

IMPACTS OF SALESPERSON-BRAND RELATIONSHIP ON PERFORMANCE OF SALESPERSON IN RETAILING

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ABSTRACT

In competitive markets with multiple brand alternatives, seeking a differential has been a recurring task for companies nowadays. In this sense, people have become an essential asset in the company and manifold studies focused on the relationship of consumers with brands. But few studies have examined other types of brand relationships, such as that of the salesperson in this scenario, and how this relationship can influence sales performance. This research aims to understand the background of the performance of retail salespeople, this work unprecedentedly integrates the concepts of Salesperson-Brand Relationship (SBR) and Salesperson-Brand Attachment (SBA). For this, a survey was carried out with 206 salespeople. It is one of the first researches that seeks to develop an integrative model of the salesperson-brand relationship and its consequences, the work demonstrates significant relationships between SBR and SBA, job satisfaction and sales performance. The main results indicate that the salesperson-brand relationship impacts the performance of small retailers since results point out that the salesperson's relationship with the brand plays a significant role in their performance, commitment, effort, and satisfaction with work. According to the survey results, companies aiming at retail sales performance should develop "Brand Attachment" on their sales team to stimulate job satisfaction and commitment.

Keywords: Salesperson-Brand Relationship (SBR); Salesperson-Brand Attachment (SBA); Salespeople Performance; Retail

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INTRODUCTION

In the consumer research field, the notion that consumers form strong connections with the brand is already recognized (Fournier, 1998, Kervyn, Fiske and Malone, 2012, Fournier and Alvarez, 2012). When a consumer has a strong relationship with the brand he relates to it more, providing growth and this type of relationship has been the object of research in the field of marketing (Allison et al., 2016).

Blackston (1992) was one of the first to identify an obvious connection between consumers and a brand. He regards relationships with brands as analogous to relationships between people. Fournier (1998) suggests that the brand relationship is an emotional bond resulting from the interaction between consumers and brands. Dozens of theoretical research, models, and theoretical frameworks for consumer-brand relationship development followed within the literature (Thomson, MacInnis and Park 2005, MacInnis, Park and Priester 2009, Malar et al., 2011, Fournier and Alvarez 2012), but it is still necessary to consider that this idea can also be extrapolated to other factors, thus applied to a brand's employees (Michel, Merk and Eroglu 2015, Allison et al 2016).

Considering the current scenario of strong competition in several markets, studying and analyzing each factor influencing the sales performance of a brand is of fundamental importance. The role of companies today is not just to deliver products or services, but to solve customers' problems. The role of salespeople was to impart knowledge, and this generated a greater challenge to them (Ingram et al., 2008; Verbeke, DIETZ and VERWAAL, 2011, DONASSOLO and MATOS, 2012).

In this way, the role of the salesperson begins to gain prominence and the understanding of the factors influencing their performance can be decisive for the company's survival (Verbeke, DIETZ and VERWAAL, 2011, DONASSOLO and MATOS 2012). Due to the importance of deepening knowledge about organizational performance, researchers began to investigate within the area of Management Science, especially in the late 1980s, motivation and its linkage with the performance of salespeople in different sectors of the economy (Nizza, 2015).

Within this conceptual scope of salesperson and brand relationship, Michel, Merk and Eroglu (2015) developed and conceptualized the Salesperson-Brand Relationship (SBR), which consists of an interaction that allows the establishment of a unique bond between the brand and the salesperson, in which the intensity and strength of this connection is determinant of the quality of the relationship. They postulate that the SBR is structured around cognitive and affective dimensions, assuming multiple forms and meanings, which generate emotions in salespeople.

In this sense, it is also observed in the literature, other efforts to explore the relationships between brands, attitudes, and performance of salespeople as stated by Hughes and Ahearne's (2010). Allison, Flaherty, Jung, and Washburn (2016) developed a concept called Salesperson-Brand Attachment (SBA) in which the salesperson is able to develop a relationship of attachment to the brand, seeking to verify its relationships with sales performance. Another research that investigated the relationship of attachment to the brand and the consequences for the salesperson is from the authors Gillespie and Noble (2017), the results found that when the identification of a salesperson with the brand increases, the attachment also increases. This confirms the concept constructed by the authors Allison et al (2016). However, in Gillespie and Noble's (2017) research the focus was not to investigate the impact of attachment on sales effort and its consequences on salesperson's performance, and it is a suggestion point for future research.

It is considered that there are still few studies that focus on the relationship between salespeople and brands. The researches found also do not integrate SBR with the SBA and do not reach the level of SBR's relationship with SBA with the performance of the salespeople. In the literature, there is still this huge gap that needs to be filled.

Considering the importance of the topic and the scarcity of studies on the relationship between salespeople and brands (SBR), the purpose of this study is to identify the retail antecedents that affect the motivation of the retail salesperson, it is intended to contribute with an unprecedented research that explores the relationships between the salesperson-brand relationship (SBR) with the salesperson's brand attachment (SBA) as well as its consequences on the attitudes and performance of salespeople.

It is hoped that the contributions of this research may foster an understanding of the phenomenon, as well as other relationships that may reveal elements of academic and managerial relevance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Small Retail and Its Importance

Small retailers account for a large part of Brazil's labor force and it moves the economy, according to data from the Brazilian Institute of Applied Geophysics (IBGE) in 2015 (most recently available), retail trade in Brazil had a net operating revenue of R\$ 1,389,794,645.00 (BRL) in 2015, and according to Serasa Experian (2018) in 2017, only in Brazil, the retail trade grew by 7.3% in relation to the previous year. Retailing is considered one of the most important sources of labor contracts in the country, in addition to its relevance in the economy's movement. They are known as neighborhood stores (BARKI, PARENTE, 2010), as they seek to establish themselves near consumers to facilitate access, being the link that has greater contact with the consumer and their needs and desires, especially those that serve the population of low income.

Another important issue that must be highlighted about retailing is the role of the retailer, especially in the small retail industry, such as Arndt, Arnold and Landry (2006), Singh and Koshy (2010), Kim and Kim (2012) and Andrade et al (2017) have highlighted this relevance, but with the focus on the tasks assigned to them. According to Kim and Kim (2012), they can influence the consumer. Andrade et al. (2017) state that the salesperson is the individual who represents the organizations to their customers; Its main function is to sell merchandise but also to deal with tasks such as dealing with distributors, attending meetings, attending services necessary to the products it sells, trips, communication and information, training, among others (SINGH and KOSHY, 2010).

