

Brand social orientation and its relationship with customer engagement behaviors. A case study

Orientación social de marca y su relación con comportamientos de *engagement* en clientes. Un estudio de caso

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The aim of the article was to analyze the relationship between brand social orientation and customer loyalty and recommendation engagement behaviors. **Methodology:** A case study was carried out, based on a mixed research method. As information gathering techniques, a documentary analysis of two official communication channels of the studied entity was carried out to identify if social orientation was a characteristic factor of its brand identity. Subsequently, through a survey, the recognition of customers about the attributes and values that this brand stands out, which were identified in the previous analysis, was investigated. Finally, we proceeded with this technique to determine if the brand's social orientation was related to engagement loyalty, and recommendation behaviors. **Results:** It is identified that the brand highlights its social orientation as a fundamental feature of its identity, an aspect that is recognized by 60% of the participants. In turn, it is evident that the respondents who considered this social orientation relevant to configure themselves as clients are more willing to maintain a commercial relationship with the entity and recommend it. **Discussion and Conclusions:** Through the chi-square test, it was possible to corroborate that there is a dependency between the brand social orientation variable and customer engagement. Therefore, generating value from this aspect would exert an effect on the encouragement of engagement in consumers/users from the notion of reciprocity.

Keywords: Brand identity; Engagement; Customer engagement; Brand engagement; Responsible consumption; Brand with purpose; Brand social orientation.

RESUMEN

Introducción: el objetivo del artículo fue analizar la relación entre la orientación social de marca y los comportamientos de *engagement* lealtad y recomendación en clientes. **Metodología:** se realizó un estudio de caso, a partir de un método mixto de investigación. Como técnicas de recolección de información, se llevó a cabo, en primer lugar, un análisis documental de dos canales de comunicación oficiales de la entidad estudiada, con la intención de identificar si la orientación social era un factor característico de su identidad de marca. Posteriormente, por medio de una encuesta se indagó el reconocimiento que tienen los clientes de los atributos y valores de la marca, los cuales fueron identificados en el análisis previo. Finalmente, se procedió con esta misma técnica a determinar si la orientación social de marca tenía relación con los comportamientos de *engagement* lealtad y recomendación. **Resultados:** se identifica que la marca destaca su orientación social como un rasgo fundamental de su identidad, aspecto que es reconocido por un 60% de los participantes. A su vez, se evidencia que los encuestados que consideraban relevante esta orientación social para configurarse como clientes presentan una mayor disposición a mantener un vínculo comercial con la entidad y a recomendarla. **Conclusiones:** por medio de la prueba chi-cuadrado se pudo corroborar que existe una dependencia entre la variable orientación social de marca y el *engagement* en clientes, por lo cual, generar valor a partir de este aspecto ejercería un efecto en el estímulo de compromiso en consumidores/usuarios desde la noción de reciprocidad.

Palabras clave: Identidad de marca; *Engagement*; Compromiso de clientes; Compromiso de marca; Consumo responsable; Marca con propósito; Orientación social de marca.

1. Introduction

The relational approach to marketing is a current perspective, which is still relevant even in the current context where actions to stimulate demand for products and services are increasingly developed in virtual scenarios. This approach reaffirms its importance if viewed from the logic of stimulating highly significant cooperation behaviors related to the concept of engagement, such as repeated purchases, recommendation of goods to others, participation in co-creation processes, and even defense against the questioning of organizations' actions. Such behaviors could be observed as acts of reciprocity (Bruni and Calvo, 2009; Zamagni, 2013; Calvo, 2013), insofar as they are not regulated by contracts and are given freely, as a compensation for a strong bond with an organization.

According to Ure (2018), the translation of the term "engagement" is "compromiso" (commitment), which may imply a degree of emotional involvement of users in response to content posted on platforms such as digital social networks; in turn, Ballesteros (2019) argues that, from the point of view of individuals, engagement refers to both a cognitive state and its manifestation through acts such as approving content, sharing it, commenting on it, or expressing opinions about it. Thus, it can be indicated that engagement is related to repeated interactions that strengthen the bond that a person has with a brand (Yoon *et al.*, 2018).

On the other hand, consumer/user commitment can be considered as a psychological process that forms the mechanisms by which loyalty is shaped in new customers, as well as by which it can be maintained in old ones (Bowden, 2009). Gambetti and Graffigna (2010) point out that the intention to stimulate these manifestations is key if a type of marketing is assumed in which the customer is at the center, therefore, although purchases are extremely relevant, the behaviors linked to the commitment that a consumer/user can have towards a brand transcend these transactions, becoming manifestations

resulting from motivational factors (Van Doorn *et al.*, 2010). In this line, Goldsmith *et al.* (2011) indicate that engagement describes a behavior through which people use commercial brands to shape their own identities and express them to others.

