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Les antécédents de la relation acheteur-vendeur : le rôle médiateur du partage de la connaissance

The antecedents of buyer-seller relationship: the mediating role of knowledge sharing

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Abstract

This study aims to test the effects of buyer-seller relationship antecedents and test the mediating role of knowledge sharing. A quantitative study based on a sample of 100 marketing managers in small medium companies. Data were analyzed using the PLS Structural equation modeling. Findings show that Knowledge sharing, contract specification level and opportunistic behavior have a positive effect on buyer-seller relationship; however, power asymmetry has a negative effect. In addition, contract specification level, Dysfunctional conflict, opportunistic behavior were found to have a positive effect on knowledge sharing, however, power asymmetry has a negative effect.

Keywords: buyer-seller relationship, knowledge sharing, functional conflict, opportunistic behavior, dysfunctional conflict

Résumé

Cette étude vise à tester les effets des antécédents de la relation acheteur-vendeur et à tester le rôle médiateur du partage des connaissances. Une étude quantitative basée sur un échantillon de 100 responsables marketing dans des PME. Les données ont été analysées à l'aide de la modélisation d'équations structurelles PLS. Les résultats montrent que le partage des connaissances, le niveau de spécification du contrat et le comportement opportuniste ont un effet positif sur la relation acheteur-vendeur ; cependant, l'asymétrie de pouvoir a un effet négatif. En outre, au niveau de la spécification du contrat, le conflit dysfonctionnel, le comportement opportuniste se sont avérés avoir un effet positif sur le partage des connaissances, cependant, l'asymétrie de pouvoir a un effet négatif.

Mots clés : relation acheteur-vendeur, partage des connaissances, conflit fonctionnel, comportement opportuniste, conflit dysfonctionnel

Introduction

Based on an extensive reading on what has been written so far in the topic of the antecedents of buyer-seller relationship in business-to-business context, there are two issues that can be extracted from the literature and need careful consideration. The first issue is that buyer-seller relationship is a concept that has many antecedents. For example, studies such as (Bush and Rocco, 2016; Chen et al., 2017a; Voldnes and Grønhaug, 2015), focused on affective trust, commitment, respect, technology, network capability, cultural adaptation, opportunism, and showed how these constructs have effect on buyer-seller relationship. The second issue is that fewer studies interested in the role of knowledge sharing as a link between the buyer-seller relationship and its antecedents.

This his study aims to answer two main questions:

What is the effect of the antecedents (functional conflict, opportunistic behavior, dysfunctional conflict, power asymmetry and contract specification level) *on buyer-seller relationship*? *What is the mediating role of knowledge sharing between these antecedents and buyer-seller relationship?*

1. Litterature review

1.1Knowledge sharing (KS) and buyer-seller relationship (BSR)

