Relationship Quality and Relationship Satisfaction: an Application At Retail Banks in Brazil

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Relationship Quality and Relationship Satisfaction: An Application at Retail Banks in Brazil
Paulo Henrique Muller Prado, CEPPAD UFPR, Brazil
Rubens da Costa Santos, EAESP FGV, Brazil

ABSTRACT
In a study of the rapport between customers and retail banks, it has been validated the relationship of Satisfaction with Relationship Quality and Loyalty. It has been verified the influence of the bank service quality and the Relationship Perceived Benefits on the consumer satisfaction with these services, as well as a moderated but significant impact of the affective responses to it. The assigned components of the relationship quality have shown great influence with each other (Satisfaction on Trust and Commitment, Trust on Commitment). The commitment, herein suggested as the Attitudinal Loyalty dimension, has had the greatest influence on Loyalty (embedded dimension), followed by Trust and Satisfaction, whose main effect has been indirect on it.

INTRODUCTION
The models of relationship evaluation are traditionally applied to incorporate this aspect as constructs such as Trust (Sidershukh et al, 2002) and their relationship with Loyalty behavior. Likewise, integrative models, such as that of Morgan & Hunt (1994) also insert the concept of Commitment into this context as a mediating variable between them. This construct and Trust, linked to Satisfaction, have been indicated as the formers of a second order concept, which is Relationship Quality (Hennig-Thurau & Klee, 1997). In this case, this construct is the degree of suitability of a relationship in meeting the needs of a consumer. Thus, it is relevant to integrate into one model the three components of Relationship Quality with Loyalty itself, as examined individually in a number of studies (Gruen et al, 2000).

Some authors have commented on the non-existence of a direct and linear connection between Satisfaction and Loyalty (Reichheld, 1996; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). In a theoretical model, Hennig-Thurau & Klee (1997) identified the possible measurement of the constructs of Commitment and Trust between the two aforementioned variables. These are important to the context of the relationship, and may be the key connection between these concepts.

Finally, most studies that evaluate Consumer Satisfaction in the context of the relationship deal with it summarily (Global Satisfaction) (Hennig-Thurau & Klee, 1997; Crosby & Stephens, 1987; Gwinner, Gremler & Bitner, 1998) and little importance has been given to the antecedent constructs. Reynolds & Beatty (1999) dealt with the interaction of perception of the Relationship Benefits on Satisfaction with it, but did not integrate it with Service Quality. Furthermore, despite the fact that academic studies have shown that relationships have relevant affective content (Fournier, 1998), and this representation has been greatly explored in personal relationships (Duck, 1991), there has only been the applications of Price, Tierney & Arnould (1995) and Barnes (1997), in a relationship context, which has sought to integrate the evaluation of the global Affective Responses to this as an antecedent of Satisfaction. Therefore, the understanding of Consumer Satisfaction in a relationship context has not been greatly developed. The adaptation of this construct and its antecedents in the relationship context is relevant as a form of identifying, measuring and generating actions that integrate not only the evaluation of products and services but also that of the relationship as a whole, linked to its benefits (Gwinner, Gremler & Bitner, 1998).

According to the reference chart proposed in this introduction, we see that there is still some academically unexplored space in the integration of the concepts of Relationship Consumer Satisfaction and its antecedents, with aspects that are intrinsic to Relationship Quality and Loyalty. This gap suggests the need to create a model that allows us to integrate these constructs in order to understand their interactions and, more widely, understand the evaluation process of an ongoing relationship of services not centered merely on each transaction carried out for suppliers.

THE CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP EVALUATION PROCESS
The structural model proposed is shown in figure 1. The first part refers to the antecedents of Satisfaction (Oliver, 1997), dealing with Perceived Quality, Perceived Relationship Benefits and Affective Responses related to a bank.