Based on these factors, it is possible to evidence behaviors of commitment (Smaoui and Behi, 2011) in frequent purchases and in the recommendation of products or services derived from a much deeper relationship that a person has with a brand, behaviors that emerge from interactive and co-creative experiences (Brodie *et al.*, 2011) in which the consumer/user assumes an active role, contributing to the creation of content and discourse for a brand, which therefore affects its image and reputation (Gambetti and Graffigna, 2011).

Thus, emotional connections are evidenced as a condition for the emergence of engagement behaviors. Therefore, if a brand is naturally integrated into the lives of its customers, it can become a sort of "trusted companion" (Gambetti *et al.*, 2012), which could influence consumer/user preference, as people are more willing to choose brands that have personalities they can identify with and express themselves through. This situation would increase the commitment toward them (Goldsmith and Goldsmith, 2012), derived from a relationship that transcends purely utilitarian interests of customers and companies (Vivek *et al.*, 2012).

Similarly, while behaviors such as repurchase and recommendation have been associated with factors related to the quality of products or services, researchers like Hollebeek (2012) argue that brands that generate value from focal benefits of the experience could be considered more "hedonic," fostering greater commitment in their customers, as these types of benefits generate higher levels of excitement emotions, producing responses such as emotion, fun, and fantasy (Franzak *et al.*, 2014), achieving a higher level of engagement that is based on communication processes about relevant topics for customers and goes beyond the simple promotion of the functional benefits of the products or services offered (Venkatesan, 2017).

In this way, brands that present themselves to their consumers with "anthropomorphic" and "hedonic" characteristics stimulate commitment behaviors based on relationships that resemble interpersonal ones, highlighting the importance of organizational behavior in relation to society as a whole (Wong and Merrilees, 2015). This means that a strategy aimed at encouraging customer engagement cannot be approached solely for superficial purposes (Biraghi *et al.*, 2017), avoiding addressing issues that are of interest to this audience and that require an equally strong commitment from the organization. Guckian *et al.* (2018) state that when customers perceive that corporate wrongdoing was the result of individual actions rather than a general culture of an organization, they are more likely to show intentions of commitment toward it, based on the idea that their future behavior will be ethical, demonstrating the importance of how organizations account for their role in society.

According to Mayorga-Gordillo and Añaños-Carrasco (2020), "Consumers establish more lasting and profitable relationships with brands that clearly demonstrate their social character, based on aspects such as the treatment of their employees, their impact on the environment, and their contribution to society" (p. 103). In turn, Xifra (2020) states that organizations that are perceived as socially responsible have more support from the public, which translates into the purchase of products or services and their recommendation, but also into a more positive opinion. In this vein, Jiménez-Marín *et al.* (2021) argue that iconic brands take advantage of moments like the COVID-19 crisis to show themselves as positive actors for society, positioning themselves in the eyes of their customers as brands that have social purposes that coexist with their profit-making objectives.

According to Lourenço *et al.* (2022), customer brand engagement enriches the relationship between consumers/users and the brand. However, they consider it relevant that communication strategies are oriented toward those customers more prone to assume a position of cognitive, emotional, or behavioral effort, or a combination of these dimensions towards the brand. It is also vital that the objective of encouraging customer engagement is established as a focus of marketing actions by companies, although, as noted by Ndhlovu and Maree (2022), customers interact with products and service brands differently, so communication should be aligned with the dimension of customer brand engagement that prevails in a particular market segment.

Based on the above, it could be argued that engagement highlights a relationship that transcends the depersonalized link between providers and buyers of the traditional capitalist market economy, in which the protagonist is the homo *æconomicus*, characteristic of neoclassical economics, which was conceived as a reductionist view of the human being in their role as an economic agent, and described as a person who always behaved selfishly. Authors such as Bruni (2004), Frank (2005), and Gui (2011) affirm that human beings assume certain postures incentivized by both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations, which is why denying that people always behave selfishly does not mean that they do so in all situations in an unselfish way (Sen, 1989).

This more complex image of individuals challenges the orthodox notion of economic rationality (Kahneman, 2017), which is conceived solely as a permanent search to maximize personal benefits. Thus, a space is opened for the visibility of other factors that influence people's decisions in the economic sphere, such as the principle of reciprocity, which Zamagni (2013) assumes from the notion of unregulated gratuitousness and which is linked to behaviors associated with what is called responsible consumption.

