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La influencia de los valores de los alimentos en las variables postcompra en los establecimientos de alimentación

RESUMEN

La importancia de los valores de los alimentos en el proceso postcompra no ha sido ampliamente estudiada. La mayoría de las investigaciones previas en esta línea se han centrado o en examinar los atributos de categorías específicas de alimentos, sin tener en cuenta dichos valores, o en las actitudes y el comportamiento de compra de alimentos. Para abordar esta brecha en la investigación, este artículo profundiza en la influencia de los valores de los alimentos en las variables postcompra. Específicamente, analiza la influencia de los valores de los alimentos en la satisfacción (tanto la satisfacción con la compra como la satisfacción con el establecimiento), los costes de cambio y la lealtad. Para ello, se analiza una muestra de 708 consumidores, recopilada a través de cuestionarios en España, utilizando diversas estadísticas descriptivas y modelos causales. Los resultados confirman la influencia de los valores de los alimentos en la satisfacción y que esa satisfacción influye positivamente en la lealtad. Sin embargo, la influencia moderadora de los costes de cambio sobre la relación entre satisfacción y lealtad no fue confirmada.

Palabras clave: Valores de los alimentos, comportamiento del consumidor, satisfacción, lealtad, costes de cambio.

The influence of food values on post–purchase variables at food establishments

ABSTRACT

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

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

JEL classification: M30, M31

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The influence of food values on post-purchase variables at food establishments

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1. INTRODUCTION

The study of the motives conditioning end consumers' food choices is a line of research of great interest in the field of marketing today. Greater knowledge and understanding of these motives would certainly be beneficial for a wide array of decisions, from more successful product development and market introductions by private companies to the planning of more efficient policies and interventions to promote healthier eating habits (Januszewska et al., 2011).

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; Honkanen et al., 2006; 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). Finally, the whole process is influenced by the changes in consumer buying and consumption habits of recent years, as well as a great dynamism and constant changes in the reference environment (Peter and Olson, 2004).

For all of these reasons, determining how consumers assess the values of the foods on offer at different establishments is of great interest. Therefore, retail food establishments must be able to introduce into their offer those products that have the values demanded by the various consumer segments, in order to achieve not only their satisfaction in the short term (Pelissari et al., 2011; Izquierdo-Yusta et al., 2019), but also their loyalty in the long term (Izquierdo-Yusta et al., 2019). In this broad frame of reference, it is helpful to take a more detailed look at the relatively new concept of food values, and more specifically, at how consumers consider them in their food-purchasing and consumption processes (c.f., Lusk and Briggeman, 2009; Lusk, 2011; Martínez-Ruiz and Gómez-Cantó, 2016).

With the previous ideas in mind, this paper aims to examine the impact food values on several key postpurchase variables, in particular: satisfaction (both with the purchase and with the establishment), switching costs and loyalty. In order to achieve this goal, the paper first offers a review of the relevant literature on this line of research to enable the formulation of research hypotheses. Next, it analyses 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 discusses the conclusions and implications for management, as well as the limitations and future lines of research.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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; Sparks et al., 1992), 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.

When the value that a food represents for a consumer (e.g. organic food) is taken into account, the purchase of a food product by a consumer can be understood as a means of achieving a desired end state. This understanding clearly sheds light on why consumers prefer a given product over another with similar characteristics (Lusk and Briggeman, 2009; Lusk, 2011). To this end, it is worth noting that consumers attach different importance to the different food values, i.e. the importance given can vary from one consumer to another depending on each one's specific characteristics (Engel et al., 2005). Thus, to the extent that retailers are able to identify consumer preferences regarding some food values over others, they should try to offer products that respond to these specific demands, in order to provide greater added value to the shopping experience. This is expected to result in greater satisfaction in the short term, as well as higher switching costs and greater loyalty in the long term.

Therefore, retailers need to be able to identify the most important food values for consumers, and to introduce them into their offer, since product assortment has usually been considered a key variable to achieve differentiation and to respond to customers' needs better than competitors do (e.g. Lancaster, 1990; Kotler, 1997; Broniarczyk, Hoyer and McAlister, 1998).

