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# Risk and perceived value: antecedents of customer satisfaction and loyalty in a sustainable business model

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## ABSTRACT

In the contemporary economic environment, each company that succeeds in creating and offering value to its clients/consumers will be able to survive in the market and even record profit for the medium and long time – thus value represents a driving force for a sustainable business model. Considering the significant role of perceived value within strategic management, the main purpose of this research is to identify and test an adequate conceptual frame in order to study the value concept and its connections with satisfaction, loyalty and perceived risk in order to offer a proper management tool for monitoring the sustainability of an existing business. So, this study proposed and tested concepts in the context of the S.M.E. market in Romania. Results show that both risk and value play a significant role in influencing satisfaction and customer loyalty, thus, in the end, company bottom line.

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Perceived value; risk; structural equation modelling

## JEL CLASSIFICATION

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## 1. Introduction

In the last decade of the past century, the concept of perceived value became a key element used by the most developed countries' economies to define the business model. The concept is still relevant, and is included in the marketing definition proposed by the American Marketing Association: 'Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large'.

In our study, enterprises will be targeted as potential customers. Selling products or services to enterprises requires a different approach than selling to customers as individuals. Based on the fact that decision-makers involved in purchasing decisions

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are individuals in this study, we will refer to both enterprises and individuals without taking into consideration the differences between them. Some remarks on enterprises' acquisition process need to be pointed out: decision-makers from the acquisition department are usually involved in the purchase decision, along with other departments such as finance, production, etc.; therefore more people are involved in the supplier selection process, enterprises deal with budget constraints, and consultations between requirements, budget, and acquisition processes take place in order to improve the acquisition process.

Many companies recognise the significant role of perceived value within strategic management (Spiteri and Dion, 2004). Slater (1997) stated that the existence of a successful company is driven by its own capacity to create and to offer real value for consumers.

Following this idea, increasing value for consumers became a strategic point for companies to develop and maintain a competitive advantage. Both loyalty and the company's profitability are strongly related to the process of the creation and delivery of customer value. Customer value, defined by Woodruff as 'a customer perceived preference for and evaluation of those products attributes, attribute performances, and consequences arising from use that facilitate (or block) achieving the customer's goals and purposes in use situations', is considered to be 'a crucial strategic factor in gaining a competitive advantage' (Mele, 2007). We can assert that the consumers' increasing value plays a critical role in companies' strategies in the context of an increasingly competitive environment. In this context both loyalty and the company's profitability are strongly related to the process of the creation and delivery of customer value. The main purpose of our research is to identify and test an adequate conceptual frame in order to study the concept of value, and also the connections between value and other concepts such as satisfaction, loyalty and perceived risk. This study is conducted on the Romanian small to medium enterprise (S.M.E.) market, and the obtained results indicate that both risk and value play a significant role in influencing satisfaction and customer loyalty.

## **2. Materials and methods**

### ***2.1. Relevance of risk on perceived value***

The consumption-value theory proposed by Sheth et al. (1991) is considered to be one of the most important research contributions to the study of perceived value. The theory focuses on the impact of five consumption values – functional value, social value, emotional value, epistemic value and conditional value – on consumers' consumption decisions (Sheth et al., 1991). Not all researchers agree with the model: Sweeney and Soutar (2001) maintain that epistemic value and conditional value should be excluded from the customer value construct; and Izquierdo et al. (2006), Sanchez et al. (2006), and Roig et al. (2006) propose a three-dimension value construct: functional value, social value and emotional value.

No matter the form of value, value creation for customers is a key concept in marketing (Gronroos and Voima, 2011), so companies need to consider that each consumer has its own value structure that determines the consumption decision

(Howard, 1977; Mayton et al., 1994). When estimating the value of a product, customers take into consideration both the benefit and sacrifice items repurchase (Lin et al., 2012). Tim Lu et al. (2011) even suggest that sacrifice is one of the two key determinants of value – sacrifice and quality – and tested the effects of elements such as perceived quality, perceived sacrifice, perceived value and customers' satisfaction on purchase consumers' intention, concluding a possible positive connection between them.