This type of consumption is characterized as conscious and deliberate, as the consumer takes decisions considering various variables. They take into account the effects of their routine purchasing choices, seeking external interests and with the intention of modifying the context or market structures, acting upon business practices themselves (Bianchi *et al.*, 2014). Peñalosa-Otero and López-Celis (2018) identified a positive attitude towards socially responsible consumption among Colombian individuals, demonstrating awareness not only of the impact of their own consumption behavior but also of the requirement for ethical conduct by companies, i.e., corporate social responsibility, as one of the variables to consider at the time of purchase (p. 257). Similarly, López-Celis and Peñalosa-Otero (2018) argue that few activities arouse more preference and brand affinity than those related to social, ethical, and environmental aspects of organizational behavior. Therefore, incorporating such activities into the strategic guidelines of companies and effectively communicating with the growing segment of socially responsible consumers can be a key factor for the future competitiveness of Colombian organizations.

In this sense, proposing a social orientation could be configured as a relevant factor to encourage engagement behaviors, based on the notion that, if customers recognize and feel identified with this commitment that the brand assumes for the benefit of society, they could establish much more lasting relationships with it, becoming an "ally" for a person with whom they share common ideas and purposes. Calanchez-Urribarri *et al.* (2023) indicate that the harmonious combination of commercial objectives with the solution of social problems led to the emergence of a concept known as "social marketing", an approach that seeks to reconcile sales generation with increasing the awareness of companies based on socially acceptable philosophies and through activities that help in solving problems in contexts where they have a high degree of influence.

Mayorga-Gordillo and Añaños-Carrasco (2020) state that "the value of a brand is strongly linked to the image, coherence, and consistency that the organization has regarding its products and/or services and that is supported by the recognition of its corporate identity" (p. 102). In this sense, these authors suggest that it is necessary for managers of organizations to recognize the increasing relevance that the impact of companies has on the common good in the market while developing "attributes of the brand itself that allow organizations to generate links loaded with social and environmental awareness, which should not only be a communicational exercise, but also a strategic, cultural, and behavioral one" (p. 103).

It is clear that the usefulness of goods, supported by functional factors, will always be a significant element to encourage attitudes with a high degree of commitment such as repurchase and recommendation. However, in a competitive global scenario like the current one, where quality processes are increasingly adopted with more intensity by all organizations, it becomes more relevant to recognize whether these types of actions can be incentivized by other relational and symbolic factors.

2. Objective

The purpose of this article is to analyze the relationship between brand social orientation and customer engagement behaviors such as loyalty and recommendation, in order to determine a possible dependence between this variable and these commitment attitudes. The aim is to investigate whether these engagement behaviors can emerge from the principle of reciprocity, which means that the acquisition of products or services and the recommendation of the brand to others could be strongly influenced by the premise of supporting an entity with which one has a bond that goes beyond the utilitarian relationship based on the functional attributes of the goods it offers to the market.

3. Methodology

Based on the question of whether there is a dependency between the variable of brand social orientation and the engagement behaviors of loyalty and recommendation in customers, the research was developed through a mixed-method approach. This approach represents a set of systematic, empirical, and critical research processes that involve the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, as well as their integration and joint discussion, in order to make inferences from all the information gathered and achieve a better understanding of the phenomenon under study (Hernández-Sampieri *et al.*, 2014). In this sense, the aim was to determine whether there was a dependent relationship between the recognition of social orientation as a part of a brand's identity and the willingness to maintain a commercial relationship with it and recommend it.

Thus, a case study was conducted, considering that this type of research allows, through the collection of data from a variety of sources, for processes to be analyzed with significant depth (De la Calle-Durán *et al.*, 2020). Its greatest strength lies in measuring and recording the behavior of people involved in a studied phenomenon (Martínez-Carazo, 2006). The selected case study was that of a bank that has historically promoted itself as an entity with a strong commitment to Colombian society, assuming anthropomorphic traits such as being a sort of "friend" to its clients.

Financial institutions are some of the organizations that have generated the most concerns, reservations, and even questions about their real impact on the economy in terms of wealth creation, profit margins, and some scandals such as the global financial crisis of 2008. In Colombia, this situation is no exception, especially considering that in the last decade, the proportion of adults with at least one financial service has risen from 57% (16.7 million) to 82.6% (28.6 million) in the country (Asobancaria, 2019).

Therefore, national banks are highly visible entities that are constantly of interest to public opinion, and for this reason, they have had to work hard to improve their corporate reputation and achieve considerable customer satisfaction.