Moreover, some works (e.g., Chernev, 2006) highlight how the relevant literature in this area has traditionally shown that greater choice benefits consumers. This prediction is mainly based on the idea that larger assortments offer a greater variety of choices to consumers; and at the same time, it increases the probability of a perfect match between the preferences of such consumers and the characteristics of the alternatives in the set of options (cf. Lancaster, 1990).

Consumers' purchase decisions are driven by fixed underlying values; therefore, buying a specific product means achieving a desired end state (Gutman, 1982). These fixed values can be very heterogeneous. For example, one consumer might wish to buy organic products because she considers them safer than traditional ones, whilst another might buy them because he believes they are better for the environment. The idea thus lies less in identifying food attributes in order to explain the choices shoppers make amongst various products than in identifying the more abstract attributes, or values, resulting from the end states (Lusk and Briggeman, 2009).

In this line, Lusk and Briggeman (2009) move beyond the mere consideration of traditional food attributes with a view to understanding how consumers assess these generic attributes and their impact on purchase-decision processes (Martínez-Ruiz and Gómez-Cantó, 2016). Lusk and Briggeman (2009) propose a classification of food values based on a thorough review of the literature on human preferences and values. These values are recognised as a key contribution to the fields of marketing and consumer behaviour (Martínez-Ruiz and Gómez-Cantó, 2016).

Rather than estimating consumers' preferences for a given food product or attribute (which they might actually have little experience with or knowledge of), Lusk and Briggeman (2009) identify a stable set of food values with regard to which consumers have better-defined preferences. Therefore, consumers no longer base their choices merely on product attributes, but rather on a set of values that they perceive the product to possess that represent more abstract concepts and which often encompass numerous physical attributes at once. This makes it possible to understand why consumers prefer some food products, or food product values, over others.

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.

In this regard, it is worth considering the distinction proposed by Rokeach (1973) between values that refer to modes of behaviour, called instrumental values, and values referring to end states of existence, called terminal values. Whilst the latter can be defined as the goals towards which a person works and that would be desirable to achieve over the course of one's life, as they are considered more desirable, the former, that is, instrumental values, are the preferred mode of behaviour or means for achieving an end. In other words, instrumental values can be used to achieve the terminal values and generally refer to personal features, such as being honest, polite, or ambitious.

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).

2.1. 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). It is a critical measure of a company's success and has been widely observed to influence attitudes, repeat purchasing behaviour, and word-of-mouth communication processes (Sivadas and Baker-Prewitt, 2000). It is also a predictor of future purchasing behaviour (Kasper, 1988), influences benefits (Anderson et al., 1994), and leads to long-term customer loyalty (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). To this end, Giese and Cote (2000) identify three components of satisfaction:

- consumer satisfaction is a response (emotional or cognitive);
- the response pertains to a particular focus (expectations, product experience, and consumption experience);
- the response occurs at a particular time (after consumption, after choice, and based on accumulated experience).

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

On the other hand, some studies have focused on assessing consumer satisfaction with food purchases based on the retail format (Carpenter and Fairhurst, 2005; Carpenter and Moore, 2006). Food retailers should thus understand these differences in order to create retail formats

and offer products with values that allow them to differentiate themselves from their competitors. This is especially true given that, as a result of the highly heterogeneous nature of consumers' expectations, satisfaction can vary depending on both the values offered by the food purchases and the type of establishment (Huddleston et al., 2009).

Finally, in the post-purchase stage, the consumer evaluates the retailer, considering all products and services offered. As a result of this evaluation, the consumer will decide whether to continue the relationship with the retailer in the future. Specifically, the consumer forms an image of the retailer and determines his or her attitudes, which will lead him or her to a certain future behaviour. Some research has shown that image attributes are one of the most important variables of satisfaction; and that they are sometimes even capable of leading to loyalty without the need for satisfaction (Chang and Tu, 2005; Koo, 2005).

