



The Influence of Food Values on Post-Purchase Variables at Food Establishments

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Structured abstract

Purpose (mandatory)

The importance of food values for the post-purchase process has not been widely studied. Most previous research in this line has focused on examining either the attributes of specific food categories, without taking the corresponding values into account, or food-purchasing attitudes and behaviour. To address this gap in the research, this paper delves deeper into the influence of food values on post-purchase variables.

Design/methodology/approach (mandatory)

Specifically, it analyses the influence of food values on satisfaction with the purchases made at an establishment, loyalty (behavioural and attitudinal), and switching costs. To this end, a sample of 708 consumers, collected through online questionnaires in Spain, is analysed using various descriptive statistics and causal models.

Findings (mandatory)

The findings confirm the influence of food values on satisfaction and that satisfaction positively influences loyalty. Switching costs were not found to moderate the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty.

Research limitations/implications (if applicable)

The survey had to be completed online, and, thus, respondents needed to have an e-mail address. This influenced the respondents' profile, since many consumers over the age of 54 do not have e-mail, do not use it, or are more reluctant to complete online surveys.

Practical implications (if applicable)

Purchase satisfaction was not found to affect switching costs, which reinforces the idea that loyalty can sometimes be spurious. It would thus be an indicator that, as long as consumers have no other option, they will continue to shop at the establishment. In contrast, establishment satisfaction did generate switching costs. This finding could be due to aspects such as convenience, the development and maintenance of relationships with the employees, knowledge of where products are located in the store, etc.

Customers may be dissatisfied with their purchase, yet still satisfied with an establishment, which could entail very high switching costs for them and, therefore, cause them to remain loyal (albeit spuriously) to the establishment.

Social implications (if applicable)

Originality/value (mandatory)

This research contributes to the literature in this field by examining the influence of food values on key postpurchase variables.

KEYWORDS: Food values, consumer behaviour, satisfaction, loyalty, switching costs.

The Influence of Food Values on Post-Purchase Variables at Food Establishments

INTRODUCTION

There is considerable interest in understanding consumer behaviour based on the motivations, preferences, and habits that trigger the purchase of food products (O'Neill *et al.*, 2014). Food choice is a complex issue, amongst other things, because people can make around 200 decisions a day related to food and beverage consumption (Wansink and Sobal, 2007). Thus, the purchase of food for consumption is no longer considered a purely routine process and has come to be regarded as a process with a high degree of consumer engagement, especially in certain situations and for certain products. The food-product purchasing process can be described as a complex process influenced by individual (personality), environmental (Furst *et al.*, 1996), and sociodemographic aspects, as well as individual motivations and values (Chen, 2007; Wadolowska *et al.*, 2008), amongst other things. Aspects related to context and social interaction might also be cited, as well as certain sensory attributes of foods and the information stated on the product (King *et al.*, 2004).

The whole process is influenced by the changes in consumer buying and consumption habits of recent years. Over the last few decades, a debate has arisen over how aspects such as health or ethics influence eating in terms of food production and distribution (Clarke *et al.*, 2008). Despite increased social awareness of the importance of a healthy, balanced diet, more and more people suffer from obesity, are less physically fit, and have a more sedentary lifestyle. Likewise, consumer groups have emerged that are more concerned with the genetic modification processes that have become increasingly common in commercialised food (Luomala *et al.*, 2006). For all of these reasons, determining how consumers assess the characteristics of the food products on offer at different food establishments is of great interest.

With a view to addressing these consumer concerns, in the field of retail, retailers are devoting more and more space to dietary and health products, amongst other things. There is also increased interest in identifying which aspects of the purchased food and of the retailers that sell it shoppers value most, as well as which ones have the greatest influence on key variables such as satisfaction, loyalty, or switching costs (Martínez-Ruiz *et al.*, 2010).