Considering that many researchers consider value as a three-dimensional concept, we will use this approach in our study, namely functional, emotional and social value.

Sheth et al. (1991) consider that an object gets a functional value if it includes prominent functional, utility or physical attributes for consumers. In other studies (Pura, 2005; Sweeney et al., 1997; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001; Wang et al., 2004; Williams and Soutar, 2009) the functional value is identified in all cases in the unidimensional form (Sweeney et al., 1997; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001; Wang et al., 2004), or with two components, quality-performance report, or price-value for the money (Williams and Soutar, 2009), respectively, monetary value and convenience (Pura, 2005). These authors consider this a necessity because of the inclusion of two concepts within the functional value under the unidimensional form.

Related to social value, Sheth et al. (1991) indicate that consumers develop positive or negative stereotypes based on their association with demographic, social-economical or ethnical-cultural groups.

Further studies (Prior, 2013; Pura, 2005; Sweeney et al., 1997; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001; Wang et al., 2004) confirm and support the importance of this type of value, and even if it is not placed in the top position for explaining consumers' decisions, it still represents a relevant and distinct component for value as general concept.

Emotional value is represented by association with specific sentiments, or by the triggering and probability of developing of such sentiments (Sheth et al., 1991). This component is included in different studies in order to research the influence of the value on consumers' satisfaction (Arslanagic-Kalajdzic and Zabkar, 2017; Candi and Kahn, 2016; Pura, 2005; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001; Wang et al., 2004; Williams and Soutar, 2009; ), buying intention (Pura, 2005; Williams and Soutar, 2009), commitment (Pura, 2005) and loyalty for a specific brand (Wang et al., 2004) – all these studies confirm the existence of a strong influence for this type of value. Customers' satisfaction is considered to be the result of perceived customer value (Omar et al., 2011; Demirgüneş, 2015).

Referring to the risk relevance of the value, Woodall identifies risk as one of the determinant factors in the perception of a value, close to classical benefits and sacrifices (Woodall 2003), while Mwencha emphasises that the perceived risk has a negative impact on purchase behaviour (Mwencha et al., 2014). According to ISO 31000, risk is defined as the 'effect of uncertainty on objectives', and Kogan and Wallach (1964) consider that risk assumes two distinct issues: the chance that is related to a certain probability, and the perils that affect the severity of negative consequences.

Stone and Winter (1987) consider risk as an expectance of a loss. Following this idea, the higher the certainty related to this expectance for a person is, the higher the

risk intensity. This manner of risk conception, based on psychological aspects, is opposite to traditional theories related to this term, theories with mathematical and economical origins and backgrounds.

Dwyer and Tanner (2009), mention that risk is represented by the occurrence probability for a result and by the importance of the related costs to that result. Moreover, Kothandaraman and Wilson (2001) agree that an ideal business partner would be one that is able to offer significant value to the client with a low level of risk. Being a multidimensional concept, risk can be perceived in many forms, such as financial (Hu, 2012; Chang and Chen, 2008), economical (Cunningham, 1967; Crespo et al., 2009), functional (performance) (Hu, 2012; Chen and Chang, 2013), social (Hu, 2012; Chang and Chen, 2008), physical (Hassan et al., 2006) and psychological (Hassan et al., 2006, Crespo et al., 2009). Financial risk is related to the cost of a new similar acquisition and to potential loss of revenues in the case that they will not respect the advertised characteristics (Dwyer and Tanner, 2009). Functional risk is represented by the risk of products malfunctioning. Both these risks may occur at once, and they are strongly correlated because there are just a few situations when a malfunction has no financial impact on a company (Dwyer and Tanner, 2009). Taking into account this strong correlation between these last two risks, during this research only the financial risk will be considered, with its direct impact on the enterprise's profit.

