

## RELATIONSHIP QUALITY, COOPERATION AND PERFORMANCE: THE SPECIFIC CASE OF PORTUGUESE COMPANIES OPERATING IN ANGOLA

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### Abstract

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*This research encompasses the main concepts of relationship marketing in order to develop a model that explains the different factors preceding the export performance of Portuguese companies operating in Angola; it particularly seeks to understand the relationship between exporters and their local intermediaries from a relationship point of view.*

*This study is particularly relevant because studies on emergent markets are scarce.*

*The conceptual model presented is based on the relationship marketing literature, specifically the Morgan-Hunt Model (1994), named KMV (Key Mediating Variables).*

*It intends to analyse how trust influences both commitment and cooperation. Similarly, it examines how commitment influences cooperation. Finally, this study aims to analyse the association between cooperation and export performance based on the last and next three years.*

*Concerning the methodology adopted questionnaire and interviews that have been chosen. The study sampled 102 Portuguese companies at FILDA (International Fair of Luanda). Thirty questionnaires were fully completed and the data was analysed through SPSS. Meanwhile, some Portuguese companies' managers were interviewed so that questions related to «how» and «why» could be clarified.*

*All in all, it was possible to acknowledge a positive association amongst trust, commitment and cooperation. Likewise, it was confirmed that there is also a positive association between cooperation and export performance.*

*Suggestion for future research is analysis of matched pairs, that is, the Portuguese exporting companies and their distributors in Angola.*

**Keywords:** *international marketing, relationship marketing, commitment-trust theory, trust, commitment, cooperation, export performance*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

In context of the global crisis, the Portuguese market is increasingly becoming a smaller market share for Portuguese companies, therefore it is necessary to take advantage of the installed capacity in Portuguese companies and explore new markets.

In order for production levels to return to its normal level because of the strong current crisis, in order to ensure Portuguese companies their survival, have been seeking new markets, such as the specific case of the Angolan market.

The choice of the Angolan market for this study is due to the fact that the country is outside the Eu-

European Union and because Angola is the country to which Portuguese companies export more.

In this sense, the weight of Angola in the Portuguese economy has been increasing in recent years.

According to studies of the International Monetary Fund (2008), despite the international economical crisis, Angola is one of the countries with the highest potential for growth in the next ten to fifteen years.

A potential that many Portuguese companies recognize and are strengthening as demonstrated by the increase in the level of Portuguese exports, as stated above.

The Angolan market is a very specific market and trust is a core value in trade relations. We could say that without trust, no one comes to the deal.

An example is that Angolan companies are expecting that representatives from Portuguese companies will go to Angola to establish personal contacts.

Although this behavior goes against the establishment of a personal / business relationship, it will contribute positively to dispel any suspicions and develop a human contact between exporters and potential local intermediaries.

Trust is a concept that has been treated in the context of relationship marketing and constitutes the basis for this study. According to Abosag, Tynan & Lewis (2006) existing theories of relationship marketing have been developed and tested in predominantly social, cultural Anglo-Saxon, but is yet to be tested in other cultural contexts. The inclusion of Portugal and Angola meets this concern.

This study seeks to examine the extent to which the quality of the relationship established between Portuguese companies and intermediaries in Angola contributes to increased cooperation between exporters and intermediaries and in turn, how this is reflected in Performance Export of Portuguese companies to Angola both from the perspective of the past, as well as the future.

In short this research is highly relevant since, Portuguese companies are increasingly not confined

only to the domestic market but looking for new markets to ensure their survival.

Thus, it becomes important to analyze the quality and the cooperation in the relationship between the Portuguese exporting companies and their intermediaries in Angola, as well as their impact on export performance. For this purpose, we resort to a part of the Morgan & Hunt model (1994) by designating KMV (Key Mediating Variable) (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) including the concepts that explain the commitment, trust and cooperation.

The analysis of this issue is relevant to understand how exporting companies should have access to international markets for direct export route and to evaluate the network of relationships and inter-relationships they establish with their intermediaries located in the destination country.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 The concept of internationalization**

There are various international settings. According to Meyer (1996), internationalization is a process by which a company increases its level of value-added activities outside their country of origin. However, according to Calof and Beamish (1995), it is the process of adapting the company's operations (strategic, structure, resources, etc.) to international environments. From the point of view of Freire (1997), the internationalization of a company consists of the extension of its product-market strategies and vertical integration to other countries, resulting in a full or partial replication of operational chain. As for Chetty & Campbell-Hunt (2001), internationalization cannot be seen only as a process of "growing progression" but as a phenomenon with setbacks, in which companies can be "de-internationalize" or leaving to work a product or giving up foreign direct investment (FDI) and refocusing on export mode reducing (or stopping) its international activities. For Fernández & Nieto (2005), this is the most complex strategy that a company can implement, since its entire supply chain is geared to particular market.

When a company decides to internationalize itself, the first step is to study and choose the target market. Later they need to determine the best way

to enter that market. This is a critical decision in international marketing (Viana et al., 2005).

Selecting the correct input mode is essential because a bad decision at this level leads to possible losses and the company is liable to cause an unfavorable image with its potential consumers and, consequently, damage the growth potential (Viana et al., 2005). This implies that additional efforts will be required to renew its image.

Also according to these authors the most common way for a company to develop its international business is export, which can be considered direct or indirect. With regards to indirect export, the company sells through an intermediary located in the country of origin which could be active or casual. Casual export occurs from time to time to take advantage of a possible request. The costs of direct export are higher than that of indirect export. However, both forms of export, direct and indirect, are not mutually exclusive since the company can export directly to the most important markets and indirectly to the less significant markets (Viana et al., 2005).

