

## **ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE ON DEALER-SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIPS: AN ANALYSIS OF DEALER'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION**

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**Abstract:** In today's environment, businesses have become more complex and uncertain where sustainable competitive advantages rely on the development and maintenance of relationships between buyers and supplier. Understanding the relationship in depth contributes to organizational knowledge as it facilitates the delivery of the products to the intended customers. Thus, researchers' and marketers' interests have become more focused on relationship building and development, and many marketing scholars have recognized the need for examination of the relationship aspects of buyer-supplier exchange and the components that influence relationship development and satisfaction. Despite the assumption that relationship satisfaction contributes to buyer-supplier relationship, previous researches have concentrated more on overall satisfaction of relationship and less research focus has been given to investigating the multi dimensionality of relationship satisfaction. The aim of this study is to examine the level of relationship satisfaction in supplier-dealer relationships as well as the relationships between dimensions of relationship satisfaction. Using a survey method, this study explores the level of relationship satisfaction among 126 car dealers in Malaysia as well as the influence of economic satisfaction on social satisfaction. Results show that the dealers are highly satisfied with the suppliers and both dimensions of relationship satisfaction are correlated to each other. The results provide support for the relationship between economic and social satisfaction. Theoretical and managerial implications are extracted from these findings with a view towards knowledge sharing.

**Key Words:** Relationship satisfaction, automobile industry, Malaysia, buyer-seller relationship.

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Over the past 15 years, a major shift has occurred in the ways that business to business (b-to-b) companies deal with their channel members (Caceras & Paparoidamis, 2007: ). This change has come about as companies have recognized that sustainable competitive advantage in the global economy increasingly requires companies to establish and satisfied with channel members they are working with.

Specifically, in marketing channel relationship, researchers have revealed that a channel member's satisfaction increases long-term orientation and continuity (Bolton, 1998; Selnes, 1998). Under such a scenario, channel members, like dealers must develop good working relationships with their suppliers in order to provide merchandise efficiently and effectively to the consumer. This is because the dealers and its suppliers are interdependent upon one another and this relationship is one of the keys to successful channel distribution. Despite that, building strong relationships between manufacturers, suppliers, distributors, retailers and customers has become an important channel strategy in both industrial and consumer markets. Through the utilisation of a relationship element like relationship satisfaction, buyers and suppliers could integrate various functions spread over different areas within them which could lead to greater levels of channel trust and commitment. This effort could enhance their capability to cope with today's worldwide trend towards building closer and more integrated relationships between channel intermediaries and suppliers (Corsten & Kumar, 2005; Leonidou, Palihawadana, & Theodosiou, 2006).

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Interest in satisfaction in channel relationship arises primarily from the belief that establishing and maintaining a network of satisfied resellers is crucial to the long-term viability of the channel systems (Dwyer, 1980; Geyskens, Steenkamp, & Kumar, 1999). The level of satisfaction in relationship is an important measure of an inter-organisational relationship (Rodriguez et al., 2006; Madaleno, Wilson & Palmer, 2007). For instance, evaluating existing supplier relationships could lead to manufacturers and dealers strategizing their way of working with suppliers, resulting in an increase in relationship satisfaction in the long-term (Jonsson & Zineldin, 2003). With the increasing interest in buyer-supplier relationships, relationship satisfaction has become an important component in relationship marketing and channel theory (Abdul-Muhmin, 2005; Ramaseshan, Yip, & Pae, 2006; Rodriguez, Agudo, & Gutierrez, 2006). In business relationships, relationship satisfaction is viewed as an essential ingredient in the development and maintenance of long-term buyer-supplier relationships. Relationship satisfaction is becoming critical in business relationships and it has been found that successful business relationship has resulted in lower transaction costs and has fostered greater economic value for both marketers and their customers (Geyskens & Steenkamp, 2000; Ping, 2003; Caceres & Paparoidamis, 2007).

The expansion and importance of relationship satisfaction in business-to-business relationship have changed the existing shape of transaction relationships between organizations. This is because the importance of relationship satisfaction enables the construction of new relationship model, which was unavailable under the existing discrete transaction relationship. In other words, the satisfaction of business relationship has huge potential for enabling organizations, small and large, to develop better collaboration and coordination for long-term based strategies and commitment in business relationship. Totally new competitive advantages and opportunities would open up for organizations. As a result, the importance of relationship satisfaction is being emphasized.