Yee and San define perceived risk as a being the most important antecedent to consumer behaviour (Yee and San, 2011); research on this matter has found that a high level of perceived risk determines the intention of purchasing a product or service (Mwencha et al., 2014), behavioural intention being negatively influenced by perceived risk (Bertea and Zait, 2013).

So, we conclude that there is an obvious connection between risk and perceived value, because financial risk evolution may lead to a decrease in total perceived value.

## **2.2. The value–satisfaction relationship**

Value and satisfaction may be perceived as similar concepts within a framework where quality is a determinant variable for both concepts. More, both value and satisfaction are noticed at a transactional or sequential level, and also at a relational one (Huber et al., 2007). Following these remarks, Oliver (1996), relying on the typology of the value proposed by Holbrook (1996), proposed the idea that satisfaction and value represent the same concept. Against these arguments, there is a significant and distinctive literature that treats satisfaction and value as two separate concepts, but accepts the existence of a connection between them (Oliver, 1996; Woodruff, 1997; de Ruyter et al., 1997; Huber et al., 2007, Korda and Snoj, 2010, Demirgüneş, 2015). Moreover, there are authors that consider satisfaction as a preamble for value (Oliver 1996; Woodall 2003, Omar et al., 2011), and meantime there are authors that treat satisfaction as a consequence of value (Woodruff, 1997; de Ruyter et al., 1997; Huber et al., 2007; Demirgüneş, 2015), and also authors that suggest that both satisfaction and value are bidirectionally connected to a wider network of consumption experiences (Oliver, 1996). Perceived value is seen in the literature as a predictor for

customers' repurchase intentions (Morar, 2013). Gaining new consumers is more expensive than keeping a satisfied consumer, therefore companies need to increase consumer shopping intentions by providing the value that can be achieved by 'creating and delivering good shopping experiences' (Demirgüneş, 2015). The concept of perceived value is different to consumer satisfaction: in the case of perceived value, consumers compare benefits with sacrifices, while in case of consumer satisfaction they compare delivered value with expected value (Demirgüneş, 2015).

During this paper, we will analyse it as an antecedent of satisfaction, not only because most of studies research the relation between satisfaction and value following this idea, but also because the authors of this paper subscribe to this by considering this a normal and logical relation between these concepts. In our opinion satisfaction cannot precede value.

### ***2.3. Fundamentals of the proposed conceptual framework***

The value concept is treated from a multidimensional perspective in this paper. In our proposed conceptual framework only three values can be identified as proposed by Sheth et al. (1991): functional, social and emotional, since the epistemic and conditional dimensions of the value are not as stable over time as the other types mentioned (Sweeney et al., 1997; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001). We are following the approaches of Candi and Kahn (2016) and Arslanagic-Kalajdzic and Zabkar, (2017) by adding the functional dimension of value to the social and emotional dimensions.

The relation established between these three dimensions of value follows the premises of the consumption values theory. Thus, these types of value have individual and different contributions to consumers' decisions, and no matter the consumers' consumption situation, the types and forms of values are independent.

In the study, each type of value is defined as a result of the combination of two components, namely benefits and sacrifices. This approach is adopted because most of the literature, especially since 2000 (Lapierre, 2000; Ulaga and Eggert, 2005, 2006; Faroughian et al., 2012), considers that this concept involves a compromise between the sacrifices and the benefits perceived by consumers. Taking these into account we will use functional sacrifices and benefits for functional value, social sacrifices and benefits for social value, and emotional sacrifices and benefits for emotional value. Even though there is analytical support for treating value as a construct with a high level of abstracting based on these two components – sacrifices and benefits (Lapierre, 2000; Ulaga and Eggert, 2005) – there are recent arguments (Whittaker et al., 2007; Faroughian et al., 2012; Kassim et al., 2014) saying that these components act in different ways. Also, beside these arguments, there must be added the questions raised by Edwards (2001) related to the efficiency of the high level of abstracting research. Based on previous statements, in this research both components of different types of values are allowed to have an independent behaviour in order to form value perceptions.