The first hypothesis hints at the fact that the Perception of Quality is one of the Satisfaction antecedents (Oliver, 1997). The latter is defined as global assessment by the consumer over time based on total consumer experience of the banking services and interactions with the provider of these services (Fornell et al, 1994) and this is the judgment of the consumer on the superiority or global excellence of a service (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000). The relationship between these derives from the Disconfirmation Paradigm, which indicates that Perceived Quality is one of the forming variables of Satisfaction (Oliver, 1980, 1981, 1997). Treating this variable as the perception of performance, the relationship quoted was indicated as positive by Szmidt & Bourne (1998). Crosby & Stephens (1987) assessed it from the operational viewpoint, with personal contact, information on the products/services, communication with the company and how problems are dealt with as the parameters of performance. Furthermore, Bendsandi & Berry (1997) evaluated the performance in a relationship, associating it with expertise, the degree of similarity and the frequency of contact between partners in the relationship, as well as negative aspects such as ambiguity of tasks performed and the costs of desisting. Therefore:

H1 Perceived Quality of Services has a positive correlation on Satisfaction with the Relationship

Gwinner, Gremler & Bitner (1998) dealt with the variable Perceived Relationship Benefits as advantages that users receive, as well as the basic service for maintaining the relationship in the long term, with four dimensions, associated to Social, Psychological, Economic and Customization Aspects. These could also be assessed in a sense of perceived performance, but now on a relationship perspective, fulfilling the vision of cognitive antecedents proposed by Dick & Basu (1994). Thus this construct must also have a positive influence on Relationship Satisfaction; the second hypothesis is now stated:

H2 The Perception of Benefits has a positive correlation in the Satisfaction with the relationship.

An additional element that must be considered in the model is the relationship between Perceived Quality and Perceived Relationship Benefits. As proposed by Reynolds & Beatty (1999), in a complementary analysis on the typology of Perceived Relationship

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Benefits, it can be inferred that the assessment of this construct must positively affect the perception of Service Quality since they are both based on a Service Provider performance from the viewpoint of customers. Nevertheless, the Benefits refer to the advantages offered throughout the relationship, and the perceived quality itself refers to more operational aspects of the Service. Thus the third hypothesis has been put together:

**H3 The Perception of Benefits has a positive correlation on the Perceived Quality in the Services Offered**

The fourth hypothesis integrates the Affective Responses in a relationship with their antecedents. This construct is defined in this article as the feelings that the user develops, both positive and negative, in situations of purchase, consumptions or others associated with the relationship (Oliver, 1997). According to the proposal of Oliver (1993) and Mano & Oliver (1993), based on the Cognitive Theory of Emotions (Frijda, 1986), the affective (secondary) response is the result of the evaluative processing centered on some fact relating to the consumer. The affective responses are based on the evaluation of Perceived Quality, and of Perceived Relationship Benefits with providers of financial services, which are characterized by a long-term relationship and routine consumption services by consumers. Therefore, positive evaluations on the Quality and Benefits must provoke more positive affective responses, and negative appraisal of these elements must yield negative affective responses. So the fourth hypothesis is:

**H4. The Perception of Benefits and Quality in Banking Services has a positive (negative) correlation in the positive (negative) Affective Response concerning the provider**

The fifth hypothesis is built on the affective cornerstones of Satisfaction, pointed out by Oliver (1997), and on the point of view of the relationship, as assessed by Price, Tierney & Arnould (1995). Dick & Basu (1994) propose that the affective antecedents must structure Satisfaction so as to complement the behavioral (retention rate) and cognitive (perception of performance) aspects. Therefore:

**H5 The Positive (Negative) Affective Responses have a positive (negative) correlation in the satisfaction with the relationship.**

Hypotheses 6, 7 and 8 refer to the relation between Relationship Satisfaction and Relationship Quality (Hennig-Thurau & Klee, 1997; Pick, 1999). These authors propose a relation between Satisfaction, Trust and Commitment concepts to be positive. For this article, Trust is defined as the belief of the user that his needs will be met in the future by the actions of the supplier (Anderson & Weitz, 1992). Commitment is defined here as the desire to develop a stable relationship, with a tendency to make sacrifices in the short term to maintain the relationship (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). In this light, Satisfaction may be considered as a formative element of the relationship and, since Commitment and Trust are elements resulting from time and resource investment on both sides, this pathway has to be positive and of great intensity (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Gruen, Summers & Acito, 2000). The Loyalty model proposed by Oliver (1999), in which loyalty is achieved by a longitudinal evaluation of the construction of several satisfactions, reinforce this idea. Hence:

**H6 Relationship Satisfaction has a positive relation with Trust in the Service Provider.**

**H7 Relationship Satisfaction has a positive relation with Commitment to the Service Provider.**

**H8 Relationship Satisfaction has a positive relation with Loyalty to the Service Provider.**
Among Trust and Commitment there is a widely researched positive relationship (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Andaleeb, 1996; Anderson & Weitz, 1992). This relationship is predicted as positive in the sense of Trust -> Commitment. Consequently the ninth hypothesis is formulated thus:

H9 Trust in a relationship partner has a positive relation to Commitment to the Service Provider.

