



Research article

# A Relational Study of Communication, Reputation and Cooperation on Relationship Satisfaction in the Context of Apparel Sector in Bangladesh

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## Abstract:

This paper examines the importance of a set of underlying variables such as communication, reputation and cooperation of suppliers to the relationship satisfaction of the apparel sector. This study proposes a conceptual model including supplier and dealers' reputation, communication, cooperation and relationship satisfaction and examined the relationship among variables through correlation and regression analyses. The study has been conducted on 192 suppliers and information were collected through questionnaire survey. A stepwise regression analysis model was run to scrutinize the impact of communication, reputation and cooperation of suppliers to the relationship satisfaction on the garment industries. The model that best fits the data showed that supplier's cooperation improves the relationship satisfaction in the context of apparel sector in Bangladesh.

**Keywords:** Communication, Reputation, Cooperation, Relationship Satisfaction, Suppliers, Apparel sector.

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## **1.0 Introduction:**

The apparel sector in Bangladesh has provided a huge contribution to the overall economy of Bangladesh, with a view to promote and supply garments based raw materials (yarns, tags, labels, and buttons). The sector mainly emphasizes on supplying and producing garment based raw materials and finished goods through strong distribution channels. Currently a number of reputed garment accessories suppliers are heavily engaged in supplying raw materials to more than hundreds of garment industries by establishing legal contracts. Besides that, the apparel manufacturers and suppliers in this particular sector are also practicing extensive promotional activities to increase the overall profit margin. Several renowned suppliers are supplying garments based accessories which promise a huge competition in this sector. So there is an emergence of studying the related factors of communication, reputation, cooperation and their effect on relationship satisfaction.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem:**

There are many companies that are operating to serve the garments industries in our country. As a result a huge competition is over there. Because of communication, reputation, and cooperation, customers always prefers to develop a sound relationship to their business channels. Sometimes communication, reputation, cooperation can significantly effect relationship satisfaction. So failure to maintain communication, reputation, cooperation may result negative impact on relationship satisfaction. The proposal intends to investigate the impact of communication, reputation, cooperation on relationship satisfaction with in the context of Privatized Apparel Sector, Bangladesh.

### **1.2 Purpose of the Study:**

The purpose of the study was to present the relationship between communication, reputation, and cooperation with relationship satisfaction in the context of Apparel Sector, Bangladesh.

### **1.3 Limitations of the study:**

The study has several limited factors. Firstly, the study was limited only in one supply based organizations. Secondly, sample size was small to represent the full scenario. Thirdly time constraint led to get narrower outcomes.

## **2.0 Literature Review:**

### **2.1: Definition of Communication:**

The heart of any relationship is communication and dealings between at least two parties who are in contact with each other. That is communication coordinates individual and organizations together. It is People but not trading agreements that can communicate efficiently with each other in an exchange of values by this communicating process. Mohr and Nevin (1990), for example, dispute that the function of channel communication as a moderator linking structural/behavioral state and channel outcomes (e.g. satisfaction and promise levels) has been largely overlooked by researchers. The structure of the data frameworks and the functionality of the information technology are of course essential for the victory of supply chain association (e.g. Korhonen et al., 1998; Croom, 2001). However the attention here is on the behavioral parts of the relationships.

The relationship is some measure of the communication between partners depends on the frequency, duration and content of the contract between the partners involved. In the partnership relationship has higher frequency and more bidirectional flows, familiar modes, and not direct content in communication than in a transactional relationship suggested by Mohr and Nevin (1990). In the absent of trust or commitment informational significance factors are influence strategies of the target populations. That will lead incorrectly perceive or distort the message. To make



each party more confident in the relationship and more willing to keep alive, intensive communication should lead to better informed partners. However House and Stank (2001) argued that periodic lapses in communication may encourage partners to dissociate themselves for the partnership relationship. That why, communication is an important prerequisite for developing high trust relationship. And a good communication could be turned into high satisfaction relationship. Anderson and Weitz (1989); Ganesan (1994) showed that satisfaction relationship and communication has a significant relation.

### **2.2 Definition of Reputation:**

Generally reputation defined as the overall quality or character as seen or judged by mass people. Supplier reputation has often been expressed as the extent to which companies and people in the industry believe a supplier is honest and pays close attention to its customers (Ganesan, 1994; Doney and Cannon, 1997). In other words, dealers believe supplier trustworthiness and expected satisfaction throughout the words and action of other people and organizations. According to Dasgupta (1988) and Storbacka et al. (1994) one of the most powerful tool for creating and retaining customers is the reputation. It can either give a boost of an organization and customer satisfaction relationships or can damage it. A dynamic reputation is easily transferable across affirms and enhances the credibility of the vendor (Ganesan, 1994). Channels members trust in a manufacturer is positively related to the reputation of the manufacturer (Weitz et al, 1988).The poor reputation of the supplier will dissatisfy the channels members.

