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# Satisfaction and attitudinal responses: indirect effects of involvement and reputation

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to identify the influence of the company's reputation and individual consumer involvement in the relationship between satisfaction, loyalty and willingness to pay more for a product.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The method used is quantitative, by means of a survey with real consumers of automotive services of two vehicle dealerships, whose data were analyzed through linear regression analysis and conditional analysis of moderation.

**Findings** – The authors have identified that the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty and between loyalty and willingness to pay more for a product is entirely moderated by the (high) reputation of the brand and the (high) individual involvement of the consumer.

**Practical implications** – The study contributes to marketing managers as it demonstrates effect of brand reputation and involvement. Therefore, it is understood that these variables need to be considered in satisfaction surveys, as it has been proven that satisfaction alone cannot explain the variables of business performance (loyalty and willingness to pay).

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Aleixo Fernandes completed the conception, operational definition, supervision of data collection and initial analysis. Marcelo Moll prepared the general orientation of the study. Evandro Lopes contributed the final analysis and the review of the work. Felipe Quevedo contributed the proposal preparation phase of research.



**Originality/value** – The greatest innovation of this study is the identification of the total moderation between stated satisfaction and loyalty and between satisfaction and willingness to pay more. It has been demonstrated that high levels of brand reputation coupled with high levels of consumer involvement account for the fully dependent variables.

**Keywords** Satisfaction, Loyalty, Services, Involvement, Reputation

**Paper type** Research paper

## 1. Introduction

Several studies have been conducted regarding the importance of satisfaction as a background for consumer attitudes. In this article we test the direct relationship between satisfaction and the attitudinal variables of consumer response (loyalty and willingness to pay), in the presence of two moderators, reputation and involvement, simultaneously. Some researches point that is difficult to accept there is a positive, linear relationship between customer satisfaction and attitude unconditionally ([Hamilton, Kaltcheva, & Rohm, 2016](#)).

Few studies propose the examination of the direct relationship of satisfaction with after-sales services in conjunction with product loyalty. Some studies investigate dimensions of after-sales services and their influence on consumer satisfaction, retention and loyalty of domestic products, without directly relating satisfaction with after-sales services to loyalty ([Fazlzadeh, Bagherzadeh, & Mohamadi, 2011](#); [Murali, Pugazhendhi, & Muralidharan, 2016](#)). Additionally, [Ahmad and Mohsin Butt \(2012\)](#) studied the impact of aftermarket services in the automotive sector regarding brand value.

In our bibliographic survey, no previous study proposed testing the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty and willingness to pay (WTP), while taking into account reputation and involvement simultaneously. A greater understanding of the effects of developed brand reputation and identifying emotional effects of involvement is a benefit to reviewing each separately as well as the two together. Thus, our study differs from previous ones in that it seeks to understand more than one source of the effects of satisfaction on consumer attitudes. Consequently, we will be able to understand the effect of the context of brand perception by the respondent and the respondent's emotional relationship with the product category.

[Oliver \(1980\)](#) proposed his satisfaction model in function of expectation and non-confirmation of expectation in relation to a product or service. Extensive studies have been conducted on the effects of satisfaction and value chain of satisfaction. [Eisenbeiss, Cornelißen, Backhaus, and Hoyer \(2014\)](#) evaluated willingness to pay more and share of wallet regarding satisfaction and included reputation and involvement as moderator variables without considering the effects of involvement and reputation together. Therefore, unawareness about these effects still remained. While considering reputation and involvement, the authors point out a plausible explanation for the nonlinearity and asymmetry of the function between satisfaction, WTP and share of wallet ([Eisenbeiss et al., 2014](#)). However, this study goes a step further in discussing how the levels of each variable influence the results of satisfaction.

The work by [Eisenbeiss et al. \(2014\)](#) was carried out in hedonic contexts but did not clarify if moderation is present in mandatory consumption relationships. It is important to study the effect in an obligatory context because the emotional component of satisfaction explains intention and repurchase behavior better than the cognitive component ([Allen, Machleit, & Kleine, 1992](#)). Thus, the study context applied enables us to understand the relationship among the variables in an environment not yet studied.

[Allen et al. \(1992\)](#) have shown that, in relationships, emotions are better predictors for behavior than cognition when action is required. In evaluating reputation and involvement together, we intend to demonstrate that experiences related to emotions will prevail over cognitive ones as predictors in forming attitudes that precedes behavior. In this study, periodic automotive review services characterize the required consumption context, which is a condition for the manufacturer to honor product guarantee. Loyalty and WTP will be considered in relation to the automobile. The intention is to verify whether satisfaction measured in after-sales is associated with loyalty and WTP. To fill the proposed gap, the main objective of this paper is to identify the influence of the company's reputation and consumer involvement simultaneously on the relationship between consumer satisfaction, loyalty and the WTP.