Andrade et al. (2017) point out that it is common for small retailers to have high contact and interaction with customers, needing to be divided into many activities, as well as sales: supplying shelves, talking with clients on the telephone, organizing exhibitors, assisting in exchanges and returns inventory, among others (ARNDT, ARNOLD and LANDRY, 2006).

While the studies of Guo (2012), Bendaputi, Leone (2002), Haytko (2004), Plalmatier et al. (2007) and Guo (2012) focus on the relationship that the salesperson develops with his client, taking into consideration the positives and negatives of this type of relationship. Guo (2012) states that the salesperson-customer relationship is a well discussed subject in the literature, presenting positive and negative points. For example, at the same time as the salesperson can be

a figure of influence in the purchase of the customer, from the perspective of the company there may be a risk in this relationship since the customer can transfer its loyalty to the salesperson and not the brand (BENDAPUTI, LEONE , 2002).

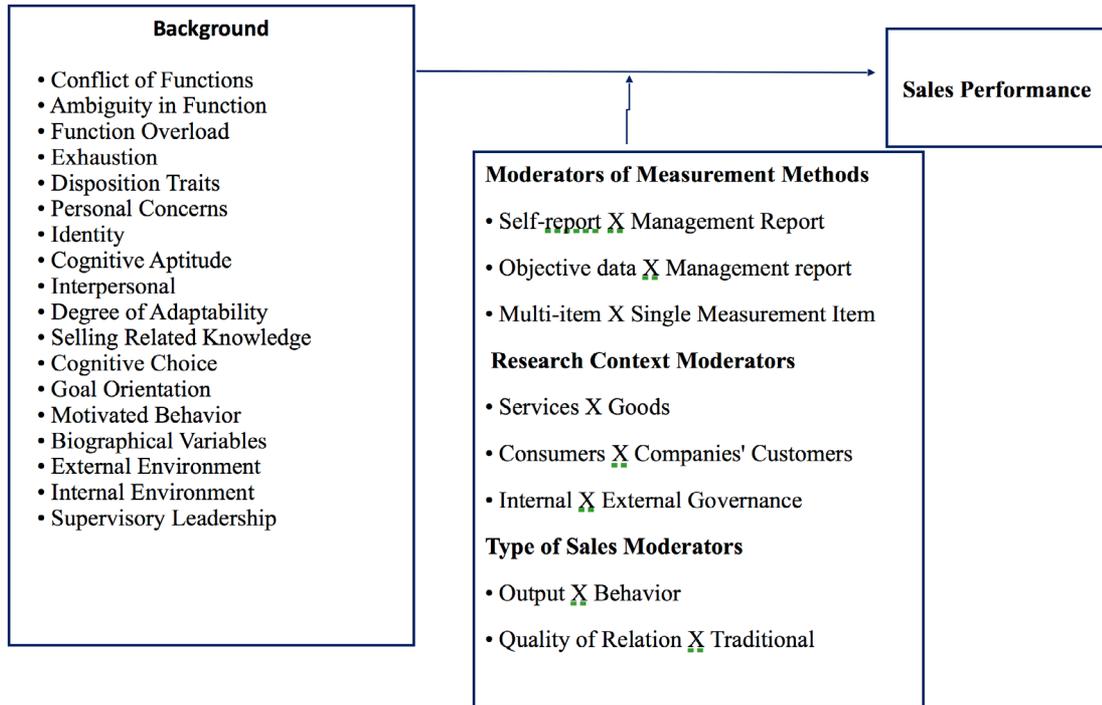
Sales performance and salesperson motivation

According to the authors Donassolo and Matos (p.6, 2014) performance can be defined as “the perception of the salesperson about their sales results; on the profits generated by his sales; on overcoming the goals and on their satisfaction with the results obtained and in relation to the work done “. For Churchill et al. (1985), scholars have been researching the “sales” phenomenon since the beginning of the twentieth century; however, in the 1970s they had not been able to create robust models and explain the differences between salespeople who had high or low performance. This means that the relationship between the salespeople and his performance is a topic that has challenged marketing and sales researchers at the organizational level but still has no valid results. Baldauf and Cravens; Piercy (2005) state that within this performance issue, behavioral performance refers to the activities and strategies of salespeople conducted in the sales process, while the performance result represents the quantitative results of the salespeople’s efforts.

Churchill et al. (1985) conducted a meta-analysis where it was found that a salesperson’s performance is affected by five basic factors: aptitude; skill level; motivation; perception; role; and personal, organizational and environmental variables. The results found that the performance of salespeople is influenced by multiple factors.

In the year 2011, the authors Verbeke, Dietz, and Verwaal performed a meta-analysis based on the studies of Walker, Churchil and Ford (1977), but this meta-analysis approached the contemporary period of 1982 to 2008. Verbeke, Dietz, and Verwaal (2011) estimated the predictive validity of their subcategories and the impact of a series of moderators of determinant sale-performance relationships. The results found pointed out two relevant issues. The first is five subcategories that have demonstrated significant relationships relating to performance and closures, being sales related to knowledge, the degree of adaptability, role ambiguities, cognitive aptitude, and engagement at work. The second question is related to the subcategories moderated by the method of measurement, research context, and variables of the type of sale. As a result, we have interpreted the meanings of these sales performance drivers and the following Picture 1 illustrates the model that was proposed by the authors.

Picture 1: Conceptual Model of meta-analysis



Source: Adapted from VERBEKE, DIETZ and VERWAAL, 2011.

Considering the role of the salesperson within the organizations, it is perceived that it is important to be analyzed, because according to the performance that he has within his work context, it can affect his performance in sales in a positive or negative way, whether it is influencing a consumer to buy the brand, whether a consumer is loyal to the salesperson and not the brand, for example. But so far, studies have not measured the impact of this performance directly on the small retails market, considering that in this context the influence of a salesperson is much greater than in large companies where employee roles are more departmentalized.

According to Gillispie and Noble (2017), a relevant study on motivation as one of the key antecedents of sales is, “The Role of Perceived Impact of Sales Motivation on Work Performance: A Cognitive and Affective Perspective,” developed by the authors Miao and Evans (2007). The authors carried out a literature review work and established some general terms, such as first the intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions (I / E) and second the general terms of intrinsic motivation, the conflict reduction factor represented by the ambiguity of their role that show that the relative impact of I / E motivation on sales performance has been inconsistent.

While admitting that intrinsic motivation is a stronger predictor of performance than extrinsic motivation, as stated in the articles by Anderson and Oliver (1987) and Weitz, Sujana and Sujana (1986), the empirical evidence does not seem to converge, as in Tyagi (1985) on the fact that, in general, intrinsic motivation positively affects sales performance more strongly than extrinsic motivation.