Satisfaction is included in the conceptual framework because it represents one of the most presented consequences of value in the specialist literature (Oliver, 1996; Woodruff, 1997; Eggert and Ulaga, 2002; Woodall, 2003; Faroughian et al., 2012).

Regarding the relationship between satisfaction and value, there is a direct and positive one.

Increasing perceived value we will enhance consumers' satisfaction level in most cases. Similarly, a decrease in perceived value is normally followed by a decrease in satisfaction level related to a particular consumption experience. Measuring consumers' satisfaction is directly linked to many benefits for a company (Rahman and Alzubi, 2015), such as better understanding of problems and reporting of results, and improvement in communications.

Satisfaction and loyalty have been introduced in the proposed concept because they represent two of the most frequently presented consequences of value in the literature (Oliver, 1996, 1999; Woodall, 2003; Faroughian et al., 2012). Beside the direct relationship between value and loyalty, there is also an indirect relationship between them, a relationship mediated by satisfaction. The relationship between loyalty, benefits and sacrifices follows the same logic as the one previously presented for the relationship between satisfaction and both components of each type of value. The relationship between satisfaction and loyalty is presented in our study as a direct but negative one. Thus, an increasing of satisfaction level perceived by consumers derives from a decreasing of their loyalty towards the particular enterprise, and a decreasing of the same level of satisfaction leads to an increasing of consumers' loyalty for the same company. At an initial point, this aspect seems to be logically less related to the relationship normally established between satisfaction and loyalty (direct and positive connection). The proposed relationship in this case has a logical explanation based on the loyalty concept definition – intention to switch or intention to buy from a different supplier.

Risk is analysed as an antecedent of the value (Faroughian et al., 2012). Based on this assumption, risk is contributing differently to the formation of perception, starting from its components level. Certain high-risk situations will negatively impact consumers' perception of benefits (will decrease them), and related to sacrifice perceptions this situation will lead to a positive effect (will accentuate them).

Risk has a dominant influence on perceived value when it has a higher relative intensity or a negative one. In this case, the presence of risk within a specific situation decreases the value perceived by consumers in that context.

#### **2.4. Proposed research hypothesis**

The first set of hypotheses refers to the relation between the three dimensions of value mentioned in this study and the satisfaction concept. We formulated the following hypotheses to be tested in our analysis:

*H1a, Relation between functional benefits and satisfaction is a direct one and positive.*

*H1b, Relation between functional sacrifices and satisfaction is a direct one and negative.*

*H2a, Relation between social benefits and satisfaction is a direct one and positive.*

*H2b, Relation between social sacrifices and satisfaction is a direct one and negative.*

*H3a, Relation between emotional benefits and satisfaction is a direct one and positive.*

*H3b, Relation between emotional sacrifices and satisfaction is a direct one and negative.*

The second set of hypotheses refers to the direct supposed connection between the three dimensions of the value and loyalty. The hypotheses are:

*H4a, Relation between functional benefits and loyalty is mediated by satisfaction.*

*H4b, Relation between functional sacrifices and loyalty is mediated by satisfaction.*

*H5a, Relation between social benefits and loyalty is mediated by satisfaction.*

*H5b, Relation between social sacrifices and loyalty is mediated by satisfaction.*

*H6a, Relation between emotional benefits and loyalty is mediated by satisfaction.*

*H6b, Relation between emotional sacrifices and loyalty is mediated by satisfaction.*

The third set of hypotheses takes into consideration the connection between value and risk, where risk is used as an antecedent of the other concept. The hypotheses are:

*H7a, Relation between financial risk and functional benefits is a direct one and negative.*

*H7b, Relation between financial risk and functional sacrifices is a direct one and positive.*

*H8a, Relation between financial risk and social benefits is a direct one and negative.*

*H8b, Relation between financial risk and social sacrifices is a direct one and positive.*

*H9a, Relation between financial risk and emotional benefits is a direct one and negative.*

*H9b, Relation between financial risk and emotional sacrifices is a direct one and positive.*

Finally we formulated a hypothesis based on the relation between satisfaction and loyalty:

*H10, Relation between satisfaction and loyalty is a direct one and negative.*

## **2.5. Research methodology**

The population analysed in our research represents Romanian S.M.E.s in 2014. Because the authors did not have access to an exhaustive list of statistical units, we used in our research a non-random sampling method. From non-random sampling methods, we chose the quota sampling method because this allows constitution of a sample that is very close in structure to the structure of target population. Data have been gathered using an online questionnaire addressed to the persons that had a managing position inside S.M.E.s. The period of data collection was November 2014, this period being considered an adequate one for a transverse study. For this study 229 participants completed the entire survey.