In addition to contributing to a greater understanding of the effects of satisfaction, this work brings empirical evidence closer to the reality of day-to-day market situations, demonstrating the point at which reputation and involvement are (or are not) significant. This enables us to recognize which amount of service reputation and level of involvement increases satisfaction and positively influences loyalty and WTP through the tests proposed by [Hayes \(2017\)](#). This study also contributes to marketing managers as it demonstrates how these factors need to be considered in satisfaction surveys.

## 2. Theoretical framework, variables and hypotheses

Products or services capable of satisfying consumers are those capable of meeting consumers' needs in a sufficient way. With the advancement of studies, satisfaction is understood as a process, incorporating consumer perceptions before, during and after consumption ([Oliver, 2014](#)). Satisfaction is the consumer response to meeting expectations. It refers to a judgment of the characteristic of the product or service provided with relation to the level of fulfillment of consumption-related expectations ([Oliver, 2014](#)). Since the 1980s, satisfaction acknowledges an association with negative and positive variance in emotions related to consumer expectations, and outcomes above expectations are capable of positively influencing consumers' attitudes.

Consumer expectations serve as a foundation for the satisfaction. If the service or product exceeds the expectation, then reality is better than expected, and if the product or service falls short of the initial expectation, then reality is worse than expected, and if reality is comparable to expectations, then the product or service meets what was expected ([Oliver & DeSarbo, 1988](#); [Oliver, 1993](#); [Stauss & Neuhaus, 1997](#)). At least three studies ([Allen et al., 1992](#); [Martin, O'Neill, Hubbard, & Palmer, 2008](#); [Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2004](#)) suggest that emotion-based satisfaction is a stronger predictor of behavioral intentions than cognition measured satisfaction.

Satisfaction studies have evolved to recognize that satisfaction alone is not the only predictor of attitudinal and/or behavioral responses, such as loyalty and willingness to pay more, and other variables need to be considered, such as reputation and involvement ([Eisenbeiss et al., 2014](#)). [Eisenbeiss et al. \(2014\)](#) proposed an experiment based on pleasurable activities for consumers or issues related to self-esteem (holiday travel and choice of haircut sites). After-sales services (object of study of this work) occur in potentially adverse situations. In the context of this research, the consumer is obliged to periodically visit a car dealership for maintenance services; otherwise, the warranty of the product will be invalidated.

This work is aligned with [Amine \(1998\)](#), and loyalty is treated as a positive attitude toward the brand, both as an intention to repurchase and to recommend the brand (word of mouth). When the situation is service-related, risk perception influences loyalty and

thus supplemental dimensions should be incorporated into the analysis, notably quality of service and consumer satisfaction (Rundle-Thiele & Bennett, 2001). The relationship between consumer satisfaction and loyalty was also supported by Oliver (1999), and empirical studies found a positive correlation between consumer satisfaction (CS) with a given product or service and supplier loyalty and is represented by intention to repurchase the products (Flint, Blocker, & Boutin, 2011; Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996).

The works by Homburg, Koschate, and Hoyer (2005) and Eisenbeiss *et al.* (2014) demonstrate that there is a positive relationship between consumer satisfaction and attitudinal responses of loyalty and WTP. Together, loyalty and WTP indicate how much the customer intends to contribute financially to the company. As loyalty and WTP are measures related to the actual or potential economic contribution of the consumer, it is inferred that the effect of consumer satisfaction on loyalty and WTP will be similar.

In CS studies, it is pointed out that CS contains cognitive and affective elements (Oliver, 1993). Positive and negative emotions (joy/non-satisfaction) arise from the cognitive process of comparing expected and actual performance of a product or service and contribute to satisfaction - or dissatisfaction (Oliver, 1993). Based on these studies, satisfaction can be considered a mixture of cognition and emotion, and in certain compositions, emotions play a more significant role in the formation of satisfaction (Allen *et al.*, 1992; Fournier & Mick, 1999).

Company reputation is defined as the general evaluation of the company formed through experience (Wiles, 2007). In this way, reputation is built over time, and, to establish a positive reputation, the company makes significant investments of time and money (Peterson, 2018; Purohit & Srivastava, 2001). Reputation provides the consumer with important information regarding the expected quality of the product or service before the consumer acts (Purohit & Srivastava, 2001; Ramalho & Resende, 2016), and in the case of services, these clues are more important and meaningful (Ashraf, Ilyas, Imtiaz, & Ahmad, 2018; Zeithaml, 1988). Reputation of the company is the main variable linked to the cognitive aspect of satisfaction as it provides clues for the consumer to create an expected satisfaction for the service provided by the company, i.e. the level of satisfaction that will be achieved if the expectations defined are confirmed throughout the consumer experience with the company (Eisenbeiss *et al.*, 2014).