In this broad and heterogeneous frame of reference, it is helpful to take a more detailed look at the relatively new concept of food values and, especially, at how consumers take them into account in their food-purchasing and consumption processes (c.f., Lusk and Briggeman, 2009; Lusk, 2011; Martínez-Ruiz and Gómez-Cantó, 2016). The present paper aims to examine the importance of food values in the food-purchasing and consumption process, as well as their impact on satisfaction, loyalty, and switching costs with regard to the retail establishment where the food is bought. To achieve this goal, the remainder of this paper will be structured as follows. First, it will offer a review of the relevant literature on this line of research to enable the formulation of research hypotheses. Next, it will analyse the results of the empirical part of the research, which was conducted using a database built with an online questionnaire completed by consumers in Spain. Finally, it will discuss the conclusions and implications for management, as well as the limitations and future lines of research.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Food values

Several studies have shown that personal values can predict the consumption of products such as food (e.g. Grunert and Juhl, 1995; Povey *et al.*, 2000), influencing consumers' choices (e.g. Allen and Baines, 2002; Feather *et al.*, 1998). Building on that work, others studies, including key subsequent contributions such as Lusk and Briggeman (2009) or Lusk (2011), have sought to identify why consumers prefer some food products over others, taking into account the most important food values for the end consumer.

Specifically, Lusk and Briggeman (2009) conduct an extensive review of the relevant literature on end consumers' willingness to pay for food products and for the values they represent, applying to food the general concept of values previously defined by authors such as Rokeach (1973) or Schwartz (1992). They argue that consumers have intermediate values consisting of a stable set of beliefs about the relative importance of certain meta-attributes resulting from end states (desired goals and states), associated with the purchase and consumption of food. The existence of these values could play a key role in explaining consumers' choices according to the aforementioned means-end chain theory, which postulates that fundamental underlying values motivate consumers' purchase decisions.

The literature review shows that many studies have sought to identify consumers' preferences for product-specific attributes, without considering the fact that, when making their purchase decision, consumers are choosing from a wide range of products with a large variety of characteristic attributes or features (Lister *et al.*, 2014). This is why Lusk and Briggeman (2009) and Lusk (2011) study the general classifications attributable to food in the form of values, since they express more abstract attributes, capable of explaining consumers' purchases over time. Some of these food values, such as safety, origin, or naturalness, have frequently been considered in many subsequent studies conducted in the field of consumer preferences (e.g. Adalja *et al.*, 2015).

The influence of food values on key post-purchase variables

Satisfaction is one of the main key variables in the construction of company-consumer relationships (Oliver, 1997). In general, consumer satisfaction can be defined as a global evaluation or a state of feelings toward a product, service, or establishment (Olsen *et al.*, 2005). For Giese and Cote (2000), consumer satisfaction is a response (cognitive or affective) of varying intensity, with a time-specific point of determination and limited duration, directed toward focal aspects of product acquisition and/or consumption. In light of this definition, a customer's satisfaction with his or her purchase can be the result of the value provided by that experience and thus could include both hedonic and utilitarian benefits, bearing in mind that every consumer behaves differently and assigns different value to his or her purchase experience.

In this regard, Vad Andersen and Hyldig (2015) observe that the sensory properties of food (e.g. appearance, taste, texture) are one determinant of satisfaction. Accordingly, they have been used in numerous studies on food and consumer behaviour (Tuorila, 2007). Another widely researched aspect is the origin or provenance of food and its influence on satisfaction. For example, Stefani *et al.* (2006) highlight the importance of knowing the origin of food and its influence on hedonic benefits in the eating experience. Origin is thought to affect the consumer's assessment in two ways: either because it can be considered an indication of quality insofar as it suggests certain

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3 connotations (e.g. sensory characteristics, symbolic function) or due to ethical values,
4 authenticity, or its ability to evoke memories of past experiences (satisfactory or
5 otherwise). Additionally, Vad Andersen and Hyldig (2015) conclude that multiple
6 factors are likely to contribute to food satisfaction (the hedonic and/or sensory ones
7 being the most highly valued) and that the importance of each factor is different for
8 each person. Vad Andersen *et al.* (2017) corroborate that the hedonic sensory
9 experience is the most important factor for food satisfaction and that post-consumption
10 sensations can also contribute to it.