Since the direct export may explain the existence of a local intermediary, it is essential to determine the nature of the relationship that the company establishes therewith. In this sense, it was decided to include relationship marketing concept that refers to all commercial activities directed to establish, develop and maintain the success of relational exchange (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

Marketing relationship according to Miguel-Romero, Capture-Ginger and Adame-Sánchez (2014) aims to generate profitable relationships in the long run, between partners. To Brito and Lancaster, 2014, relationship marketing manages relationships and their goals are loyal customers, monetize them and create a customer base, while the transactional marketing manages resources and its sales objectives, product profitability and market share. The Relationship Marketing brings stability and reduced uncertainty in business, acting as a barrier to entry for competitors and maintaining a stable and solid base (Alexander and Colgate, 2000 cited by Gupta and Sahu, 2012).

According to this, Grönroos (1994) states that the relationship marketing aims to "establish, main-

tain and improve relationships with customers and other partners, as well as maintenance of business profit, so that all the objectives of all the parties are satisfied." So there is a mutual and reciprocal exchange of keeping promises.

One of the templates referenced in relationship marketing literature referred to as KMV model (Mediating Key Variables) has been proposed by Morgan and Hunt (1994). According to these authors, relationship marketing implies a positive relationship between commitment and trust.

The commitment in a relationship is defined as a persistent desire to maintain a valued relationship "(Morgan & Hunt, 1994). So the commitment exists only when the relationship is considered important.

The theory of social change explains the causal relationship through the principle of reciprocity, which holds that "distrust generates suspicion" and as such, it also serves to reduce the commitment and change in the relationship leads to operation of another barter short deadline (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

Trust is the major determinant of relationship commitment (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). According to Morgan & Hunt (1994) is the expectation of lower total costs that produces a commitment relationship, thus have an effect on the customer-supplier relationship.

Partners in turn, should avoid opportunistic behavior that could harm either party.

Assuming that the commitment and trust are the key to a relationship, how can these characteristics be developed?

These develop when companies focus on relations, providing resources, opportunities and profits that are higher than the offer made by other parties; maintain high standards of values and allying themselves to other partners with similar values; communicate important information including expectations, marketing intelligence, and assessments of the performance of the partners; avoid taking advantage of their partners in a way detrimental to them. These actions enable companies and their networks, have a competitive advantage over their competitors and their networks in the global market.

Morgan & Hunt (1994) tested the KMV model under the relations of commitment and trust in the context encouraged by a distribution channel. However, the authors concluded that there is still much to do.

It therefore concludes that the theory of Morgan & Hunt (1994) is assumed to be relevant in explaining the relationship between exporters and local intermediaries based on the concepts of trust (trust) and commitment (commitment). The key concepts for the development of activities - business in establishing, developing and maintaining successful relational exchanges.

In this sense, it can be concluded that the relational exchanges successfully contribute to the cooperation between the parties involved, and this in turn has repercussions on export performance of the parties.

## **2.2 Relationship between trust and organizational commitment.**

In relationship marketing trust has been recognized as an important concept (Lagrosen, S. and Lagrosen, Y. 2012). The authors, Morgan & Hunt (1994) theorize that the success of relationship marketing requires commitment and trust relationship. The purpose of this relationship is to gain preferred supplier position (being developed trust) over a period of time. From the point of view of these same authors, the commitment reduces total costs.

Competition, especially in the global market requires companies to continually look for products, processes and technologies that add value to their own offerings. In this sense, partnerships that offer superior benefits are valued thus, companies undertake to create, develop and maintain relationships with partners that when operating together, can offer superior benefits compared to other options. In short, the beneficial relationships are highly valued as they contribute to higher profitability and customer satisfaction.

There are some reasons that cause the decrease of trust. The opportunistic behavior occurs when there is self-interest on the part of one of the partners involved, a fact which results in decreased trust (Morgan & Hunt 1994).

These authors further state that opportunistic behavior and commitment ratio result in a decrease of trust ratio since the partners believe they can no longer trust each other. They also consider that the trust decreases with a partner uncertainty decision.

That is, if one partner is uncertain about the other partner's behavior, this fact alone leads to a decrease in trust in the same partner.

It is important to highlight the positive impact that triggers trust in relationships. The trust takes a partner to realize that future controversial episodes will be functional.

It is understood that by employee conflict, disagreements are resolved amicably therefore, helps prevent stagnation, stimulate interest, curiosity and provides a means by which the problems can find solutions, in the opinion of Morgan & Hunt (1994).

The results of Morgan & Hunt (1994) in their study reveal that trust influences how disagreements and arguments are perceived by partners.

That is, when trust is present, the parties perceive the conflict as functional conflicts. Thus, they can discuss problems openly, because they do not expect harmful actions from their partners.

The trust contributes to reduce the risk of opportunistic behavior on a long term relationship and therefore positively contributes to long-term exposure to the customer. In addition, the trust increases buyer confidence that the short-term injustices will be resolved and reduces transaction costs in exchange ratio (Ruiz-Molina and Gil-Saura, 2012).

Some authors analyzed the trust and commitment bearing in different countries.

According to Abosag et al. (2006), the trust and commitment drivers vary in different countries. Some studies have proven empirical evidence on the nature of the trust and commitment in different countries. These authors encountered that the perception of trust and commitment in Serbia is based on the social and cooperative aspect of the relationship because the culture of Serbia (affective dimension) is of a collective nature while in Croatia, trust and commitment are based on the economic relationship and self-realization (instrumental dimension).