The ability to predict the level of service intensifies at higher reputation levels. Consumers have more stable and reliable expectations the higher the company's reputation and this can be more indicative for the CS process. When the consumer experiences a product or service failure that contradicts the anticipated expectation, he or she contemplates if the cause is fleeting or random and that it will not occur again (Weiner, 2013). This reaction is more likely to occur when previous expectations are clearly defined and perceived as reliable. It is assumed that for reputable companies, the consumer will attribute the failure to unexpected causes, arising from chance or coincidence and not to systematic errors of the company (Eisenbeiss *et al.*, 2014). In other words, the company's reputation determines the consumer's sensitivity to small deviations from expected satisfaction (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Ashraf *et al.*, 2018).

Companies with high reputation are protected against strong reactions on the part of consumers in cases of non-confirmation of the expectation. On the other hand, for low-end companies, as the expectation tends to be lower, making small efforts to meet consumer expectations significantly increase their perception of satisfaction. Acting on the confirmation/non-confirmation of expectation affects the perceived satisfaction, and

consequently reputation, and will influence the intensity of attitudinal responses (loyalty and WTP).

Based on these arguments of expected interactions between reputation and involvement with satisfaction, on elements such as loyalty and WTP, one can state the following hypotheses:

- H1. The positive effect of satisfaction on loyalty will be lower when reputation is high.
- H2. The positive effect of satisfaction on WTP will be lower when the reputation is high.

In addition to the variables already analyzed, individual involvement is understood as one of the main moderators of social relationships (Smith, Wallace, Vandenberg, & Mondore, 2018). Involvement is the perceived personal relevance of a stimulus to an individual and the stimulus can be a product or service (Greenwald & Leavitt, 1984). Several studies have demonstrated the importance of involvement in consumer decision making and establish involvement as one of the principles of consumer behavior theory (Alves, Lopes, & Hernandez, 2017; Bloch & Richins, 1983; Liang, 2012; Matos & Veiga, 2005; Wu, Liu, & Hu, 2015).

Emotions influence the relationship between CS and the client's contributions to the company. Emotions will be more intense the greater the distance between the expected and obtained performance (Eisenbeiss *et al.*, 2014). The greater the personal involvement, the greater the strength of the emotions that emerge from the experience of consumption as a result of the cognitive process (Bloemer & De Ruyter, 1999). Consequently, attitudinal responses (loyalty and WTP) associated with the consumer experience will be more emotion-laden for consumers highly involved with the product or service (Park & Mittal, 1985; Zaichkowsky, 1986). This notion is consistent when CS is considered to be a mixture of cognition and emotion and there are types of consumption in which emotions play a more dominant role in the formation of satisfaction (Allen *et al.*, 1992; Fournier & Mick, 1999). In this way, involvement can be considered as a dominant variable linked to emotions that emerge from the cognitive process of satisfaction. Thus, we can elaborate the third and fourth hypotheses of this work:

- H3. The positive effect of satisfaction on loyalty is lower when involvement is low.
- H4. The positive effect of satisfaction on WTP is lower when involvement is low.

In isolation, both reputation and involvement have positive effects in the main relationship. When discussed simultaneously, the two variables continue to have the same presence in the interaction with satisfaction. However, these variables show an interaction that is not constant.

Attitudinal antecedents can be divided into three types: cognitive, emotional and psychological. In consumer relations, in a context marked by lower freedom of choice, the dimension that stands out is the emotional, surpassing the other dimensions in terms of relevance (Allen *et al.*, 1992; Dick & Basu, 1994). After-sales services in the automotive sector fall within the context of less freedom of choice, as consumers must carry out mandatory periodic reviews, otherwise the vehicle warranty will be revoked.

