



Enhancing relationship value between manufacturers and distributors through personal interaction

Evidence from Vietnam

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Abstract

Purpose – Realizing the importance of personal interaction in business relationships between manufacturers and distributors, this study aims to explore the role of personal interaction in relationship value, and subsequently in distributor performance, in a transition market, Vietnam.

Design/methodology/approach – A sample of 472 distributors in the south of Vietnam was surveyed to test the theoretical model. Structural equation modeling was used to analyze the data.

Findings – It was found that personal interaction drives product support, information support, and delivery performance perceived by distributors. In addition, product support, information support, and delivery performance are key factors that nurture the value of relationships between manufacturers and distributors. Finally, relationship value is a determinant of distributor performance.

Research limitations/implications – A key limitation of this study is the heavy reliance on the hypothetico-deductive approach. Business relationships of firms in transitional economies, due to differences in cultures and economies, might exhibit some differences in value drivers. An inductive approach may be a suitable alternative method to explore relationship value and its determinants in transition economies like Vietnam.

Practical implications – The results of this study suggest that manufacturers should invest more time and efforts in personal interaction with their key distributors to enhance the value of their relationships with those distributors.

Originality/value – This study is the first of its kind in Vietnam, which explores the role of personal interaction in relationship value in Vietnam.

Keywords Vietnam, Customer relations, Business analysis, Channel relationships, Developing countries, Social interaction

Paper type Research paper



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Introduction

It is impossible for firms not to have relationships with other firms, as they cannot operate in isolation (e.g. Hakansson, 1982; Nguyen *et al.*, 2007). Research has shown that many firms are moving from transactional discrete exchanges to relational ones (Ganesan, 1994; Nguyen *et al.*, 2007; Nguyen and Nguyen, 2010). This is because loyal customers will bring more profits to firms than the price-sensitive and deal-prone switcher (Reichheld, 1996). In addition, committed relationships are among the most durable because they are difficult for competitors to understand, to copy, or to displace. Consequently, scholars and practitioners have agreed that collaborative relationships between buyers and sellers represent a source of competitive advantage (Dwyer *et al.*, 1987; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Ulaga and Eggert, 2006; Cannon and Homburg, 2001). Relationship value is among the core concepts in research on buyer-seller relationships. This has led to several empirical studies, which have explored value of business relationships (e.g. Gil-Saura *et al.*, 2009; Pinnington and Scanlon, 2009; Ulaga and Eggert, 2006; Wagner *et al.*, 2010; Westerlund and Svahn, 2008). However, research on relationship value has focused mainly in advanced economies and little attention has been paid to transition economies like Vietnam (e.g. Nguyen *et al.*, 2007).

Vietnam represents an under-investigated transition economy, especially in terms of business relationships. In 1986 the Vietnamese government initiated a new economic reform program, aiming to transform the economy from a centrally planned economy to a market-oriented economy under socialist guidance. The movement toward a market-oriented economy, together with the entry into the WTO, has pushed Vietnamese firms to change their traditional ways of doing business. Prior to the transformation, the business activities of Vietnamese firms had been primarily arranged by the planning system of the Vietnamese government, lowering the role of business relationships between firms and their partners.

The transformation of the Vietnamese economy has pushed Vietnamese firms to find new ways of doing business (Nguyen *et al.*, 2007). Instead of focusing on production and relying on the government, Vietnamese firms are now forced to find their own markets for their products. Therefore, establishing and maintaining business relationships with their partners are among the priorities for Vietnamese firms. However, questions that have been raised by academics as well as practitioners in Vietnam are whether business relationships are valuable, i.e. beneficial to both parties, and if they are, what are the determinants of business relationship value.

For a number of years, the concept of customer value has been the focus of research attention by many marketing academics (e.g. Kotler, 2003). In buyer-seller relationships, the purpose of business partners (suppliers, distributors, customers) engaging in relationships is to work together in order to create higher value for all parties involved (Walter *et al.*, 2001). Therefore, partners in a business relationship should try to improve the value of the relationship to obtain competitive advantage (Ulaga, 2001; Wagner *et al.*, 2010; Westerlund and Svahn, 2008).