In general, three types of store image attributes (i.e. merchandise attributes, service attributes, and store shopping atmosphere attributes) are consistently used by customers to evaluate the overall retail shopping quality and provide an overall impression of a store. In evaluating merchandise related aspects, cues such as, for example, product quality, selection or assortment, styling or fashion, guarantees, and pricing appear to be salient to customers. Service related aspects of store image include salesclerk service, presence of self-service, ease of merchandise return, and delivery service. Retail store shopping atmosphere is related to the ambient aspects of a retail store like physical facilities, shopping convenience, staff kindness, and pleasantness of shopping (Chang et al. 2001).

Based on these ideas, the following research hypotheses can be proposed regarding the expected influence of food values on both purchase satisfaction and satisfaction with the establishment:

H1. Food values have a positive influence on satisfaction.

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

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

H1b. Food values have a positive and significant influence on satisfaction with the establishment.

Loyalty is also undoubtedly a key variable in consumers' post-purchase processes. Building and maintaining a customer base loyal to a brand and/or retail establishment is likely to

provide multiple benefits from the point of view of retail management. For example, loyal customers are more profitable, since they are not sensitive to variations in product prices and are willing to devote a greater share of their budget to buying a certain brand or shopping at their preferred establishment. Likewise, loyal customers are less likely to seek alternative brands or switch stores, since the switching costs could be higher (East et al., 1995).

In general, customer loyalty is understood as the buyer's overall attachment, or deep commitment, to a product, service, brand, or organisation (Oliver, 1999). The concept of loyalty has a similar meaning to that of relational commitment, which is usually described in the relationship marketing literature as an enduring desire to stay in a valuable relationship (Anderson and Weitz, 1992; Moorman et al., 1992; Morgan and Hunt, 1994).

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

Although customer satisfaction has long been commonly considered a clear antecedent of loyalty, some authors (e.g. Mital and Lassar, 1998) have shown that a satisfied customer is not always a loyal one. These authors base their argument on two possible reasons: (1) a dissatisfied customer may continue to buy the same brand or go to the same store if she cannot find anything better amongst the available alternatives; and (2) a satisfied customer may be willing to purchase new brands or go to a new provider in the hopes of achieving more favourable results. In light of these ideas, the following hypothesis regarding the positive influence that satisfaction is expected to have on loyalty can be formulated:

H2. Satisfaction has a positive and significant influence on loyalty.

However, since satisfaction can refer to both the purchase and the retail establishment where the purchase is made, the foregoing hypothesis can be divided into the following two sub-hypotheses:

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

H2b Satisfaction with the establishment has a positive and significant influence on loyalty.

Finally, the present research also seeks to measure the influence that satisfaction, with both the purchase and the establishment, is likely to have on switching-cost variables.

In the field of marketing, switching barriers generally refer to the difficulties that dissatisfied customers must overcome to switch to another provider or supplier; they may also include the financial, social and psychological burden borne by the customer when he or she switches to another establishment (Fornell, 1992). Therefore, the higher the switching barrier, the more a customer will feel he or she has no choice but to remain loyal to a retail establishment. This switching barrier is made up of the attractiveness of the alternatives, interpersonal relationships, and the switching costs themselves.

Switching costs can be defined as the cost incurred when switching from one retail establishment to another, including time, money, and psychological costs (Dick and Basu, 1994). This definition could also include the perceived risk, insofar as there are also potential losses when switching establishments, including financial, social, psychological, and safety-related losses (Murray, 1991). The scope could even include the loss of loyalty benefits as a result of ending the current relationship. Such a situation could occur, for example, in cases in which a customer considers that purchasing certain specific foods (e.g. specific brands or categories sold exclusively at certain kind of establishments), is a specific asset of the transaction with the supplier; and over time, the customer has developed routines and procedures for dealing with that particular supplier (Heide and Weiss, 1995; Jap and Ganesan, 2000). Both the investment made and the familiarity with the procedures are types of switching costs insofar as they would be rendered useless should the customer decide to end the relationship. In conceptual terms, switching costs may also reflect a buyer's dependence on a supplier, as reflected in the buyer's need to maintain his or her relationship with the supplier to achieve the desired goals (Frazier, 1983).