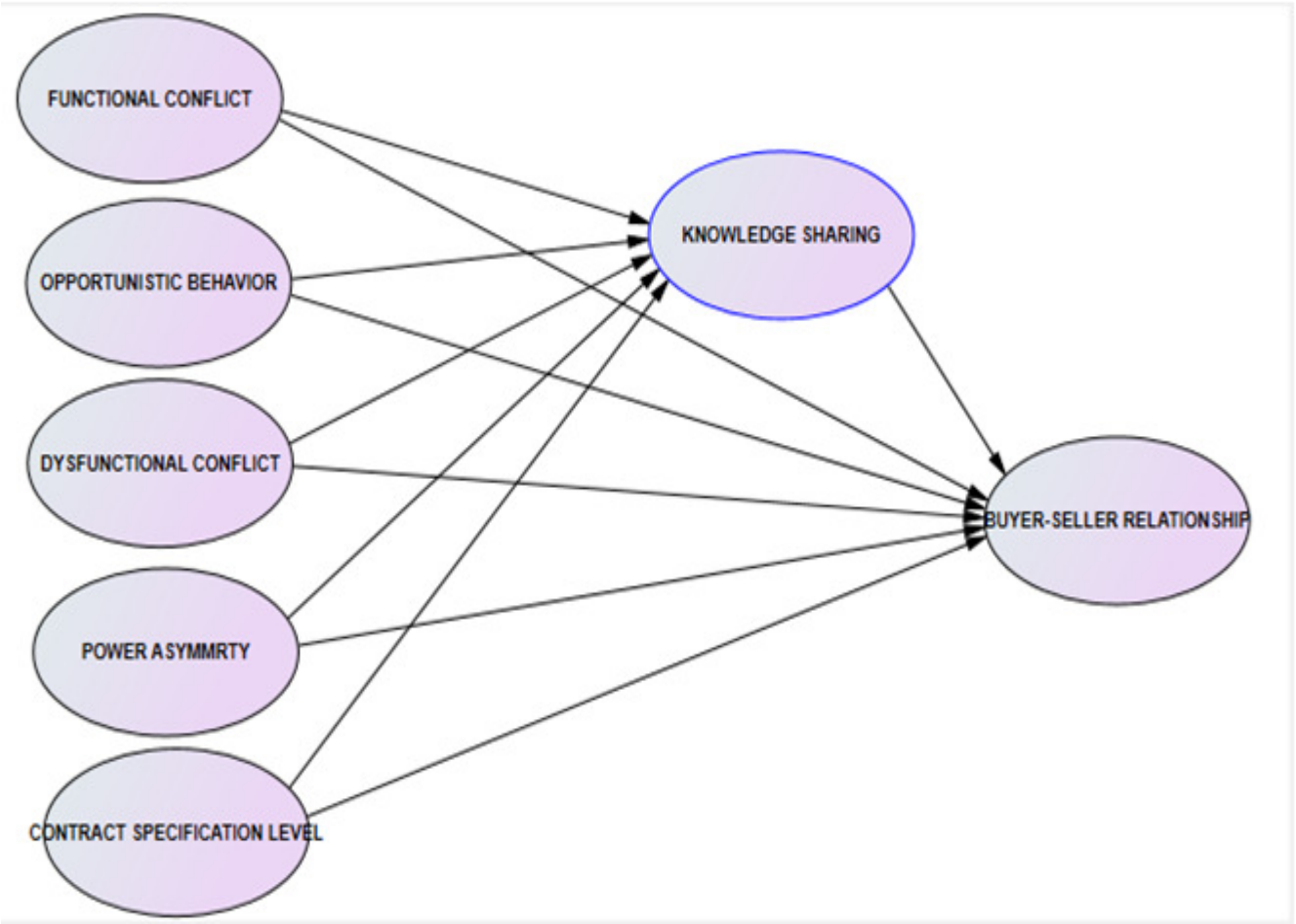
Knowledge sharing is considered as a valuable capital for modern companies (Hooff and Weenen, 2004; Young et al., 2003). However, not all knowledge sharing is worth devoting the same level of consideration. Therefore companies have created interorganizational alliances to extract value from knowledge management (Tan et al., 2005c). For an effective buyer-seller relationship, knowledge needs to be shared (Du et al., 2012b) even though people who are supposed to share it might have different motives for not doing it (Baalen et al., 2013) because of several relational factors.

Knowledge sharing allows to bridge the gap between different stakeholders (Hatzakis et al., 2005b) and it is a tool that can be used to solve different problems in a supply chain partnership and consequently a better relationship (Yan et al., 2001). It is also suggested that knowledge sharing capability and the joint integration of information systems processes between relationship members is a determinant factor of collaborative buyer-supplier relationships (Keong Leong et al., 2008c).

Therefore, we posit,

H1 knowledge sharing (KS) has a positive effect on buyer-seller relationship (BSR)

Figure N°1: The proposed conceptual framework



Source: Author

1.2Functional conflict (FC) and knowledge sharing (KS)

Although functional conflict has received limited attention in the literature (Duarte and Davies, 2003; Panteli, 2002), it is at the heart of organizational knowledge sharing. "Functional conflict refers to differences in opinions regarding tasks, procedures, strategy, business ideas, and other-business related issues that tend to be openly discussed and resolved and facilitate the strengthening of the relationship (Skarmeas et al., 2006)".

Relationship conflict is a negative factor to knowledge sharing (Chen, 2011a; Chen et al., 2011a), and has an effect on both information exchange and creative problem solving (Langfred and Moye, 2014a). Although it seems logically that relationship conflict between partners has negative outcomes on their relationship and performance, evidence and empirical

studies have shown the opposite. It can stimulate inter-organizational knowledge sharing, (Tang et al., 2017b) and improves both quality of strategy and performance (Menon et al., 1996a). However, only moderate levels of relationship conflict is good for knowledge sharing, and both high and low levels of relationship conflicts are not conducive for knowledge sharing (Kakar, 2018). Furthermore, many research didn't pay attention to the fact that there is conflict inside interorganizational knowledge activities (Tan et al., 2005d) and the type of its management has an impact of the whole knowledge strategy.