Several authors have studied the “Commitment-Loyalty” relationship (Pritchard, Havitz & Howard, 1999; Crosby, Evans & Cowles, 1990; Hennig-Thurau & Klee, 1997; Reynolds & Beatty, 1999). Loyalty is conceived here as the intention to maintain transactions in the same bank and the behaviors that result from this (Jacoby & Chesnut, 1978). In the studies quoted above, the desire for continuity, represented by the first construct, is interposed with an element defined in the loyalty behavior of clients. In a similar situation of application, Prado & Santos (2002) reported a strong correlation between these constructs, separating the cognitive and affective aspects of continuity grouped with Commitment and aspects of behavior or intention of continued Loyalty. For that reason hypothesis number ten is made up as follows:

H10 Commitment with Service Provider has a positive relation with Loyalty to this.

Added to this hypothesis, and considering the business relationship with banks, Trust is expected to have a direct influence on Loyalty. This is so because Commitment is meant to be mutual investment in the relationship for the establishment of Loyalty (Sidershmukh et al., 2002). Thus the direct correlation of Trust on Loyalty is to be considered, bringing us to the eleventh hypothesis:

H11 Trust in a Relationship Partner has a positive relation to Loyalty to the Service Provider.

METHOD

This research has been projected in three stages, outlined as follows. The development of the measurement model was based on the proposals of Churchill (1979) and Anderson & Gerbing (1988), applied to retail banks and collected in a major city in South of Brazil. It was decided that some data collection should be made in the selected city (the banks were selected according to the number of clients), and how long the clients had had an account in these institutions. The results of this collection were submitted to Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for each construct indicators in each sample followed by internal consistency assessment for their own dimension. They were then submitted to Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) for validity verification (Hair et al., 1998; Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). This method was developed by estimating the ERLS available on EQS 5.7 software.

The third phase included data collection with the objective of allowing the assessment of the validity of the constructs, as well as the verification of the relationships among them according to the proposed model (n=480). The indicators collected in this phase were submitted to CFA and a SOCFA (Bagozzi et al., 1988), in accordance with configurations obtained in the previous phases as well as alternative configurations with the dimensions found in prior studies. The final option was carried out considering the one that offered a better global performance. The results of the CFA models are found in the last column of Table 1.

In order to express aspects of a settled relationship, the sampling was restricted to special account users with diverse transactions (current account statements, investments, loans, credit cards, etc.) for at least a year with their banks.

The average of the interviewees was around 41 years old, and there was a slight dominance of the male sex (54.0%). Most of them (around 54%) had completed high school education, followed by further education (around 24%), middle school (around 14%) and primary (8%). Most of them fell into the categories of employer (around 35%), employee (30%) and self-employed (20%). As for socio-economic group (Brazil criteria), about 15% were Class C (working class), B2 (lower middle class) around 36%, B1 (middle class) around 27%. Class A2 (upper middle class) accounted for around 20% of the sampling, and A1 (upper class) came in at around 2%.

DISCUSSION OF THE STRUCTURAL MODEL RESULTS

To assess the validation in the final sample, a CFA has been applied. The indicators of this phase were generated by means of the measurement aggregation models generated in the preparatory stages. This aggregation was made by calculating the average of each construct dimensions, as suggested by Anderson & Gerbing (1988). A CFA evaluated the discriminant and convergent structure of Satisfaction (Service Quality, Positive and Negative Affective Response, and Perceived Benefits as Antecedents of Satisfaction) and Trust, Commitment and Loyalty. Table 2 shows the results of item loadings in each latent variable, which are all statistically significant. The model fit can be considered good ($\chi^2=1345.3; \chi^2/df=2.30$; NFI=.966; NNFI=.987; CFI=.981; IFI=.981; SRMR =.051; RMSEA=.053).