On the other hand, Ingram, Lee, and Skinner (1989) found no direct relationship be-

tween intrinsic motivation and performance, while Leach, Liu, and Johnston (2005) found mixed results. It is therefore perceived that there is an inconsistency in the findings of the relationship between I / E motivation and sales performance (MIAO & EVANS, 2007). For Spiro and Weitz (1990), satisfaction is considered an affective dimension of intrinsic motivation relative to its experimental aspect of independently doing a task.

Miao and Evans (2007) concluded that role perception is a stronger precedent for sales performance than the salesperson's motivation (CHURCHILL et al., 1985). What is evident in the results of this study is that the perception of function acts as an important mediator between motivation and performance. Particularly interesting was the finding that, although it had a direct positive effect on performance, the satisfaction in the activity had a direct negative effect on the result. This may have been due to the fact that salespeople focused on satisfaction activities are distracted immediately from the results (Anderson and OLIVER, 1987; KOHLI, SHERVANI and CHALLAGALLA, 1998). However, because the improvement in behavioral performance tends to lead the salesperson to a better performance in the result, one can conjecture that, over the long term, satisfaction in the activity should generate a positive impact on the result - as asserted by Challagalla and Shervani (1996).

SBR (*Salesperson-Brand Relationship*)

The research developed by Michel et al. (2015) explores the relationship between salespeople and brands. They are based on the Consumer-Brand Relationship Theory (FOURNIER, 1998; FOURNIER and ALVAREZ, 2012), which draws parallels between consumers, their relationships with brands and their relationships with people. Expanding on this premise, Kervyn, Fiske and Malone (2012) employ social perception theories to show how human interactions translate into consumer brand, their interactions, and how they inform brand positioning and brand communications. Essentially, they see the role of consumers as agents of relationships. For authors, as well as consumers, marketers can also relate to brands in the long run, this relationship having some or several facets. In this sense, with the objective of exploring the conceptual foundations of SBR, theoretical foundations were developed in theories on the interpersonal relationship and consumer-brand relationship (Keller, 1993; FOURNIER, 1998; FOURNIER and ALVAREZ, 2012; KERVYN, FISKE and MALONE, 2012).

The three dimensions of SBR (affection, trust, and recognition) are relevant to researchers and practitioners in many aspects. These dimensions can be used to evaluate the success of a brand. The research by Michel et al (2000) shows that a motivated salesperson is one of the most important factors of sales and impacts the performance of the company (CHURCHILL et al., 1985; HULTINK and ATUAHENE-GIMA, 2000; STEENBURGH e AHEARNE, 2012). The main results found in the studies of Michel et al. (2015) show that SBR has a direct influence on salespeople and their attitudes, affecting their motivation to sell one brand relative to another. In addition, the study confirms that SBR also strengthens salespeople's commitment to their own retail organization, especially in the context of front-line employees and their own brands. In such cases, retailers not only benefit from the high-profit margins generated by sales of their own brands and customer loyalty (Ailawadi and Keller, 2004) but also reap benefits by keeping their employees committed to the company (ZEINABADI, 2010). One of the great contributions of the research of Michel, Merk and Eroglu (2015) is the fact of including the recognition of the salesperson as an element that impacts his performance. Salespeople feel recognized when customers value their knowledge and services during the sales process.

SBA (*Salesperson-Brand Attachment*)

The notion that the consumer has strong attachment or strong connections with brands is firmly rooted in consumer research (FOURNIER, 1998; KERVYN, FISKE and MALONE, 2012; FOURNIER and ALVAREZ, 2012). Brand attachment was defined as the strength of brand linkage with the other (PARK et al., 2010). When consumers feel a strong connection to a brand, consumption of that brand serves to enhance their identity and allows them to self-build, as well as self-expand and expand their social network (FOURNIER, 2009). Essentially, brand consumption gives consumers an opportunity for self-expression and overall happiness as a result of the relationship. In fact, brand attachment was called “the ultimate destination for the customer - brand relationships” (PARK et al., 2010, p.2). Not surprisingly, the building of brand attachment has brought much research and attention in the consumer marketing field.

Although the existing marketing research has underlined the importance of consumer attachment to the brand as a resource (Thomson, Macinnis and Park, 2005, Macinnis, Park and Prister, 2009, MALÄR et al., 2011, FOURNIER and ALVAREZ), it has not yet considered the idea that brand attachment can also serve as an important resource for its salespeople. Based on the considerations presented in the literature that the attachment to the brand can improve and raise the company’s results, Allisson et al. (2016) took advantage of the gap and investigated whether the same would apply to salespeople. Based on the work demands - resource theory - the authors suggest the SBA concept as an exclusive psychological resource for salespeople. These authors have developed the concept of the Salesperson Brand Attachment (SBA) in which it suggests that the salespeople’s attachment to the brand can affect sales performance positively. Based on data gathered from 154 beverage industry salespeople, evidence provided corroborates that the SBA increases the sales effort for the brand and, ultimately, job satisfaction. In addition, it has been shown that the salesperson’s attachment to the brand acts as a buffer against the perception of the demands of the job, including the work environment and the hierarchy of authority. The results show that the salesperson who has more attachment to the brand achieves better performance, which has important consequences for the sales result, confirming that the SBA can be a resource used to leverage sales (GILLESPIE AND NOBLE, 2017). Allisson et al. (2016) also point out that, curiously, brand attachment not only affects the branding effort but also has ramifications for the salesperson’s stress and satisfaction.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Fournier’s theory of the brand-consumer relation draws parallels between consumer relations in brands and their relations with people (Fournier and Alvarez 2012). Expanding on this premise, Kervyn, Fiske and Malone (2012) employ social perception theories to show how human interactions translate into consumer brand interactions and how they inform brand positioning and brand communications. Based on this theory, it was observed that salespeople establish relationships with brands in a similar way to consumers (Michel et al 2015). However, the characteristics that qualify these relationships are not exactly the same. For example, salespeople can rely on brand, but not necessarily have the feelings of intimacy and interdependence as is common in the consumer and brand relationship (FOURNIER, 1998). One explanation, according to Michel et al. (2015), is that there is a limit in the context of a professional relationship that inhibits such feelings. In this sense, it suggests that SBR has other dimensions compared to CBR

(Consumer-Brand Relationships).