Among the variables of this study, satisfaction, through the cognitive process, results in emotions and involvement. Although not a measure of emotion, satisfaction is associated with the intensity of the emotions that arise as a result of the cognitive process. It is important to notice that emotional satisfaction is a stronger predictor (Allen *et al.*, 1992;

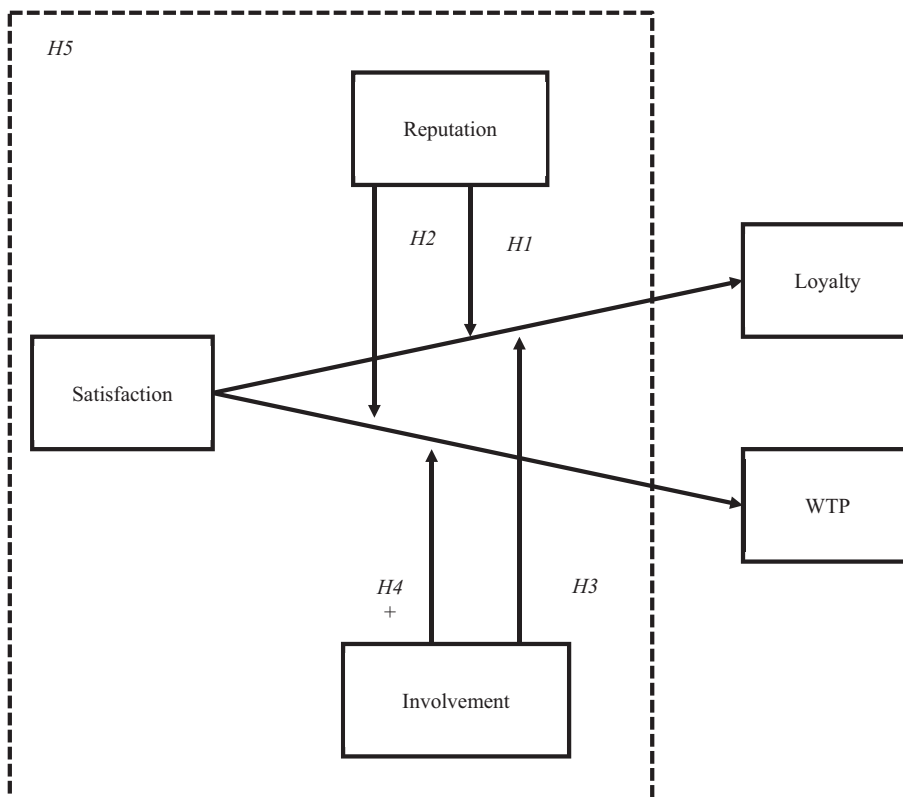
Martin *et al.*, 2008; Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2004), and involvement should enhance the reputation effect by broadening the effect in the context of mandatory services. Higher level of involvement should put reputation in a more relevant position in the hierarchy of attributes evaluated by consumers (Irmak, Sen, & Bhattacharya, 2015; Pritchard & Wilson, 2018). Faced with this:

*H5.* The higher the involvement, the greater effect of the interaction between satisfaction and reputation.

Figure 1 presents the conceptual model of the work.

### 3. Method

Our study is positive, quantitative, explanatory and transversal (Malhotra, 2007). To operationalize this research, consumer satisfaction was measured based on the after-sales services of automobiles and the effect on loyalty and WTP, and then comparing the results to when reputation and involvement are more (and less) present. We used herein a non-probabilistic convenience sampling, composed of consumers who used after-sales service of vehicle maintenance and/or improvement (Malhotra, 2007).



Source: The authors

Figure 1.  
Conceptual model



The sample is justified by the obligation of consumers to complete periodic maintenance services required by the manufacturer, which is the desired context for this study, thus respondents are those who used after-sales services.

### 3.1 Scales and measures

For the elaboration of the questionnaire, we used scales of previous studies. To estimate loyalty, two items of the scale by [Urdan and Zuñiga \(2001\)](#) were used. For measuring WTP, we used four items of the scale by [Jones, Taylor, and Bansal \(2008\)](#), and four items of the scale by [Homburg et al. \(2005\)](#). To measure reputation, we used three items of the scale by [Purohit and Srivastava \(2001\)](#). Finally, to measure involvement, we used three items by [Laurent and Kapferer \(1985\)](#). The statements are given in [Appendix](#). All items were estimated using an 11-point Likert scale, which ranged from 0 (Totally Disagree) to 10 (Totally Agree). In addition to the items of the scales, demographic variables were requested for further qualification of the sample.

### 3.2 Field research

The questionnaire was made available through the internet, using the SurveyMonkey tool (Retrieved from [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)). Consumers' name and email addresses were obtained from the registers of Ford and Mitsubishi dealerships. Customers who bought a new vehicle between 2014 and 2015 were invited to participate in the survey. Data collection took place in the second half of 2016. As the maintenance of the vehicles occur every six months, we ensure these consumers used the maintenance service at least once. Respondents are the users of the car, and only the maintenance services performed at authorized dealerships of the brands were evaluated. The questions were randomized, except for the demographic data that were collected at the end of the questionnaire.