11
12 Finally, some studies have focused on assessing consumer satisfaction with food
13 purchases based on the retail format (Carpenter and Moore, 2006; Kamran-Disfani *et*
14 *al.*, 2017).

15
16 Food retailers should thus understand these differences in order to create retail formats
17 and offer products with values that allow them to differentiate themselves from their
18 competitors. This is especially true given that, as a result of the highly heterogeneous
19 nature of consumers' expectations, satisfaction can vary depending on both the values
20 offered by the food purchases and the type of establishment (Huddleston *et al.*, 2009).
21 Based on these ideas, the following research hypotheses can be proposed regarding the
22 expected influence of food values on both purchase satisfaction and satisfaction with the
23 establishment:
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25
26 H1. Food values have a positive influence on satisfaction.

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28 As this satisfaction can refer both to the purchase and to the retail establishment where
29 it is made, this hypothesis can be further divided into the following two sub-hypotheses:

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32 H1a. Food values have a positive and significant influence on purchase
33 satisfaction.

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35
36 H1b. Food values have a positive and significant influence on establishment
37 satisfaction.

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39 Loyalty is also undoubtedly a key variable in consumers' post-purchase processes. In
40 general, customer loyalty is understood as the buyer's overall attachment, or deep
41 commitment, to a product, service, brand, or organisation (Oliver, 1999). The concept
42 of loyalty has a similar meaning to that of relational commitment, which is usually
43 described in the relationship marketing literature as an enduring desire to stay in a
44 valuable relationship (Anderson and Weitz, 1992; Morgan and Hunt, 1994).

45
46 The relevant literature shows that whilst the study of loyalty has been approached from
47 many perspectives, the most common are the behavioural and attitudinal perspectives
48 (Dick and Basu, 1994). The former conceptualises loyalty as repeat purchasing
49 behaviour. According to this perspective, people may repeat purchases out of habit due
50 to the existence of barriers to switching providers or a lack of attractive alternatives.
51 Thus, customers may stay in the relationship out of obligation, developing a sort of
52 spurious loyalty, i.e. without ever developing feelings toward the provider or supplier
53 (Picón *et al.*, 2014). The latter perspective, the attitudinal approach, describes loyalty as
54 a psychological state (affective and/or cognitive), which the customer can achieve as a
55 result of the company's relational strategy. Under this approach, the customer may
56 maintain the relationship based on the benefits received whilst it lasts. This approach is
57 based on the idea that true loyalty is a positive attitude toward the company. Therefore,
58 a positive attitude toward the provider or supplier is what ensures repeat purchases in
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3 the future. From this perspective, unlike in the previous type of relationship, customers
4 are loyal because they truly wish to maintain the relationship (Oliver, 1999). The
5 present paper refers to these two perspectives.

6 Although customer satisfaction has long been commonly considered a clear antecedent
7 of loyalty, some authors (e.g. Mital and Lassar, 1998) have shown that a satisfied
8 customer is not always a loyal one. These authors base their argument on two possible
9 reasons: (1) a dissatisfied customer may continue to buy the same brand or go to the
10 same store if she cannot find anything better amongst the available alternatives; and (2)
11 a satisfied customer may be willing to purchase new brands or go to a new provider in
12 the hopes of achieving more favourable results. In light of these ideas, the following
13 hypothesis regarding the positive influence that satisfaction is expected to have on
14 loyalty can be formulated:
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17 H2. Satisfaction has a positive and significant influence on loyalty.
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19 However, since satisfaction can refer to both the purchase and the retail establishment
20 where the purchase is made, the foregoing hypothesis can be divided into the following
21 two sub-hypotheses:
22