Therefore, according to these theories, food values could constitute a specific asset capable of creating stable long-term relationships with consumers, thus influencing the switching costs. In other words, consumers who find the food values they are looking for in a certain establishment may experience higher switching costs when considering other establishment alternatives.

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

Satisfied customers are generally understood to have less motivation to seek and evaluate other alternatives (Liu, 2006). This is consistent with the work of authors such as Pick and Eisend (2014), who argue that the perceived quality of a relationship and a company's offer are positively related to switching costs. Additionally, Oliver (1999) suggests that satisfaction is a necessary step in the loyalty-building process, but that it becomes less significant when other mechanisms (e.g. social or personal ties) are influencing that loyalty. All these factors create switching costs that increase customer retention. In the same line, Matzler et al. (2015) find a positive relationship between satisfaction and switching costs, establishing that switching costs have a mediating effect on the satisfaction-loyalty relationship. Furthermore, customer satisfaction enables greater identification with the brand and the supplier, which increases the switching costs. If expectations are met, the costs associated with learning about, evaluating, and creating a new relationship with a new supplier may be perceived as outweighing the potential benefits of making the switch (Matzler et al., 2015).

This mediating effect is also analysed by De Matos et al. (2009), who conclude that different types of relationships (direct, partially mediated, totally mediated, and moderated) can be established between satisfaction, switching costs, and loyalty and that switching costs can thus act differently depending on the context within the satisfaction-loyalty relationship (i.e. depending on whether they have, for example, a mediating effect on the satisfaction-loyalty

relationship). Additionally, Picón et al. (2014) corroborate that switching costs play a mediating role within this relationship and thus argue that satisfaction influences the expected perception of the costs and benefits of switching and that this perception, in turn, influences loyalty. This reasoning is grounded in the idea of opportunity costs: the higher the satisfaction, the greater the opportunity costs, or loss of satisfaction, when the customer switches (Picón et al., 2014).

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

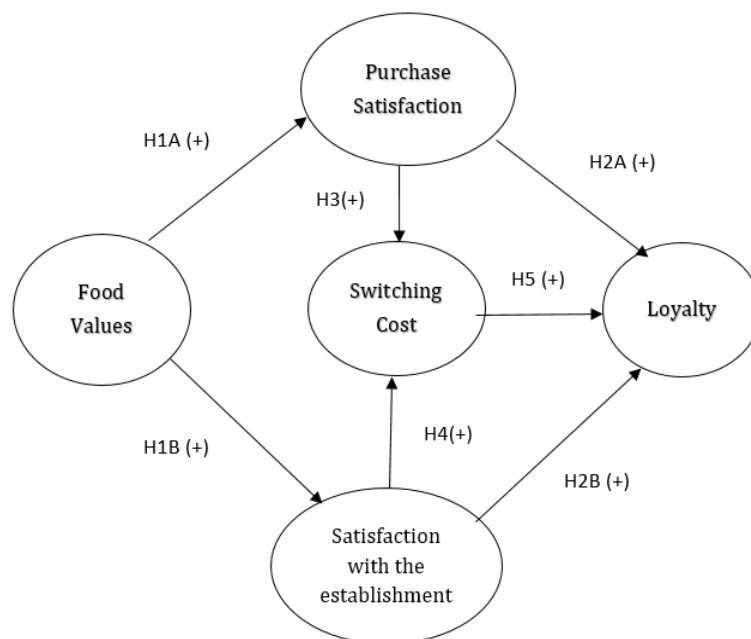
H3. Purchase satisfaction has a positive and significant influence on switching costs.

H4. Satisfaction with the establishment has a positive and significant influence on switching costs.

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

Figure 1 graphically synthesises the proposed relationships between the considered variables.

Figure 1. Proposed model



3. 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 scales were used.

Table 1. Technical details of the research

Universe	consumers living in the city of albacete (spain) over the age of 18 (131,288)
Sample unit	consumer living in the city of albacete over the age of 18
Geographical scope	albacete (capital)
Data collection method	online survey
Place where the survey was conducted	food establishments in the selected metropolitan area

Over the month of April 2017, 708 online questionnaires were collected in the city of Albacete (Spain). 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.