### 3.3 Preparation for data analysis

The PROCESS macro ([Hayes, 2017](#)) was used in conjunction with the SPSS software to analyze reputation and involvement as continuous moderators. The use of PROCESS allows the independent variables (factors present or not) to be scalar or dichotomous while performing all the calculations of a linear regression with multiple moderation. In this research, Model 2 of the process was used, with double moderation without interaction among the moderator variables. The bootstrapping option was used.

From the 4,500 consumers invited to participate, 202 valid questionnaires were obtained, representing a sufficient participation of 4.48 per cent. Among the respondents, 60.9 per cent ( $n = 123$ ) were male and 39.1 per cent ( $n = 79$ ) female. The average age of the respondents was 45 years; 85.6 per cent ( $n = 173$ ) had bachelor or graduate degrees; 42.6 per cent ( $n = 86$ ) declared a monthly income above R\$15,000; and in average, the respondents affirmed to purchasing nine vehicles during the lifetime. From this, we can affirm that respondents are accustomed to car dealership processes.

From the sample, 12.4 per cent ( $n = 25$ ) respondents reported that they had never purchased a vehicle from that brand before; 36.6 per cent ( $n = 74$ ) reported that this would be their second car of the same brand; while 43.1 per cent ( $n = 87$ ) of respondents indicated it was their third vehicle of the same brand, indicating that most of the sample had a repurchase behavior. The outliers analysis, which followed the recommendations by [Freire, Senise, dos Reis, and Ono \(2017\)](#), indicated that ten records were biased. One questionnaire presented all responses equal to 0, while the other nine questionnaires had all responses equal to 10. These records were excluded, leaving 192 observations for conducting the study. We treated the two inverted questions of the scales for correction of the signal.



The reliability analysis of the variables indicated the need to exclude only one assertion (The price of maintenance services is not an important factor in the purchase decision of vehicles of this brand) resulting in acceptable Cronbach's alpha coefficients ( $>0.7$ , according to Hair, Black, & Sant'Anna, 2009).

Two consistency analyses were conducted to ensure the quality of the database (Freire *et al.*, 2017). In the first analysis, data were analyzed based on the response time of each respondent. The mean response time was 11 min and 35 s ( $\sigma = 8.32$  min). The Student's *t*-test of independent samples indicated there is no significant difference in the means of the answers given by all participants, no matter the response time. The second consistency analysis aimed to analyze whether there is a difference in the pattern of responses during the application period of the questionnaire. The data set was divided into four groups according to quartile of the collection time cut. Again, the Student's *t*-test for independent samples revealed no significant difference between the groups. Given these results, we proceeded with the data analysis.

#### 4. Results

In this section, we describe the results obtained in the empirical phase of the study as well as the analysis performed.

We generated the constructs with the averages of each item, which resulted in Satisfaction ( $\alpha = 0.945$ ), Loyalty ( $\alpha = 0.749$ ), WTP ( $\alpha = 0.719$ ), Reputation ( $\alpha = 0.751$ ), and Involvement ( $\alpha = 0.831$ ). Following the analysis, Pearson's correlation test was performed, presented in Table I. As expected, Satisfaction presents a positive correlation with Loyalty and WTP. Reputation has positive correlation with Satisfaction, Loyalty and WTP. Likewise, Involvement has a positive correlation with Loyalty, WTP, Satisfaction and Reputation. All the correlations presented are significant.

For the analysis of regressions and weights, we used a dummy variable based on the average satisfaction ( $-x = 6.82$ ) and individuals with above-average satisfaction in group 1 (high satisfaction). Then, we performed two simple regression tests between satisfaction and loyalty and satisfaction and WTP. For loyalty, the results were as follows:  $R^2 = 0.305$ ;  $p$ -value  $< 0.001$ ;  $\beta$  satisfaction = 2,822;  $p$ -value  $< 0.001$ . For WTP, the results were:  $R^2 = 0.216$ ;  $p$ -value  $< 0.001$ ;  $\beta$  satisfaction = 2,397;  $p$ -value  $< 0.001$ .

We continued using PROCESS to calculate the regressions, simultaneously considering reputation and involvement. The results are presented according to the statistical models suggested by Hayes (2017). The results for the dependent variable loyalty are shown in Figure 2 and for the dependent variable WTP in Figure 3.