The correlation matrix between the constructs is in Table 3. By analyzing, we can see that the correlations were all significant, in the right directions, but not very high (above 0.90). Likewise by observing the average variance extracted results (AVE) of each
construct, it can be seen that they have never been higher than the squared number of the correlations that reach them. (Fornell & Larcher, 1982).

**TABLE 1**
MEASUREMENT MODEL (N=270)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Operational Definition</th>
<th>Results from CFA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Satisfaction | 4 indicators, with 10 point scales as, a) Global Satisfaction; b) Global Disconfirmation; c) Distance from Ideal company and d) global affective response (Fornell et al, 1994; Garbarino & Johnson, 1999) | $\chi^2=8.01; 2 df; p<0.001; \chi^2/df =4.21; NFI=.994; NNFI=.986; CFI=.995; IFI=.995; SRMR=.011; RMSEA=.079 | AVE= 73.0%  
CONF= 0.915 |
| Service Quality | Performance assessment, with 31 items and 10 points, comprehending the dimensions of promptness, Infrastructure, Services Dependability and Access to Agencies, generated at the preparatory phases | $\chi^2=1149.17; 428 df; p<0.001; \chi^2/df =2.68; NFI =.948; NNFI=.971; CFI =.974; IFI =.974; SRMR =.071; RMSEA=.066 | AVE= 63.5%  
CONF= 0.873 |
| Benefits of Relationship | Likert Scale, with 10 items and 10 points representing the dimensions a) Social, (b) Security, (c) Economic, e (d) Customization, suggested by Gwinner et al (1999) and adapted at the qualitative phase | $\chi^2=203.5; 29 df; p<0.001; \chi^2/df =7.01; NFI =.927; NNFI =.902; CFI =.937; IFI =.937; SRMR =.070; RMSEA =.115 | AVE= 51.5%  
CONF= 0.808 |
| Affective Responses | Intensity Scale in 20 items and 10 points, representing dimensions of positive affect (content, interest and enthusiasm) and negative (fear, anger, boredom, discouragement, guilt, shame.) developed by literature review (Izard 1977; Oliver 1993; Westbrook, 1984) and purified in the preparatory phases | Positive Affective Response: $\chi^2=75.9;18 df; p<0.001; \chi^2/df =4.21; NFI =.965; NNFI =.957; CFI =.972; IFI =.972; SRMR =.046; RMSEA =.084  
Negative Affective Response: $\chi^2=162.8; 67 df; p<0.001; \chi^2/df =2.42; NFI =.967; NNFI =.973; CFI =.980; IFI =.980; SRMR =.046; RMSEA =.057 | AVE= 58.3%  
CONF= 0.792 |
| Trust | Likert Scale, with 12 items in the dimensions: (a) competence/ credibility; (b) benevolence (benevolence); (c) integrity generated at the preparatory phases and combined with scales developed by other studies (Sidorskikh et al, 2002; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Garbarino & Johnson, 1999) | $\chi^2=239.9; 41 df; p<0.001; \chi^2/df =5.85; NFI=.949; NNFI=.914; CFI=.956; IFI=.956; SRMR=.056; RMSEA=.115 | AVE= 69.5%  
CONF= 0.872 |
| Commitment | Likert Scale, with 16 items and 10 points with a) the Normative dimension, b) the Instrumental dimension, c) the Affective dimension. | $\chi^2=593.3; 51 df; p<0.001; \chi^2/df =11.6; NFI=.891; NNFI=.869; CFI=.899; IFI=.899; SRMR=.101; RMSEA=.154 | AVE= 64.0%  
CONF= 0.771 |
| Loyalty | Probability scale of occurrence, with 6 items and 10 items representing the non-motivation for the search of other competitors, resistance to change to the offer of other banking options and the mouth-to-mouth communication. (Jacoby & Chesnut, 1978; Dick & Basu, 1994) | $\chi^2=81.0; 9 df; p<0.001; \chi^2/df =4.21; NFI=.949; NNFI=.924; CFI=.955; IFI=.955; SRMR=.044; RMSEA=.129 | AVE= 61.4%  
CONF= 0.904 |

AVE=Average Variance Extracted (Fornell & Larcher, 1982)  
CONF=Composite Reliability (Fornell & Larcher, 1982)