Business relationships are actually managed by individuals and there is extensive personal interaction in any business relationship (Pinnington and Scanlon, 2009; Ulaga, 2003). Personal interaction between key individuals of partners plays an important role in creating value for the relationship (Ulaga, 2003). Personal interaction will enhance a better understanding of each partner's goals (Ulaga and Eggert, 2006). However, little attention has been paid to the role of personal interaction in the value of

business relationships (Pinnington and Scanlon, 2009), especially in transition markets like Vietnam. To bridge this gap, based on Ulaga and Eggert's (2006) conceptualization, we attempt to investigate the impact of personal interaction on relationship value of business relationships between manufacturers and distributors in a transition market, Vietnam. The rest of the paper is organized around four key points: literature review and hypotheses; method; data analysis and results; discussion and implications; and, limitations and directions for future research.

Literature review and hypotheses

Conceptual model

We propose that personal interaction will enhance manufacturers' product quality, information support and delivery performance. In addition, personal interaction, together with those factors, in turn, underlie relationship value, perceived by distributors. Finally, relationship value has a positive effect on distributor performance. Figure 1 presents these relationships and hypotheses graphically.

Relationship value

Value is a core concept in marketing and has attracted attention from both academics and managers alike (Flint and Woodruff, 2001; Walter *et al.*, 2001). Creating superior customer value is a key to long-term survival and success for every business. There are a number of different perspectives of customer value in business markets (Flint and Woodruff, 2001). Traditionally, three perspectives have been found in the literature: the buyer's perspective, i.e. value creation through products and services; the seller's perspective, i.e. value creation through customer equity; and, the buyer-seller perspective, i.e. value creation through networks (Ulaga, 2001). In the context of this study, we regard relationship value perceived by a distributor, as the trade-off between the benefits and sacrifices gained through the distributor's relationships with manufacturers (Walter *et al.*, 2001), i.e. the buyer's perspective of value.

As a result of the government's effort to liberalize the market, especially, after joining WTO in 2007, the Vietnamese market is more competitive, which has forced Vietnamese manufacturers to move from arm's length relationships with their distributors to much stronger partnerships characterized by greater interdependence

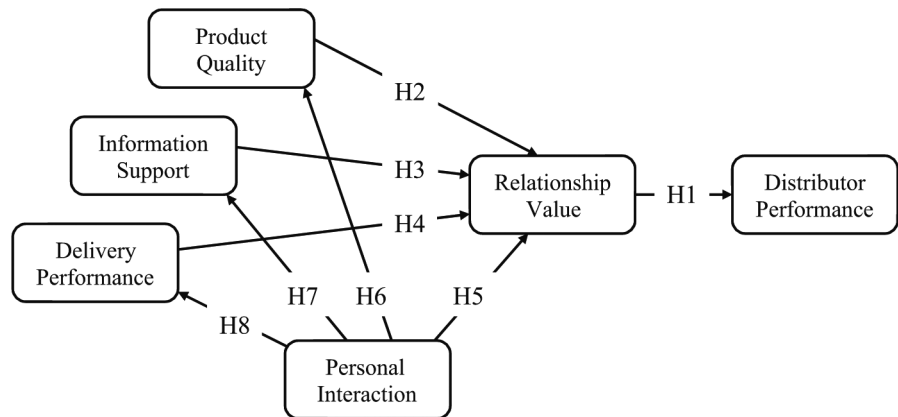


Figure 1.
Conceptual model

(Nguyen and Nguyen, 2010). Therefore, Vietnamese manufacturers should find ways to establish high quality relationships through providing their distributors with high relationship value because creating high relationship value is essential for all business relationships (Walter *et al.*, 2001) such as those between manufacturers and distributors (Ulaga, 2001). Both parties will benefit from high relationship value. For example, a distributor perceiving a high relationship value with a manufacturer could be expected to increase the volume of purchases. Similarly, manufacturers can create higher value for distributors through the provision of high quality products and services (Ulaga, 2001).