The structure of the sample, taking into account the S.M.E.s' dimension and the main domain of activity, is presented in [Table 1](#). From the total number of S.M.E.s



**Table 1.** Sample structure taking into account the S.M.E.s' dimension and the main domain of activity.

Activity domain	Dimension			Total
	<i>Micro enterprises</i>	<i>Small enterprises</i>	<i>Middle enterprises</i>	
<b>Industry</b>	4.36%	6.55%	2.19%	13.10%
<b>Constructions</b>	5.24%	1.74%	1.31%	8.29%
<b>Commerce</b>	25.37%	6.55%	1.74%	33.62%
<b>Transport</b>	2.18%	1.31%	0.87%	4.36%
<b>Services</b>	23.14%	4.36%	1.31%	28.82%
<b>Other domains</b>	7.42%	3.05%	1.32%	11.79%
<b>Total</b>	67.69%	23.58%	8.73%	100.00%

Source: Authors' calculations.

**Table 2.** Differences between the sample structure and the structure of the population.

Activity domain	Dimension			Total
	<i>Micro enterprises</i>	<i>Small enterprises</i>	<i>Middle enterprises</i>	
<b>Industry</b>	(3.28%)	4.53%	1.59%	2.84%
<b>Constructions</b>	(4.45%)	0.50%	1.08%	(2.88%)
<b>Commerce</b>	(8.56%)	4.03%	1.45%	(3.13%)
<b>Transport</b>	(3.79%)	0.85%	0.79%	(2.15%)
<b>Services</b>	(5.92%)	2.55%	1.01%	(2.36%)
<b>Other domains</b>	3.69%	2.70%	1.25%	7.65%
<b>Total</b>	(22.33%)	15.18%	7.16%	–

Source: Authors' calculations.

considered for this study, 67.69% are Micro Enterprises, 23.58% Small Enterprises, and the difference (8.73%) is Middle Enterprises.

Differences recorded between the structure of the sample and structure of population taking into account variables indicated in this study are presented in [Table 2](#).

### 3. Results

AMOS program version 20 was found to be highly appropriate for the present study based on the presence of reflective constructs in our proposed conceptual model.

Based on the assumption that a dependence relation exists between elements of the proposed model and within the model there are multiple relations between dependent and independent variables, we will use as a statistic technique one of Structural Equations Model (Hair et al., 2010).

#### 3.1. Measurement model

The values of reliability indicators taken into account for this model are presented in [Table 3](#). We can notice that for each indicator the minimal exigency values are over the normal values, generating an acceptable model.

Recorded values for each individual construct, related to confidence levels and their validation, are presented in [Table 4](#) (level of confidence and convergent validity) and then in [Table 5](#) (discriminant validity).

**Table 3.** Goodness of fit indicators for the final measurement model.

Category	Name	Recorded value
Absolute goodness of fit indicators	GFI	0.900
	RMSEA	0.049
Incremental goodness of fit indicators	AGFI	0.858
	IFI	0.975
	TLI	0.967
	CFI	0.974
Parsimony goodness of fit indicators	$\chi^2/df$	1.549

Source: Authors' calculations.

**Table 4.** Level of confidence and convergent validity.

	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted
Financial risk (FNR)	0.861	0.674
Functional benefits (FB)	0.892	0.675
Functional sacrifices (FS)	0.901	0.753
Social benefits (SB)	0.924	0.858
Social sacrifices (SS)	0.862	0.757
Emotional benefits (EB)	0.974	0.950
Emotional sacrifices (ES)	0.872	0.695
Satisfaction (SAT)	0.880	0.787
Loyalty (LOY)	0.883	0.792

Source: Authors' calculations.