**Structural Model Analysis**
After the validity test in the summarized ratings, applied to the measurement model, this item discusses the test in the proposed...
### TABLE 2
RESULTS OF CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS AMONG THE CONSTRUCTS—CORRELATION AMONG COMPONENTS OF THE STRUCTURAL MODEL (N=480)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Perceived Quality</th>
<th>Negative Affective Response</th>
<th>Positive Affective Response</th>
<th>Benefits of Relationship</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>Loyalty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality— Promptness</td>
<td>0.915**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality— Infrastructure</td>
<td>0.710*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality— Service Dependability</td>
<td>0.848*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality— Access to Agency</td>
<td>0.643*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Benefits</td>
<td>0.735**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Security Benefits</td>
<td>0.820*</td>
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<td>Economic Benefits</td>
<td>0.643*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Customization Benefits</td>
<td>0.658*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>0.406*</td>
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<td>Content</td>
<td>0.848*</td>
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<td>Enthusiasm</td>
<td>0.930**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>0.875**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>0.930*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irritation</td>
<td>0.902*</td>
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<td>Fear</td>
<td>0.812*</td>
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<td>Shame</td>
<td>0.791*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guilt</td>
<td>0.808*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global Satisfaction</td>
<td>0.842**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global Disconfirmation</td>
<td>0.816*</td>
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<td>Distance from Ideal</td>
<td>0.874**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global Affective Response</td>
<td>0.885*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>0.770**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>0.874*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benevolence</td>
<td>0.854*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affective Commitment</td>
<td>0.962**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instrumental Commitment</td>
<td>0.596*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve the applications</td>
<td>0.762**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consider to buy a new financial product</td>
<td>0.823*</td>
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<td>Continue doing business</td>
<td>0.866*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tell to other people</td>
<td>0.824*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offer personal information</td>
<td>0.622*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintain the account</td>
<td>0.773*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Composite Reliability (CONF)</td>
<td>0.873</td>
<td>0.808</td>
<td>0.792</td>
<td>0.942</td>
<td>0.915</td>
<td>0.872</td>
<td>0.771</td>
<td>0.904</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Variance Extracted (AVE)</td>
<td>63.5%</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
<td>69.5%</td>
<td>64.0%</td>
<td>61.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant coefficient to 0.01
** Coefficient fixed to 1 at specification
TABLE 3
RESULTS OF CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS AMONG THE CONSTRUCTS-COMPONENTS OF THE COMPLETE STRUCTURAL MODEL (N=480)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Perceived Quality</th>
<th>Negative Affective Response</th>
<th>Positive Affective Response</th>
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<td>Perceived Quality</td>
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<td>-.410*</td>
<td>.245*</td>
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<td>Trust</td>
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<td>-.599*</td>
<td>.380*</td>
<td>.268*</td>
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<td>Commitment</td>
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<td>-.481*</td>
<td>.374*</td>
<td>.214*</td>
<td>.735*</td>
<td>.863*</td>
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<td>Loyalty</td>
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<td>-.464*</td>
<td>.400*</td>
<td>.223*</td>
<td>.689*</td>
<td>.795*</td>
<td>.811*</td>
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*Significant correlation to 0.01

model by assessing the coefficients in the estimated structural model as well as the fit indexes. The results are in Figure 1. For the model evaluation, its general indicators have been observed (X²=1676.52; 419 df; p<0.001; X²/df=3.45; NFI =.950; NNFI =.959; CFI=.963; IFI=.963; SRMR=.085; RMSEA=.075).

Hypothesis Testing of Relationship Satisfaction and its Antecedents

As proposed by Oliver (1980, 1997) the first hypothesis implies that the Perception of Service Quality is one of the forming variables of satisfaction (β=0.345; p<0.001). This result coincided with that referred to by Szmigin & Bourne (1998), Crosby & Stephens (1987), Dick & Basu (1994) and Bendapudi & Berry (1997). The relationship herein verified has a relatively low indicator reaching 0.345, which suggests that, besides this, other elements must be worked out by banks for the development of consumer Satisfaction.