23 H2a. Purchase satisfaction has a positive and significant influence on loyalty.
24

25 H2b Establishment satisfaction has a positive and significant influence on
26 loyalty.
27

28 Finally, the present research also seeks to measure the influence that satisfaction, with
29 both the purchase and the establishment, is likely to have on switching-cost variables. In
30 the field of marketing, switching barriers generally refer to the difficulties that
31 dissatisfied customers must overcome to switch to another provider or supplier; they
32 may also include the financial, social and psychological burden borne by the customer
33 when he or she switches to another establishment (Fornell, 1992). Therefore, the higher
34 the switching barrier, the more a customer will feel he or she has no choice but to
35 remain loyal to a retail establishment. Switching costs can be defined as the cost
36 incurred when switching from one retail establishment to another, including time,
37 money, and psychological costs (Dick and Basu, 1994). This definition could also
38 include the perceived risk, insofar as there are also potential losses when switching
39 establishments, including financial, social, psychological, and safety-related losses
40 (Murray, 1991).
41

42 With regard to the role of switching costs in the satisfaction-loyalty relationship, some
43 studies consider switching costs to be an antecedent of loyalty (e.g. Aydin *et al.*, 2005).
44 In fact, Kotler (1997) indicates that switching costs play a key role in the process of
45 building customer loyalty, noting that there are two main ways to retain customers:
46 increasing the satisfaction level and increasing the switching costs. Likewise, some
47 authors (e.g. Dagger and David, 2012) suggest that switching costs have a moderating
48 effect on the satisfaction-loyalty relationship, arguing that the impact of satisfaction on
49 loyalty is much greater when switching costs are lower (Bell *et al.*, 2005). This
50 argument assumes that customer's decision to remain loyal to a supplier depends on
51 how he or she evaluates the switching costs. Switching to another retail establishment or
52 brand would entail both a cognitive and a behavioural effort.
53

54 Satisfied customers are generally understood to have less motivation to seek and
55 evaluate other alternatives (Liu, 2006). This is consistent with the work of authors such
56 as Pick and Eisend (2014), who argue that the perceived quality of a relationship and a
57 company's offer are positively related to switching costs. Additionally, Oliver (1999)
58 suggests that satisfaction is a necessary step in the loyalty-building process, but that it
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3 becomes less significant when other mechanisms (e.g. social or personal ties) are
4 influencing that loyalty. All these factors create switching costs that increase customer
5 retention. Matzler *et al.* (2015) find also a positive relationship between satisfaction and
6 switching costs, establishing that switching costs have a mediating effect on the
7 satisfaction-loyalty relationship. Furthermore, customer satisfaction enables greater
8 identification with the brand and the supplier, which increases the switching costs
9 (Matzler *et al.*, 2015).

10
11 This mediating effect is also analysed by De Matos *et al.* (2009), who conclude that
12 different types of relationships (direct, partially mediated, totally mediated, and
13 moderated) can be established between satisfaction, switching costs, and loyalty and
14 that switching costs can thus act differently depending on the context within the
15 satisfaction-loyalty relationship (i.e. depending on whether they have, for example, a
16 mediating effect on the satisfaction-loyalty relationship). Additionally, Picón *et al.*
17 (2014) corroborate that switching costs play a mediating role within this relationship
18 and thus argue that satisfaction influences the expected perception of the costs and
19 benefits of switching and that this perception, in turn, influences loyalty. This reasoning
20 is grounded in the idea of opportunity costs: the higher the satisfaction, the greater the
21 opportunity costs, or loss of satisfaction, when the customer switches (Picón *et al.*,
22 2014).

23
24 Based on these ideas, the following research hypotheses can be proposed regarding the
25 potential influence that purchase satisfaction and satisfaction with an establishment are
26 likely to have on switching costs:
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28

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30 H3. Purchase satisfaction has a positive and significant influence on switching costs.

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32 H4. Establishment satisfaction has a positive and significant influence on switching
33 costs.

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35 H5. Switching costs have a positive and significant influence on loyalty.

36
37 Figure 1 graphically synthesises the proposed relationships between the considered
38 variables.

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Figure 1

METHODOLOGY

To test the model proposed in Figure 1, a questionnaire was designed containing questions aimed at obtaining information about the retail establishment where the respondents had made their purchase, their socio-demographic profile, and the study variables (food values, satisfaction, loyalty, switching costs). The scales used for the food-value variables were adapted from Lusk and Briggeman (2009) and Lusk (2011). Specifically, the questions related to these variables focused on how important respondents considered these values to be on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was the least important and 5 the most. In contrast, to assess satisfaction, switching costs, and loyalty, 5-point Likert scales were used. These items were adapted from Kamran-Disfani *et al.* (2017).