One way for the salesperson to feel motivated is to know that it can affect a customer's buying decision and can contribute to this moment (King and Grace 2010). This makes them feel recognized by customers, confident about brand awareness, feel more motivated, and thus positively increase their brand affection (MICHEL ET AL 2015, KING E GRACE 2010). In this sense, the three dimensions of the SBR (affection, trust and recognition) are relevant to evaluate the success of a brand, being a motivated salesperson one of the most important factors of sales, impacting the performance of the company (STEENBURGH and AHEARNE, 2012; and ATUAHENE-GI-MA, 2000; CHURCHILL ET AL 1985). Salespeople who achieve some kind of affection exchange with customers feel more recognized (DELPECHITRE 2013) and work harder to learn more about their roles in order to meet customer expectations and gain recognition from clients, colleagues, and supervisors (SUJAN, WEITZ, KUMAR, 1994). Previous research suggests that brands, by the meaning they convey or the identity they can incorporate, may trigger certain attitudes and behaviors in employees (SIRIANNI ET AL 2013) - be positive (motivation for work, word of mouth, company outreach, etc.) or negative (criticism, disengagement of the company) - so that they are not displayed in companies without brand names (KING E GRACE 2010; ALLEN AND MEYER 1990). Therefore, it is considered a positive association between the motivation to sell with trust, affection and perceived recognition (MICHEL ET AL 2015). Hypothesis 1: There is a positive association between motivation to sell (a) and trust (b) affection (c) brand recognition.

Organizational commitment is considered by Allen and Meyer (1996) as a mental connection between an employee and the organization. According to Michel et al (2015), the strong relationships that marketers establish with brands can improve their organizational commitment. This organizational commitment is a strong competitive advantage for companies, especially for retailers (Aileau and Keller, 2004); for, it represents the intensity of the identification of a person with involvement in a particular organization (Porter, Crimpon and Smith, 1976). In addition, Sirianni et al (2013) suggest that the jobs of salespeople require them to have an ongoing commitment to stay in office.

Park et al. (2006, p. 2) define brand trust as "the expectation that the brand can be trusted to behave benevolently and respond to existing needs." In the results found in the research by Michel et al (2015) organizational commitment is influenced by the salesperson's confidence in relation to the brand and has been found to have a significant but smaller impact in relation to perceived affection and perceived recognition. This confirms that the SBR reinforces the salespeople's commitment to the retail they work with, and with these results, retailers not only profit from the high margins generated by sales of their private brands with the largest number of customers (AILAWADI and Kuller 2004, Hultink and Atuahene-Guma, 2000), but also by the benefits provided by the smaller volume of business that keeps salespeople committed to the company (SREEJESH, 2014, SIRIANNI ET AL 2013, BITNER ET AL 1994). Thus, it can be hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive association between organizational commitment and (a) brand confidence (b) affection (c) perceived brand recognition.

Considering that organizational commitment is a mental connection between an employee and an organization, as suggested by Allen and Meyer (1990). For Bitner (1992) and Bitner, Booms, and Mohr (1994), salespeople play a relevant role because of the integration between the organization and the customer, which can represent successes and failures, according to the salesperson's commitment to the brand. Behavioral performance refers to the activities and strategies of salespeople conducted in the sales process, while the performance result represents the

quantitative results of the salespeople's efforts (BALDAUF, CRAVENS and PIERCY, 2005). Regarding the "performance" construct and its relationship to the "organizational commitment" construct, Carmeli (2003) found in his research that organizational commitment has no significant effect on result performance or behavior performance. This result was also found in the research of Subejo et al. (2013). Their rationale is that many employees may not be satisfied with the job, but still remain on the job and try to develop the imposed activities. This is because, according to Sirianni et al (2013), for salespeople to stay in their jobs, they must have a commitment to the brand, and they are responsible for the interaction between customers and the organization (BITNER ET AL 1994).

In Rafiei's studies (2014), on the contrary, a positive effect on the organizational commitment to performance was observed. Naghnen et al. (2017) also consider that the most committed employees are more loyal in their behavior and organizational commitment and this can result in a more favorable performance, being something positive for the organization (BITNER ET AL 1994; BITNER, 1992). In this sense, the research by Michel et al (2015) suggests that the SBR components reinforce the salespeople's commitment to the brand by increasing its motivation, and this impact on the performance of the company (STEENBURGH e AHEARNE, 2012; HULTINK e ATUAHENE-GIMA, 2000; CHURCHILL ET AL 1985). Thus, the following hypothesis has been observed:

Hypothesis 3: The impairment positively affects the performance of the result (b) behavioral performance.

Donassolo and Matos (2014) define performance as a perception that salespeople have in sales results, including the profits provided by sales, as well as the achievement of goals and satisfaction with the results obtained and the accomplishment of the work. The performance of a salesperson for some authors is the ability of a salesperson to reach the goals and achieve the sale objectives (HUNTER and GOEBEL, 2008, SUJAN, WEITZ and KUMAR, 1994). Singh and Koshy (2010) add that it can be a behavior in which the contributions to the company reach its goals and can be measured by what salespeople produce (sales) or by what they do - behaviors (Anderson and Oliver 1987). This positioning of the salesperson is particularly important for integrating customers and employees and may present positive or negative results (SIRIANNI ET AL 2013, BITNER ET AL 1994 and BITNER 1992).

Challagala and Shervani (1986) consider an improvement in behavioral performance tends to lead the salesperson to perform better. The first research to evaluate the impact of behavioral performance on the performance of the results from the perspective of the salespeople was the research of the authors Jaworski and Kohli (1991). The authors found that the behavioral performance of the salesperson has a positive impact on the performance of the salespeople's results. According to the authors, when the salesperson has positive feedback from their superiors regarding their behavioral performance, this has a positive impact on the performance of these salespeople.

Miao and Evans (2007) also researched salespeople's performance, they adopted a two-dimensional view of performance at work, including behavioral performance outcome. For the authors, the sales control literature suggests a positive causal relationship between behavioral performance and outcome performance, as found in the surveys of Cravens et al (1993) and Jaworski and Kohli (1991). Thus, to replicate, the following hypothesis is presented:

Hypothesis 4: Behavioral performance has a positive impact on performance of results.

Miao and Evans (2007) consider that one of the main sales backgrounds is the motiva-

tion construct. The motivation is related to the effort that the salesperson makes to achieve a better result (GILLISPIE AND NOBLE, 2017). Authors Shah et al (2010) and Sahoo, Routray and Dash (2014) consider that motivation at work generates better performance. These authors perceived in their studies that intrinsic factors cause positive attitudes at work because they satisfy the need for worker self-actualization, as stated in Maslow's (1954) work. Satisfaction in performing the tasks of work is considered as an intrinsic affective component of motivation (DECI and RYAN, 1995). For salespeople who enjoy sales activity, the reward for performing tasks may involve experimenting with different sales approaches and is predicted to positively affect performance (WEITZ, SUJAN AND SUJAN 1986). Recognition is an affective dimension of motivation, for salespeople it is important to have this recognition (positive assessment) on the part of their superiors (FLAHERTY, DAHLSTOM and SKINNER, 1999; KOHLI, SHERVANI and CHALLAGALLA, 1998).