According to the second hypothesis, the perceived relationship benefits also have a positive correlation on Relationship Satisfaction (β=0.345; p<0.001). The result of this hypothesis reinforced the conclusions of the research by Reynolds & Beatty (1999), applied to retail stores in which benefits of relationship directly influence satisfaction with salesclerks. On a higher perspective these benefits are assessed in an institutional relationship between the parties, where indicators reflect not only aspects of the interpersonal relationship, as proposed by these authors, but also aspects institutionalized by banks in their relationship with their customers. This issue has been widely examined in B2B Relationship Literature, when discussing shared values (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) that oftentimes result in norms and procedures established in the relation (Dwyer et al, 1987; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). When comparing the result of this coefficient to the Perceived Quality -> Satisfaction, they both similar intensity. The development of satisfaction takes place due to the equitant influence of both, which places one more relevant antecedent to the Disconfirmation Paradigm.

In the test of the third hypothesis, with a significant coefficient between these variables (β=0.720; p<0.001), it can be inferred that the evaluation of Benefits, when maintaining the relationship, was positively associated to the perception of the service quality since they are both based on the performance of the service provider under customer point of view. As discussed in the previous hypothesis, the benefits refer to the advantages offered in the relationship course and the service quality itself reflects more operational aspects. This correlation must also be forthcoming to the effect of the benefits offered to bank users with overdraft accounts on their satisfaction.

The fourth hypothesis has been split into four sub-hypothesis. The relation between Quality Perceived and Positive Affective Responses (H4a) has been verified. The coefficient between the variables was positive and significant (β=0.253; p<0.01), in conformity to the corresponding hypothesis. Despite being accepted, its significance has been higher than the others already discussed. Yet the relation between Benefits and Positive Affective Response (H4c) was not significant. In spite of the fact that the coefficient value was positive between those constructs, it was below the statistical limits of acceptance (β=0.087; p=0.352). For the relation between Perception of Quality and Negative Affective responses, the model indicated it as significant and as being in the right direction. The coefficient proved to exist in a negative relation, yet was significant among these (β=-0.350; p<0.05). The same results occurred in the evaluation of the relation between Perceived Benefits and Negative Affective Responses, with a significant and negative coefficient (β=-0.170; p<0.01).

Therefore the proposed H4 relation has been partially accepted. The acceptance of this hypothesis is directly related to the idea of the Appraisal Theory of Emotions (Frijda, 1986), in which the affective responses are the result of the appraisal in which the service is given. Two important dimensions of this appraisal are thus the Perceived Quality and the Perceived Benefits in the Relationship. As depicted by the discussions with regard to the factors that have an effect on the affective responses, Frijda (1998)
indicates that mood aspects (less intense but lasting affective responses) are important when retrieving information and the appraisal of specific situations. This way, the service provider has limited capacity of acting on this appraisal process, which makes the issue centered purely on functional quality debatable when referring to its results in the improvement of satisfaction (Grönroos, 2000). As this author argues, the processual dimension of service quality must also be contemplated in these kinds of programs, showing the necessity of developing procedures that also deal with interactions of consumers with the company, flexibility of front line personnel to make the service process adequate for specific consuming situations, and of issues related to the formation of customer expectation before and after the service is given.

The fifth hypothesis has been divided into two sub-hypotheses. Sub-hypothesis H5a, relating Positive Affective Responses and Satisfaction, was corroborated in the structural model. The outlined coefficient has been statistically significant (b=0.144; p<0.01). Also, for sub-hypothesis H5b, associating Negative Affective Responses and Satisfaction, the results indicated it to be statistically significant by model (b=-0.294; p<0.001). These two hypotheses can be considered as coming from the discussion over the affective characteristic of Satisfaction (Oliver, 1997). An important aspect is that the influence of Negative Affective Response is stronger than the one coming from Positive Affective Response. This asymmetry depicted by Seidtitz & Diener (1993) in situations of transactional exchanges and also perceived in a relational context. Again, the service nature as the continuous providing (Lovelock and Wright, 2000) can lead to this result when the promoted satisfaction would be closer to the Oliver (1989) dimension Joy, and problems in this process would be perceived by consumers more intensely than the resulting success when providing the right services. 