In short, when trust and commitment are present, they produce results that improve the productivity and efficiency that result directly in cooperative behaviors that favor the success of relationship marketing which in turn lead to business success.

### **2.3 The relationship between cooperation and trust**

The theoretical arguments of this relationship are classified by Abosag et al. (2006), the trust is felt internally however, is manifested in external actions (behaviors) in the form of cooperation.

For Abosag et al. (2006), the theory of trust and commitment Morgan & Hunt (1994) introduced much cited aspects of relationship marketing. These authors argue that trust and commitment are the main variables that lead to building a relationship of "cooperation". Still with these authors, the growth of various forms of relationship is due to the trust which is essential to establishing cooperation relations.

When trust is established, businesses learn that the coordination of joint efforts will lead to results that the company could not reach if they acted only based on their own individual interest (Anderson & Narus, 1990 p. 45).

The functional conflict, that is, when the differences are resolved amicably, can enhance relationship marketing in productivity and should be seen as "just a part of doing business" (Anderson & Narus, 1990 p. 45). In this sense, it can be deduced that the functional conflict is beneficial in a relationship; thus being assured trust; the conflict itself is perceived as an integral part of the relationship and accordingly, lead to cooperation of the parties.

Aulakh et al. (1996) indicate an order of causality between trust and a cooperative orientation to the extent that trust allows the bilateral domain that meets individual goals for independent companies through joint achievements, shared beliefs, mutual interest and long-term benefits.

Using the prisoner's dilemma game, Rokkan et al. (2003) show that the expectation of future multiple interactions makes cooperation more attractive

choice. Moreover, Heide & Wathne (2006) argue that in long-term relationships with high social content, the parties adopt systematic cooperation. Obadia (2008) defines commitment expectations as the belief of the parties that the relationship is stable and safe (Johnson et al., 2004). As mentioned by Obadia (2008), trust enables companies to have access to crucial information needed to cooperate.

In addition, trust and commitment encourages companies to participate in idiosyncratic investments cooperation requires.

Finally, the companies involved in a long-term relationship tend to seek mutual goals (Heide, 1994), which summarizes a cooperative norm.

### **2.4 The relationship between commitment and cooperation.**

Secondly, Obadia (2008) stresses that the impact of cooperation in organizational performance is based on social relations; these are based on the understanding that the partners get involved in a long-term commitment. Gilliland & Bello (2002) state that in this type of relationship, the social goals are more important than economic objectives. Therefore, Heide (1994, p. 77) adds that the parties "renounce rewards present in the base of a long-term equity anticipation".

In case of low economic performance, such partners respond by strengthening ties and fighting for the survival of a long-term relationship.

In the case of exporters and importers, there is a special incentive to cooperate to revive a failed relationship: both companies are aware that they will face high transaction costs ex ante, and start looking for a new partner.

In reality, when the switching costs are high, the partners tend to be more concerned with the relationships (Dwyer et al., 1987).

To Ambler and Styles (2000), cooperation between partners allows an intensive exchange of valuable information and to solve problems together.

Thus, the importer knows he can count on the exporter for help in case of difficulties (Obadia, 2008) and vice versa. On the other hand, the coop-

eration implies that the exporter and importer have a set of common objectives and understand that they can only reach them working together (Bello et al., 2003).

Thus, the importer enjoys all the benefits you can take from the exporter's suggestions and tends to receive them and vice versa is also true. If the partners do not raise important issues, it is likely that problems are not solved.

One can even say that an insufficient level of surveillance from distributor (importer) takes the seller (exporter) to overlook potential problems which prevents the vendor from proposing appropriate solutions to these same problems. Furthermore, the benefits of cooperation are based on the two parts pro activity.

Each party proposes its solutions to the many problems that must be solved together.

If socialization process results in a "fusion" which causes both partners think and act the same way, the advantage of being two separate entities to own ideas and experiments disappears.

This decreases the quality of debate among trading partners and, in turn, leads to a lower quality of cooperation. According Obadia (2008), cooperative standard plays an essential role when there is adversity because the parties determine how to solve problems together.

The partners believe that the cooperation is crucial. Each partner offers the most effective solutions to deal with the problem. In short, according to Obadia (2008), in the case of low performance, more effective cooperation emerges. Palmatier et al. (2007) states that the literature has shown that various forms of adversity can strengthen the effect of relational standards.

In short, we can thus conclude that there is a positive relationship between trust and commitment just as there is a positive relationship between trust and cooperation.

There is also a positive relationship between commitment and cooperation on the basis of Morgan & Hunt (1994).

## 2.5 Cooperation and export performance

There are several authors exploring the importance of cooperation under the export performance. To Obadia, (2008), the relationship between cooperation and performance is important regardless of the performance context. Exporters can improve the performance of its international activity and promoting the development of behavioral norms.

This means that a standard cooperation helps coordinate the behavior of partners in the international context.

The effectiveness of such a rule increases in difficult times, which support the idea that cooperation can be seen as a tool (Obadia, 2008).

Unlike previous studies on the relationship between exporters and importers, Obadia (2008) conceptualize and operationalize cooperation as a norm of behavior.

This new conception of cooperation makes it possible to assess the impact on the importer's distribution Performance and what the conditions of success of the export company are. It is revealed that the cooperation can be used to improve non-commercial relations.

Thus, the cooperation can be an alternative to expensive formal management mechanisms and time-consuming searches for new foreign representatives.