Relationship value is expected to have a positive impact on distributor performance, which can be defined as “the accomplishments - real and perceived – that have resulted from the manufacturer-distributor relationship” (Rosson and Ford, 1982, p. 61). In this study, we focus on distributor performance in dealing with its specific manufacturer and distributor performance reflects the sales growth, profit growth and market share of the manufacturer’s products.

A high relationship value perceived by a distributor leads to efficient transactions such as shortened response time, advantages in logistics management, and marketing programs that contribute to the distributor’s efficiency and effectiveness in serving its customers (Cannon and Homburg, 2001; Nguyen *et al.*, 2007). These, in turn, can create a strong market position which will be reflected in the distributor’s performance. When conditions required for a high relationship value are met, the manufacturer or its distributor (or both) is more likely to be attracted to an existing relationship, and such a relationship can be expected to continue in the future, leading to increased mutual profitability through better understanding and servicing of customer needs (Anderson and Weitz, 1992; Kalwani and Narakesari, 1995). Thus,

H1. Relationship value has a positive effect on distributor performance.

Product quality

Product quality is an important factor that drives relationship value in buyer-seller relationships. In the case of distributor-manufacturer relationships, distributors maintain relationships with manufacturers in order to receive high quality, consistent and reliable products over time. High quality products characterized by durability, reliability, and other product attributes perceived by consumers are important for a distributor’s business. Product quality is central to what customers are willing to purchase. In their role of distributing products to end users, distributors have to deal with customer complaints about the quality of products. High quality products supplied by manufacturers will lessen their costs of dealing with distributors’ customers and, thus, enhance the value of the relationship (Cannon and Homburg, 2001). Therefore,

H2. Product quality has a positive effect on relationship value.

Information support

Information plays a key role in business relationships (Cannon and Homburg, 2001). In addition to product quality, information support from manufacturers can create value for their relationships with distributors. An open and consistent flow of information from manufacturers will assist distributors in anticipating manufacturers’ future

plans, as well as technological changes in the industry. Three key aspects of information support provided by manufacturers are identified by Ulaga (2003), namely: information availability, speed, and appropriateness. Distributors require prompt responses with appropriate information from manufacturers when needed. Thus,

H3. Information support has a positive effect on relationship value.

Delivery performance

Delivery performance is another factor that contributes to the value of distributor-manufacturer relationships. Ulaga and Eggert (2006) propose three aspects of delivery performance, i.e. on-time delivery, flexibility of delivery, and accuracy of delivery. Thus, manufacturers can add value to relationships with their distributors by meeting delivery schedules. Manufacturers also need to adjust delivery schedules to satisfy their distributors' requirements, which vary according to changes in market demand. Accuracy of delivery is also important to manufacturers who want to add value to the relationship – the right types and quantity of products ordered will assist distributors in saving time and effort (Ulaga, 2003). Thus,

H4. Delivery performance has a positive effect on relationship value.

Personal interaction

Individuals play an important role in any business relationship because it is actually managed by individuals (Ulaga, 2003). In manufacturer-distributor relationships, personal interaction refers to the interaction at the individual level between distributors and manufacturers' key contact people (Ulaga, 2003). Interpersonal behavior theory indicates that, in any relationship, people expect their own opinions to be treated with respect and dignity, and many wish to have a chance to voice their opinions. They "seek to achieve a sense of intersubjectivity", i.e. to share a common world (Turner, 2002, p. 133). Thus, improving personal interaction between the distributor and the manufacturer will benefit both parties through better communication, more understanding of each party's goals and interdependence with each other in the relationship, leading to more effective and efficient in problem resolution (Cater and Cater, 2009; Ulaga, 2003). Better communication and understanding by each partner by means of personal interaction will lessen the confusion about what the correct procedure both partners in the relationship should perform, such as the quality standards of a product, appropriate information, and the quantity and timing of the delivery. Research has shown that personal interaction can play a critical role in distributors' evaluations of suppliers' performance (e.g. Jamal and Adelowore, 2008). Therefore,

H5. Personal interaction has a positive effect on relationship value.

H6. Personal interaction has a positive effect on product quality.

H7. Personal interaction has a positive effect on information support.

H8. Personal interaction has a positive effect on delivery performance.