Over the month of April 2017, 708 online questionnaires were collected in the city of Albacete. The questionnaires were distributed amongst shoppers over the age of 18 who lived in the city and had previously made their purchase at a consumer-goods establishment in the city.

Descriptive analysis

A total of 708 valid questionnaires were collected, with regard to which 63.4% of the respondents were women and 36.6% men. A total of 69.5% of the respondents had a monthly income of up to 1,200 euros, followed by 19.8% with a monthly income of up to 1,800 euros. Some 76.7% of the respondents were single or had a partner but no children, whilst 23.3% had children. A total of 52.1% were aged 23 or under, and 29.1% aged 33 or under. With regard to educational attainment, 44.2% had completed basic education, followed by 36.4% with university studies.

As for the retail establishment where the respondents had made their purchase, 68.78% had shopped at a supermarket, whilst 16.80% had shopped at a discount store (i.e. 85.59% of the sample was concentrated in these two types of retail formats).

The items used to test the model had scores above the mean. With regard to the different groups of variables, the scores for the food-value scale were above the mean and even, for many items, above 3.5. Specifically, the food-value scales with the highest mean scores were, in order, 'taste' and 'extent to which food does not cause illnesses'. In contrast, the scales with the lowest mean scores were for the values referring to the 'extent to which all parties involved in the trade equally benefit' and to 'where the agricultural commodities used to make the food were grown'. With regard to the purchase satisfaction variables, the highest mean score was found for the variable 'purchases made at this establishment meet my expectations', whilst the lowest mean score was found for the variable 'I consider the choice of this establishment to make my purchase a good one'. As for establishment satisfaction, the highest mean score was found for the variable 'satisfaction level with the retail establishment' and the lowest for 'compared to other establishments, my satisfaction level is'. As concerns loyalty, the highest mean score was found for the variable, 'I plan to continue shopping at this establishment', and the lowest for 'Whenever possible, I recommend this establishment'. Finally, regarding switching costs, the highest average score was found for the variable 'knowledge of product location' and the lowest for 'special relationship with the employees'. See Table 1.

Table 1

PLS SEM was used to validate the model proposed in Figure 1. The model was estimated using SmartPLS 3.0 software. To establish the significance of the parameters, bootstrapping was performed with 10000 resamples.

To ensure construct reliability and validity, first, the indicator loadings were examined for the reflective constructs. Those items with a loading of less than 0.7 were omitted (Hair *et al.*, 2018). Specifically, the item 'special relationship' was omitted from the switching costs construct, as it had a score of less than 0.55. The 'food values' variable was considered a formative construct. The assessment of this type of construct is based on: (1) convergent validity; (2) collinearity; and (3) the weight of each indicator (Hair *et al.*, 2017). For the measurement of the formative constructs, convergent validity was assessed through the construct's correlation with an alternative measure of the same concept (Hair *et al.*, 2017). With regard to the weights of each indicator, some items had a low score. Unlike reflective indicators, formative indicators are not interchangeable; therefore, omitting a single indicator can reduce the validity of the measurement model's content (Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer, 2001).

The next step was to evaluate construct reliability and validity. The most commonly used criterion is that proposed by Jöreskog (1971), which establishes that values over the 0.7 to 0.9 range are considered good or very good. Other indicators are Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). To determine discriminant validity, the sole criterion offered by PLS was used, which verifies whether the AVE of each factor is greater than the square of the correlation between each pair of factors (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Before the structural model can be validated, it is necessary to test for collinearity. This process must be performed for both formative and reflective constructs. As all the indicators have values lower than 3, it can be concluded that there is no collinearity (Hair *et al.*, 2018; Becker *et al.*, 2013). To evaluate the structural model's predictive power, the criterion proposed by Falk and Miller (1992) was used, namely, the R^2 of each dependent construct must be greater than 0.1.