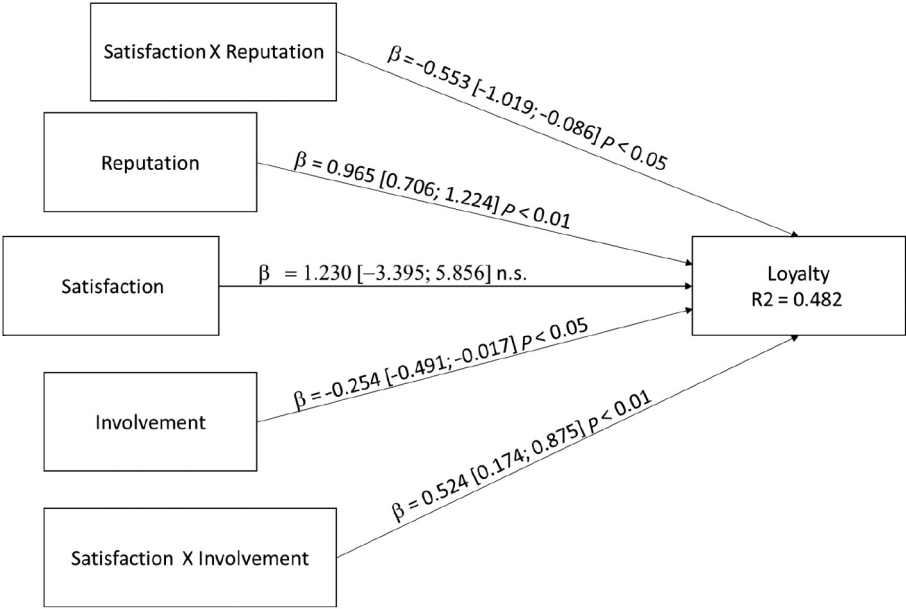
The regression analysis identified no direct effect of satisfaction on loyalty ( $\beta = 1,230$ , 95 per cent CI  $[-3.396, 5.586]$ ,  $p > 10 = \text{n.s.}$ ). However, there is a positive effect of involvement on the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty ( $\beta = 0.524$ , 95 per cent CI  $[0.174; 0.875]$ ,

Variable	Loyalty	WTP	Satisfaction	Reputation	PurchaseInt
Loyalty	1				
WTP	0.438**	1			
Satisfaction	0.666**	0.524**	1		
Reputation	0.644**	0.402**	0.735**	1	
Involvement	0.03**	0.164*	0.149*	0.309**	1

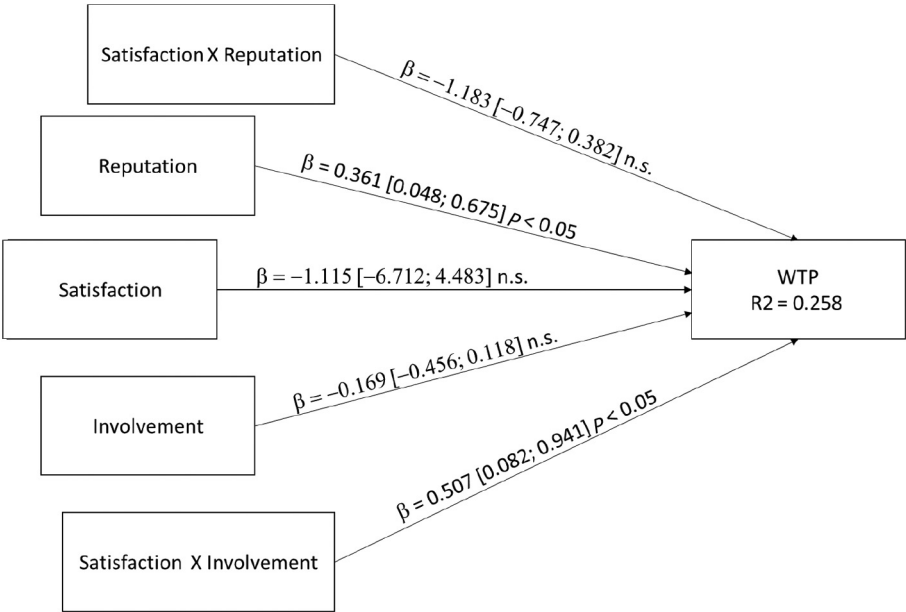
**Notes:** \*\* Correlation is significant to 0.01 (2-tails); \* correlation is significant to 0.05 (2-tails)

**Table I.**  
Pearson's correlation

**Figure 2.**  
Statistical model –  
regression  
Satisfaction ×  
Loyalty moderated  
by Reputation and  
Involvement



**Figure 3.**  
Statistical model –  
regression  
Satisfaction ×  
moderate WTP by  
Reputation and  
Involvement



$p < 0.01$ ); similarly, there is a positive effect of reputation on the same relationship ( $\beta = 0.553$ , 95 per cent CI [1.019, 0.086],  $p < 0.05$ ). The observation of moderation indicates that the satisfaction effect is better understood in the presence of the moderating variables reputation and involvement. As the  $R^2$  of this model is greater than the  $R^2$  obtained without moderation (from 0.305 to 0.482 represents an increase of 58 per cent), we increased the complexity of the model because it better explains the relationship among the variables.