In the research by Sahoo, Routray and Dash (2014) the authors also state that motivation and performance are significantly positive. The level of motivation control of the salesperson was related to their performance, the more the company motivates the salespeople (salaries, perks, incentives) the higher the final performance. From this perspective, these results confirm the results found by Tyagi (1995) and Weitz, Sujan and Sujan (1987). The research by John et al (2012) suggests that financial benefits were a key factor to better sales performance. In addition, John et al (2012) suggest that salespeople should be involved in company decisions and quota participation as this serves as a motivation strategy that will impact the performance of the salesperson. On the other hand, in the researches of Ingram, Lee and Skinner (1989) no direct relationship between motivation and performance was found. On the other hand, in the research carried out by Leach, Liu and Johnston (2005), mixed results were found on this relation. Therefore, there is an inconsistency between the findings of the relationship between motivation and performance in sales (MIAO AND EVANS, 2007). In this way, the following hypothesis was obtained:

Hypothesis 5: Motivation to sell has a positive impact on (a) performance of the outcome (b) behavioral performance.

Sreejesh (2014) defines satisfaction as the result of the subjective evaluation that the choice made has met or exceeded expectations, considering part of the knowledge acquired through past experiences. Job satisfaction is a general sense that the employee has affection for his / her work situation (Arndt et al 2006), a pleasurable and positive emotional state, as a result of the appreciation of the task performed in his / her work environment (ANDRADE ET AL 2017). Research relating satisfaction with performance has been recurrent in the literature. Judge et. al. (2001) observed a correlation of 0.3 between these constructs. It is believed that the satisfaction provided by the work is an intrinsic affective component of the motivation (SHAH et al, 2010, MAI, EVANS 2007, SPIRO and WEITZ, 1990, WEITZ, SUJAN and SUJAN, 1986, DECI and RYAN 1985).

Challagala and Shervani (1996) consider that long-term satisfaction generates a positive impact on the result. In this same sense, it is foreseeable that performance satisfaction positively affects performance (ANDRADE ET AL 2017, SHAH et al, 2010, KAHYA, 2007, WEITZ, SUJAN and SUJAN 1986) and meeting the targets leads the salespeople to a greater job satisfaction (HACKMAN and OLDHAM, 1980; BROW and ROBERTS, 1993; ARNDT ET AL 2006). On the other hand, effort is seen as a way to reach a goal (RANGAJARAN; JONES; CHIN, 2005). Sujan et al. (2014); Hughes and Ahearne (2010) consider the sales effort as the strength, energy, or activity the salesperson spends on that brand. Gillispie and Noble (2017) add that the factors that affect sales effort are relevant to the salesperson's success in the business (better performance and greater satisfaction). Thus, the hypotheses are:

Hypothesis 6: Satisfaction in tasks positively (a) affects performance (b) negatively affects behav-

ioral performance. Hypothesis 7: Brand sales effort increases job satisfaction.

In marketing literature, trust is considered as an essential element for the development of brand attachment and has been recognized as an important tool to improve brand performance (Carroll & Ahuvi, 2006; Mcalexander, Schouten and Koenig, 2002). The studies mentioned indicate that repeated interactions with a brand and brand experience are the keys to building trust (PARK ET AL 2006). To the extent that the salesperson feels a strong bond with the brand, storefront displays, distribution, shelf, space, the point of sale, and brand global presence expand the salesperson's self-concept. In addition, it expends more effort in learning more about the tasks in order to gain more recognition from clients and their coworkers (Andrade et al., 2007, Sujan, Weitz and Kumar, 1994), and the effort and focus directed towards the brand focal make him feel comfortable (SCHAUFELI and BAKKER, 2004; HAKANEN, BAKKER and SCHAUFELI, 2006). Thus, being attached to the brand serves as a direct reason to engage in the brand's sale (BITNER 1992; BITNER ET AL 1994; MIKULINCER and SHAVER, 2007; PARK ET AL 2010). For example, a salesperson who identifies with the brand will probably work harder to sell more (SUJAN; WEITZ; KUMAR, 1994; SIRIANNI ET AL 2013), as it offers him personal satisfaction (ARNDT ET AL 2006), not only economic benefits (DECI and RYAN, 1985).

In this sense, Gillispie and Noble (2017) reinforce in their study how a greater attachment to the brand increases the sales effort, being the results more positive and emphasize how the attachment theory considers this placement that a greater attachment to the brand takes to greater salespeople engagement (PARK ET AL 2010, MIKULINCER AND SHAVER, 2007). In this same perspective, Allison et al (2016) also suggest in their research that brand attachment causes a salesperson to invest more time, talent and effort in activities that increase sales, consequently having a greater commitment to the organization, (Hughes and Ahearne, 2010, SIRIANNI ET AL, 2013, and SREEJESH, 2014). Therefore, the following hypotheses are given:

Hypothesis 8: The attachment to the brand has a positive impact on the brand's sales effort.

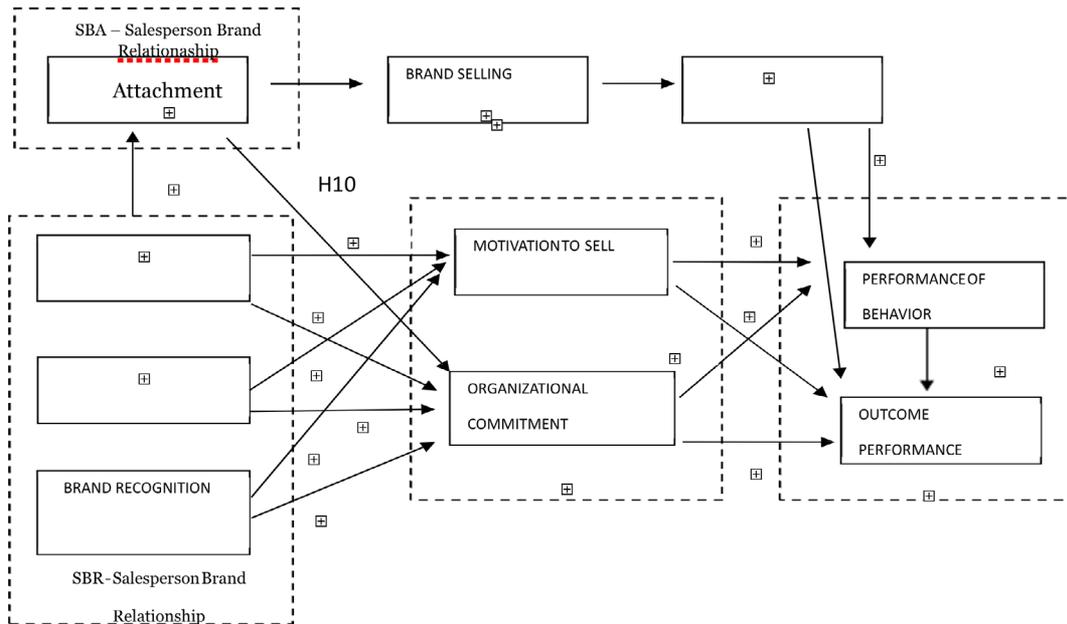
Hypothesis 9: The attachment to the brand has a positive impact on SBR.