In particular, the R^2 for each construct is: .490 for Loyalty ($Q^2=.295$), .203 for Purchase Satisfaction ($Q^2=.134$), .141 for Establishment Satisfaction ($Q^2=.064$) and .044 for Switching Costs ($Q^2=.0024$).

The 'switching costs' construct has a value of less than .10. However, this result should be interpreted with caution, since its value depends on the number of the construct's predictors (Hair *et al.*, 2018).

Estimation results

Finally, once all the measurement instrument's psychometric properties had been evaluated, the model proposed in Figure 1 was estimated. The model estimation results are shown in Table 2.

Once the hypotheses had been directly tested in the model, the mediating effect of some of the study variables was analysed. Mediation refers to the presence of an intermediate variable or mechanism that transfers the effect of an antecedent variable on an outcome (Aguinis *et al.*, 2016). This gives rise to the formulation of a mediation hypothesis postulating how, or by what means, an independent variable affects a dependent variable through one or more mediating variables (Cepeda *et al.*, 2018).

Table 2

Most PLS-SEM studies do not consider mediating effects in their hypotheses and, therefore, do not analyse their importance in structural models (Hair *et al.*, 2016). However, there is a substantial body of literature on methods for testing mediating effects (Hayes and Scharkow, 2013). For example, in the present research, there is a type of mediation, namely, simple mediation, that occurs when there is only one mediating variable, i.e. mediation exists when the relationship between the independent and dependent variable changes as a result of the introduction of a mediating variable. This causal effect of an independent variable on the dependent one can be divided into two types of effects (Cepeda *et al.*, 2018):

- Indirect effect (AxB) through a mediator variable (M).
- Direct effect (path C')
- Total effect (direct effect + indirect effect) = $C = C' + (AxB)$

In the present research, to calculate the mediating effects, bootstrapping was performed. To test the indirect effects in PLS, several steps were followed (adapted from Chin, 2010). Specifically, the steps developed in Zhao *et al.* (2010) and Nitzl *et al.* (2016)

were followed. First, the importance of the effect was determined by evaluating the significance of the indirect effects (AxB). To test that significance, bootstrapping was performed with 10,000 resamples. The direct effect values obtained were then multiplied.

Second, the type and magnitude of the indirect effect were determined. To this end, the variance accounted for (VAF) was calculated, which is the ratio of the indirect effect to the total effect (direct effect + indirect effect) (Hair *et al.*, 2016). In other words, VAF determines the extent to which the mediation process explains the variance in the dependent variable (Cepeda *et al.*, 2018). Specifically, it does so as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{VAF} &= (\text{Indirect effect}) / (\text{Total effect}) \\ \text{VAF} &= (\text{Indirect effect}) / (\text{Direct effect} + \text{Indirect effect}) \\ \text{VAF} > 80\% &\rightarrow \text{Full mediation} \\ 20\% \leq \text{VAF} \leq 80\% &\rightarrow \text{Partial mediation} \\ \text{VAF} \leq 20\% &\rightarrow \text{No mediation} \end{aligned}$$

In the present case, switching costs were not found to have any mediating effect on the purchase satisfaction-loyalty relationship, as can be seen in the following formula:

$$(0.065 * 0.345) / ((0.151 + (0.065 * 0.345))) = 12.93\% > \text{No mediating effect}$$

Nor were switching costs found to have any mediating effect on the establishment satisfaction-loyalty relationship:

$$(0.155 * 0.345) / ((0.418 + (0.155 * 0.345))) = 11.34\% > \text{No mediating effect}$$

Thus, the results obtained corroborate the model proposed in Figure 1. Support was found for all the hypotheses except H3 (referring to the purchase satisfaction-switching costs relationship).

Specifically, the data show that the strongest influence is that exerted by food values on purchase satisfaction, followed, in descending order, by the influence of: establishment satisfaction on loyalty; food values on establishment satisfaction; switching costs on loyalty; establishment satisfaction on switching costs; and establishment satisfaction on loyalty. Finally, switching costs were not found to have any mediating effect on the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty.