To be the source that sustains the performance above average, the funds must meet three criteria. Must be: (1) valuable; buyers are willing to buy the output capabilities at significantly higher prices than its costs (2) rare; so that buyers can't go back to the competitors with the same resources or substitutes (3) inimitable; which means it is difficult for competitors, to either emulate or acquire the resources (Combs & Ketchen, 1999). Moreover, the ability of a resource to meet these criteria depends mainly on industry characteristics affecting the value of a resource (Amit & Schoemaker, 1993).

Brand reputation, for example, may be more valuable in experiential service industries than in industries where quality can be determined before buying (Nayyar, 1990). Features that are rare, inimitable,

itable and entitled to create value "strategic resources" (Chi, 1994).

Based on Combs & Ketchen (1999) cooperation between companies offers this kind of incentive because the rewards of cooperation partners are largely dependent on their own performance results.

Secondly, Obadia (2008) in the context of casual exports believes it is worth investigating if the cooperation works only when the performance is good or whether it can be effective even when the past economic performance is low.

In short, the trust and commitment foster the development of a cooperative norm which in turn improves the performance of importers' distribution (Obadia, 2008).

Based on what was said, then it presents the assumptions and the conceptual model guiding this research work.

Based to the literature presented above, the working hypotheses are as follows:

- H1: The greater the trust between the exporter and agent / distributor the greater the commitment tends to be.
- H2: The greater the trust between the exporter and agent / distributor the higher cooperation tends to be.

H3: The greater the commitment between the exporter and agent / distributor the higher cooperation tends to be.

H4: The higher the cooperation between the exporter and agent / distributor the more likely the export performance tends to be.

H5: The greater the cooperation between the exporter and agent / distributor the more likely the export performance tends to be.

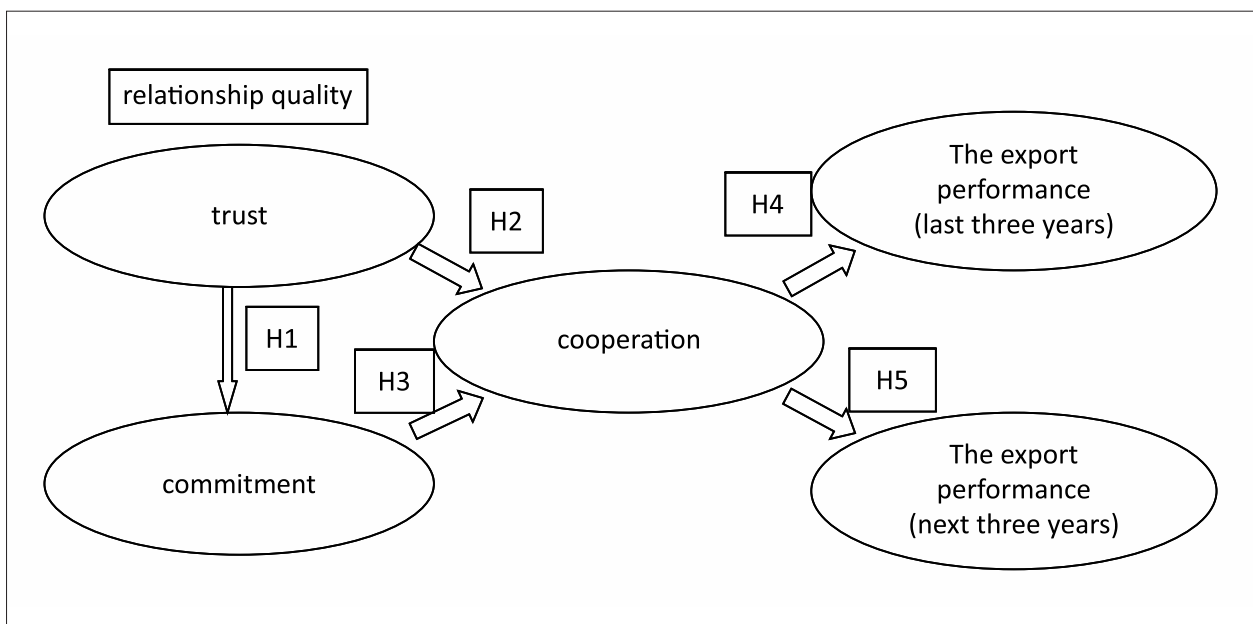
These hypotheses are represented in the following model (Figure 1).

### 2.6 Methodology and Design Study

As regards the "Study design", this research is highly exploratory but quantitative. However, given the nature of the object under examination, it will also use the qualitative nature of methodologies including interviews based on unstructured questionnaires.

The questionnaire will be aimed at analyzing the association between a set of independent and dependent variables. The geographical context of the state, as mentioned, is the Angolan market. Given the nature of this study (cross-cultural), it will take into account the specific nature of that market.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model



Given the apparent difficulty of collecting data, a material event where there are the most Portuguese companies present including an international trade fair (FILDA- Luanda International Fair, 2009) were identified. The population in question shall consist of all Portuguese companies exporting to the Angolan market. The sampling process will be for convenience since only companies present in Angola FILDA will be considered for this study.

With regard to the proposed theme, our belief is that the relationship marketing area is a scarce study comparing different international contexts. Therefore, our goal at the time of this study is to fill this gap in research since there is no scientific study to examine the quality of the relationship, cooperation and performance in the specific case of the Portuguese companies operating in Angola.

The purpose of this study is to investigate and contribute to a better understanding of this issue that has become increasingly important.