**Table 5.** Discriminant validity.

	MSV	ASV	FNR	FB	FS	SB	SS	EB	ES	SAT	LOY
FNR	0.343	0.203	<b>0.821</b>								
FB	0.534	0.274	-0.427	<b>0.822</b>							
FS	0.537	0.097	0.286	0.199	<b>0.868</b>						
SB	0.534	0.246	-0.352	0.731	0.126	<b>0.927</b>					
SS	0.537	0.100	0.332	0.060	0.733	0.055	<b>0.870</b>				
EB	0.671	0.284	-0.394	0.722	0.101	0.700	0.088	<b>0.975</b>			
ES	0.343	0.194	0.586	-0.432	0.297	-0.354	0.367	-0.427	<b>0.834</b>		
SAT	0.671	0.332	-0.562	0.710	-0.010	0.725	-0.030	0.819	-0.542	<b>0.887</b>	
LOY	0.341	0.181	0.558	-0.467	-0.044	-0.383	0.023	-0.483	0.441	-0.584	<b>0.890</b>

Notes: MSV: mean shared variance; ASV: average shared variance.

Source: Authors' calculations.

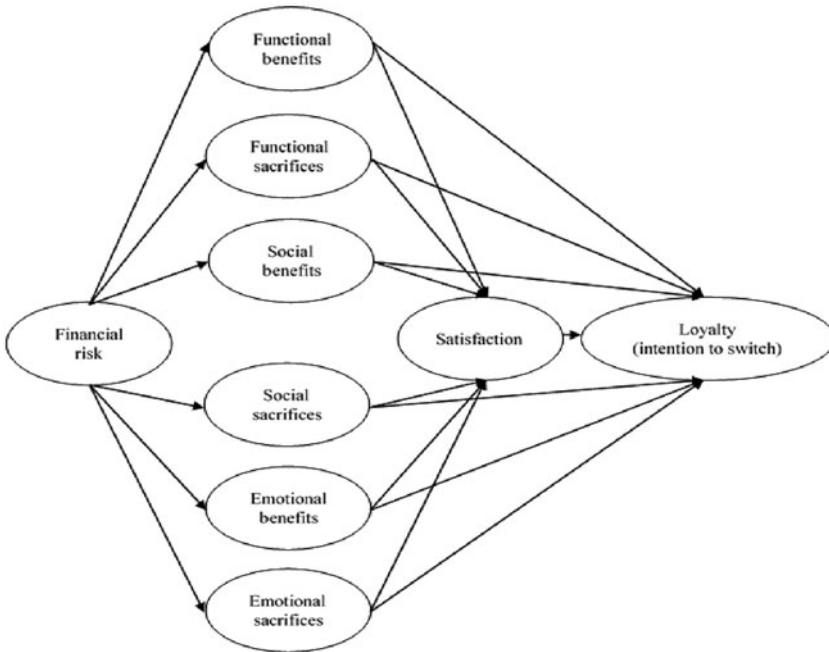
As can be noticed, from the data presented in these two tables, each individual construct meets the minimal evaluation criteria: trusting level, convergent and discriminant validity.

### 3.2. Structural model

Using the proposed research hypothesis as a starting point, we will develop, based on constructs from the measurement model, a structural model in order to test the causality relations assumed to exist between these constructs. The model is presented in Figure 1.

Table 6 presents standardised regression coefficients between independent and dependent variables, and their levels of significance.

Causal relationships among the various constructs are analysed based on values, sign and significance level of coefficients that are validated or not.