Hypothesis Testing of Relationship Quality and Loyalty

The sixth hypothesis has been verified. Here, the coefficient has presented a positive and significant result, according to the proposed hypothesis (b=0.784; p<0.001). This result shows the first proposed relation of Relationship Quality according to Hennig-Thurau & Klee (1997). By the discussion of Singh & Sidershmukh (2000), the development of Trust between the consumer and their supplier goes through the perception of competence and its integrity. Therefore it is through accumulated appraisal of satisfactions that this verifies along the relationship. Its relative weight can be considered high if compared to Sidershmukh et al (2002) results, in which these authors found significant but lower magnitude (between 0.14 and -0.17). Despite very similar measures, this model keeps closer to Perceived Quality, such as competence and benevolence, related not as an image dimension but rather an effective experience that they have towards their bank.

The seventh hypothesis, in which the outlined coefficient has yielded positive and significant weight according to the proposed model (b=0.282; p<0.01), has been validated. This concept is therefore considered Attitudinal Loyalty. According to a discussion by Prado & Santos (2003), this hypothesis showed that the formation of long-term relationships is initiated by means of relationship satisfaction, in what it says about perception that the supplier change would be costly (Instrumental Commitment) and identification developed between them (Affective Commitment). Despite this observation, and the significant relation among these constructs, the effect could be seen as indirect, as this coefficient has not assumed a high value, comparative to the other components of Relationship Quality.

The eighth hypothesis has also been verified in that the weight has shown positive and significant result according to the proposed model (b=0.194; p<0.01). In this case the coefficient has not assumed a high value, considering the comparison to other elements of the relationship quality. This fact could lead to a weaker direct effect, yet with a direct result heightened by means of the formation of Trust and Commitment.

The ninth hypothesis has been verified, where the coefficient presented positive and significant result according to the proposed hypothesis (b=0.612; p<0.01). This result is explained by the theory of social exchange (Kelley & Thibault, 1959), where the relationship in situations of vulnerability of one party towards the other leads to the need of primary trust between the parties and that they will be committed to each other. The evaluation of the relationship costs involved proposed by those authors as an indication of the relationship continuity is reinforced in this hypothesis, since the supplier change would take place out of the perception that the migration costs to alternative banks is lower than the costs of keeping the relationship. In this are logics that can be instrumental and/or affective. Therefore, for Commitment to the bank, there must basically be Trust between them, heightening the perception of outcome costs to users of service.

The tenth hypothesis has been verified, where the coefficient presented positive and significant results according to the proposed hypothesis (b=0.429; p<0.01). The proposed relation followed the results presented by Prado & Costa (2003), where a large convergence is perceived in a CFA between the two constructs at issue since these could represent different dimension of a wider loyalty concept (r=0.856; p<0.001). The option in this paper has been to keep them apart, following recommendations by Garbarino & Johnson (1998) and Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2001), in a way of capturing the relation among them, and suggest that the behavioral perspective is preceded by attitudinal logics according to the traditional models of attitude (Engel et al, 1998).

The eleventh hypothesis has been verified, where the coefficient presented positive and significant result according to the proposed outline of hypothesis (b=0.257; p<0.01). Similarly to the previous hypothesis, this relation indicates the importance of Trust in the relationship continuity. The magnitude of this relation was between that of Commitment and Satisfaction, from which it gets a median significant influence on loyalty. Additional elements that have not been considered in this model could support in the heightening of indirect influence of trust on loyalty as the question of perceived relationship value discussed by Sidershmukh et al (2002). This variable is pointed out by these authors as mediating in the relation between them and relatively strong links to loyalty.

Explanatory Power of the model

By verifying the determination coefficients for satisfaction and its antecedents it can be perceived that the model composed by the evaluation of Perceived Service Quality, of Perceived Relationship Benefits and by the Affective Responses has large explanatory power over satisfaction with the relationship in the sample at issue (R²=75.0%). For Perceived Quality (R²=51.8%), it can be verified that, besides a high coefficient in its relation to perceived benefits, this has relatively high explanatory power on that. Therefore taking the coefficients of Perceived Benefits into consideration along with other model constructs, the relational programs proposed to customers must be concerns regarding operational aspects of Quality of Service, and also be centered on benefits to their customers as these positively influence the service evaluation as well as represent important impact on their satisfaction. This relation reflects the fact that both concepts, despite being theoretically and empirically different regard the service quality as a main element of aggregation among them. Finally, the relatively low explanatory power that the evaluation of service quality and perceived benefits have over positive affective responses (R²=10.3%) and Negative (R²=24.4%)
lead to another important aspect. Affective Responses show that the customers’ experiences with their banks are a fundamental builder. This shows that the relationship formation must also be an important hub in the process of service providing, in the personal clerk posture, in aspects linked to atmospherics, of contact points with customers and the detailed preparation of interaction with them (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982).