See in appendices 1 the measuring instrument development and the operationalization of concepts adopted in this study and in appendices 2 the Interview guide (exporters vs. agents / distributors).

## 2.7 Samples and data collection procedures

The questionnaires were applied directly to a population of 102 Portuguese companies that were presented at the International Fair of Luanda - Angola; FILDA 2009; 14-19 of July 2009 under the flag of Portugal.

Of these 102, 30 valid questionnaires were given, which corresponds to a response rate of 30/102 (20.4%) which is acceptable for such a study.

Of these 30 questionnaires, it was decided to eliminate 9 for not meeting the criteria stipulated by the investigator as regards the existence of a relationship with a local intermediary.

After the data collection, we proceeded to the preparation and analysis of the data which were then entered into the SPSS statistical program, presented the methodology and research design, then proceeded to the analysis and discussion of the data.

## 3. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

### 3.2 Sample profile

There is a range of activities (NACE) in the study sample, although there is a clear predominance of the industrial sector companies.

Almost 67% of the key clients in international markets of companies in the sample develop a wholesale business.

Regarding the percentage of sales in international markets 38.1% ranges from 5% to 25%; 23.8% sell between 26% to 50%; 19% is from 51% to 75%.

Regarding the percentage of sales in international markets, 38.1% ranges from 5% to 25%; 23.8% sell between 26% to 50%; 19% is from 51% to 75%.

Finally, 4.8% have a percentage of less than 5% sales, an identical value to companies that have a percentage of sales from 76% to 95%. Similar value is presented by companies that have a higher percentage of sales up to 96%. Finally, 4.8% of companies do not know and / or do not answer the question.

In summary, almost 24% of companies have a percentage of sales for international markets exceeding 50%, which means a high degree of internationalization.

With regard to direct export, the sample shows the following results: 47.6% of the sample confirm that this type of export is very significant; 23.8% are indifferent; 9.5% of this type of export is something significant; with similar percentage this type of export being nothing significant; 4.8% is negligible. Finally, 4.8% did not respond or did not know. In short, up to 57.1% of the companies' direct export is something meaningful and significant.

In regards to the indirect export, this sample shows the following results: 38.1% of the sample confirms that this type of export is something meaningful; 19% of companies stated that it is very significant. In contrast, 14.3% of companies stated that this type of export is negligible and 4.8% is nothing significant. Finally, 4.8% did not respond or did not know.

In short, for 23.8% of companies, the indirect export is something meaningful and significant.



### 3.3 Preliminary analysis of the concepts and reliability of measurement scales.

Through the reliability of the analysis, the internal consistency of the scales or the degree of homogeneity of the items making up the scales of measurement were examined and the extent to which it was free of random error was found<sup>1</sup>.

The Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ), is a commonly applied estimation (Hair et al., 2006) to analyze the degree of internal consistency of an aggregate scale, based on the average correlation between pairs of indicators<sup>2</sup>. It proceeded to an item-total correlation analysis corrected, in which the correlation coefficients between each item and the corrected score (group score minus the score of the item) of their group were used. Thus, in order to ensure internal consistency and homogeneity of the respective dimensions of each scale, items that in aggregate have a low correlation with the total score (ie,  $r < 0.25$ ) were eliminated (Nunnally, 1978).

These items show from the start a low degree of internal consistency, it means that it does not have a covariance that is consistent with the total score or other items.

Those whose correlation, were less than 0.25, or whose elimination would allow obtaining a considerably higher alpha were removed from the analysis items.

### 3.4 Discussion of Results

#### 3.4.1 Descriptive data analysis (Average and Standard Deviation)

With regard to trust dimension, as we can see, the item that has a higher Average is: "It's a correlation based on high integrity" (M = 4.30; SD = 0.64). In contrast, one that has a lower mean is "Our main agent does not take advantage (or advantage) of our company if they have that opportunity" (M = 3.53; SD = 1.16).

With regard to commitment dimension, the item having a higher average is "This correlation is very important to us" (M = 4.64, SD = 0.57). In contrast, one that has a lower mean is "This correlation is almost like belonging to a family" (M = 3.42; SD = 1.11).

With regard to cooperation dimension, the item that has a higher Average is: "Strategic information marketing (eg new products, market trends, sources of supply.)" (M = 4.05; SD = 0.74 ). On the other hand, one that has a lower mean is "Inventory Policy" (M = 2.71; SD = 1.37).

With regard to Performance (last 3 years) size, the item that has a higher Average is: "New Products" (M = 4.15; SD = 0.65). On the other hand, one that has a lower mean is "Market Share" (M = 3.21; SD = 0.93).

As regards the size Performance (next 3 years), the item having a higher average is "Volume" (M = 2.8; SD = 0.51). On the other hand, one that has a lower mean is "Profit" (M = 2.45; SD = 0.74).

### 3.5 Composite model variables

As regards the composite variables from the model, the impairment variable is one that has a higher Average (Mean = 4.23): 1 = None arrangement; 5 = strongly agree.

In contrast the performance variable (future), it is one that has a lower average (mean = 2.69) in a Likert scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = very bad and 5 = very good.

### 3.6 Discussion of Data

To achieve the proposed objectives in this work, it is important to analyze how the different concepts of trust, commitment, cooperation, performance (past) and performance (future) correlate with each other (Table 1).

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1 It should be noted that the term of validity reliability differs, the latter being wider, indicating the degree in which the measurement process is free of both systematic errors like random errors.

2 However, as noted Hair et al. (2006), the limitation of this measure lies in the fact that there is a distortion related to the number of indicators of an aggregate scale. Scales aggregated with the largest number of indicators tend to report higher alphas.