**Figure 1.** Proposed Structural Model.

Source: Author's configuration

**Table 6.** Standardised regression coefficients.

Exogenous variables	Endogenous variables	Coefficient	p
Financial risk	Functional benefits	-0.470	***
	Functional sacrifices	0.313	***
	Social benefits	-0.389	***
	Social sacrifices	0.371	***
	Emotional benefits	-0.425	***
	Emotional sacrifices	0.649	***
Functional benefits	Satisfaction	0.128	***
Functional sacrifices		-0.115	***
Social benefits		0.292	***
Social sacrifices		0.065	0.056 n.s.
Emotional benefits		0.586	***
Emotional sacrifices		-0.235	***
Functional benefits	Loyalty	-0.110	0.056 n.s.
Functional sacrifices		-0.168	0.002
Social benefits		0.231	***
Social sacrifices		0.038	0.483 n.s.
Emotional benefits		0.103	0.215 n.s.
Emotional sacrifices		0.200	0.002
Satisfaction	Loyalty	-0.607	***

Notes: n.s.: not significant; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

Source: Authors' calculations.

If a coefficient is considered not significant, the causal relationship corresponding to this is considered not significant, and the proposed connection between these constructs is not confirmed by our data. Obviously, in the case of a significant coefficient, the causal relationship between involved constructs is confirmed, and the sign of analysed coefficient reflects the influence of the independent variable on the dependent one – positive for a positive coefficient, negative for a negative coefficient.

**Table 7.** Satisfaction as mediator of the value-loyalty relation.

Hypothesis	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Results
H4a	-0.110 n.s.	-0.078 **	Full mediation
H4b	-0.168 n.s.	0.070 **	Full mediation
H5a	0.231 **	-0.178 ***	Partial mediation
H5b	0.038 n.s.	-0.039 n.s.	Hypothesis not supported
H6a	0.103 n.s.	-0.356 ***	Full mediation
H6b	0.200 **	0.142 ***	Partial mediation

Notes: n.s.: not significant; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ .

Source: Authors' calculations.

Analysing data from Table 6, we notice that a significant part of the proposed causality connections between constructs of the proposed structural model are confirmed by the fact that the values of the standardised regression coefficients are significant. Then, the sign of these coefficients confirms the positive or negative influence of the independent variable on the dependent one.

For the hypothesis set referring to the role of satisfaction as a mediating factor for the relation between the different proposed values and loyalty, the results are presented in Table 7.

As can be observed in Table 7, beside hypothesis H5b, all other hypotheses referring to satisfaction as a mediating factor between value and loyalty are confirmed. The impact of perceived value on loyalty is partially or totally explained by enterprises' satisfaction with their suppliers.

Following this idea, enterprises in a supplier position must focus not only on offering a valuable offer to their customers, but also on maintaining an adequate level of satisfaction for them.

#### 4. Discussion

The hypothesis H1a – *Relation between functional benefits and satisfaction is a direct one and positive* – it is entirely validated because of the positive sign of its standardised regression coefficient, and because of the significant level of the coefficient.

Hypothesis H1b – *Relation between functional sacrifices and satisfaction is a direct one and negative* – is entirely validated, using the same judgement as in hypothesis H1a, but taking into account the negative sign of the coefficient for this relation.

For hypotheses H2a, H3a and H3b, following the same arguments as the ones used for hypotheses H1a and H1b, we reached the same conclusions presented in the previous paragraphs. This means that the hypotheses H2a, H3a and H3b are entirely confirmed by the results obtained in our study.

The results obtained for this first set of hypotheses are consistent, totally (Whittaker et al., 2007) or partially, with other similar findings from earlier literature. Our findings are confirmed by those of Whittaker et al. (2007) that study the impact of benefits and sacrifices on satisfaction. In both studies, benefits (functional, social, emotional in our study) have a direct and positive impact on perception of satisfaction, and sacrifices (functional, social, emotional in our study) have a direct and negative impact on the same perceptions in both studies.

The results obtained by Spiteri and Dion (2004) and Faroughian et al. (2012) confirm the existence of a significant connection between benefits and satisfaction only; the connection between sacrifices and satisfaction is not confirmed. Referring to these two studies, the results obtained in our study confirm the connection between benefits and satisfaction and confirm the inexistence of the connection between sacrifices and satisfaction.