By analyzing the determination coefficients of Relationship Quality and Loyalty constructs we can perceive that the explanatory power of their precedents is high in the three cases. The Trust $R^2$ coefficient is relatively high (61.4%), if considering that its only antecedent specified has been Satisfaction with Relationship. It is also important to remind that this indicator could have reached such value from the indirect affects of the satisfaction antecedents, basically Perceived Quality and Benefits in the Relationship. The value of the explanatory power over commitment was likewise high (72.5%), with their antecedents of Satisfaction and Trust. This represents a very strong linked among these three central concepts in a relationship that must be worked adequately by a bank. The explanatory power of the specified Loyalty antecedents (Satisfaction, Trust, and Commitment) is also high (67.6%), considering the complexity of the phenomenon at issue. The model proposed by Dick & Basu (1994) has shown this complexity when indicated: besides cognitive, affective and intention components as antecedents to loyalty partially represented by the proposed antecedents in the proposed model, there are also social consumer interaction aspects that have not been explicitly considered.

CONCLUSIONS
The main result of this paper has been to test a model that permitted the validation of the relationships between Satisfaction and the relationship to some of its antecedents, by verifying the linkage between Relationship Satisfaction and some of its antecedents (Affective Response, Perceived Service Quality and Benefits), the constructs of Relationship Quality, focusing Trust and Commitment, and Loyalty towards a retail bank. This model has shown the possibility of combining the constructs discussed in the literature on Relationship Marketing, Consumer Satisfaction and Loyalty that, with some exceptions, are dealt with in an isolated fashion. In a more specific manner the first important issue referring to the combination of Service Quality with Perceived Relationship Benefits, dealt with separately, as antecedents in the proposed model. The discrimination among them, the significant relations found towards the other constructs and the increase of explanatory power of their consequence showed that monitoring cannot be restricted to transactional aspects of Service Quality, but it also must contemplate evaluation relationship benefits offered to bank customers. The Service Quality usually dealt with in transactional optics proved to be a key element for the formation of relationships, since its influence goes beyond immediate Affective Responses and Satisfaction and has a direct and significant impact on relation constructs such as Trust and Commitment. In addition, the Perceived Relationship Benefits were outstanding because of the great influence they have over the evaluation of Service Quality and over all constructs that compose the described relationship quality. It was even possible in the context of the financial market to verify that the established relations among the elements of Relationship Quality oftentimes tested in B2B businesses, they are also valid for these kinds of service; these have even shown great influence on Loyalty.

Suggestions for Future Research
Several additional questions arise from the results obtained that indicate proposals for future research. The first is the interaction of the antecedents of Satisfaction with it. The first of them has been studied mainly in situations of dealing with complaints and recuperation of services but also offers important information in normal consumer situations, as shown by Oliver & Swan (1989). The sense of justice in the relationship may contribute to the widened scope of Satisfaction and Trust developed between the client and the financial institution, and may also complement the notion of benefits received from the business partner.

The notion of Perceived Value in the Relationship has also been studied a great deal in the literature, both from the transactional viewpoint and the relational. This element may be evaluated from a cumulative viewpoint, considering its mediating function between Satisfaction and the constructs of Relationship Quality, and also centered on the latest transactions, focusing on the notion of antecedent to Satisfaction.

Still on the subject of Satisfaction antecedents, the Affective Responses had their coefficients of determination with relatively low values. This is partly due to the fact that only two antecedents were considered (Perceived Quality and Relationship Benefits). The Affective Responses are strongly linked to the experience of consuming and service. Therefore, they are contaminated by the latest interactions that the user had with his bank. The proposed antecedents are related to the perspective of results and interactions, and the consuming process in itself was not adequately detected. Thus, an axis of the research that results from this analysis concerns deepening studies into Consumer Experience as a whole, according to the suggestions of Holbrook & Hirschman (1982).

REFERENCES