3.1. 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 analysis (Anex 1) shows that all the food values had scores above the mean (2.5), with ‘taste of food’ (4.3) and ‘food does not cause illnesses’ (4.2) receiving the highest scores. The items assessing satisfaction with both the purchase and the establishment had scores of around 4. Almost all items assessing loyalty had scores of over 3.5., with the exception of “Whenever possible, I recommend this establishment” (score of 3.11). In contrast, all but one of the items assessing switching costs had scores of less than 3, the exception being ‘knowledge of product location’, which received a 4.

3.2. Resultados

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 10,000 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) (See Anex1). 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 next step was to evaluate construct reliability and validity (see Table 2).

Table 2. Construct reliability and validity

	CRONBACH'S ALPHA	COMPOSITE RELIABILITY	AVE
Food Values			
Loyalty	.89	.899	.642
Purchase satisfaction	.812	.899	.728
Satisfaction with the establishment	.801	.884	.718
Switching costs	.700	.834	.629

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). The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Discriminant validity

	Food values	Loyalty	Purchase satisfaction	Satisfaction with the establishment	Switching costs
Food values					
Loyalty	.260	.801			
Purchase satisfaction	.451	.5235	.853		
Satisfaction with the establishment	.375	.605	.766	.847	
Switching costs	.109	.459	.184	.205	.793

To evaluate the structural model’s predictive power, the criterion proposed by Falk and Miller (1992) was used, namely, the R2 of each dependent construct must be greater than 0.1. The ‘switching costs’ construct has a value of less than .10. 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 4.

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 4. Path coefficients

	β	t-statistic	p value	
(H1a) Food values-----Purchase satisfaction	.451	12.205	0.000	ACCEPTED
(H1b) Food values----- Satisfaction with the Establishment	.375	9.976	0.000	ACCEPTED
(H2a) Purchase satisfaction-----Loyalty	.151	3.569	0.000	ACCEPTED
(H2b) Satisfaction with the establishment----- Loyalty	.418	10.090	0.000	ACCEPTED
(H3) Purchase satisfaction-----Switching costs	.065	1.115	0.265	NO ACCEPTED
(H4) Satisfaction with the establishment ----- Switching costs	.155	2.756	0.000	ACCEPTED
(H5) Switching costs-----Loyalty	.345	11.999	0.000	ACCEPTED
R2 Loyaty = 0.044; R2 Purchase Satisfaction = 0.203 ; R2 Satisfaction with the Establishment= 0.141; R2 Switching Cost = .044				
Q2 Loyalty = .295; Q2 Purchase Satisfaction = .134; Q2 Satisfaction with the Establishment = .064; Q2 Switching Cost = .0024				

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). 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 satisfaction with the establishment-loyalty relationship:

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

The results obtained corroborate the model proposed in Figure 1, with the exception of hypothesis H3. 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 satisfaction with the establishment, 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'.

With regard to the proposed causal model, 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: satisfaction with the establishment on loyalty; food values on satisfaction with the establishment; switching costs on loyalty;

satisfaction with the establishment on switching costs; and satisfaction with the establishment 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.

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

The results also show that food values greatly influence customer satisfaction, with regard to both the purchase and the retail establishment. That is a necessary first step for consumers to consider an establishment as a potential purchasing option. Interestingly, in this research, consumers placed greater importance on purchase satisfaction than satisfaction with the establishment. This underscores the strategy that retailers are pursuing to build customer loyalty, first, by meeting customers' needs and, second, by trying to ensure that their shelves and sales outlets are stocked with foods that take food values into account (for example, functional foods, superfoods, dietary foods, preservative-free foods, low-calorie foods, etc.).

In other words, more and more consumers are increasingly aware of the various values that food can represent and are trying to address aspects related to values such as, for example, health and wellness.

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

In contrast, switching costs were not found to have a mediating effect on the satisfaction-loyalty relationship, that is, only direct effects were detected. Likewise, 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, satisfaction with the establishment 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.