However, other factors intervene in this negative relationship. Thus, reward and reputation play the role of moderators, when they are high the negative relationship between relationship conflict and knowledge sharing is weaker than when they are low (Chen, 2011b). However, knowledge sharing itself is found to be a predictor of conflicts. As an illustration, Gu and Wang, (2013) revealed that when the attitude toward knowledge sharing increases team conflicts decrease. By the same token, disagreements over how to undertake tasks have been found to produce positive outcomes in management teams (Jehn and Mannix, 2001).

Thus, we posit:

H2 Functional conflict (FC) has a positive effect on Buyer-Seller relationship (BSR)

H3 Functional conflict (FC) has a positive effect on Knowledge sharing (KS)

H4 (KS) mediates the relationship between (FC) and (BSR)

1.3Opportunistic behavior (OB) and knowledge sharing (KS)

Opportunism is considered as an important factor of the buyer-seller relationship quality (Hawkins et al., 2013; Kang and Jindal, 2015). As a phenomenon that is empirically established in the exchange relationship, buyers and suppliers must put opportunism in the heart of their interests, (Hawkins et al., 2008). There is a significant research debate between scholars about its Impact on knowledge sharing and relationship.

Opportunistic behavior can be defined as "one kind of unethical behavior, which refers to pursuing self-interest with guile or taking advantage of opportunities as they appear. During this process, the opportunists are regardless to principles or consequence, but are keen on what can rather than what should be done in a context" (Liu et al., 2013)

Knowledge sharing is significantly influenced by trust of partnership. Hence, more trust is maintained in a business partnership, more knowledge is shared and exchanged between its members. On the other hand, opportunistic behavior has a negative effect on future purchase intentions. Therefore, Machiavellianism is found to be negatively correlated to knowledge

sharing willingness (Liu, 2008b). The absence of opportunistic behavior or a lower opportunistic behavior enhances knowledge sharing. This is shown by the empirical results of (Cheng and Shih, 2014a) who found that knowledge sharing is critically affected by moral orientation. In a study examining the knowledge sharing influencing factors and its implementation in inter-organizational relationships, relational risk is one the factors that is negatively associated with willingness to share knowledge between in inter-organizational relationship (Cheng, 2011). In a research examining the relationship between trust and interorganizational knowledge sharing, opportunistic behavior is shown to be a trust factor that contributes negatively to knowledge sharing (Cheng et al., 2008a; Martínez et al., 2013a). Furthermore, opportunistic behavior has a significant influence on knowledge sharing between members in a particular team. Similarly, the overall inter-organizational trust, which means a low opportunistic behavior, encourages the behavior of knowledge exchange in a supply channel (Kyu Kim et al., 2012).

However. The relationship that exists between opportunism and knowledge sharing is not considered negative in all studies, there are several studies that has revealed that opportunism can be analyzed from another angle and can provide a further explanation to the nature of this relationship. For example, a moderate level of opportunism is acceptable given that its control mechanisms are expensive in an exchange relationship between supply chain members (Boissinot and Paché, 2011). Moreover, Information-sharing itself contributes to reducing opportunistic behavior. Also, opportunistic behavior disappears when partners have access to information, and vice-versa. Likewise, contrary to many research studies, when partners are highly committed, their willingness to knowledge sharing increases and their opportunism decreases (Chan, 2015). Similarly, knowledge exchange is related to knowledge complementarity, when it is low there is a risk of opportunism to appear and when it is high, oppositely to what is expected, knowledge exchange is impeded because of the appearance of trust (Kim et al., 2012b). However, There is no effect of opportunistic behavior and knowledge sharing, this could be explained by the fact that expected extrinsic rewards don't have a significant effect on attitude toward knowledge sharing (Tohidinia and Mosakhani, 2010)

Therefore we posit,

H5 OB has a positive effect on BSR

H6 OB has a positive effect on KS

H7 KS mediates the relationship between OB and BSR

1.4Dysfunctional conflict (DS), Power asymmetry (PA), Contract specification level (CSL)

Empirical studies in the field of marketing on dysfunctional conflict is partial and not complete and does not present the whole picture (Massey and Dawes, 2007). Research studies showed that performance of the channel is negatively affected by dysfunctional conflict and positively affected by functional conflict (Chang and F. Gotcher, 2010; Rose and Shoham, 2004a). This means that functional conflict increases the channel performance and dysfunctional conflict decreases it. Considered as a team, Dysfunctional conflict negatively affects the buyer-seller satisfaction and performance because of antagonism and tension created (De Dreu and Weingart, 2003a). Dysfunctional conflict may be the outcome of a situation when functional conflict is daunting (De Dreu and Weingart, 2003b).