These different results may be explained by the operationalisation of sacrifices in these three studies. Thus, in our present study sacrifices have been operationalised taking into account the type of the value used for research (functional, social, emotional); in the other two studies sacrifices were operationalised as aggregates.

Relationships between risk and different types of benefits and sacrifices are all confirmed within the structural model. Similar findings were reported by Faroughian et al. (2012); relationships between risk and the two components of the value (benefits and sacrifices) are confirmed for each type of value included in the model. Also, our study confirms the usefulness of risk inclusion in the model of consumers' perceived value, given the fact that a significant impact of it was noticed on all types of considered values.

The last causality relation tested within the proposed model is the one between satisfaction and loyalty. Results emphasise a direct and negative impact of satisfaction on loyalty (intentions to switch), in concordance with results obtained by Lam et al. (2004) and Bontis et al. (2007). Thus, hypothesis H10 is totally validated within this study; satisfaction has a negative influence on the intention of switching supplier.

#### **4.1. Managerial implications**

The results obtained in this paper may offer real support in the managerial decision-making process, bringing some contributions to the practical activity of enterprises.

First, this study offers empirical proofs related to the financial risk impact on the components of value. Enterprises that offer products and services should highlight the fact that a quality offer – together with respecting the terms of the contracts and offering post-sale services and an adequate guarantee – leads to a decrease in operational and financial costs, and also directly contributes to the decrease of the enterprise's total costs. Similarly, the clients of that enterprise should be assured that by using the products and services there will be no negative impact on their own companies. In the case of new clients, these conclusions may be reached by presenting study cases, or/and by the support/recommendations offered by enterprises that already use the same offered products/services.

For existing clients, enterprises should offer consultancy on the way that risk minimisation may lead both to increase in perceived benefits and to decrease of supported sacrifices; for example, the employees of an enterprise may win from decreasing their mistakes (psychological benefits), or reducing insidious fraud from the same employees may positively affect the enterprise (decreasing the sacrifices).

Second, the behaviour of value's components in relation to satisfaction suggests that efforts made to increase the satisfaction level felt by consumers should be directed to the improvement of the perception of benefits perceptions for them, and

by reducing the perceptions about supported sacrifices. For example, reaching excellence in functionality, or building and maintaining an excellent reputation in the market, may make a significant contribution to profit for enterprises offering products and/or services. Meantime, avoidance or amiable resolution of the conflicts that may appear between these enterprises and their customers may assure a long-term profit for these enterprises.

Third, the results of this study prove once again the significant role of satisfaction in loyalty. Taking into account the competitive nature of business, enterprises should offer superior value to their clients compared with competitors in order to reach a higher satisfaction level for their consumers. In this way, these enterprises, by causality chain value satisfaction, may increase their own clients' loyalty, assuring in this way a continuous and sure level of future profits.

## 5. Conclusions, limitations and future research

Taking into account our findings, the present study brings the following contributions to the general knowledge value concept:

First, although this research was carried out in the context of the organisational market in Romania, this work is among the first to examine the relationships between different types of risk and perceptions of value in the wider field of organisational marketing. Second, the results of this study confirm the view that the risk is a key factor in the formation of value perceptions. Third, these results provides information on how different types of risk work on value.

In conclusion, the proposed conceptual model is confirmed mostly by empirical results obtained after analysing the data set. This model can be used, with some limitations, in modelling perceived value as concept in the organisational market.

This study has some limitations which have to be pointed out. First, the Romanian sample may limit the generalisability of our findings, based on the fact that although there are many similarities between countries, there are also many differences that can influence results. Future research projects should carry out international studies in order to identify similarities and differences based on cross-country data.

Second, our study refers to enterprises and individuals as similar customers. Distinctive differences between enterprises and individuals can be identified, so future research should investigate if there are major or minor differences related to the opportunity of risk inclusion in consumers' model of perceived value in both categories.

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