These results are consistent with the literature in this line of research, as they highlight the importance of offering a product or providing a service that satisfies the customer. This helps generate loyalty, with regard to both products and the services offered at the retail establishment. However, although these conditions are necessary, they are not enough to create true loyalty. Support was not found for the relationship proposed in hypothesis H3 (purchase satisfaction-switching costs), which could lead customers to buy the same product in another establishment. Retailers should pay careful attention to this aspect, making sure to offer products that build customer loyalty through superior quality or exclusive distribution.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

The present research has furthered understanding of the importance of food values in the post-purchase process, allowing a more in-depth exploration of consumer behaviour in the field of food and consumer goods retail. From a conceptual perspective, having

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2
3 considered Lusk (2011) and Lusk and Briggeman (2009) is a major advance, as those
4 papers marked a turning point in the line of research of this paper. Amongst other
5 things, the work of those authors opened the doors to the study of food values, as
6 opposed to attributes, thereby enabling a more detailed analysis from a consumer
7 perspective. It must be recalled that food values are the union of a consumer's values as
8 a human being with what that consumer believes that any food he or she purchases or
9 consumes should have.

10
11 The results also show that food values greatly influence customer satisfaction, with
12 regard to both the purchase and the retail establishment. That is a necessary first step for
13 consumers to consider an establishment as a potential purchasing option. Interestingly,
14 in this research, consumers placed greater importance on purchase satisfaction than
15 establishment satisfaction. This underscores the strategy that retailers are pursuing to
16 build customer loyalty, first, by meeting customers' needs and, second, by trying to
17 ensure that their shelves and sales outlets are stocked with foods that take food values
18 into account (functional foods, superfoods, dietary foods, preservative-free foods, low-
19 calorie foods, etc.). In other words, more and more consumers are increasingly aware of
20 the various values that food can represent and are trying to address aspects related to
21 values such as health and wellness.

22
23 The results of the assessment of the post-purchase process are also worth highlighting.
24 When evaluating the satisfaction-loyalty relationship, consumers placed more
25 importance on the establishment where they made the purchase than on the products
26 they bought there. This finding is consistent with previous research that has shown that
27 a satisfied customer is not always a loyal one.

28
29 In contrast, switching costs were not found to have a mediating effect on the
30 satisfaction-loyalty relationship, that is, only direct effects were detected. Likewise,
31 purchase satisfaction was not found to affect switching costs, which reinforces the idea
32 that loyalty can sometimes be spurious. It would thus be an indicator that, as long as
33 consumers have no other option, they will continue to shop at the establishment. In
34 contrast, establishment satisfaction did generate switching costs. This finding could be
35 due to aspects such as convenience, the development and maintenance of relationships
36 with the employees, knowledge of where products are located in the store, etc.

37
38 Finally, attention should be called to the importance of the relationship between
39 switching costs and loyalty (attitudinal and behavioural), i.e. customers may be
40 dissatisfied with their purchase, yet still satisfied with an establishment, which could
41 entail very high switching costs for them and, therefore, cause them to remain loyal
42 (albeit spuriously) to the establishment. Even the descriptive analysis showed that this
43 was the variable to receive the lowest score, which could suggest that the consumer was
44 shopping at the establishment for convenience. It should be recalled that around 60% of
45 the respondents were shopping at a supermarket and that the structure of this retail
46 format is quite close to their homes, meaning the consumers might shop at multiple
47 establishments.

48
49 These results could be due to the sample profile, since a high percentage of the
50 respondents were consumers under the age of 35. The failure to obtain a sample with a
51 broader age range could be due, amongst other things, to the fact that the survey had to
52 be completed online, and, thus, respondents needed to have an e-mail address. Many
53 consumers over the age of 54 do not have e-mail, do not use it, or are more reluctant to
54 complete online surveys.