Dysfunctional conflict has negative outcomes on relationship (Jehn, 1995). Other researchers have revealed that dysfunctional conflict has negative outcomes on relationship variables (Harris et al., 2008b). Furthermore, dysfunctional conflict prevents new information from processing and triggers hostility among network members in terms of behavior and also diminishes tolerance and hinders effective cooperation, communication in a network (Bradford et al., 2004a). Buyer-seller effective decision making and processes that shape it is negatively affected by dysfunctional conflict which is a hindrance to effective interorganizational knowledge sharing (Wu-Chung et al., 2015). Dysfunctional conflict has negative consequences on information processing, intentions and behavior effective cooperation and communication in a given network(Bradford and Weitz, 2009). At the same time, dysfunctional conflict has no effect on the relationship quality and this will depend on the management of the type of this conflict (Bobot, 2011).

H8 DF has a positive effect on BSR

H9 DF has a positive effect on KS

H10 KS mediates the relationship between DF and BSR

Although the literature about the effect of power on the knowledge is scarce, power is a major variable in the buyer-seller relationship(He et al., 2013a). It was found that the concept of power in B2B relationships is a pluralistic construct, this extended the existing theories that are narrowing their reflections only on individual or organizational aspects of the power(Meehan and Wright, 2012). In business to business relationship, power has been under

the contrasting views of researchers, some of them consider it as alien to mechanisms of relationship exchanges (kumar 1996). And some of them view it as important to management of the exchanges between business organizations (Hingley, 2005) and also important in designing and conducting of conflict interventions (Rouhana and Korper, 1997a). However, knowledge sharing is an antecedent of bargaining power which result in an elimination of partner dependency (Inkpen and Beamish, 1997). Furthermore, when the use of power is restrained by the actor having most power and when alternatives are limited by actors in a supply chain, this increases the flow of knowledge.(He et al., 2013b). knowledge sharing is essential for buyer-seller relationship, because, goal congruence (which requires knowledge sharing) mediates the effect of power asymmetry on the development of trust in organizations and process and formal roles(Cuevas et al., 2015). Contrarily to theoretical predictions that claim that power asymmetry leads to unequal distribution of benefits, power asymmetry could increase relationship value(Chen et al., 2017b). Buyer-seller relationship requires that both parties work as a team when sharing knowledge which is influenced by power asymmetry, type of performance feedback received by a team is a moderating variable that moderates the effect of power asymmetry on team learning and performance. In addition to this, the effect of power asymmetry on team performance is mediated by team learning(Van der Vegt et al., 2009). By contrast, the level of power asymmetry negatively moderates the relationship between innovative performance and alliance learning, alliance experience and. However a positive moderating impact on the relationship between alliance experience on innovative performance(Wang, 2011a)

H11 PA has an effect on BSR

H12 PA has an effect on KS

H13 KS mediates the relationship between PA and BSR

Knowledge sharing represent one of the three facilitators of the inter-organizational creativity that is affected by contract (Wang et al., 2008a). Knowledge sharing may turn to knowledge leakage because of formal contracts and trust (Jiang et al., 2013a). Formal contracts complements the impact of relational mechanism on the acquisition of explicit and tacit knowledge(Li et al., 2010a). Moreover, formal agreement design is of crucial importance for alliance partnerships and knowledge sharing. It was found that formal contracts safeguard risks, co-ordinate activities between allies(Jong and Woolthuis, 2009). The attitudes for sharing knowledge are influenced by implicit psychological contracts that often influence.

This aspect of contract is highly overlooked by managers(O'Neill and Adya, 2007). This relationship is mediated by trust and collaboration (Lui, 2009). Time horizon of the relationship moderates the contract of an exchange and knowledge accessing and acquisition relationship(Nor et al., 2011).

On the other hand, relational-based governance was found to be more influential and effective than contractual-based governance in terms of strengthening the interorganizational partnership, facilitating knowledge transfer, and stabilizing the alliance (Lee and Cavusgil, 2006). Although there are complementary mechanisms between contracts and relational norms and trust, in joined R&D, it was shown that relational norms improve performance of exploration projects while contracts are more effective in exploitation projects (Arranz and Arroyabe, 2012a). Trust and contracts are both substitutes and complements. The use and the presence of contracts in interorganizational relationship depends on the close study of the content of the contract (Woolthuis et al., 2005).