Despite the assumption that relationship satisfaction contributes to buyer-supplier relationship, previous researchers concentrated more on factors affecting an overall satisfaction of relationship with less research being focused on investigating specific channel relationship satisfaction such as economic and social aspects (Geyskens & Steenkamp, 2000; Rodriguez et al., 2006). It requires a channel member to consider seriously and comprehensively the economic and social aspects that have to be invested in the relationship for further development (Dwyer et al., 1987). The underlying gaps has led many researchers to suggest further empirical research in this area (Geyskens & Steenkamp, 2000; Roslin & Melewar, 2001; Abdul-Muhmin, 2005; Ramaseshan et al., 2006). As a result, this study seeks to amplify the current knowledge base of dealer-supplier relationships by examining in depth the relationship construct that is likely to contribute the most to success in ongoing business relationships.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

Marketing channels essentially consist of interacting groups of interdependent firm entities enjoying varying degrees of autonomy from each other. Coughlan et al. (2006) defined marketing channel as a set of interdependent organizations involved in the process of making a product or service available for use or consumption. The key members of marketing channels are manufacturers, intermediaries (wholesale, retail, and specialized), and end-users including the business customers and consumers. It is important to create successful working relationship between these members. Of particular importance within the channel systems is satisfaction, which is a key to successful working relationship (Anderson et al., 1994), long-run channel vitality and understanding channel relationship (Andaleeb, 1996; Payan &

McFarland, 2005). Satisfaction with working relationships among channel members can lead to a more efficient value chain because of improvements in product quality, customer service, and logistical efficiencies, which directly lead the participating companies in the relationship to gain a sustainable competitive advantage (Mohr, Fisher & Nevin, 1996). Therefore, managing satisfaction with current relationships is imperative in ensuring a firm's strategic viability.

Satisfaction is an evaluation by relationship partners of the characteristics of their channel relationships (Lee, 2001; Abdul-Muhmin, 2005). Channel member satisfaction is defined most frequently as a positive affective state resulting from the appraisal of all aspects of a firm's working relationship with another firm (Dwyer, 1980). Channel satisfaction with the overall exchange relationship reflects a party's cognitive state of feeling adequately or inadequately rewarded for the sacrifice undertaken in facilitating that relationship (Howard & Sheth, 1969). Traditionally, channel member satisfaction has been viewed as a key factor affecting channel members' morale and resulting in incentives to participate in collective activities (Dwyer, 1980; Maxwell, Nye, & Maxwell, 1999). According to Hunt and Nevin (1974), channel member satisfaction is viewed as leading to various important behaviours within channels, like higher morale, greater cooperation, fewer terminations of relationships, fewer individual and class action lawsuits and reduced efforts to seek protective legislation. Ganesan (1994) further suggested a link between satisfactions with long-term orientation, partner's credibility and partners' benevolence.

Correspondingly, the literature on marketing channels also has established that working relationship within buyer-seller is a key driver of successful relationships' satisfaction (Abdul-Muhmin, 2005). Translated into the channel setting, distributors are likely to form relationships with supplier to achieve certain benefits (Lehman & O'Shaughnessy, 1974; Grandhi, 1978). Therefore, suppliers who are attempting to ensure buyers' satisfaction would benefit by understanding the nature of the relationship before investing in that relationship.

In channel studies, the growth of buyer-seller relationship between distributors and supplier has been noted, explored, and studied by many investigators (Lewis & Lambert, 1991; Andaleeb, 1996; Payan & McFarland, 2005). Furthermore, the importance of distributors in marketing channel has risen almost continuously over the past few decades as they increased their domination over the sales channel (Schellhase, Hardock, & Ohlwein, 2000). The reduction of trade barriers and the resultant increase in potential supplier has further enhanced the nature of vertical competition, thereby increasing the importance of distributors (Oehme, 1992). It is, therefore, insufficient for supplier to base strategic and operational decisions on the requirements of the end user alone. Ensuring satisfaction among distributor partners is now a key success requirement (Schellhase et al., 2000). Therefore, to enhance better channel relationships, firms need to increasingly emphasize satisfaction as playing a major role with strategic partners. Such efforts are supported by a substantial marketing literature on satisfaction within buyer-seller channel literature (Jonsson & Zineldin, 2003).

