trust delivers benefits that go beyond purely commercial considerations creating value associated with knowledge transfer, process capabilities and assurance of future benefit.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between these propositions in our analytical framework.

Methodology and Sample

The sample comprised 81 buyers (20%) and 323 sales people (80%). Of the total sample 65% were operational, 35% were managers. Nearly 50% had five years' experience in their function and 42% between five and ten years. 80% of respondents had received higher education. 92% worked for companies with more than 20 employees. 80% of decisions required less than three sales visits.

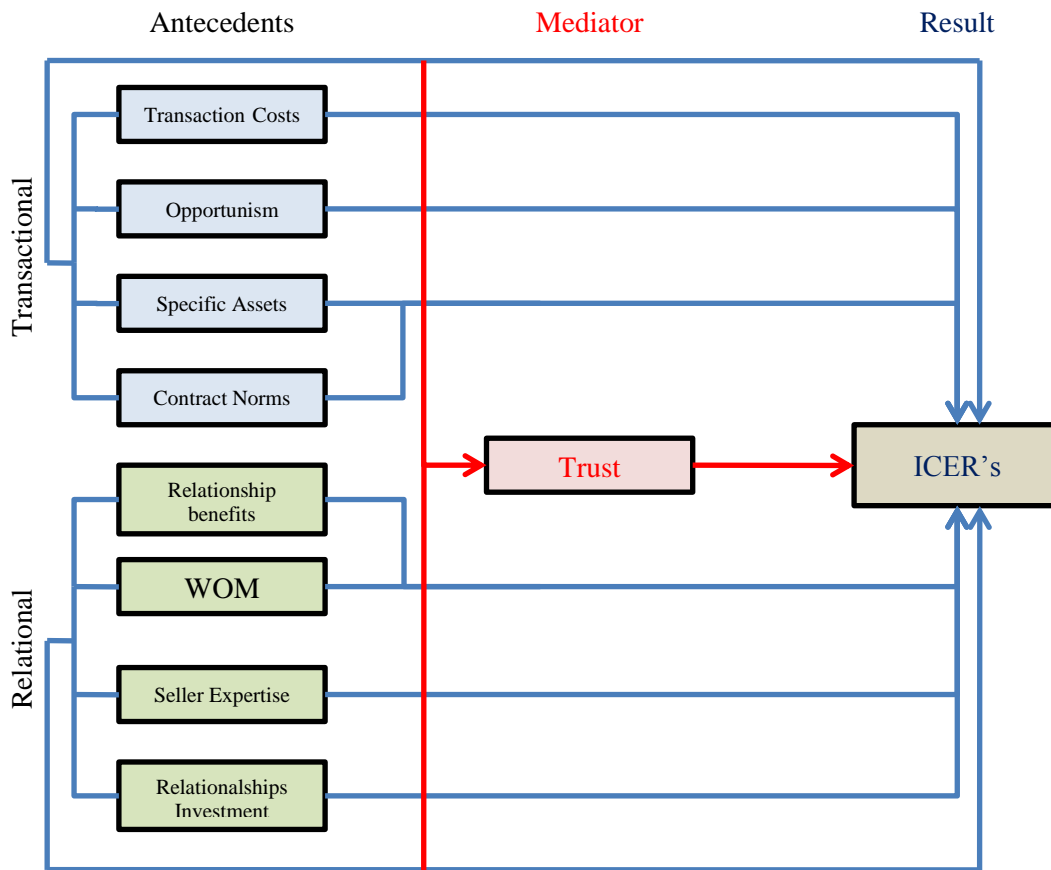
The conceptual model was validated using exploratory qualitative research. It was based on data from six semi-structured interviews with experts in making decisions to use new suppliers. This approach also facilitated the development of a questionnaire. This research instrument was validated using Cronbach's α , % of the variance, the KMO and the value of the principal component. Dimensions of the constructs are confirmed by exploratory factor analysis using analysis of principal components. The reliability and the validity of the constructs were checked by confirmatory factorial analysis. The indices of adjustment are completely within the standards (X^2 , GFI, AGFI, RMSEA, SRMR, NFI, NNFI, X^2/dll and AIC).

Confirmatory factor analyses of the transactional factors and the relational factors

The values obtained by these various indices were found to be valid and respect the restrictive criteria. The collected data fit well with the conceptual framework. The reliability of constructs is satisfied by ρ_{vc} , each dimension being higher than 0.6 and R are higher than 0.5. That means that all indicators are related to the latent variables represented. The validity of the measurement scales is also confirmed because validity Rhôs (ρ_{vc}) of each dimension are higher than the correlations square between latent variables (γ^2). It appears that measurements of the transactional factors and the relational factors are reliable and valid. The coefficients of reliability associated with the instruments are higher than the generally allowed thresholds. Moreover, the confirmatory factorial analyses show that indicators are quite distinct measurements.