H14 CSL has a positive effect on BSR

H15 CSL has a positive effect on KS

H16KS mediates the relationship between CSL and BSR

2. Methods

The research methodology used in this study was a quantitative analysis (PLS structural equation modeling) on the basis of primary data. This empirical research focused on SMEs in Morocco, they account for more than 90% of companies. The survey instrument of this study was the questionnaire; it included all the 7 constructs of the proposed framework to test the hypotheses. All the constructs are measured based on previous research as showed in the table mentioned below. They were adapted to the research context. The constructs are: Buyer-seller relationship, knowledge sharing, functional conflict, dysfunctional conflict, opportunistic behavior, power asymmetry, and contract specification level. The items of each construct were adopted from literature.

Both online questionnaire and a face-to-face questionnaire were used. A part of managers who didn't have time were given the online questionnaire so that to increase the response rate. The questionnaire was sent to a sample of 100 managers. These managers were Marketing managers, key account managers, sales managers, and all managers having relationships with customers. They were chosen randomly and contacted before the questionnaire was sent to them to see their participation in this survey. There was not a specification of a particular

industry or sector we wanted managers working in companies that there customers are companies and nor individuals

The questionnaire was translated into French and the local language so that to make it easy for them. The survey covered managers in industrial companies that their activities are business to business; their customers are companies in different industries such as restaurants, agencies, advertising companies, vegetable companies, etc. these companies are suppliers of companies and at the same time they are also customers of other suppliers. The other part of the managers found it difficult to deal with a French questionnaire version, therefore, they were given another questionnaire version of the local language. The data collection took 30 days. Because all the questions are closed each questionnaire took approximately about 15 minutes to be filled. All managers responded by their own will, there were no incentives given to them to fill the questionnaire.

The model has seven constructs, they were measured using a 7 point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 strongly agree), this scale was chosen to allow the respondents to have more variability and also to have a better distribution of the scores.

2.1Research constructs and measurement

Construct	**Items**
The construct **Buyer-seller relationship** was adapted from (Rashed et al., 2010)	1-We enter into special agreements with customer relationships who have judged our improved performance. 2-We are loyal to key customers. 3-We have very frequent face-to-face planning/communication with key customers. 4-There is high corporate level communication on important issues with key customers. 5-There are direct computer to computer links with key customers. 6-There are direct computer to computer links with key customers.

Knowledge sharing wad measured using the scale of (Ying-Hueih Chen et al., 2014 **)**	1-My company provides relevant knowledge to our business partners. 2-My company teams up with business partners to enhance inter-firm learning. 3-My company and business partners jointly organize job training to enhance each other's knowledge. 4-My company and business partners share successful experiences with each other 5-My company and business partners share new knowledge and viewpoints with each other
Functional Conflict was measured based on the scale of (Thuong Phat Tang et al., 2017)	1. Disagreements between us are worked out in a friendly way. 2. Disagreements between us have increased the productivity of our working relationship. 3. Disagreements between us stimulate us to find productive solutions to our problems.
The construct **Opportunistic behavior** was adapted from (Jao-Hong Cheng, 2011)	1-To accomplish his own goals, sometimes your partner alters the facts slightly 2-To accomplish his own goals, sometimes your partner promises to do things without actually doing them later 3-Your partner Breach formal or informal agreements to his benefit
Dysfunctional conflict was measured using the scale of (Jao-Hong Cheng, 2011**)**	1-You will interfere the decision making process in the cooperation 2-You will overstate your needs to try to influence your partner 3-You will overstate some information or facts to try to influence your partner

The construct **Power asymmetry** was measured using the scale of (Jao-Hong Cheng, 2011)	You don't respect your partner You cannot withdraw from the relationship with your partner You don't have decision-making power
Contract specification level was adapted from Jelle de Vries., et al 2014	The contract precisely states the legal remedies for a service partner's failure to perform. The contract precisely states what will happen in the case of service events occurring that were not planned. The contract precisely states how service disagreements will be resolved. The contract is highly customized and required considerable legal work.

Source: Author

3. Data analysis

3.1Testing measurement model

3.1.1Converging validity

To evaluate the convergent validity the following indicators for each variable of our model are evaluated: Individual item reliability (Factor loading), Cronbach Alpha, CR (Composite Reliability), AVE (Average Variance Extracted)

Table 1 : Convergent validity analysis of Measurement Model

Variables	Items	Factor loading*	Cronbach's Alpha*	Composite Reliability*	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)**
FC	**FC1**	**0,773**	**0,808**	**0,834**	**0,636**