55 56 57 58 **REFERENCES**

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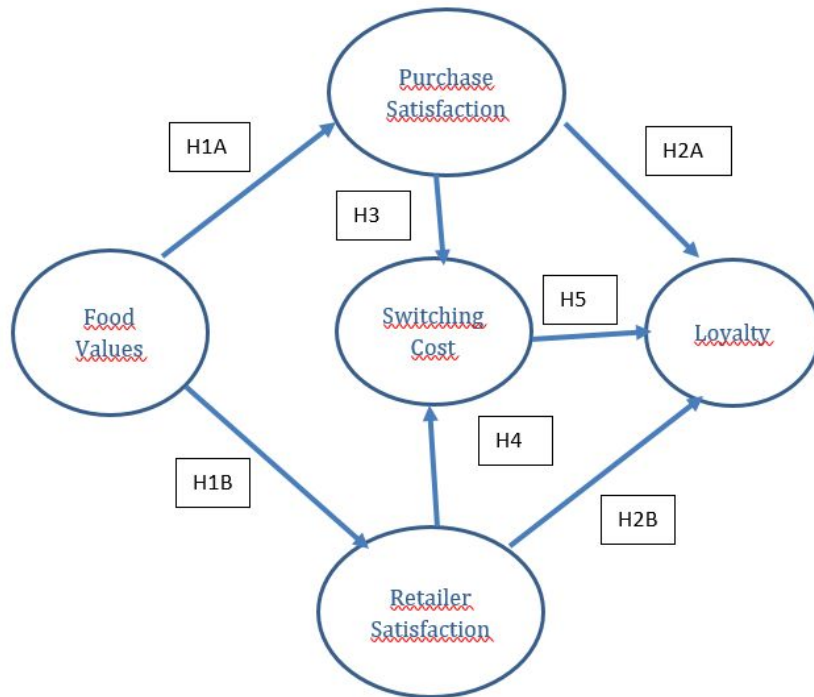
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Figures

Figure 1. Proposed Model



Tables

Table 1. Univariate analysis

	ITEM	Mean	Standard deviation
FOOD VALUES	Food produced without modern technologies	3.5791	1.07074
	Taste of food	4.3771	0.81213
	Price of food	3.8602	0.96557
	Food does not cause illnesses	4.2331	1.04262
	Ease with which food is cooked or consumed	3.6031	0.96434
	Nutritional value of food	3.7246	0.98883
	Preservation of traditional consumption patterns	3.2472	1.08854
	Where the agricultural commodities used to make the food were grown	3.0438	1.16748
	Extent to which all parties involved in the trade equally benefit	2.8771	1.16059
	Extent to which the food seems appealing	3.8545	0.93495
Effect of food production on the environment	3.2246	1.10117	
PUR	Purchases made at this establishment meet my expectations	4.09	0.621

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CHASE S	My experience with the purchases made at this establishment is satisfactory	4.03	0.647
	I consider the choice of this establishment to make my purchase a good one	3.95	0.764
ESTABLISHMENT SATISFACTION	Satisfaction level with my purchases	3.98	0.768
	Satisfaction level with the retail establishment	4.01	0.804
	Compared to other establishments, my satisfaction level is	3.96	0.7
SWITCHING COSTS	Disruption involved in switching to another establishment	2.83	1.211
	Time needed to make the purchase at another establishment	2.93	1.202
	Knowledge of product location	4	0.944
	Special relationship with employees	2.23	1.227
LOYALTY	I do most of my shopping at this establishment	3.77	0.999
	Whenever possible, I recommend this establishment	3.11	1.155
	I always think of this establishment as the best option	3.58	1.037
	I plan to continue shopping at this establishment	3.95	0.874
	I expect my relationship with the establishment to last over time	3.58	1.04

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Table 2. Path coefficients

	β	t-statistic	ρ value
(H1a) Food values-----Purchase satisfaction	.451	12.205	0.000
(H1b) Food values-----Establishment satisfaction	.375	9.976	0.000
(H2a) Purchase satisfaction-----Loyalty	.151	3.569	0.000
(H2b) Establishment Satisfaction-----Loyalty	.418	10.090	0.000
(H3) Purchase satisfaction-----Switching costs	.065	1.115	0.265
(H4) Establishment satisfaction-----Switching costs	.155	2.756	0.000
(H5) Switching costs-----Loyalty	.345	11.999	0.000