From the discussion above, the level of relationship satisfaction is an important measure of an inter-firm relationship. Evaluating this relationship between channel members, could lead the manufacturer, supplier or dealer to question and change the method of working relationship, thus resulting in an increase in relationship satisfaction in the long term. It appears that relationship satisfaction of business parties can be seen as a critical turning point in the development of buyer-seller relationships and it is a core determinant of success. In other words, it is the relationship satisfaction that allows a basic business relationship to continue to

the point where a high level of commitment exists between the parties involved, and where the dissolution of the relationship becomes increasingly difficult because of the strong bond that has developed. In particular, together with the increasing interest in relationship marketing, the relationship satisfaction has become one of the central principles in the evolving paradigm of relationship marketing, and is an important construct in understanding the development, enhancement, and maintenance of buyer-seller relationships in channel relationship contexts.

Apart from the important role of relationship satisfaction as a core element in business relationship, it is widely considered in the literature as a uni-dimensional variable, basically as a result of its affective component (Anderson & Narus, 1990; Ganesan, 1994; Andaleeb, 1996). Specifically, channel relationship literatures have focused on satisfaction of relationship as an overall positive affective state resulting from appraisal of a firm's working relationship with another firm. However, a meta-analysis study by Geyskens et al. (1999) and another recent study by Geyskens and Steenkamp (2000) empirically have confirmed that satisfaction is not a unitary variable. Both studies agreed that satisfaction derived from economic outcomes (economic satisfaction) differs substantially from satisfaction derived from social interactions (social satisfaction).

Economic satisfaction is a channel member's evaluation of the economic outcomes that flow from the relationship with its partner. An economically satisfied channel member considers the relationship a success with respect to goal attainment, productivity, and financial outcomes (Geyskens et al., 1999). Meanwhile, social satisfaction is a channel member's evaluation of the psychological aspects of its relationship, reflecting the extent to which the interaction with the exchange partner is seen as fulfilling and gratifying (Geyskens & Steenkamp, 2000). They argued that understanding channel relationship satisfaction as 'economic satisfaction' and 'social satisfaction' is important because a channel member's activities may produce economic satisfaction with its counterpart, while undermining the counterpart's social satisfaction, or vice versa. The authors further noted that relationship satisfaction as economic and social satisfaction, might have interactive effects. It is important for this distinction between economic satisfaction and social satisfaction to be clearly established because the activities of a member of the distribution channel can provide his/her partner with economic satisfaction and yet not offer him/her any social satisfaction, or vice versa (Geyskens & Steenkamp, 2000).

By including the economic and social satisfaction, rather than overall satisfaction of channel member, the role of relationship satisfaction in developing and managing relationship may be understood better. Furthermore, relationship satisfaction in the economic and social terms is intriguing and has not been addressed in primary channels research previously. Thus, it is imperative that empirical research be conducted to examine the above issues regarding the satisfaction in channel relationship. This sentiment is echoed in a recent study by Auh and Johnson (2005) who believed that relationship satisfaction is one of the most important cornerstone concepts in marketing theory and potential factors leading to relationship satisfaction which merits further investigation. In addition, as part of the conceptualization issue of relationship satisfaction, the relationship between the two dimensions of satisfaction has received little attention in marketing literature. Rodriguez et al. (2006) found that economic satisfaction has a positive effect on social satisfaction. They argued that channel relationships are initially economic relationships in which the members depend on the economic results to survive and grow. When there is a high level of economic satisfaction, the members will be willing to respond to a particular problematic situation positively and

constructively thereby increasing their social satisfaction with the relationship (Geyskens & Steenkamp, 2000). Therefore, in the present study, the interrelations between dimensions of relationship satisfaction will be investigated. It is hypothesized that the greater the dealer's economic satisfaction with the supplier, the greater will be the social satisfaction.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

Our sample consists of national car dealers in Malaysia. The sampling frame of the dealers is based on the listing of national car dealers in Malaysia from the supplier's database. The automobile industry provides a fertile ground for this research because: this industrial sector plays an important role in Malaysian national economy (Nor & Sumormo, 2005), and there is a very limited amount of empirical research on the nature of dealer-supplier relationship in this area. As a key driver for providing sustainable economic contribution, the domestic automotive industry has been facilitated by policies that have promoted local vehicle manufacturers to move forward and become global. For data collection purposes, 300 questionnaires were distributed to national car dealers in Malaysia. Out of this number, 156 were returned and 18 were incomplete. A total of 126 responses were usable for subsequent analysis. Thus, the effective response rate is 42 percent. This response rate is considered adequate and within the range reported by other researchers for channel studies (Perumal, 2010; Abdul-Muhmin, 2002).