Method

Procedure

The research comprised two phases, a pilot and a main survey. Respondents were distributors' managers and owners. Product types were tiles and electrical appliances. The pilot study consisted of two steps: qualitative and quantitative. First, we conducted a series of in-depth interviews with nine tile distributors and six electrical appliance distributors in HCM City, the principal business center in Vietnam to modify the measures. Although all the measures of constructs were available in the literature, this step is important to make them appropriate for the context of this study (a transition market) by examining how consumers described the value of their business relationships with manufacturers and personal interactions with manufacturers' people.

In the quantitative pilot step we undertook face-to-face interviews with 125 tile and electrical appliance distributors, also in HCM City, to refine the measures. Cronbach's alpha reliability and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) were used to preliminarily assess the scales. The main survey was undertaken by using face-to-face interviews with 472 tile and electrical appliance distributors in Ho Chi Minh City and in some provinces in the south of Vietnam, including Long An, Tien Giang, Ben Tre, Binh Duong, and Binh Phuoc. The purpose of the main survey was to validate the measures and to test the structural model. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) were employed to analyze the data.

Measurement

There were six constructs examined in this study: relationship value; personal interaction; product quality; information support; delivery performance; and, distributor performance. Relationship value was measured by four items asking distributors about the value of the relationship between them with the manufacturer. Personal interaction was measured by five items, addressing the quality of the interaction between the distributor and the manufacturer's key contact people. Product quality was measured by four items, addressing the overall perception of distributors about the quality of the manufacturer's products. Information support was measured by three items focusing on the perception of distributors about the manufacturer's supply of information needed for their business. Delivery performance was measured by three items asking distributors about the manufacturer's delivery performance such as timing and accuracy. These scales were adapted from Ulaga and Eggert (2006). Finally, distributor performance, was measured by three items, based on Homburg and Pflesser (2000), assessing the performance of distributors, in terms of sales growth, profit growth, and market share.

All items (Appendix 1, Table A1) were measured by a seven-point Likert scale, anchored by 1: strongly disagree and 7: strongly agree. The questionnaire was initially prepared in English and then translated into Vietnamese by an academic fluent in both languages. This procedure was undertaken because English is not well understood by all distributors. Back translation was undertaken to ensure the equivalence of meanings.

Measurement refinement

The measures were refined via Cronbach's alpha reliability and EFA, using the data collected from 125 distributors in the quantitative pilot study. The results indicated that all scales satisfied the requirement for reliability: All Cronbach's alphas of the scales were higher than 0.80. It is noted that one item measuring personal interaction (Manufacturer X gives us a feeling of being treated as an important customer) and another item measuring product quality (the quality of manufacturer X's products is very stable) were deleted due to their low item-total correlations (< 0.30). The EFA results (principal components with varimax rotation) also indicate that all the scales satisfied the requirement for factor loadings (> 0.50), total variance extracted (> 50 per cent) and the number of factors extracted. Accordingly, these measures were used in the main survey.

Sample characteristics

The sample included 400 distributors in Ho Chi Minh City, 17 distributors in Long An, 17 in Tien Giang, eight in Ben Tre, 14 in Binh Duong and 6 in Binh Phuoc. In terms of product types, there were 317 tile distributors and 155 electrical appliance distributors. In terms of relationship duration, there were 278 (58.9 per cent) distributors had less than or equal to five years of relationships with their manufacturers; 147 (31.1 per cent) had from six to ten years of relationships with their manufacturers; and, 47 (10.0 per cent) had more than ten years of relationships with their manufacturers.

Data analysis and results

As discussed previously, the analysis was undertaken in two steps. First, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to validate the measures and then, structural equation modeling (SEM) was utilized to test the theoretical models. The data exhibited slight deviations from normal distribution, however, all univariate kurtoses and skewnesses were within the range of $[-1, 1]$. Therefore, the maximum likelihood estimation method was used.

Measurement validation

As mentioned previously, there were six constructs under investigation: relationship value; personal interaction; product quality; information support; delivery performance; and, distributor performance. The scales measuring these constructs were refined via Cronbach's alpha and EFA using the data set ($n = 125$) collected in the pilot study. These scales were then assessed via CFA using the data set ($n = 472$) collected in the main survey.