	FC2	**0,960**			
	FC3	**0,811**			
OB	**OB1**	**0,942**	**0,797**	**0,880**	**0,712**
	OB2	**0,709**			
	OB3	**0,864**			
DF	**DF1**	**0,821**	**0,767**	**0 ,861**	**0,674**
	DF2	**0,833**			
	DF3	**0,808**			
PA	**PA1**	**0,900**	**0,821**	**0,917**	**0,842**
	PA3	**0,940**			
CSL	**CSL1**	**0,878**	**0,905**	**0,934**	**0,660**
	CSL2	**0,878**			
	CSL3	**0,895**			
	CSL4	**0,879**			
KS	**KS1**	**0,868**	**0,855**	**0,897**	**0 ,637**
	KS2	**0,782**			
	KS3	**0,746**			
	KS4	**0,714**			
	KS5	**0,869**			
BSR	**BSR1**	**0,800**	**0,871**	**0,906**	**0,660**
	BSR2	**0,817**			
	BSR3	**0,742**			
	BSR4	**0,822**			
	BSR5	**0,876**			
*signifiant at the 0.7 level **significant at the 0.5 level					

Source: Author

The analysis of the convergent validity of the independent variables of the model shows that there is a very good internal and external reliability of the measurement scales used for the measurement of each construct. The items of the seven constructs have values that exceed the

accepted threshold of 0.7 for Cronbach's alpha analysis, composite reliability, and the loading factor, as well as a value that exceeds 0.5 for the AVE variance. This shows that we have very good reliability of the scales of measurement of the variables and that each item manages to measure effectively its construct.

3.1.2. Discriminant validity

- ✓ **Variable correlation (ROOT Square of AVE)**

Table 2 : Analysis of the correlation matrix

	BSR	CSL	DF	FC	KS	OB	PA
BSR	**0,812**						
CSL	0,478	**0,882**					
DF	0,723	0,337	**0,821**				
FC	0,589	0,441	0,641	**0,798**			
KS	0,913	0,493	0,724	0,616	**0,798**		
OB	0,616	0,232	0,778	0,643	0,548	**0,844**	
PA	-0,614	-0,219	-0,487	-0,380	-0,563	-0,309	**0,920**

Source: Author

The result of the correlation matrix shows that the correlation value of each variable with itself gives the highest value. This shows that there is a divergence of the measure of the variables and that each item of a construct is distinct from the other measurement items of other constructs. This gives a discriminant validity to scales measures of the model.

3.2Testing the structural model

The evaluation of the structural model requires the calculation of two indicators: Coefficient of determination (R^2) and Standard Beta (β)

3.2.1. The coefficient of determination (R^2).

This coefficient varies between 0 and 1. It indicates the percentage of variance of the endogenous variable explained by the set of explanatory variables introduced in the regression model, the higher the coefficient of determination, the greater the explanatory power of the explanatory variables.

Coefficient of determination

Table 3: Coefficient of determination R²		
Outer model	**R square**	**R square adjusted**
Direct Model : (BSR)	**0,864**	**0,855**
Model with mediation (KS)	**0,658**	**0,640**

Source: Author

The result of the coefficient of determination R² makes allows to estimate the proportion explanation of the explanatory variables in the measurement model of the mediator variable (KS), as well as the dependent variable (BSR). The value of R² gives a very strong value that exceeds 60% for the two models (direct model, and model with mediation), and therefore, that the explanatory variables exert a considerable power of explanation on the moderator variable (KS), as well as the dependent variable (BSR).

Table 4 : Hypotheses testing						
Hypothesis	**Relation**	**Std. Bêta (β)**	**Standard Deviation (STDEV)**	**T-Statistics**	**P-value**	**Decision**
H14	CSL → BSR	0.070	0.035	2.023	0,044*	**Accepted***
H15	CSL → KS	0.236	0.079	2.990	0,003**	**Accepted***
H8	DF → BSR	0.013	0.077	0.164	0,870	Rejected
H9	DF → KS	0.394	0.161	2.451	0,015*	**Accepted***
H2	FC → BSR	-0.055	0.073	0.754	0,451	Rejected
H3	FC → KS	0.119	0.116	1.020	0,308	Rejected
H1	KS → BSR	0.725	0.084	8.585	0.000**	**Accepted***
H5	OB → KS	0.069	0.068	2.260	0.024*	**Accepted***
H6	OB → BSR	0.069	0.103	0.667	0.505	Rejected

H12	PA → KS	-0.158	0.054	2.931	0.004**	**Accepted***
H11	PA → BSR	-0.253	0.091	2.776	0.006**	**Accepted***
* significant at the 0.05 level ** significant at the 0.01 level						

Source: Author

The analysis of the direct effect model shows two statistically significant relationships of influence at the 0.05 and 0.01 level among the five predictor variables on the dependent variable (BSR); namely the variable CSL and PA. These two variables exert a significant influence on the dependent variables (BSR). On the other hand, the variables DF, FC and have no significant direct impact on the dependent variable (BSR).