Hypothesis 10: Attachment to the brand has a positive impact on organizational commitment.

Considering that the relationship motivates and has an impact on the salesperson's performance, a nomological model represented by picture 2 is proposed. This model has as its main antecedent the SBR, which in turn impacts the motivation and the organizational commitment. On the other hand, we have the SBA, demonstrating that attachment also has a chain of impact on motivation and job satisfaction. In this sense, this model expects that the attachment and the relationship generate performance in the salesman through sales.

In this sense, Picture 2 presents the research model:

Picture 2 - Hypothetical Research Model



Source: Developed by the authors

METHODOLOGY

A survey was conducted through personal interviews in May 2017, at small retailers during their period of operation. The questionnaire was answered by salespeople who were in their working hours. The collection was carried out in six regional administrations of the city of Belo Horizonte, the 3rd largest metropolis in Brazil. Retailing in Belo Horizonte is one of the main economic activities of the city, present in all regions, being responsible for employing a large part of the local labor force and with strong participation in the economy, according to CDL / BH (2018). For the accomplishment of this research, a pre-test was done with 20 questionnaires; the respondents were salespeople who had commercial daytime hours. The objective of this quota sampling methodology was to obtain a sample that was proportional to the stratum of small trades in the city. Sampling at each of the retailers was for convenience because the people selected were the most available at those locations.

In relation to the constructs used in the research, a translation of the English to Portuguese scales was carried out. Subsequently, two reverse translations (Portuguese-English) were carried out by two translators and a third translator produced a final English version based on previous translations. This version was compared with the original version in English and after the approval of the translators the studies were initiated.

The description of the operationalization scales of the constructs follows:

Chart 1: Construction Operationalization - Scales Employed

Construct	Scales Source
SBR Brand Trust	Michel et al (2015); Park et al (2006); Chaudhuri & Holbrook 2001)
SBR Brand Affection	Michel, et al (2015); Berger-Remy & Michel (2015); King & Grace (2010); Chaudhuri & Holbrook 2001)
SBR Brand Recognition	Michel, et al (2015); Berger-Remy & Michel (2015); King & Grace (2010);
SBA Salesperson Brand Attachment	Gillispie & Noble (2017); Allison et al. (2016); MacInnis et al. 2009
Organizational Commitment	Naghnen (2017); Michel et al. (2015); Rafiei (2014); Atuahe-ne-Gima (1997); Anderson & Robertson (1995); Allen & Meyer (1990)
Motivation to Sell	Allison et al (2016); Saha et al (2010); Choudhury (2007); Spiro & Weitz (1990)
Brand Selling Effort	Gillispie & Noble (2017); Allison et al (2016); Hakanen et al (2006); Schaufeli et al (2004)
Job Satisfaction	Gillispie & Noble (2017); Andrade et al (2017); Seerjesh (2014); Saha et al (2010); Kahya (2007); Arndt et al. (2006)
Behavior Performance	Miao & Evans (2007); Sujan et al (1994); Cravens et al (1993); Jawarski & Kohli (1991); Anderson & Oliver (1987)
Outcome Performance	Miao & Evans (2007); Sujan et al (1994); Cravens et al (1993); Jawarski & Kohli (1991); Anderson & Oliver (1987)

Source: Developed by the authors

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

Sample Profile

Sampling at each retail was for convenience, because the people selected were the most available in those locations, which could provide the necessary information.

Respondents	Variables	N	Valid %
Gender	Feminine	143	70%
	Masculine	58	28%
Marital Status	Married	76	37%
	Divorced	18	8%
	Single	107	52%
Age	Less than 25	86	42%
	Between 26 and 35	64	31%
	More than 36	27	13%

Family Income	Up to R\$ 2.000	123	60%
	Between R\$ 2.001 to R\$ 5.000	30	15%
	No answer or Blank	51	25%

Source: Research Data

As for the sample profile of the companies, 77% are shops located in the streets or galleries. 93% of them work with physical product sales (not service). More than 60% of these retailers sell products linked to fashion and beauty. 64% of the establishments interviewed have an average value of the products sold of R\$ 256.00 (BRL).

Table 2 – Company Profile

Company	Variables	N	Valid %
Product Type	Fashion and Beauty	122	60%
Sector	Product	189	93%
Average Value	Up to R\$ 256	130	64%
Location	Street	157	77%
	Shopping Mall	47	23%

Source: Research Data

Exploratory Analysis and Assumptions

When evaluating the missing data, that is, incomplete data in the questionnaires, a small amount (0.76% of the database) was observed, with no variable presenting more than 5% of missing data. No case presented an expressive number of missing data (greater than 10%). Thus, for the scales, it was preferred to give the data restoration treatment by the simple linear regression method (TABACHNICK and FIDELL, 2007). To evaluate the univariate outliers, two classification criteria outside the limits of 3.00 deviations were applied in relation to the average. To identify the cases with combinations of values outside the so-called multivariate outliers' patterns, the Mahalanobis distance (D2) was used. Four multivariate outliers were detected. Thus, it was preferred to maintain the univariate and multivariate cases, since, on a scale of 0 to 10; it is believed that its effect on the estimates would be minimal, according to the comparison made in the model test (HAIR et al., 2010).

Validity and Measurement Reliability

It was then proceeded to verify the quality of the measurement (reliability and validity) through the measurement dimensionality evaluation. On the other hand, the exploratory factorial analysis with extraction by main components was applied, retaining factors with higher eigenvalues (GERBING and ANDERSON, 1988). Indicators with low commonalities (below 0.40) were excluded. The KMO values were between 0.68 and 0.91, and the measure variance extracted between 61 and 76%.