Again, there is no direct effect of satisfaction on the dependent variable - WTP ( $\beta = -1.115$ , 95%CI [-6.713, 4.483],  $p > 0.10 = \text{ns.}$ ). Once more, what explains WTP is the positive relationship between involvement and satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.507$ , 95%CI [0.082, 0.941],  $p < 0.05$ ). However, there was no observed moderating influence over perceived reputation in the relationship between satisfaction and WTP ( $\beta = -1.183$ ; IC95% [-0.747; 0.382];  $p > 0.10 = \text{n.s.}$ ). We only observed a direct positive effect between reputation and WTP ( $\beta = 0.361$ ; IC95% [0.048; 0.675];  $p < 0.05$ ). The  $R^2$  of this model is larger than the  $R^2$  obtained without the moderators (from 0.216 to 0.258 represents an increase of 19.4 per cent); therefore, we increased the complexity of the model because it better explains the relationship among the variables.

One of PROCESS' features is to indicate the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable in the various levels of moderation and to indicate whether the effect is significant or not. Tables II and III were created using data from this resource, considering the involvement and reputation in three levels (high, medium and low). The tables are important to help confirm  $H3$  to  $H5$ .

Table II presents the conditional effect of satisfaction on the loyalty variable at each level of involvement and reputation. The effect of satisfaction conditioned by moderators is significant for low reputation values (at any level of involvement); as involvement increases,

Involvement	Reputation	Effect	$p$ -value
Low	Low	1.369	0.033
Low	Medium	0.444	0.353
Low	High	-0.481	0.425
Medium	Low	2.210	-
Medium	Medium	1.285	-
Medium	High	0.360	0.451
High	Low	2.960	-
High	Medium	2.035	-
High	High	1.110	0.026

**Table II.**  
Effect of conditional  
of satisfaction on  
loyalty

Involvement	Reputation	Effect	$p$ -value
Low	Low	1.251	0.107
Low	Medium	0.945	0.104
Low	High	0.639	0.381
Medium	Low	2.063	0.004
Medium	Medium	1.757	-
Medium	High	1.451	0.013
High	Low	2.788	0.001
High	Medium	2.482	-
High	High	2.176	-

**Table III.**  
Conditional  
satisfaction effect on  
WTP

the effect of satisfaction on other levels of reputation also becomes significant. Regarding the intensity of the effect, it decreases when reputation increases, and increases when involvement increases, thus confirming hypotheses *H1*, *H3* and *H5*. The major significant effects presented in Table II shows that the positive effect of satisfaction depends on high involvement and high reputation and not only on the increase of the two conditions.

Table III presents the conditional effect of satisfaction on the variable WTP at each level of involvement and reputation. It is worth noting that the effect of satisfaction conditioned by the moderators is not significant for low levels of satisfaction and involvement. The satisfaction effect becomes significant for middle and high levels of involvement and reputation. In relation to the effect intensity, this decreases when reputation increases and increases when involvement increases, partially confirming *H2* (since moderation is not significant in all evaluated points) and *H4* and *H5*.

## 5. Discussion and final considerations

Our results are in line with results of previous studies, which demonstrate that satisfaction, although an important component in the relationship with the consumer, by itself, it is not sufficient to predict attitudinal responses (Cool, Keiningham, Aksoy, & Hsu, 2007; Eisenbeiss *et al.*, 2014; Feng & Wang, 2016; Kumar, Dalla Pozza, & Ganesh, 2013; Pappas, Pateli, Giannakos, & Chrissikopoulos, 2014; Ryu & Han, 2010; Suh & Youjae, 2006). We show that satisfaction, when considered alone, has less explanatory power than when considering the moderating variables. In the specific context of compulsory consumption relationships, the satisfaction effect is mitigated by the effect of the interaction between satisfaction and reputation and involvement but can be increased in the extreme conditions of the two moderating variables when evaluated simultaneously for loyalty.