The CFA results (saturated model) indicate that the measurement model received an acceptable fit: $\chi^2_{[155]} = 389.81$ ($p = 0.000$); GFI = 0.923; CFI = 0.960; and, RMSEA = 0.057. All factor loadings were substantial ($\lambda \geq 0.67$) and significant ($p < 0.001$; see Appendix 1). These findings supported the within-method convergent validity (Steenkamp and van Trijp, 1991). All factor correlations were significantly below unity ($p < 0.001$; see Appendix 2, Table AII). These findings supported the across-construct discriminant validity (Steenkamp and van Trijp, 1991).

Further, all measures satisfied the requirement for composite reliability ($\rho_{vc} \geq 0.79$; Steenkamp and van Trijp, 1991) and average variance extracted ($\rho_c \geq 0.56$; Fornell

and Larcker, 1981). These CFA results reveal that the measures of constructs used in this study satisfied the requirements for scale reliability and validity.

Structural results

SEM was used to test theoretical model and hypotheses. The SEM results show that the model received an acceptable fit to the data: $\chi^2_{[162]} = 418.05 (p < 0.001)$; GFI = 0.917; CFI = 0.956; and RMSEA = 0.058. It is noted that no improper solution was found in any model: Heywood cases were absent; all error-term variances were significant; and, all standardized residuals were less than (2.58). The unstandardized structural coefficients are shown in Table I and the standardized ones are presented in Figure 2. Table II presents the standardized direct, indirect and total effects between constructs in the model.

Hypothesis testing

First, consistent with *H1*, relationship value had a positive effect on distributor performance ($\beta = 0.75, p < 0.001$). Second, product quality, information support, and

Hypothesis	Path	β/γ	Std err.	t-stat	p-value
H1	Relationship value → Distributor performance	0.82	0.049	16.68	0.000
H2	Product quality → Relationship value	0.29	0.068	4.30	0.000
H3	Information support → Relationship value	0.23	0.057	4.11	0.000
H4	Delivery performance → Relationship value	0.13	0.062	2.06	0.040
H5	Personal interaction → Relationship value	0.33	0.084	3.89	0.000
H6	Personal interaction → Product quality	0.31	0.043	7.30	0.000
H7	Personal interaction → Information support	0.88	0.069	12.72	0.000
H8	Personal interaction → Delivery performance	0.55	0.059	9.43	0.000

Table I.
Unstandardized structural coefficients

Note: β/γ (se): estimate (standard error)

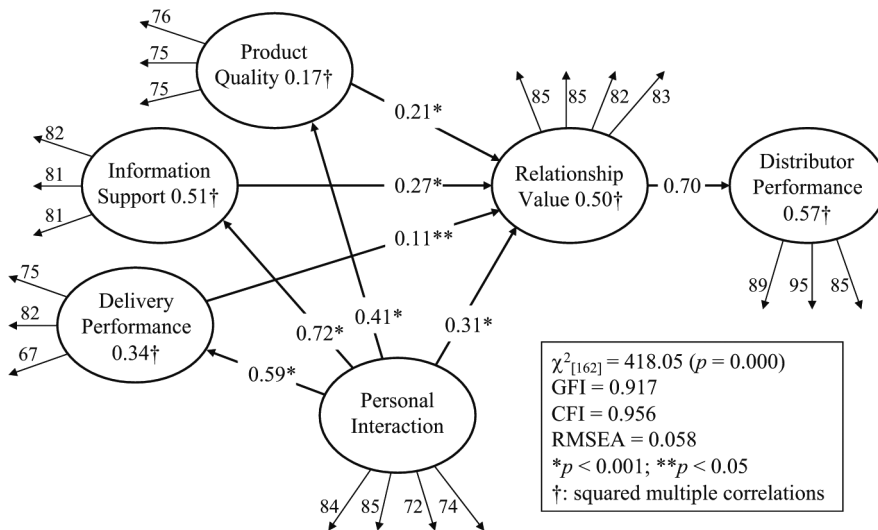


Figure 2.
Structural results (standardized estimates)