*Tabel 1: Matrix Correlations*

	Alfa	1	2	3	4	
1. Trust	0.84	1				
2. Commitment	0.77	0.81**	1			
3. Cooperation	0.65	0.37	0.486*	1		
4. Performance ( <i>last</i> )	0.84	0.072	0.23	0.58**	1	
5. Performance ( <i>future</i> ) <sup>b</sup>	0.91	-0.23	-0.20	-0.52 *	-0.31 <sup>a</sup>	1

Note: \*\*  $p < 0.01$  (2-tailed); \*  $p < 0.05$  (2-tailed); <sup>b</sup> was used 7 point scale (Likert-scale)

Based on the Pearson correlations the data reveal that, despite the fact that we are in the presence of a small sample size, there is a fairly strong positive correlation between variables as proposed in our model.

With regard to the events set forth in the study, one could say that:

The first hypothesis holds that: the greater the trust between the exporter and agent / distributor the greater the commitment tends to be. You can see that there is indeed a strong positive and significant correlation between these two variables ( $r = 0.81$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) suggesting that there is a high quality in the correlation between exporters and their local intermediaries. In this sense, we can say that Hypothesis 1 is supported by the data.

This result can be supported by the following interview which states that:

"It's a tough little structured market where trust is critical, crucial." (...) "Shared values are the values of culture, mentalities. Understanding is easier between the Portuguese and the Angolans than among Angolans and the Irish. (...) Usually companies that use letter of credit have the guarantee that the customer will pay but if they do not pay, the bank pays all the same. I already know the company for X years then I no longer need a letter of credit value upon order. Letter of credit; advance; payment on delivery depends from company to company. "

However, as we can see from the interviews, there is great suspicion as regards the financial relationship, so it is necessary to strengthen the social dimension of the correlation to minimize the negative impacts resulting from the failure to collect. As regards social relations, there are shared values that

are the culture of values, mentalities. In short, although there is trust in the affective / social does not mean that there are no bank guarantees for the fulfillment of financial operations.

With regard to the second hypothesis, it argues that the greater the trust between the exporter and agent / distributor the higher cooperation tends to be.

Data for this association have a non-significant positive correlation to the level of significance of 5% ( $r = 0.37$ ,  $p < 0.09$ ).

Based on this assumption, we have decided to partially confirm this hypothesis. This result can, however, be supported by the following interview:

As regards the shared values, this is highly variable. Still, "the difficulties encountered in Angola arouse a survival spirit that tends to devalue Branding values that should be important factors of brand differentiation."

As for the commitment, it is also variable. Some importers "show a greater ability to meet targets and maintain regularity in the market. Still, external stressors (port difficulties, logistics, customs and foreign exchange) often provide adequate justification for failing commitments."

Finally, with regard to cooperation, it "also varies widely and directly resulting from the two previous."

This is confirmed by the interview that follows:

"Cooperation towards the Portuguese company that comes here (Angola):

Portuguese companies sell (mobile phones) to an Angolan company. The Angolan company says "I want exclusivity." The Portuguese company says "I

will not give you exclusivity, I will sell it to you, but if a company wants to buy in Lobito or Luanda, we will sell it to them too".

This initiative can be from Angolan companies or Portuguese companies. "I want exclusivity."

Usually Portuguese companies prefer to sell as much as possible here and there. Especially because there is a lot competition between importers and which is good, because they want to sell more of their product."

We can thus deduce from this statement that the cooperation is due to the commitment as well as shared values.

As for Hypothesis 3, this is based on the assumption that the higher the compromise between the exporter and the largest player the higher the cooperation tends to be. The data for this combination show a significant positive correlation considering a significance level of 0.05 ( $r = 00:48$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ).

The confirmation of the hypothesis can also be verified through the interview when the respondent states that "cop (cooperation) - It is also very variable and directly resulting from the two previous (Co (commitment); S (shared values))."

Table 2: Validation of Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Validation
<b>H1:</b> The greater the trust between the exporter and agent / distributor the greater the commitment tends to be.	Supported by the data
<b>H2:</b> The greater the trust between the exporter and agent / distributor the higher the cooperation tends to be.	Partially supported by the data
<b>H3:</b> The greater the commitment between the exporter and agent / distributor the higher the cooperation tends to be.	Supported by the data
<b>H4:</b> The greater the cooperation between the exporter and agent / distributor the more likely the export performance (last three years) tends to be.	Supported by the data
<b>H5:</b> The greater the cooperation between the exporter and agent / distributor the more likely the export performance (last three years) tends to be.	Supported by the data

As for Hypothesis 4, this is based on the assumption that the higher the cooperation between the exporter and the largest agent the higher the export performance (last 3 years) tends to be.

The data for this combination show a significant positive correlation considering a significance level of 0.05 ( $r = 00:58$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ).

Finally, Hypothesis 5 is also based on the assumption that the higher the cooperation between the exporter and the largest agent the higher the export performance (last 3 years) tends to be. Interestingly, the data for this association have a significant negative correlation considering a significance level of 0.05 ( $r = -0.52$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This result is particularly interesting in that future expectations of Portuguese entrepreneurs are relatively low in relation to the performance of their companies. Table 2 systematizes the results obtained in this study.

The analysis and discussion of the data, the analysis of the findings and implications of the study were presented.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND STUDY IMPLICATIONS

As it is with this research, the purpose of this article is to analyze how the different concepts are correlated with each other, ie the trust, commitment, cooperation and export performance (last and next three years).