### **2.3: Definition of Cooperation:**

In today's increasing competition, the larger organizations are becoming more dependent on suppliers. The consequence of developing relationships with suppliers for an organization is more beneficial. It is important to address varying definitions of cooperation and supplier development to discern different viewpoints.

Cooperation is state as a "status or form depicted by part's ability to organize their exercises with an end goal to help all channel individuals accomplish super ordinate objectives" (Stern and Gorman, 1969, p. 156). Fundamentally, participation is encouraged in those channels whose individuals offer comparative objectives. However a fewer studies has investigated the idea of cooperation (Barratt and Oliveira, 2001) and logistic organizations (House and Stank, 2001). According to Anderson and Narus, (1984) most studies that have directly confronted is issue is cooperation have viewed the phenomenon as either a form of satisfaction or the form of conflict (Gottorna, 1987)

According to (Aitken *et al.*, 2003; and Chopra and Meindl, 2007) contingency theory, depending on their exacting circumstances and environment, supply chains require to be customized to speak to the challenges include in effectively and efficiently matching supply and demand. Upon this idea, to grow companies more elasticity and place a higher importance on a long-term supplier relationship formation is need for cooperative relationships.

Cooperative relationships are apparent by the incentivizing of one partner to invest resources or increase the profitability of another partner in the supply chain. The majority of these partnerships provide more benefit to the downstream partner of the supply chain, who wields greater bargaining power (Munson, 1999). In the simplest of cases, cooperation refers to long-term contractual relationships, such as outsourcing or subcontracting (Ketchen, et al., 2006). However, as these relationships have evolved over time, certain cooperative partnerships have pushed the envelope to incentivize their partners to increase their profitability.

For each firm to maintain or improve the outcomes a cooperative activities are primary important. Relation satisfaction positively correlated with the direct member's level of self-rule and supposed cooperativeness of the firms and expected rewards (Dwyer, 1980). Developing trust and also for higher satisfaction effective cooperation are need (Zineldin and Jonsson, 2000)



#### ***2.4 Definition of relationship satisfaction:***

The capability of an institute to develop and enhance long time customer relationships and to satisfy existing customers should be central in a supplier-dealer working relationship. Understanding and satisfying customer's wishes and reputation are most likely the key factors in increasing and retaining loyal customers. If the customers are pleased, they will continue using the same supplier in the future. Customer satisfaction is formed through a grouping of responsiveness to the customer's views and wishes, and continuous enhancement of products or services, as well as continuous development of the on the whole customer relationship. According to Frazier (1983) a high satisfaction level will have affirmative consequences for the relationship. According to Lijander and Strandvik (1994), Satisfaction defines to an insider viewpoint, the customer's personal experience of a service where the result has been evaluated in terms of customary value. Satisfaction is an affecting response to the difference between what customers wait for and what they ultimately receive. Relationship satisfaction may be define as customer's cognitive and touching evaluation based on individual experience across all services. Satisfaction between members of the channel can be defined as a helpful affective status resulting from the assessment of all aspects of the relationship of one firm with another in the channel (Anderson an Narus, 1984). They also point out that satisfaction is an effective valuation and can be compared to a purpose or rational assessment of the results. Satisfaction is one channel member's general approval of the relationships in the channel according to the above affirmation (Gaski and Nevin, 1985). A satisfied customer could be the buy of extra products or services. A satisfied customer concern about the less cost sensitivity, favorable remark about the company and its products or services, fewer attentions paid to opposing brands and advertising and long term loyalty. If a customer is loyal is most effective to service them than new customer due to regular transactions.

So the central strategy of an organization should be to build up and enhance long term customer relationships and to keep happy existing customer. The positive impact of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty, preservation and profitability has been discussed in several studies (Liljander and Strandvik, 1994; Gronoroos, 2000; Zineldin, 2000). In other word companies should search for to create committed customers, otherwise they shift to the other companies which make satisfactory offers.