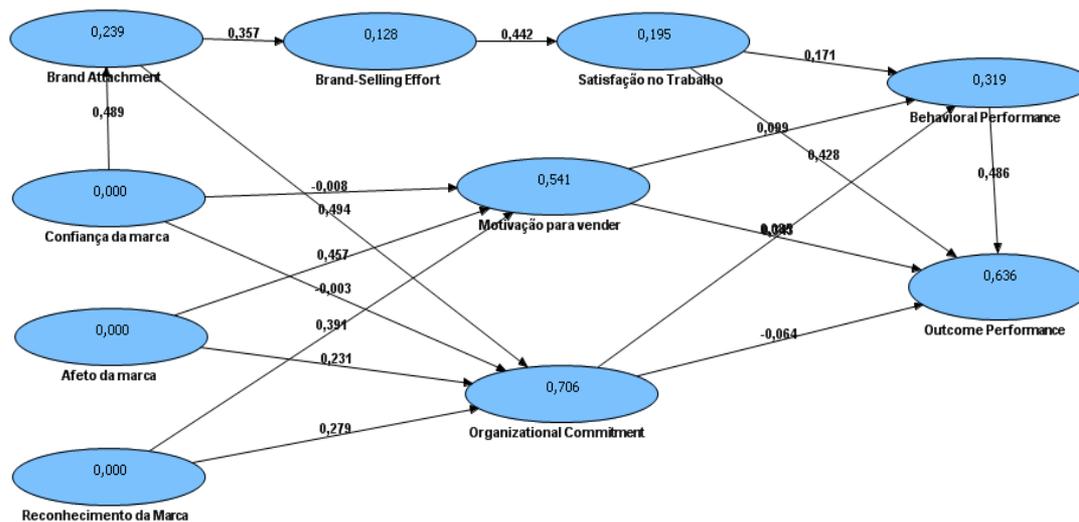
Regarding the validity of the construct and reliability, the Partial Least Squares (PLS) estimation was adopted (HAENLEIN and KAPLAN, 2004). The method requires a minimum sample of 10 to 5 times the indicator block of the construct with the highest number of indicators or the construct that has the highest number of independent variables (CHIN, 2000). This allows a test with relative safety and stability in the estimates, considering not only the sample of the study but also the deviations of normality found in the research. In order to evaluate the convergent validity, it has been verified that the factorial loads of the constructs were significant. In order to verify the discriminant validity, the traditional method of discriminant validity analysis suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981) was used, in order to evaluate it. It is observed that the models denote a good quality of measurement and that all the constructs have reached discriminant validity. For the measures of the reliability of the scales, the value of 0.700 was used as cutoff point (HAIR et al., 2010). For the measures of the reliability of the indicators, the proposed metric was 0.500 (FORNELL and LARCKER, 1981). It can be verified that the results were considered adequate, with the indicators of reliability and validity of the constructs revealing satisfactory measures of measurement.

Nominal Validity and Hypothetical Model Testing

In this section, the structural model of the study is presented, which was done here by the application of the modeling technique of structural equations, given its potential to test models of interrelations between constructs in a single approach, besides and to consider the impact of the measurement error on the estimates (Forner et al., 2003). In general, structural equation modeling refers to techniques that test covariance structures (HAENLEIN; KAPLAN, 2004), widely disseminated by softwares such as LISREL (FORNELL and BOOKSTEIN, 1982). However, as it turned out, study data do not follow a normal distribution, so its applicability in this study would be limited. In addition, in the limit, the ideal sample to test this model using the traditional structural approach would be 1653 cases (number of non-redundant elements in the covariance matrix).

For this reason, it was sought as an alternative the estimation by Partial Least Squares (PLS) (HAENLEIN; KAPLAN, 2004). The method requires a minimum sample of 10 to 5 times the indicator block of the construct with the highest number of indicators or the construct that has the highest number of independent variables (CHIN, 2000). This allows a test with at least 65 responses, being an ideal 260. Thus, the test of the model was made using the PLS approach. The structural model tested can be seen in PIC. 1, below:

Picture 1 - Estimated model in PLS: standardized weights and R2



Source: Research data.

In terms of the hypotheses tested, the weights, standard error, T-tests, significance and results of hypothesis tests (TAB.3) are presented in sequence.

The criterion for judging the hypotheses is the value of t, which should be above 1.96 for p < 0.05 (5% 0).

Table 3 - Result of hypotheses of the proposed model (excluding weights of second order factors)

H	Relationships	WEIGHT	DEV	T	Result
H1B	Brand Affection -> Motivation to Sell	0,46	0,08	5,48	Supported
H2B	Brand Affection -> Organizational Commitment	0,23	0,08	2,91	Supported
H4	Behavioral Performance -> Outcome Performance	0,49	0,08	6,14	Supported
H8	Brand Attachment -> Brand-Selling Effort	0,36	0,08	4,74	Supported
H10	Brand Attachment -> Organizational Commitment	0,49	0,07	6,76	Supported
H7	Brand-Selling Effort -> Job Satisfaction	0,44	0,08	5,6	Supported
H9	Brand Reliability -> Brand Attachment	0,49	0,06	8,66	Supported
H1a	Brand Reliability -> Motivation to Sell	-0,01	0,08	0,11	Not Supported
H2a	Brand Reliability -> Organizational Commitment	0	0,06	0,04	Not Supported
H5b	Motivation to Sell -> Behavioral Performance	0,1	0,16	0,63	Not Supported
H5a	Motivation to Sell -> Outcome Performance	0,08	0,08	1,02	Not Supported
H3b	Organizational Commitment -> Behavioral Performance	0,34	0,17	2,06	Supported
H3a	Organizational Commitment -> Outcome Performance	-0,06	0,1	0,66	Not Supported
H2c	Brand Recognition -> Motivation to Sell	0,39	0,08	5,21	Supported
H1c	Brand Recognition -> Organizational Commitment	0,28	0,06	4,6	Supported
H6b	Job Satisfaction -> Behavioral Performance	0,17	0,12	1,44	Not Supported
H6a	Job Satisfaction -> Outcome Performance	0,43	0,09	4,61	Supported

SOURCE: Research data. Note: a) SAMPLE is the standardized weight obtained for complete sample; b) DEV is the standard deviation of the estimate; c) The error is the expected in the estimate; d) The value t is the

ratio of the weight not standardized by its standard error.