Finally, attention should be called to the importance of the relationship between switching costs and loyalty (attitudinal and behavioural), i.e. 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. Even the descriptive analysis showed that this was the variable to receive the lowest score, which could suggest that the consumer was shopping at the establishment for convenience. It should be recalled that around 60% of the respondents were shopping at a supermarket and that the structure of this retail format is quite close to their homes, meaning the consumers might shop at multiple establishments.

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

Some interesting theoretical contributions can be obtained from this research. First, unlike some previous studies focused on restaurants (e.g., Izquierdo-Yusta et al., 2019; Pérez-

Villarreal, Martínez-Ruiz and Izquierdo-Yusta, 2019), this research focuses on food establishments. Secondly, the number and type of variables studied is also different from previous work in this line of research. For example, while studies such as that of Izquierdo-Yusta et al. (2019) analyse the existence of various groups of consumers based on their assessments of food values, examining inter-group differences in terms of consumption habits and two post-purchase variables (satisfaction and confidence), this work investigates the impact of food values on satisfaction (both with the purchase and with the establishment), loyalty and switching costs. The variables analysed in this paper also differ from those considered in other previous works, such as those considered in Pérez-Villareal et al. (2019), that studied the effect of food values on other pre-purchase variables, such as attitudes and purchase intentions.

Although the potential direct relationship between food values and loyalty has not been proposed in this research, it could be an interesting future line of investigation. Based on the proven influence of food values on satisfaction, it would be interesting to try to verify in the future the possible direct influence of food values on loyalty.

In relation to the construct of food values, it is important to highlight how in this research, traditional values such as taste, price and safety are more important than social values. This result, which is consistent with Lusk (2011), might suggest that it would be interesting to work with two different dimensions: one related to traditional food values, and the other, more related to social values. Proposing this as a line of future research would help to obtain a more precise knowledge of how each dimension influences satisfaction.

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ANEXO 1

	ITEM	Mean	Standard deviation	Loading/Weight	Scale / Reference
FOOD VALUES	Food produced without modern technologies	3.57	1.07	0.089	Less Important/Most Important Lusk, J. L. (2011); Lusk and Briggeman (2009)
	Taste of food	4.37	0.81	0.474	
	Price of food	3.86	0.96	0.086	
	Food does not cause illnesses	4.23	1.04	0.295	
	Ease with which food is cooked or consumed	3.60	0.96	0.190	
	Nutritional value of food	3.72	0.98	0.115	
	Preservation of traditional consumption patterns	3.24	1.08	-0.039	
	Where the agricultural commodities used to make the food were grown	3.04	1.16	0.189	
	Extent to which all parties involved in the trade equally benefit	2.87	1.16	-0.066	
	Extent to which the food seems appealing	3.85	0.93	0.326	
	Effect of food production on the environment	3.22	1.10	0.039	
PURCHASE SATISFACTION	Purchases made at this establishment meet my expectations	4.09	0.62	0.873	Likert (1-5)
	My experience with the purchases made at this establishment is satisfactory	4.03	0.64	0.880	
	I consider the choice of this establishment to make my purchase a good one	3.95	0.76	0.805	
SATISFACTION WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT	Satisfaction level with my purchases	3.98	0.76	0.885	Likert (1-5)
	Satisfaction level with the retail establishment	4.01	0.80	0.867	
	Compared to other establishments, my satisfaction level is	3.96	0.7	0.786	
SWITCHING COSTS	Disruption involved in switching to another establishment	2.83	1.21	0.872	Likert (1-5) Bell et al. (2005). De Matos, et al. 2009) Picón et al. (2014)
	Time needed to make the purchase at another establishment	2.93	1.20	0.832	
	Knowledge of product location	4	0.94	0.66	
	Special relationship with employees	2.23	1.22	ELIMINATED	
LOYALTY	I do most of my shopping at this establishment	3.77	0.99	0.752	Likert (1-5)
	Whenever possible, I recommend this establishment	3.11	1.15	0.747	
	I always think of this establishment as the best option	3.58	1.037	0.850	
	I plan to continue shopping at this establishment	3.95	0.87	0.827	
	I expect my relationship with the establishment to last over time	3.58	1.04	0.827	