The purpose of this study is to contribute to a better understanding of relationship quality through trust and commitment which in turn influence the cooperation and therefore the export performance (last and next three years) of Portuguese companies operating in Angola.

That is, how trust influences the commitment and how to influence the trust cooperation. In turn, how they influence commitment to cooperation was analyzed. Finally, how cooperation influences the performance Export was examined.

This study had revealed that there is a strong positive and significant correlation between trust and commitment suggesting that there is a high quality in the relationship between exporters and their local intermediaries.

The data also confirms that there is a strong positive and significant correlation between commitment and cooperation.

This is particularly interesting in the Angolan market owing to special factors resulting from social relations between exporters and local intermediaries. As it can be seen in some interviews carried out, the "bonus system" is a constant in Angola.

On the other hand, the data also confirms that there is no significant positive correlation between trust and cooperation. That is, the hypothesis 2 is partially confirmed.

The study data also reveals that there is a strong positive and significant correlation between the cooperation and export performance (last 3 years).

On the other hand, the data also confirms that there is a strong negative correlation between the cooperation and export performance (next 3 years). This result is interesting in that it indicates a certain distrust / uncertainty about the future.

In short, the analysis of the data allows us to conclude that only the hypothesis 2 is partially confirmed, that is, it maintains that the greater the trust between the exporter and agent / distributor the

higher the cooperation tends to be. The remaining hypotheses are validated in its entirety by the data obtained.

Regarding suggestions for future researches, this work can suggest the necessity to improve the relationship between the exporters and the local intermediaries in a longitudinal perspective. This research would make a dynamic analysis of the behavior of the Portuguese companies operating in Angola.

The use of a wide and longitudinal sample is certainly one of the assets of the study.

A business relationship involves two parties, and the current research only used data collected from a single side, from Portuguese exporters. So, suggestion for future research is analysis of matched pairs, that is, the Portuguese exporting companies and their distributors in Angola.

Therefore we can suggest an analysis aiming to assess both sides and extend it geographically to other countries. So, other export countries that might be relevant for further investigations are Mozambique and Brazil.

The presented conceptual method will only win and will be enriched if new values are added to it.

## EXTENDED SUMMARY / IZVLEČEK

Namen tega prispevka je prispevati k boljšemu razumevanju kakovosti povezave med zaupanjem in pripadnostjo, ki vpliva na kakovost sodelovanja in s tem na učinke izvoza (v zadnjih treh letih) in pričakovane učinke pri izvozu (v naslednjih treh letih) portugalskih gospodarskih družb, ki delujejo v Angoli.

Posledično je cilj tega prispevka razviti model pojasnjevanja različnih dejavnikov, ki pogojujejo izvoz portugalskih družb v Angolo. Še posebej gre za razlago razmerij med portugalskimi izvozniki in njihovimi območnimi posredniki v Angoli. Prispevek je še zlasti zanimiv, ker je takih raziskav o porajajočih se trgih razmeroma malo.

Zasnova predstavljenega modela temelji na literaturi o razmerjih pri trženju, še zlasti na Morgan-Huntovem (1994) modelu, imenovanem KMV (Key Mediating Variables). Teži k analiziranju vpliva kakovosti zaupanja tako na pripadnost kot na sodelovanje. Ob tem gre tudi za proučevanje, kako kakovost pripadnosti vpliva na sodelovanje. Končno gre tudi za analiziranje povezave med kakovostjo sodelovanja in učinki izvoza v omenjenem obdobju.

Uporabljena metodologija temelji na vprašalnikih in intervjujih. V vzorec sta bili vključeni 102 portugalski družbi od sodelujočih na meddržavnem sejmu v Luandi (FILDA), Angola. V celoti je bilo izpolnjenih le trideset vprašalnikov. Podatki so bili analizirani s programom SPSS. Istočasno so s ciljem dobiti odgovore na vprašanja »kako« in »zakaj« potekali intervjuji z ravnatelji nekaterih portugalskih družb. Z njihovimi odgovori naj bi določene zadeve boljše pojasnili.

Raziskava nam dokazuje, da obstaja med zaupanjem in pripadnostjo pozitivna in značilna korelacija, ki kaže na visoko kakovost razmerij med izvozniki in njihovimi območnimi posredniki. Posledično je moč potrditi pozitivno povezavo med zaupanjem, pripadnostjo in sodelovanjem. Podobno je bila potrjena pozitivna povezava med kakovostjo sodelovanja in izvoznimi učinki. Podatki še zlasti pričajo o pozitivni in značilni korelaciji med pripadnostjo in sodelovanjem.

Razmere na angolskem trgu so še zlasti zanimive glede na dejavnike, povezane z razmerji med izvozniki in območnimi posredniki. Iz opravljenih intervjujev je razvidna stalna navzočnost »bonus sistema« v Angoli. Na eni strani nam ugotovitve dovoljujejo sklep, da obstaja sicer pozitivna, a neznačilna korelacija med zaupanjem in sodelovanjem. Gre za delno potrditev druge od postavljenih hipotez. Podatki v raziskavi prav tako nakazujejo pozitivno in značilno korelacijo med kakovostjo sodelovanja in učinki izvoza v zadnjih treh letih. Na drugi strani podatki kažejo na negativno in to značilno korelacijo med kakovostjo sodelovanja in učinki izvoza (v naslednjih treh letih). Ta ugotovitev pomeni izziv, saj nakazuje na nezaupanje in negotovost v prihodnosti.