#### ***2.5 Relationship between communication and relationship satisfaction:***

Intensive communication should guide to better informed partners, which in turn should build each party more confident in the relationship and more willing to maintain it alive. The net consequences will be an expanded level of satisfaction. House and Stank (2001) reported that intermittent lapses in communication may persuade participants to dissociate themselves from the accountability for partnership relationship objectives and follow their own agendas instead. The occurrence, period and content of communicate between the followers involved in a relationship are some evaluate of the communication. Mohr and Nevin (1990) proposed that communication is an association relationship has higher occurrence and more bidirectional streams, informal modes, and indirect content, than in a value-based relationship. The frequency and quality of information exchange (contents) are important factors in determining the extent to which the parties understand each other's goals and organize their efforts to achieve those goals and reach a satisfactory relationship. Consequently, communication should be a precondition for developing high belief relationships, which could be turned into high satisfaction relationship. Studies have revealed that there is a significant relationship between satisfaction, relationship profit, and communication (Anderson and Weitz, 1989; Ganesan, 1994).

#### ***2.6 Relationship between reputation and relationship satisfaction:***

A favorable reputation is effortlessly transferable across firms and updates the credibility of vendor (Ganesan, 1994). As noted by Anderson and Weitz (1989), Channel members trust in a manufacturer is positively related to



the reputation of the manufacturer. Channel members are disappointed if the reputation of a supplier is seen as poor. There is experiential evidence that supports the connection between supplier reputation/trust and buyer satisfaction. Reputation is most presumably a standout amongst the most effective components in making and retaining customers (Dasgupta, 1998; Storbacka et al., 1994). It can either harm an organizations image and customers relationships, or give it in a help in a business section. The last circumstance can prompt more grounded and additionally restricting customer relationships. In this way we can expect a positive connection between's supplier reputation and the satisfaction of the purchasing firm (Doney and Cannon, 1997).

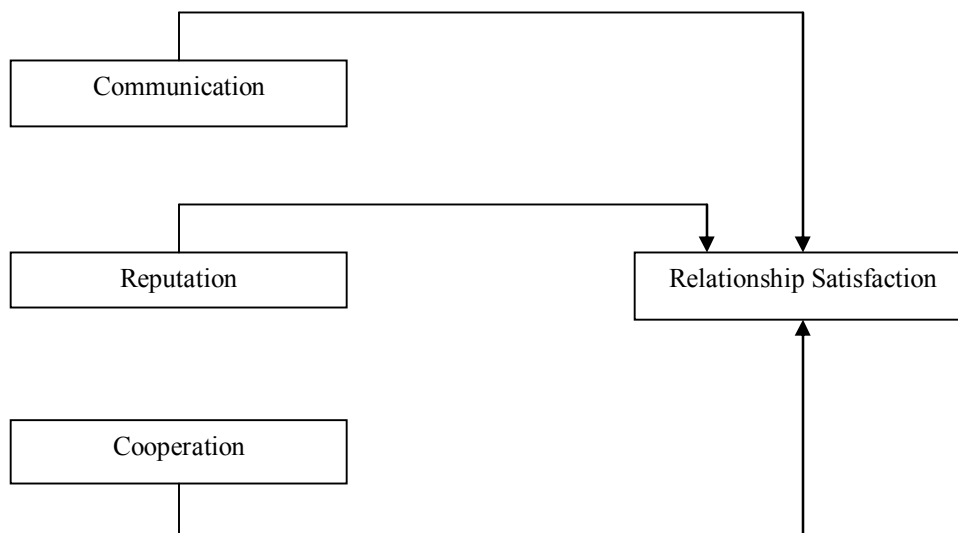
### **2.7 Relationship between cooperation and relationship satisfaction:**

Dwyer (1980) found satisfaction to be positively correlated the channel members' level of self-rule and the perceived cooperativeness of the firms and expected prizes. Effective cooperative actions are vital as well as important. Useful cooperative activities may often lead to higher relationship satisfaction (Jonsson & Zineldin, 2003). Most studies that have straight confronted the issue of cooperation have viewed the event as either a form of satisfaction (Anderson & Narus, 1984), or the opposite of conflict (Gattorna, 1978). Neither clash nor collaboration can be utilized in isolation to describe the dominant sentiments of supplier dealer relationships.

### **3.1 Research Hypotheses:**

- i. There is a significant relationship between communication and relationship satisfaction in the context of Apparel Sector, Bangladesh.
- ii. There is a significant relationship between reputation and relationship satisfaction in the context of Apparel Sector, Bangladesh.
- iii. There is a significant relationship between cooperation and relationship satisfaction in the context of Apparel Sector, Bangladesh.

### **3.2 Conceptual Framework:**



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework of Research Variable and their Relationships.