It is not that satisfaction is not important or has no relation to attitudinal responses, but it is necessary to put into perspective how attitudinal (and behavioral) responses are influenced by moderating variables. Thus, low reputation companies, by investing in customer satisfaction, get a quick initial response to the investments. With the evolution of consumer relations, the company improves the perception of reputation with consumers and the answer is not always apparent, which could minimize obtained returns of investments. If the services or products offered to the consumer stimulate consumer involvement in some way and the reputation is further increased, then returns on investments in customer satisfaction will be enhanced. If the context of consumption is characterized by obligation, the added variables linked are more relevant, directly or indirectly, to emotions. Thus, we demonstrate that it is not the unconditional effect of satisfaction that is directly linked to attitudinal responses, but rather the conditioned effects of satisfaction in the presence of reputation and involvement that shape consumer attitudes.

As shown in this paper, the relationship between satisfaction and attitude is best explained when conditioned to the effects of interactions with brand reputation and consumer involvement. Reputation provides clues to the consumer so that he or she will build up a cognitive expectation regarding the quality of services that will be obtained from the company, and therefore, acts on the cognitive aspect of satisfaction. Consumer involvement determines the strength with which emotions will emerge from the experience of consumption and after the cognitive process of satisfaction and thus act on the emotional elements generated as a result of the cognitive process of satisfaction. This formed the perception of satisfaction under the influence of these conditioning variables and the result is perceived in consumer loyalty and willingness to pay (WTP).

Loyalty and WTP have been shown to be sensitive to involvement, and the moderating effect is absolute. Reputation has only a direct influence on WTP, which was not specifically addressed by the initial assumptions but was implicit in the proposed moderation, conversely, the reputation directly influences loyalty. This work contributes to satisfaction studies by demonstrating that the effect of satisfaction on loyalty and WTP is not a direct effect but conditioned to other variables, especially when considered consumption relationships marked by obligation. In addition, the effect of satisfaction on loyalty and WTP decreases as reputation grows and increases as involvement increases.

Another theoretical contribution of this work is that we demonstrate the mechanism by which emotional satisfaction is a stronger predictor of behavioral intentions than cognitive satisfaction, as suggested by [Martin \*et al.\* \(2008\)](#), and [Zeelenberg and Pieters \(2004\)](#). Involvement (linked to emotions) makes the interaction between reputation (linked to cognition) and satisfaction stronger. The results suggest this effect is independent of the dependent variable studied herein, and that the magnitude of the effect makes the direct effect of satisfaction on the non-significant dependent variable. This total moderating effect, to the best of our knowledge, had not been observed in any previous study.

As a contribution to management, we suggest that in setting up strategies for brand building, marketing managers should focus on consumer satisfaction, credibility and brand reputation as differentiation strategies. Rethinking opportunities for consumer involvement with the brand will benefit the brand. Reviewing satisfaction metrics, including measuring the emotions involved in providing after-sales services, will effectively guide companies toward after-sales policies. Our results indicate that prior knowledge of the emotions experienced by the consumer can be an important information in the conduction of future interactions with the consumers.

It would be interesting to include in future satisfaction surveys, emotional dimensions related to the use of the service network established by the manufacturers to perform mandatory maintenance services, comparing with non-mandatory services, which could further evidence the role of emotions in the formation of attitudinal responses. Testing the connected effect of variables related to emotion and cognition on other dependent variables will help to consolidate the model of total moderation initially demonstrated in this study, but is still poorly understood. In another line, the evolution of the study could also occur from other variables that may influence the formation of attitudinal responses, such as perceived value and price and the inclusion of new variables may increase the explanation power of the model.

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## Appendix

## Satisfaction and attitudinal responses

Constructs	Affirmatives	Source
Loyalty	The next time I buy a new vehicle it will be the same brand (assembler). I would recommend to friends to purchase a vehicle of this brand (assembler)	Urdan and Zuñiga (2001)
WTP	I'm likely to pay a little more for my car maintenance services. The price of maintenance services is not an important factor in the decision to purchase vehicles of this brand. If service prices rose by around 10% I would probably continue to use vehicles of this brand.	Jones <i>et al.</i> (2008)
Satisfaction	I am willing to pay more for the review services of this brand Considering the whole I was satisfied with the services of the dealership. The services of the dealership met my expectations. The dealership's services were close to ideal. Overall, how satisfied are you with the services of the dealership	Homburg <i>et al.</i> (2005)
Reputation	The brand of car I use is dependable. The car maker that produces my car is known for producing high quality vehicles. The dealership where I drive my car has a reputation for providing high quality services	Purohit and Srivastava (2001)
Involvement	I choose my cars carefully. Which car I'm going to buy is very interesting for me. Choosing the car is an important decision for me	Laurent and Kapferer (1985)

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**Table AI.**  
Scales used in the  
study

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