Table II.Standardized direct,
indirect and total effects
between constructs

	Effect type	Personal interaction	Product quality	Information support	Delivery performance	Relationship value
Product quality	Direct	0.41				
	Indirect	0.00				
	Total	0.41				
Information support	Direct	0.72				
	Indirect	0.00				
	Total	0.72				
Delivery performance	Direct	0.59				
	Indirect	0.00				
	Total	0.59				
Relationship value	Direct	0.31	0.21	0.27	0.11	
	Indirect	0.34	0.00	0.00	0.00	
	Total	0.65	0.21	0.27	0.11	
Distributor performance	Direct	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.75
	Indirect	0.49	0.15	0.20	0.09	0.00
	Total	0.49	0.15	0.20	0.09	0.75

delivery performance were found to have positive effects on relationship value, supporting and $H2$ ($\beta = 0.21, p < 0.001$), $H3$ ($\beta = 0.27, p < 0.001$), and $H4$ ($\beta = 0.11, p < 0.05$). Third, $H5$ proposed a positive relationship between personal interaction and relationship value. This hypothesis also received support ($\beta = 0.31, p < 0.001$) from the data. Finally, personal interaction was found to have positive impacts on product quality ($\gamma = 0.41, p < 0.001$), information support ($\gamma = 0.72, p < 0.001$), and delivery performance ($\gamma = 0.59, p < 0.001$), thus supporting $H6$, $H7$, and $H8$, respectively (see Figure 2).

Discussion and implications

Realizing the importance of personal interaction in business relationships between manufacturers and distributors, this study explores the role of personal interaction in relationship value, and subsequently in distributor performance, in a transition market, Vietnam. Using a sample of 472 tile and electrical appliance distributors in the south of Vietnam, we find that personal interaction is a key factor that underlies relationship value, which in turn, drives the performance of distributors. Personal interaction also enhances product quality, information support and delivery performance, perceived by distributors. In addition, product quality, information support, and delivery performance are key factors that nurture the value of relationships between manufacturers and distributors. Thus, this work contributes to an under-investigated field of study in Vietnam. These findings suggest several implications for academics as well as practitioners.

Relationship value is critical in the relationship between manufacturers and distributors. A high relationship value in a manufacturer-distributor relationship will improve the distributor's performance, in terms of sales, market share and profits, based on the manufacturer's products. This will benefit both parties. The distributor would be more likely to work more closely with the manufacturer, giving the manufacturer the opportunity to become a key supplier, resulting in several

advantages for both parties. Therefore, manufacturers should pay attention to the results of this study by investing more in the relationship with their distributors.

Personal interaction between the distributor and its manufacturer's key contact personnel will help improve the value of such a relationship. For example, personal interaction will make both partners working closely together. The manufacturer has opportunities to serve its respective customers more effectively and efficiently, e.g. to understand and respond more quickly than competitors to the market, to more readily adjust prices over time to match competition, and, to be in a better position to compete for new business due to their early involvement in new product development (Ulaga and Eggert, 2006). Through better communication and understanding of both partners' goals also help improve product quality, information support and delivery performance, which subsequently, enhance the value of the relationship between both parties. Enhancing personal interaction between the distributor and the manufacturer will also give the manufacturer more opportunities to meet the distributor's quality standards, to quickly provide the distributor with appropriate information, and to meet the distributor's delivery schedules without errors or delay. Thus, manufacturers should invest more time and efforts in personal interaction with their key distributors to enhance the value of the relationships with those distributors.

Limitations and directions for future research

This study has a number of limitations. First, we only tested the model in two industries, i.e. the tile and electrical appliance industries and in some regions in the south of Vietnam. Other industries and regions may reveal different perspectives of value drivers. Therefore, future research should test the model in other industries and geographical regions in order to compare and contrast the similarities and differences among industries and regions, which help to improve the generalizability of the results. Second, the key informant approach was used in this study. Although the key informant approach is commonly used in organizational research (Kumar *et al.*, 1993), other members of the distributing firms might have different perspectives and emphases on value drivers (Ulaga and Eggert, 2006). Therefore, collecting data from multiple informants is an alternative method recommended for future research. Finally, this study relies heavily on the hypothetico-deductive approach. Business relationships of firms in transitional economies, due to differences in cultures and economies, might exhibit some differences in value drivers. Therefore, an inductive approach such as grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) may be a suitable alternative method to explore relationship value and its determinants in transition economies like Vietnam.