#### **4.0 Research design:**

In the (Figure1) graphical representation of the proposed framework showed the pattern and structure of relationships among the set of measured variables. The purpose of the study was to measure correlations among variables.

This research intended to investigate the relationships of communication, reputation and cooperation with relationship satisfaction in the context of Apparel Sector, Bangladesh. Here, communication, reputation and cooperation are being considered as the independent variables and relationship satisfaction is being considered as dependent variable. This paper used a correlational study to establish the existence of relationships between the measured variables. In this study, the researcher only wanted to reveal whether any relationships exist between these measured variables or not. To measure the degree of strength and direction of relationship between two or more variables correlational study was used. Therefore, the present study was characterized as a correlational study.

#### **4.1 Sampling method:**

In this paper the researcher collected information from 192 suppliers delivering raw materials (i.e. Tags, labels, buttons, & yarns) to the prominent apparel/RMG manufacturers in Bangladesh. The researcher followed the Non-probability convenient sampling technique to carry out this research study.

#### **4.2 Survey instrument:**

The researcher used structured questionnaire in this research to collect data. The questionnaire survey is the most useful technique for this study to collect data because of the following reasons. Respondent's anonymity can be maintained. The researcher has conducted the study on 192 suppliers. It will not be potential to conduct personal interview because of time constraint. Therefore, questionnaire survey will be the most suitable one for this study.

The questionnaires formed by 2 sections. According to Anderson et al. (1987) Communication was being calculated by using 4 items (Section 1, Question 1-4) and the reported reliability of this variable was 0.86. Reputation was being considered by using 3 items 5-7 (Section 1, Question 5-7), formed by Zineldin & Jonsson (2003) and the reported reliability of this variable was 0.83. Cooperation was being composed by using 3 scales (Section-1, Question 8-10), developed by Childers and Ruekert (1982) and addressed the reliability of this variable was 0.80.

The final part of the questionnaire takes the dependent variable, relationship satisfaction. Three attributes consequential from scale addressed by Zineldin & Jonsson (2003) were used to sustain the construct. The reliability of this variable was 0.83. Since the mechanism was measuring respondents attitudes towards relationship satisfaction, a 5 point Likert scale was used to conclude how strongly respondents agree or disagree with every item (1= strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree) (Zikmund, 1997).

#### **4.3 Data Collection:**

Due to lack of journals and publications on garment accessories supplier, it was necessary to analyze primary data to examine the research questions. To collect data's from the primary sources researcher used a set of structured questionnaire.

#### **4.4 Data analysis:**

The proposed study was a correlational study. As a result, after collecting the data the researcher used Spearman correlation to identify whether relationships exist between the measured variables or not. Next to it the researcher calculated the mean and standard deviation of the variables to identify the variable having most influence on



relationship satisfaction. For this research SPSS version 22 was being used as the statistical data examination instrument as it offers better flexibility in data analysis and visualization.

## 5.0 Results and Discussion:

### 5.1 Descriptive Statistics and Reliability:

The means, standard deviation and reliability, of all the constructs of the present study are showed in Table 1. For different constructs the coefficient alphas were computed using the reliability procedure in SPSS (version 22.0). The tools used in basic research should have reliability of .70 or above suggested by Nunnally (1978). The reliabilities of all the constructs found to be above the minimum standard set by Nunnally (1978).

**Table 1**  
**Descriptive statistics and Reliability Coefficient of Communication, Reputation, Cooperation and Relationship satisfaction**

Scale	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation
Communication	4	0.75	4.34	0.55
Reputation	3	0.75	4.23	0.65
Cooperation	3	0.82	4.09	0.80
Relationship satisfaction	3	0.78	4.12	0.70

Note: n=192

Mean scores have been computed by in the same way weighting the mean scores for all the items. On a five-point scale, the mean score for communication 4.34 ( $sd = .55$ ). The mean score for reputation is 4.23 ( $sd = .65$ ). The mean score for cooperation is 4.09 ( $sd = .80$ ). The mean score for relationship satisfaction is 4.12 ( $sd = 0.70$ ). It suggests that the relationship satisfaction in this industry is also high.

### 5.2 Correlation analysis:

The correlation analysis was studied on all variables to discover the relationship between variables. The bivariate correlation process was subject to a two tailed of statistical significance at two dissimilar levels highly significant ( $p < .01$ ) and significant ( $p < .05$ ).