To conclude these methodological checks, the collection of the quantitative information was carried out on the samples. Links between the explanatory variables and the variable to be explained are established by regression analysis. Later, we would like to test the effect of trust as a mediator. The analysis of the links of mediation is validated with Sobel Z's.

Figure 1 : Our model, Antecedents and result of ICER's



Results

Our results are presented in table 1. Hypothesis are tested, initially, via regression. The regression enables us to test the direct influence of an explanatory quantitative variable. The exploratory factor analyses and the various regressions are obtained by software SPSS 17.0.

Hypothesis description	Standardized parameter (FA/client)	Variance explained (FA/client)	Conclusion
H1. Transaction costs positively influence the success of initial commercial exchange relationships (ICERs).	0.321^a / 0.129^a	0.097 / 0.057	H1 is supported.
H2. Opportunism positively influences the success of initial commercial exchange relationships (ICERs).	0.283^a / 0.280^a	0.080 / 0.079	H2 is supported.
H3. Asset specificity positively influences the success of initial commercial exchange relationships (ICERs).	-0.149^{NS} / 0.085^{NS}	0.022 / 0.007	H3 isn't supported
H4. The transactional contract norms positively influence the success of initial commercial exchange relationships (ICERs).	0.388^a / 0.184^a	0.150 / 0.034	H4 is supported.
H5. The transactional factors positively influence the success of initial commercial exchange relationships (ICERs).	0.382^a / 0.294^a	0.146 / 0.087	H5 is supported.
	0.633^a / 0.659^a	0.400 / 0.435	
	-0.269^a / 0.222^a	0.022 / 0.042	

(ICERs).	0.351^a / 0.291^a	0.123/0.084	
H6. Relationship benefits positively influence the success of initial commercial exchange relationships (ICERs).	0.147^{NS} / 0.205^a	0.073/0.049	H6 is supported.
H7. Relationship investment positively influences the success of initial commercial exchange relationships (ICERs).	0.551^a / 0.503^a	0.303/0.253	H7 is supported by salespeople but not by buyer
H8. Seller expertise positively influences the success of initial commercial exchange relationships (ICERs).	0.298^a / 0.207^a	0.146/0.087	H8 is supported
H9. WOM positively influences the success of initial commercial exchange relationships (ICERs).	0.192^a / 0.486^a	0.123/0.253	H9 is supported by salespeople
H10. Relational factors positively influence the success of initial commercial exchange relationships (ICERs).			H10 is supported.
H11. Trust positively mediates the link between the transactional factors and the success of initial commercial exchange relationships (ICERs).			H11 is partially supported.
H12. Trust positively mediates the link between the transactional factors and the success of initial commercial exchange relationships (ICERs).			H12 is totally supported.

Notes: ^aSignificant at $p < 0.05$. The variance explained (R^2) by this factor can be obtained by squaring the standardized parameter estimate. For example, the variance of ICER's by Relational benefits is 40 per cent (0.400) in the salesmen sample.
^{NS}Non-significant at $p > 0.05$.

We tested our twelve hypotheses with the EQS SEM software (Bentler, 1992; Byrne, 1994). The measurement and structural models were estimated simultaneously. An important strength of SEM is its ability to incorporate the psychometrician's notion of constructs and measurement error in estimation procedure (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Furthermore, each model was estimated on two samples (buyers and sellers), which enhances the validity of our conclusions.

Results are presented in Table I Initial commercial exchange relationships (ICERs) Success Antecedents. We relied on several statistics to evaluate the goodness-of-fit of the different models. First, the NFI (0.953) and the CFI (0.961) which constitutes a good indication that the hypothesized models represented adequate fit to the data. The average off-diagonal value of the standardized residuals matrix ranged from 0.01 to 0.03, which also reflects an adequate fit (Byrne, 1994). The $X^2/\text{degrees of freedom}$ ratio is satisfactory (2,55). Although the X^2 was statistically significant in each model ($p < 0.05$), it is known to be sensitive to sample size (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Linear regression and analysis of the variance enabled us to evaluate the force of link between the success of initial commercial exchange relationships (ICERs) and transaction costs (H1). The transfer of the property right of the good must be efficient. An initial commercial exchange relationships (ICERs) is concluded by the production of higher profit for the dyad.

The success of initial commercial exchange relationships (ICERs) is related to the adoption of an opportunist behavior (H2). This variable clarifies this mechanism. An initial commercial exchange relationship (ICER) can be the fruit of opportunistic behaviour of both actors of the dyad.