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Further reading

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Appendix 1

Items	Mean	SD	λ	<i>t</i> -stat
Relationship value: $\rho_{vc} = 0.90$; Average variance extracted: $\rho_c = 0.70$				
Manufacturer X adds a great deal of value to our relationship	4.99	1.202	0.85	–
We gain a lot in our relationship with manufacturer X	4.87	1.222	0.85	22.88
Manufacturer X creates a lot of value for us when comparing all costs and benefits in the relationship				
Overall, the relationship with X is valuable	4.96	1.276	0.82	21.57
Overall, the relationship with X is valuable	4.73	1.271	0.83	22.24
Personal interaction: $\rho_{vc} = 0.87$; $\rho_c = 0.63$				
It is very easy to work with manufacturer X	5.33	1.288	0.74	–
We have a good interaction with manufacturer X's people	5.48	1.311	0.73	15.28
It is very easy to address problems with manufacturer X	5.18	1.275	0.86	18.08
It is very easy to discuss problems with manufacturer X	5.07	1.287	0.84	17.78
Product quality: $\rho_{vc} = 0.80$; $\rho_c = 0.57$				
Manufacturer X provides us with high quality products	5.79	0.944	0.75	–
Manufacturer X always satisfies our quality standards	5.64	0.986	0.75	13.79
Manufacturer X's products are very reliable	5.66	1.010	0.75	13.77
Information support: $\rho_{vc} = 0.85$; $\rho_c = 0.66$				
Manufacturer X is always available when we need information	5.24	1.350	0.82	18.52
Manufacturer X always provides us with appropriate information	4.88	1.323	0.81	18.34
Manufacturer X always responds very fast when we need information	4.87	1.446	0.80	–
Delivery performance: $\rho_{vc} = 0.79$; $\rho_c = 0.56$				
Manufacturer X always meets our delivery schedule	4.86	1.402	0.75	12.90
We rarely have delivery errors with manufacturer X	4.90	1.385	0.82	13.32
Deliveries from manufacturer X are always accurate	5.50	1.331	0.67	–
Distributor performance: $\rho_{vc} = 0.92$; $\rho_c = 0.80$				
Our sales gained from manufacturer X's products have increased as expected	4.51	1.247	0.89	–
Our profits gained from manufacturer X's products have increased as expected	4.49	1.233	0.94	30.65
Our market share of manufacturer X's products has increased as expected	4.51	1.202	0.85	25.55

Table AI.
CFA loadings of items
(standardized estimates)

Correlations	Est	Std err	1-r	t(1-r)
Relationship value ↔ Personal interaction	0.64	0.067	0.36	5.38
Relationship value ↔ Distributor performance	0.75	0.066	0.25	3.70
Distributor performance ↔ Product quality	0.40	0.060	0.60	10.03
Distributor performance ↔ Information support	0.43	0.058	0.57	9.79
Information support ↔ Delivery performance	0.49	0.068	0.51	7.61
Information support ↔ Product quality	0.39	0.062	0.61	9.76
Personal interaction ↔ Product quality	0.39	0.062	0.61	9.74
Personal interaction ↔ Delivery performance	0.57	0.072	0.43	6.00
Distributor performance ↔ Personal interaction	0.49	0.060	0.51	8.41
Personal interaction ↔ Information support	0.70	0.073	0.30	4.09
Relationship value ↔ Delivery performance	0.49	0.066	0.51	7.72
Relationship value ↔ Product quality	0.46	0.062	0.55	8.72
Relationship value ↔ Information support	0.62	0.065	0.38	5.85
Distributor performance ↔ Delivery performance	0.28	0.057	0.72	12.68
Delivery performance ↔ Product quality	0.32	0.063	0.68	10.73

Table AII.
Correlations between
constructs

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