**Table 2**  
**Correlation Matrix for Communication, Reputation, Cooperation and Relationship satisfaction**

	Communication	Reputation	Cooperation	Relationship Satisfaction
Communication	———	.23*	.18	.23*
Reputation		———	.63**	.52**
Cooperation			———	.75**
Relationship Satisfaction				———

**Note:** \*\* $p < .01$ . \* $p < .05$

In Table 2, Correlation analysis for all the variables is shown. It examines the correlation among Communication, Reputation, Cooperation and Relationship satisfaction. The variables significantly and positively correlated with Relationship Satisfaction were Communication ( $r = .23$ ,  $p < .05$ ), Reputation ( $r = .52$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and cooperation ( $r = .75$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The correlation analysis provides full support to research hypothesis.



**5.3 Stepwise Regression Analysis:**

Stepwise regression analysis was directed to assess the relationship between variables. Cohen and Cohen (1975) advised that, when an examiner has an extensive pool of potential free variables and almost no hypothesis to guide choice among them, he might be profited by utilizing stepwise relapse. The creators noticed that in the utilization of stepwise relapse examination likely the most significant issue emerges when a moderately substantial number of autonomous variables are utilized. as the significant test of an independent variable’s contribution to R<sup>2</sup> proceed in unawareness of the huge number of other such tests being performed at the similar time for the other challenging independent variables, there can a be very severe capitalization by chance. However, the authors recommended that if the researcher has preferred both dependent and independent variable based on stranded theory, and the main independent variables (before stepwise selection) is not too large, stepwise regression will effort as an practical instrument in testing hypothesis at this case. The chosen variables for this study are based on well-built grounded theories

**Table 3**  
**Stepwise Regression on Relationship satisfaction**

Variable	B	SEB	β	R <sup>2</sup>
Step 1				.562
Cooperation	.654	.061	.750***	

\*\*\*p<.001

Table 3 depicts that in apparel sector Cooperation (p <.001), was create to be statistically significantly related with Relationship satisfaction. Communication and Reputation failed to enter into the regression equation, which indicates the declared variables were not that significantly connected with Relationship satisfaction. These results provided a partial support for hypothesis. Cooperation explained about 56.2% of the variance in Relationship satisfaction.

**6.0 Discussion:**

The proposed hypothesis development and tested in this study represent an initial attempt to explain the impact of communication, reputation and cooperation on the level of relationship satisfaction. Based on a theoretical review, this study argues that the characteristics of these three variables (i.e. communication, reputation and cooperation) are crucial to a greater extent in assuring high relationship satisfaction. However from the study it was found that cooperation has a substantial and significant influence on the relationship satisfaction in the context of apparel sector in Bangladesh. Therefore, the suppliers in Bangladesh should develop a reasonable cooperative relationship satisfaction among the apparel industries to increase their profitability. Apparel suppliers may use cooperation as an effective tool to evaluate the business potentiality and relationship satisfaction. According to the findings, suppliers’ cooperation seems to be a very important factor for increasing relationship satisfaction. So, if the suppliers increase their cooperation, through effective market strategies, then the number of satisfied Garment manufacturers will increase which in turn will motivate new Garment manufacturers to sign up.

But in order to understand the full impact on the relationship satisfaction, the effect of communication and supplier reputation should also be increased. According to Anderson and Narus (1984), a good reputation and cooperation are identified as key success factors for partnership relationship. In addition relationship satisfaction is always





considered important in a competitive business context (Jonsson & Zineldin, 2003). However communication is an important factor for generating high level of relationship satisfaction. It has positive impact on relationship satisfaction of the partners. We expected Communication and reputation to have some significant effect on the relationship satisfaction, however, the study was unable to reveal its impact on relationship satisfaction. Although communication and reputation are not significantly related to the relationship satisfaction but a major determinant of future business opportunity is the extent to which supplier are satisfied the partners. The findings provide insights into the direction such an effort might take an example being that suppliers should emphasize these aspects of relationship satisfaction especially the cooperation for their better benefit.

## 7.0 Conclusion:

So researcher can conclude that relationship between suppliers' cooperation and relationship satisfaction in the context of Apparel sector in Bangladesh is significantly important. Apart from relationships consisting of competition or cooperation, a firm can live in symbiosis by coexisting with other relationships, or being involved in a relationship simultaneously containing elements of both cooperation and competition. Consequently, a successful supplier needs to focus on relationship management in order to achieve relationship satisfaction to other horizontal firms. In the long run, we can say that the above relationship provides important insight to the buyer seller relationship in terms of Apparel Garments Industry in Bangladesh.

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