Transactional contract norms have a positive influence on the success of the initial commercial exchange relationship (ICER) (H4). This result highlights the effects of the conditions of contract as an antecedent to the decision. A purchaser and a salesperson must meet them in order to conclude an exchange. The consequence is a formal contract.

The transactional factors are an explanatory variable of the success of the initial commercial exchange relationship (ICER) (H5). This one is characterized by economic factors and is illustrated by an opportunity for economic gain the respect of a contractual between two parts.

The results of our statistical approach emphasize a positive relation binding Relationship benefits and the effectiveness of the initial commercial exchange relationships (ICERs) (H6). The force of this association is revealed by the value of the coefficient of regression and by its significance.

For the salespeople in our sample, relationship investment is perceived as the cause of successfully achieving the initial sale (H7). Relationship investment is a good indicator of the degree of probability of an agreement.

The expertise of salespeople contributes to the successful achievement of the initial commercial exchange relationship (ICER) (H8). The credibility and market knowledge of salespeople reinforce the effect of relational investment on purchasers from our sample. Sales expertise is a precondition of their effectiveness in achieving the initial commercial exchange. The salesperson is recognized as enriching the exchange process by contributing to problem solving. The salesperson develops solutions, using their understanding of the purchaser to establish the relevance of their solutions within the framework of good relations. Word of Mouth explains the effectiveness of the initial commercial exchange relationships (ICERs) for our salesmen. They would like to use this WOM and exploit its positive effects. They use their references in argumentations and develop customer's satisfaction.

The relational factors and the success of initial commercial exchange relationships (ICERs) are related (H10). An initial commercial exchange relationship (ICER) is explained by the sum of the positive influences of the relational factors. This multidimensional construct is represented by the force of the positive influences of "relationship benefits" and "expertise".

The transactional factors influence the success of initial commercial exchange relationships (ICERs) directly, but also in an indirect way through trust. Trust is a partial mediator (according to the results of Sobel test) of the relation binding the transactional factors and the success of the initial commercial exchange relationship (ICER) (H11). The relational factors directly influence the success of the initial sale but also indirectly through the effect of trust. Trust constitutes a total mediator (according to the results of Sobel test) of the relation binding the relational factors and the decision to purchase.

Thus we can conclude that both relational and transactional factors impact positively upon the decision to purchase resulting in a successful initial exchange relationship. What is perhaps most interesting, however, is the differences of perception between sales people and purchasers. Salespeople perceive that success is greatly influenced by relational investment and they also stress the importance of word of mouth advocacy. Neither is a view shared by purchasers in our sample, which perhaps reflects the difference in occupational "culture" between professional sales people and buyers. Purchasers are charged with achieving economic advantage for their company from the decisions they make and have the ultimate power of decision-making, whilst sales people have traditionally perceived themselves as influencing that decision, at least in part, through developing relationships with their potential clients. Whilst our research supports the importance of relational factors in influencing the purchasing decision, it is those factors that deliver tangible relational benefits that are important, not those based on mutual liking. We perceive trust as just such a "tangible" benefit that emerges from a series of pre-commercial exchanges where both parties must demonstrate their ability to be trusted.

Discussion

This study confirms the positive influence of seven factors (transaction costs, opportunism, transactional contractual terms, expected benefits, expertise, word of mouth recommendation and trust) upon the success of first commercial exchange episodes allowing managers to better understand the factors that influence decision making and enriching the debate on negotiation effectiveness (Dupont, 2004 ; Audebert-Lasrochas, 2004 ; Barth, 2008 ; Barth and Bobot, 2011)

Transactional antecedents to the first exchange episode have a greater influence on buyers than on sellers who tend to understate the importance of transactional variables. Sales people understate the importance of transactional variables, particularly contractual standards, transaction costs and opportunism, which extends the application of Williamson (1975, 1985). It is important that sellers as well as buyers recognize and meet these transactional criteria in order to support the decision making process that leads to the first commercial exchange (Smith, 2004;-Lasrochas Audebert, 2004, Barth 2008, Barth and Bobot, 2011) .

Relational antecedents positively influence the decision to enter into the first commercial exchange. The relational constructs are illustrated most strongly by three variables, namely, the expected benefits, the expertise of the seller and to a lesser extent, the word of mouth reputation of the supplier.

Our study supports the findings of other studies into commercial decision making by purchasing and marketing functions (eg Bergadaà 2005). For example, investment in the relationship is not a prerequisite for buyers. They see time spent meeting sales people as a means to an end but relationship building is not seen as a differentiating criterion for buyers. Our buyers have rejected the hypothesis that investment in the relationship is a necessary precursor to the first commercial relationship and believe that this factor has no effect on their decision making. Buyers invest time to evaluate alternatives (Bergadaà, 2005) but the relational investment is not a factor weighing on their choice. In this way they claim to guarantee their autonomy, impartiality and independence. The investment in the relationship does not explain their decision. Their professionalism is based on objective factors (Zeyl and Small, 2004).