For another indicator of the general predictive power of the model, the GoF measure was calculated, which indicated that 43.25% of the general variability of the data is explained by the proposed predictive model, but not all the hypotheses were supported by the model.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

In an analysis of the results of the hypothetical model presented in the research, it is possible to observe some significant questions. Firstly, when analyzing the SBR, one perceives that it explains 54.1% of the motivation to sell. SBR and SBA explain 71% of the organization's commitment. Observing the main antecedents that affect the motivation to sell, it is perceived that the greatest impact comes from the affection for the brand ($\beta = 0.46$, $p < 0.01$). The second most relevant impact is brand recognition, with ($\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.01$). Brand confidence has no significant impact. In this sense, the results suggest that, in the small retail scenario, affection is the main antecedent of the motivation to sell. This result found confirms the results of the research by Michel et al. (2015), which demonstrates that the affection is the main motivation, as indicated values: affection ($\beta = 0.834$, $p < 0.01$), while reliability presented ($\beta = 0.477$, $p < 0.05$) and brand recognition ($\beta = 0.504$, $p < 0.05$).

Regarding the antecedents of the organizational commitment, the main antecedent is the Brand Attachment (SBA) with ($\beta = 0.494$, $p < 0.01$), followed by SBR components, Brand Recognition with significant impact ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.01$), followed by the affection for the brand ($\beta = 0.23$, $p < 0.01$). Reliability, on the other hand, did not display a significant impact, presenting ($\beta = 0.00$, $p < 0.01$). These results are different from those found in Michel et al. (2015) since these authors found that reliability significantly impacts organizational commitment, being ($\beta = 0.767$, $p < 0.01$). It is noticed that, in the small Brazilian retails, reliability makes no difference, unlike the result found in the research of Michel et al. (2015), which was applied in another context and with large retailers. Possibly these differences are tied to the small retail and the environment in which they are inserted. According to Andrade et al. (2017), small retailers have less specific attributions compared to large retailers, that is, in smaller businesses, salespeople often perform many functions, and the degree of engagement with the brand becomes greater. Unlike other large-scale retailers, where salespeople usually take up the single position of a salesperson, there are more specific employees to fulfill other tasks, generating more distance between the brand and the salesperson (ARNDT et al., 2006).

Regarding the connections between SBR and SBA, it is observed that the brand reliability has a significant impact on the attachment, being ($\beta = 0.489$, $p < 0.01$). Following the monological chain of the SBA, a positive impact of the attachment in relation to the sales effort is observed, being ($\beta = 0.357$, $p < 0.01$). This means that when a salesperson has a strong attachment to the brand, the sales effort increases. This result confirms with those of the research of the authors Gillespie and Noble (2017).

Regarding the construct sales effort and job satisfaction, it was found ($\beta = 0.442$, $p < 0.01$). This result suggests that the SBA is a sales effort booster and in turn impacts satisfaction on the salesperson's job. These results corroborate the results found in the research by Allison et al. (2016) and Gillespie and Noble (2017).

Performance is another point to be explored in the model. The first analysis that can be carried out is the impact of behavioral performance on the performance of the results. The

results indicate that the impact found is ($\beta = 0.486$, $p < 0.01$), which means that the salesperson who has performance oriented behavior tends to have tangible results and achieve goals. The results indicate that job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.428$, $p < 0.01$) has a positive impact on the performance of the results, which means that the satisfaction affects the goals directly, as it influences the performance of the salespeople (SHAH et al. , 2010; ANDRADE ET AL 2017). But the motivation to sell did not have a significant impact on the performance of the results ($\beta = 0.08$, $p = NS$), as well as the organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.08$, $p = NS$).

According to the model, organizational commitment is the most significant antecedent in behavioral performance ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.05$). On the other hand, job satisfaction and motivation to sell did not have a significant impact on behavioral performance, respectively ($\beta = 0.17$, $p = NS$) and ($\beta = 0.10$, $p = NS$), results that are contrary to the considerations of Shah et al (2010) in which it is believed that greater motivation and job satisfaction increases the performance of salespeople. As for Andrade et al (2017), it has been found in the results of their research that it is needed to check the factors that can affect the salesperson's satisfaction, as this may affect their performance.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Considering the importance of verifying the relationship between the salesperson and the brand, as well as the consequences of this relationship in sales performance, this research contributed to the literature with the discussion about the relevant concepts created by Michel et al (2015) on the SBR and Allison et al. (2016) on SBA. Being this the first research that recognizes an integration between these two concepts and measures the performance of the salespeople. The antecedents and definitions of SBA, SBR and performance were presented, bringing to the fore the perspective of several authors of this field of study. An integrative model of the SBA and SBR components was proposed, presenting the connections with the performance as relevant in the relations. Ten hypotheses were also proposed in order to verify the impacts of the components of the model on behavioral performance and results. The conclusions aim to correlate the objectives with the results obtained.

The impacts of the salesperson's relationship with the brand in small retailers were identified in order to determine their attitudes towards their work and performance (FETSCHERIN and HEILMANN, 2015). The effect of mediation of the attitudes of the work between the salesperson-brand relationship and its performance was explored. The antecedents of salespeople's performance (organizational commitment, motivation and job satisfaction) were identified. It was perceived through the results found that the organizational commitment is the antecedent that most impacts the performance of the company, followed by satisfaction. On the other hand, it has been identified that motivation has no significant impact on performance. The SBR and the SBA explained 70.6% of the organizational commitment and 54.1% of the motivation to sell. When analyzing the antecedents of motivation, it was identified that affection is what most impacts the motivation to sell, followed by brand recognition. On the other hand, reliability did not have a significant impact, a result different from the one found in Michel et al. (2015).

It was also observed that the results found in relation to the SBA in the monological chain are in agreement with the results found in the research by Allison et al. (2016), that is, the SBA is a booster of sales effort and job satisfaction. It was also possible to verify that there is a strong relationship between brand reliability and attachment.

It was concluded that this research reached the proposed objectives and answered the question of the research of how the salesperson-brand relationship impacts the performance of small retailers since results prove that the relationships of the salesperson with the brand have a relevant role in their performance, commitment, effort and satisfaction with work. According to the survey results, companies desiring retail sales performance should build “Brand Attachment” on their sales team to drive job satisfaction and commitment. Also relevant are the “Brand Affection” and “Recognition”. Salespeople need to be recognized by customers who consume the brand. In this respect, the importance of the role of the customer in the performance of the salesperson is emphasized.

It is understood that this research contributes to the theoretical understanding of the phenomenon, especially regarding the relations between brands, retailers behavior in retail and performance. From the managerial point of view, it contributes to the perception of the attributes that can most influence the relationship between the salesperson and the brand, aiming at a closer approximation and connection with this salesperson, in order to value and validate such relationship. Brand managers could, from the proposed model and results obtained, focus on the development and management of the relationship between the salesperson and the brand.

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