The value of the Standard Beta (β) shows that the variables (PA) the most influential variables on the dependent variable (BSR) with a negative coefficient of -0.25. The impact model on the mediator variable (KS) gives more significant results, it was found find that four explanatory variables: (CSL, DF, OB and PA) exert a significant influence on the mediator variable (KS). The variable (KS) gives a very strong influence value on the dependent variable (BSR) at the threshold of 0.01 with a Standard Beta (β) of 0.72. This result allows to say that the introduction of the variable (KS) as a mediator of the dependent variable (BSR), improves the impact of the five explanatory variables of the model, as is justified in the following table 5

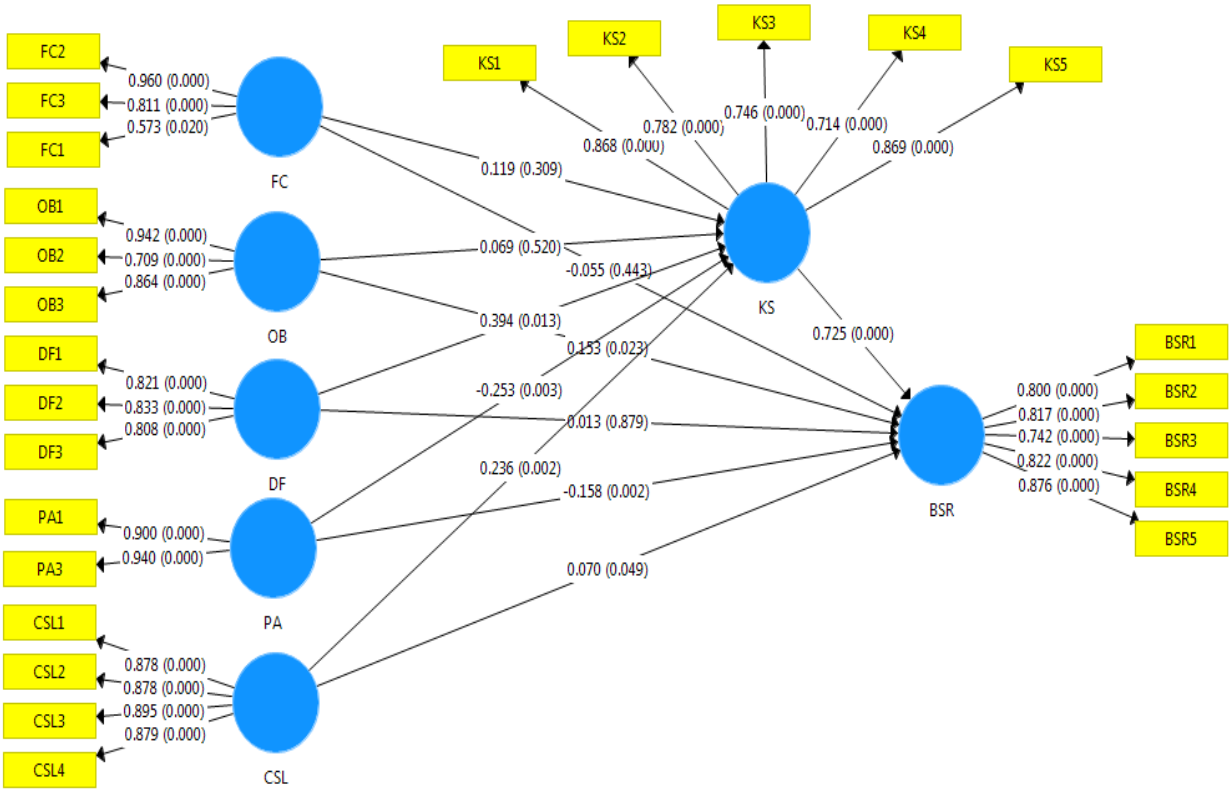
Table 5 : Specific indirect effect

Hypothesis	**Std. Beta (β)**	**Standard Deviation (STDEV)**	**T-Statistics**	**P-value**	**Decision**
H16 CSL →KS → BSR	0.171	0.062	2.757	0.006*	**Accepted***
H10 DF → KS → BSR	0.286	0.125	2.282	0.023**	**Accepted***
H4 FC → KS → BSR	0.086	0.077	1.118	0.264	**Rejected**
H7 OB → KS → BSR	0.050	0.072	0.690	0.490	**Rejected**
H13 PA → KS → BSR	-0.183	0.061	3.005	0.003*	**Accepted***
* significant at the 0.05 level ** significant at the 0.01 level					

Source: Author

The indirect effect table shows that the introduction of the variable (KS) as a mediating variable allowed to improve the relation between the explanatory variables and the dependent variable (BSR). It should be noted that after the introduction of the mediating variable, the variable (DF) is added as a predictor variable on the dependent variable (BSR), the value of the standardized Beta coefficient has improved for the variable (CSL), it has gone from 0.07 to 0, 17.