With regards to the profile of the respondents, most of the responding dealers are in mature relationships and have accumulated experience in channel relationship where more than half of the respondents have more than 10 years' relationship. In relation to annual sales turnover, almost half (45 %) of the respondents have turnover between USD 2.7 million to USD 5.4 million.

The relationship satisfaction is the main focus in this study. It is operationalized as the degree to which the dealers are satisfied with their supplier in terms of two dimensions, namely economic and social satisfaction. The economic satisfaction is operationalized as the extent to which economic outcomes flow from the relationship with its supplier, such as sales volume, margins and discounts. The social satisfaction is operationalized as the extent to which social outcomes of the relationship appreciates the contacts with its partner, and, on a personal level, likes working with it, because it believes the partner is concerned, respectful, and willing to exchange ideas. The ten multiple-items construct used to measure relationship satisfaction are based on the recent conceptualization of relationship satisfaction in marketing channel studies (Geyskens et al., 1999; Geyskens & Steenkamp, 2000; Yilmaz et al., 2004).

### **4.0 RESULTS**

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of the relationship satisfaction among respondents. In average, it is important to highlight that the respondents tend to be highly satisfied with the existing relationship with the suppliers. This is shown by the mean scores of 4.26 on a five-point Likert scale. Furthermore, with standard deviation of .70, indicate that statistically, the variations of relationship satisfaction among respondents are slightly high.

**Table 1. Descriptive and Reliability Analysis Results**

Variables	No. of Items	Mean	Standard	Alpha
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			Deviation	value
Relationship Satisfaction	10	4.26	.70	.87

This study assessed construct validity using exploratory factor analysis for relationship satisfaction (economic and social satisfaction). Factor analysis was based on principal component method with varimax rotation for all constructs. The results for each factor analysis conducted are summarised in Table 2 respectively. Scales were formed according to the loadings of the factors. The factor analysis conducted on relationship satisfaction shows the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value of .91, exceeding the recommended value of .50 (Hair *et al.*, 1998) and the Barlett's test of sphericity was highly significant ( $p = .00$ ), supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. Furthermore, an examination of the measure of sampling adequacy for each item fall in the acceptable range, that is between .86 - .94. These indicate that the assumptions of factor analysis were met. Principal components analysis revealed the presence of two components with an eigen value exceeding one. This factor captured 71.95 percent of the total variance in the items. The first factor is dominated by items that measure economic satisfaction (5 items) and the second factor is related to social satisfaction (5 items). As shown in Table 2, the factor loadings are between .61 and .84. Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) for this factor is .90 and .88 respectively, which indicates high reliability.

**Table 2. Factor Analysis of Relationship Satisfaction**

Items	Factors Loadings of Economic Satisfaction	Factors Loadings of Social Satisfaction
We are very pleased with our decision to distribute the supplier's product since their high quality increases customer visits.	.835	
Our relationship with this supplier has provided us with a dominant and profitable market position in our sales area.	.810	
Our relationship with this supplier is very attractive with respect to discounts.	.798	
The supplier provides us with high quality marketing and selling supports.	.777	
The marketing policy of this supplier helps us to get our work done effectively.	.742	
The supplier expresses criticism professionally.		.731
The working relationship of our firm with this supplier is characterized by feelings of harmony.		.700
The supplier leaves us in the dark about things we should know. (reverse coded)		.697
The supplier always explains the reasons for its policies.		.639
The interaction between our firm and the supplier are characterized by mutual respect.		.613

The stated hypothesis regarding the influence of economic satisfaction on social satisfaction was tested using regression following the guidelines established by Hair *et al.* (2006). Prior performing the hypothesis test, correlation between the constructs was derived. Table 3 shows

the correlation structure of the data used in this study. As shown in table 3, positive correlation exists between economic satisfaction and social satisfaction ( $r = .31$ ;  $p < .01$ ).