Gledano v celoti, analiza podatkov nam omogoča zaključek, da je le druga hipoteza (več zaupanja, več sodelovanja) delno potrjena. Preostale hipoteze ob razpoložljivih podatkih nimajo ustrezne potrditve.

Raziskava naj bi imela posledice na dveh ravneh, na ravni portugalskih in na ravni angolskih družb. V povezavi s portugalskimi družbami utegne biti raziskava uporabna, saj jim kaže na pomen trga in političnih teženj v trženju ter strategije za izboljšanje učinkov v izvozu. Prav tako nakazuje potrebo po ustreznih načinih dela za izboljšanje razmerij z angolskimi družbami. Angolske družbe naj bi dojele, da raziskava prispeva k boljšemu razumevanju pomena izboljšanja razmerij s portugalskimi družbami. Hkrati se lahko nadejamo, da raziskava prispeva k razjasnitvi zasnov analiziranja. Prav premajhno število raziskav na tem področju kaže na potrebo po temeljitejšem raziskovanju. Uporabljena metoda naj bi odprla poti za raziskave, ki naj bi pospešile razvoj učinkovitih orodij ravnanja, uporabnih za družbe, ki se srečujejo s težavami v poslovnih razmerjih. Glede predlogov za raziskave v prihodnje iz prispevka izhaja tudi nujnost izboljšanja dinamične analize glede dolgoročnih razmerij med izvozniki in območnimi posredniki.

Uporaba predstavljenega vzorca je gotovo ena od prvin raziskave. Poslovno razmerje sicer vključuje dve strani, a ta raziskava žal uporablja le podatke, pridobljene z ene same, portugalske, strani. Zato naj bi v prihodnjih raziskavah pridobili podatke z obeh strani in jih razširili še na druge države. Predstavljena metoda bo dosegla svoj namen le, če bo obogatena z novimi vrednostnimi kategorijami.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendices 1

#### Measuring instrument development

As mentioned, the quantitative study design was based on a survey questionnaire. It is a cheaper method to quantify and collect a plurality of variables, has low cost; achieves a large geographically dispersed population, confers a greater degree of freedom and time to the respondent, the possibility of happen distortion is smaller, allows to obtain often surface data and more detailed data can be obtained with open questions (Barañano 2008; Lakatos, 1991).

However, it is important to note that the use of the questionnaire also has some drawbacks of which the most important is the low response rate. The questionnaire development was not only based on the contribution of exploratory interviews, but also on the relevant literature.

In order to evaluate the questionnaire issues, a pre test / pilot test by three academic and two businessmen / general managers who suggested some adjustments or adaptations making it more noticeable and adapted to the reality of the Portuguese companies and agents / distributors located in the Angolan market was conducted.

The structure of the questionnaire and your organization is a task of the utmost relevance since it must contain the appropriate questions for collecting the information that will be needed to solve a particular problem under study. Similarly, the issues should be linked consistently by different topics under review.

#### Operationalization of concepts adopted in this study

Most of the concepts used in this study were based on the work of Morgan & Hunt (1994). These variables were measured on a scale of 5-point Likert (1 = Nothing agreement; 5 = strongly agree).

##### Trust

###### Items:

- It's A relationship in which there is not always existing trust;
- It's A perfectly honest and truthful relationship;
- It's A relationship based on loyalty;
- It's A relationship based on what is actually correct;
- It's A relationship based on sincerity;
- It's A relationship based on high trust;
- It's A relationship based on high integrity;
- Our Main agent does not take advantage (or advantage) of our company if they have the opportunity;
- Our Main agent scrupulously keeps the established promises

##### Commitment

###### Items:

- This Relationship involves a high involvement / commitment on our part;
- This Relationship is very important to us;
- This Relationship is negligible;
- It's Something the company intends to maintain indefinitely;
- This Relationship is almost like belonging to a family;
- It's Something with which the company really cares about;
- It looks like the company devotes its maximum effort.

## Cooperation

### Items:

- Advertising / Joint promotion on a base / regional;
- Politics Return of defective products;
- Politics Inventory;
- Politics Discounts;
- Information Strategic marketing (e.g. new products, market trends;. Supply sources);  
Company -Collaborators are sent from the country to support the main agents and / or distributors.

As regards the variable **export performance** was based on input from Sousa & Lopez-Martinez & Rabbit (2008).

### Items:

- Volume Exports;
- Growth In export sales;
- Profits Arising from export activity;
- Market share;
- Growth Market share through exports;
- Success of New products.

A scale of 5-point Likert (1 = Nothing agreement; 5 = strongly agree) was used to measure the variable export performance in the last three years. In what refers to the export performance for the next three years, a range of 3-point Likert (1 = Worsen; 2 = Maintain and 3 = Improve) was used.

In terms of data collection, the questionnaire was supplemented with interviews in order to allow a better response to the study questions.

## Appendices 2

### Interview guide

#### (exporters vs. agents / distributors)

- 1) Generally where is the main form of access to the Angolan market by Portuguese companies?
- 2) In the case of opting for export, is it often the use of agents / local distributors?
  - 2.1) How do you establish the choice of these agents / local distributors?
- 3) Is the identification of the most appropriate agents / local distributors for the distribution of products in the target market done through the AICEP?
- 4) How would you characterize the relationship between agents / local distributors and Portuguese companies in the following dimensions: trust (t), shared values (sv), commitment (co) and cooperation (cop), communication (com) (..)
- 5) What are the main problems that occur when there is a break in the contractual relationship between export companies and agents / local distributors?

Thank you very much for your time!