Path model



Source: Author

4. Discussion

Based on the empirical results of the present study, the majority of hypotheses (10 out of 16) were supported. These findings have theoretical implications for the antecedents of the buyer-seller relationship. In this research, results, show that KS has a positive effect on BSR. This, is consistent with the results of (Du et al., 2012d; Hsu et al., 2008; Yu et al., 2001a). In addition (Martin et al., 2005; Yu et al., 2001b) found consistent results with the results of the present research in terms of KS and BSR. This means that the current research reinforces and corroborates the existing literature about the importance of knowledge sharing to the quality

of buyer-seller research.

This research concluded that FC has no effect on BSR, because the relationship was found non-significant. This finding is of a crucial importance to the literature, because it enriches the existing literature that lacks enough research related to the FC construct (Duarte and Davies, 2003; Panteli, 2002). However, if we consider that buyer-seller relationship is a type of performance, this finding is divergent from the finding of (Chang and Gotcher, 2010a; Menon et al., 1996b; Rose and Shoham, 2004b) saying that conflict attitudes have a positive effect on conflict coordinating learning (which is a buyer-seller relationship) and also that task conflict reduce the performance. In addition in this study FC is found to have no effect on KS, which is not consistent with the results of (Chen, 2011c; Chen et al., 2011b; Langfred and Moye, 2014b; Tan et al., 2005a; Tang et al., 2017c) stating that functional conflict has an effect on knowledge sharing.

After testing the model hypothesis of this research, OB has a positive impact on KS. This finding is completely divergent from the work of (Cheng and Shih, 2014b; Kim et al., 2012a; Liu, 2008c). However, it converges with the work of.(Boissinot and Pache, 2011; Cheng et al., 2008b; Martínez et al., 2013b). In this article, the relationship between OB and BSR is found non-significant, which means there is no effect of opportunistic behavior on buyer-seller relationship.

The hypotheses testing revealed that DF does not have an effect on BSR. Because there is a lack in empirical research dealing with dysfunctional conflict (Massey and Dawes, 2007), the results of this study come to supplement it. In addition, it is not consistent with (Amason, 1996b; Bradford et al., 2004b; Chang and Gotcher, 2010b; De Dreu and Weingart, 2003c; Harris et al., 2008a; Rose and Shoham, 2004c; Wu et al., 2015). However, it is consistent with (Bobot, 2011). In addition, this study found that, DF has a positive effect on KS, this finding is against and doesn't back up the negative relationship in the study of (Bradford et al., 2004a).

According to the results of this research, PA has a negative effect on both BSR and KS. According to the literature, the first relationship is new, however, the second is different from the results of (He et al., 2013b), but Consistent with(Wang, 2011b) and not consistent with (Chen et al., 2017c; Rouhana and Korper, 1997b). CSL has a positive effect on BSR and on KS, the second relationship supports the results of (Arranz and Arroyabe, 2012; Jiang et al., 2013b; de Jong and Woolthuis, 2009; Li et al., 2010b; Wang et al., 2008b). Finally, KS

partially mediates the relationship between CSL and BSR, however, it completely mediates the relationship between DF and BSR. In addition, KS does not mediate the relationship between, FC, OB and BSR. Furthermore KS partially mediates the relationship between PA and BSR.

Conclusion

Like all studies, this research has several limitations to take into account to read the results, these limitations are three.

The first limitation of this research is the context, it was conducted in Moroccan context, which is too specified and particular. It will be difficult to generalize results to other contexts, therefore, future research should test the model in other contexts that can generate different results based on which we can find other explanations directions of the buyer-seller relationship. The second limitation is respondents, i.e., managers selected for the survey. These managers work for companies of different sizes, they were not comparable (of the same size some) even the majority of them were small and medium companies. Future research should test the model within companies of the same size so that the results will be of much more convergence and consistence. The third limitation is the perspective from which the buyer-seller relationship was investigated. In this research, buyer-seller relationship was evaluated from the supplier's perspective, i.e., the questionnaire was filled by the supplier (the seller) which makes the results not general, therefore, future research are invited to conduct similar studies but investigating the buyer's perspective or both of them (dyad research) to obtain the whole picture of the relationship.

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