**Table 3. Correlation between Economic Satisfaction and Social Satisfaction**

	Economic Satisfaction	Social Satisfaction		
Economic Satisfaction	1.0			
Social Satisfaction	.31**	1.0		

\*\* Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2 tailed)

The hypothesis was then tested using a multiple regression prediction model with social satisfaction as the dependent variable. Result from the analysis is summarized in table 4. As shown in table 4, economic satisfaction was positively related to social satisfaction ( $\beta = .57$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Therefore, our hypothesis on the positive influence of economic satisfaction on social satisfaction is supported.

**Table 4. The Influence of Economic Satisfaction on Social Satisfaction**

Independent variables	Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	B	SEB
<i>Dependent variable: Social Satisfaction</i>			
Economic Satisfaction	.57**	.31	.08

**Notes:** \* $p < .01$ ; Note:  $R^2 = .20$ ;  $F = 113.74$ ; \*\* $p < .01$

B=Unstandardized Coefficient; SEB= Standard error of coefficient;  $\beta$ = Beta coefficient.

## 5.0 DISCUSSION

This study demonstrated that the level of relationship satisfaction among dealers tend to be high. This indicates that the dealers perceived that they received expected outcome from the existing business relationship. More satisfied dealers tend to form a positive overall impression towards the whole relationship and will make the relationship successful and beneficial. The dealers are likely to be satisfied with a supplier on whom they are dependent upon. One plausible reason to explain this finding is the dealers' dependency on the supplier who provides critical and important resources. Another reason is possibly due to the fact that the supplier has more control over critical resources which have contributed to relationship-oriented business perceived by the dealers. This is consistent with Ganesan (1994) who found that one way to gain outcome over critical supplier is to be long-term oriented and improve the overall profitability of both parties through investments in the relationship.

In addition, the finding reported in the present study supports Jonsson and Zineldin (2003) who discovered that in Sweden, firms with high level of satisfaction perceived their supplier

with better reputation and developed stronger relationship when compared to low relationship satisfaction among dealers. Furthermore, the result is also consistent with Abdul-Muhmin (2002) who stated that in order to establish and maintain long term relationship, the high relationship satisfaction helps suppliers and dealers to build, develop, and keep a continuous process of relationship building. This is because relationship satisfaction serves as an effective relational element for creating value and developing a sustainable competitive advantage as well as an excellent relationship marketing strategy for future.

Relationship satisfaction also has been determined as necessary for relationship marketing studies (Ganesan, 1994; Gassenheimer & Ramsey, 1994; Jonsson & Zineldin, 2003; Leonidou, Palihawadana & Theodosiou, 2006; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Sheth & Sharma, 1997). In line with the previous studies, the present study also demonstrated the importance of relationship satisfaction among buyers as a fundamental basis for implementing successful relationship. Consequently, the level of perceived relationship satisfaction is an important measure of an inter-organisational relationship and evaluating existing supplier relationships could lead both parties, namely supplier and dealers, to question and change the method of working, as well as result in an increase in relationship satisfaction in the long-term. As the supplier learns to manage dealers' relationship satisfaction, the dealers will be more willing to maintain the relationship and secure the demand for the supplier's products and services. In other words, supplier needs to search for all major keys to enhance the existing relationship for as long as possible.

This study makes an effort to offer an in-depth study of the multidimensionality of relationship satisfaction in distribution channel relationships. For this reason, the economic and social satisfaction dimensions underlying the concept of relationship satisfaction have been defined and correlated to each other. We found that both the economic and social satisfaction dimensions are related to each other. Specifically, in this study, economic satisfaction was positively related to social satisfaction. It implies that channel members are initially depended on the economic results to survive and growth. When there is a high level of economic satisfaction arises, the channel members will be willing to respond to a particular problematic situation positively and constructively which consequently increase their social satisfaction with the relationship. This is consistent with Rodriguez et al. (2006) who argued that initially commercial relationships are purely concern on the economic satisfaction and the satisfaction derived from these activities has a positive influence upon the evaluation of the exchange that has taken place by the parties involved in the relationship. In particular, it is likely that the accumulated economic satisfaction enhances social satisfaction in subsequent periods. In consequence, economic satisfaction could help to create a relational climate that would lead to higher levels of social satisfaction results in the future.