The sellers' view is different. They invest time and resources to initiate and enter into a business relationship first. From the sellers' perspective, their investment in the relationship positively influences the achievement of the initial sale. To them, it represents the essence of their work.

Trust mediates between relational and transactional factors. Although the role of trust in business relationships is well established in the research (Bergeron and Vachon, 2008, and Donada Nogatchewsky, 2007), it is important to consider the role of trust in the process of commercial decision making. Trust, which is developed within the context of relationship building, is an important mediator upon transactional factors taken into account in the decision making process. Thus, although not consciously recognized by buyers, it is important for sellers to build trust whilst also addressing transactional factors.

Our contribution to the effective management of the sales force is that we stress the need to develop both qualitative and quantitative targets aimed at influencing the process of making the decision to embark on an initial commercial exchange with a supplier. In meeting transactional criteria the sales process must not ignore the need to develop trust within the context of relational development.

We recommend that sales managers tailor their approach specifically to influencing the decision making process of the buyer by establishing both transactional and relational goals. This is in line with the recommendations of Moguet (2007) on managerial actions that make a successful sales team. To enhance the skills of the sales force it is important that they understand the decision making process (Barth 2008, Barth and Babot 2011). Understanding facilitates the prediction of what actors will do. From the sales perspective, in order to negotiate effectively it is necessary to adopt an approach that integrates transactional and relational determinants.

This recommendation has the potential to enrich the content of negotiation training programmes (Usinier 2004). In many programmes there is an emphasis either upon the relational approach or the transactional approach, whereas our proposal is that there should be a balance, combining both perspectives.

Initial commercial exchange relationships differ from ongoing relationships precisely because there is no history of relational experience (Marion 2001).

Our contribution allows us to envisage how business education in this field may develop. Each of our constructs can be integrated into educational sales training programmes and thus enhance operational skills. Our work emphasises the importance of adopting a normative approach that ensures all the necessary steps are followed (Macquin, 1998). Transactional determinants are associated with transaction costs can be used to underpin economic arguments that meet the expectations of buyers on financial parameters (Donada and Nogatchewsky, 2005). Increasing the impact of transactional contract norms may enhance the roles of the contract in an initial exchange (Elommal and Perrien, 2005). The use of opportunistic behaviour can add efficiency to the process (Donada and Nogatchewsky, 2007). Interpersonal exchanges allow the seller to demonstrate expertise and emphasise the expected beneficial outcomes. Our work also emphasises the place of word of mouth as a

prohibiting factor when it is negative, and supports the work of Bergeron and Vachon (2008) built on this.

The transactional and relational exchanges that precede the initial commercial exchange aim to build confidence and effect the decision positively. These developments are of particular interest in professional training, but it is the implementation of all of these constructs that allows for decision making, to lead to an effective dyadic business relationship.

Conclusion

Our reflections on the foundations of first commercial exchanges adds to our understanding of the nature of relationships that exist between the actors in the process of making the decision to do business together and extends the work of Smith (2004) and Audebert-Lasrochas (2004) on negotiation. The object of the study was to explore the process leading to the decision to establish a commercial relationship, which is why our reasoning is based on economic fundamentals that characterize the context under observation. The incompleteness of contracts and information raises questions as to the rationality of the actors party to the decision the decision. The exchange of "goods" is enhanced by the creation of a "link" (Cova, 1995) to produce a first effective relationship. It is this social dimension that enriches the process employed during decision making. Decision making is a sum of procedures developing rich content of economic and social dimensions and leads to positive decisions. It is a process built on transactional and relational factors. With this combination, we are strengthening the arguments of Marion (2001). This dual combination enriches the debate of Filser (2008) on the transactional-relational dichotomy in order to explain the mechanisms of decision making in trade relations. This dual perspective allows us to understand the business decision as a question, an environment, a continuing process, involving repeated developments, goals and results (Barth 2008, Barth and Bobot, 2011). Through this process the first commercial relationship may be extended in a temporal continuum Bergadaà (2005) into a long term relationship that impacts upon the dynamics of the sales process. Its dyadic dimension, effectiveness of the decision is obtained in a reciprocal manner, common and shared. The axiom optimization utilities but is made by and for both parties. The decision is thus constructed from economic fundamentals, but also through social interaction . It is the implementation of a decision process that enhances the rationality of actors and including otherness necessary to its effectiveness.

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