## **6.0 THEORETICAL AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS**

From the theoretical perspective, this study provides a more complete understanding of dealer-supplier relationship as well as contributions to theory confirmation and development. Consistent with Social Exchange Theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) that "because partners who exchange superior outcomes will be highly valued, firms will commit themselves to establish, develop and maintain relationships with such partners", the findings of this study support this assertion. While prior works on relationship satisfactions are carried out in Western countries, the present study proved that the role of relationship satisfaction hold true in the Malaysian automobile channel industry as well. Therefore, it would appear that some



findings obtained in the west can be generalised to Asian settings as well (at least to Malaysia), thus lending credence to efforts to test western findings using local samples.

Besides theoretical and conceptual contributions of this study, several managerial implications are advanced from the results of this study. This study provides a few key implications on how managers of automotive suppliers, in particular, can manage their relationship with dealers in an effective way. The business goal is to establish and maintain relationship with the dealers for long-term sales instead of maximizing short-term sales. Relationship marketing helps dealers and suppliers to build, develop and keep a continuous process of relationship building. Suppliers-dealers should devote their attention to relationship satisfaction specifically, in order to “increase the pie rather than divide the pie”. Both suppliers and dealers look for effective relationships in order to maximize their profits, minimize their costs and ultimately lead to long-term commitments and trust. The results of this research would help suppliers and dealers to understand the importance of satisfaction in establishing long-term relationships and provide actionable guidance towards improving the relationship. Perceptions of a dealer’ relationship satisfaction is important to suppliers for three reasons. First, suppliers who are partnering with highly customer-oriented dealers, may be able to create greater value for end customers and thereby gain a competitive advantage by maintaining satisfied relationship with the existing dealers. Second, suppliers may be able to improve their own levels of performance through trickle-up effect, which means that when dealers’ satisfaction improves, by virtue of the dependent dealer-supplier relationship, it will lead to suppliers’ sales improvement. Finally, relationship satisfaction becomes relevant because of the concern given to the importance of relational market base which appears to be vigorous for current business competencies, especially in the area of managing relationship between organizations. Furthermore, the information provided through the evaluation of the relationship between economic and social satisfaction can be used by managers to attain greater focus in creating working relationship that promotes relationship satisfaction.

## **7.0 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND FUTURE RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS**

Although this study has some interesting findings on the aspect of relationship satisfaction, this study also has several limitations. The sample of dealers was taken from one industry. Somewhat unique to this industry is the fact that it is in a mature stage. This means that majority of the firms are well established, only a few new firms are entering this industry. Consequently, the results of this study cannot be generalized to other industries such as agriculture, mining, and health. Additional research on factors affecting relationship satisfaction should be expanded to different types of industries/sectors such as service (education, health etc.), textiles and clothing, electronics, etc.

Another important limitation is that this analysis is cross-sectional in nature. The nature of data collection is a cross-sectional study whereby the data is collected at one point of time. However, an attempt was made to minimize such problem by using a well-established scale for most constructs, and pre-testing the questionnaire to ensure that there was no perceived overlap between the different variables. Additional research must be done longitudinally in order to assess the impact of determinants and consequences over time. The longitudinal studies would provide valuable input in investigating the impact of channel strategies taken by supplier firms that are aimed at enhancing the degree of relationship satisfaction.

## **8.0 CONCLUSIONS**

These findings provide additional evidence to the growing body of knowledge concerning the importance of relationship-based approach. It was revealed that the dealers' social relationship satisfaction is contributed by economic satisfaction that they get from the suppliers. The finding gives academicians and managers a much stronger basis than intuition and anecdotes for recommending the wisdom of adopting and implementing relationship-marketing approach. Preferably the management should take initiative in the way that has been suggested under discussion for the purpose of harmonizing the dealer-supplier relationship. There must be a rightful desire within both the supplier and dealer to understand each other, to feel the importance of the relationship, and arrive at decisions that are acceptable to each party besides working together towards progress of both in terms of specific goals and long-term relationship.

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