The case in question was chosen due to the particularities of the studied bank, which, although not a leader in this category in terms of market share, is the financial institution with the highest customer satisfaction score according to the 2021 Customer Index Value (CIVeX). This situation shows the significant results that the chosen bank has obtained in terms of relationship with its users and makes it a very interesting case study to observe the engagement that these users can have with the brand.

To carry out the fieldwork, a documentary analysis was carried out in the first place, in order to identify if social orientation was a distinctive factor of the brand identity of the studied bank, expressed through attributes, values, and characteristic factors of this financial entity. Based on this, the contents of two official virtual platforms of the bank that are publicly accessible were analyzed: the website and the official blog. Since these platforms are intended to provide information to external audiences, it was expected that they would present the information being sought.

According to Díaz-Herrera (2018), when conducting a documentary study, it is possible to find information that is not usually detailed but rather emerges from consultation and interpretation. In this sense, qualitative content analysis is appropriate for this review, as it "does not aim only to search for certain contents within a corpus, but to find the meaning that these contents have within the context" (Díaz-Herrera, 2018, p. 125). To develop this type of analysis, it is necessary to internalize the messages defined through the consulted elements, in order to establish categories that result from the similarities found and that complement the results of the work, which also allows identifying the way in which the company communicates with its different stakeholders (Díaz-Herrera, 2018).

Corporate identity involves the physical and cultural traits of a brand (Sanz-de-La-Tajada, 1994). Physical traits refer to visual characteristics, including iconic elements that contribute to the identification of the company in the market. On the other hand, cultural traits consist of internal and distinctive characteristics, through which the essence of the company is constructed: values, culture, or beliefs. Consequently, categories were defined for the review of the two chosen virtual platforms of the bank (official website and blog), in order to ensure a coherent recording of the contents in these virtual channels, based on the orientation of deductive qualitative content analysis. These categories were established with the intention of specifying a structure that would allow the analysis of the projection of the brand identity of the studied bank.

Table 1. *Categories of brand identity analysis.*

Categories
Fundamental characteristics that differentiate the bank.
Characteristic attributes of the bank's offer.
Prominent values related to the bank's brand.
Key messages and prominent visual elements.

Source: Author's own work.

Following the stages to be taken into account in content analysis, after the registration of the information, a descriptive phase was carried out in order to have a detailed view of the documentation, which was complemented by a final interpretive stage, in which it was determined how all the consulted materials impact each of the defined categories, based on the interpretation of the messages and the analyzed content (Díaz-Herrera, 2018).

Subsequently, after identifying key elements of the brand identity of the studied bank, this information served as input for the development of a survey questionnaire, which was the second research technique applied. The engagement measurement tool developed by Guckian *et al.* (2018) was used as a reference for the design of this questionnaire. The survey was applied to a sample of 390 bank clients, whose size was determined using the infinite population formula with an error of 4.96% and a confidence level of 95%. Clients from Bogotá were chosen because the Colombian capital has a high representativeness compared to other departments in the country, as it has the largest number of clients in the case study.

Systematic sampling was used, applying a random selection of the first client and then selecting the following sample elements using a fixed interval until reaching the sample size. This interval was determined by dividing the population size by the sample size. A descriptive analysis was then performed by calculating the proportions of clients in relation to their response to each question, and a cross-tabulation of the variables evaluating the social orientation of the brand and the engagement behaviors of recommending and intending to continue being a client of the bank. This was done in order to determine, from a pivot table resulting from the cross-tabulation of these variables, a possible relationship between them.

Later, the Pearson chi-square test or Fisher's exact test was performed. This is a non-parametric test that allows determining differences between categorical variables in the same population, based on the examination of significant divergences between expected and observed results, comparing the values of actual data with those predictable if the null hypothesis were true (independence of variables). Based on the calculation of a p-value, the null hypothesis can be rejected when it gives a result lower than 0.05, as the probability of type one error (rejecting the null hypothesis given that it is true) would be very small, thus accepting the alternative hypothesis (there is dependence between the variables).

4. Results

In this section, first of all, the results derived from the documentary analysis carried out on two official communication channels of the studied bank are presented, whose findings served as input for the elaboration of the questionnaire that was completed by the customers. Secondly, the results obtained from the application of the survey to this public are presented.

4.1. Identification of the social orientation in the identity of the bank

As previously mentioned, a documentary analysis was conducted on two official communication channels of the case study bank in order to identify whether social orientation was a prominent element of the brand identity. From this review, it was initially apparent that there is a very close relationship between the bank and its corporate brand, as it is evident that this financial institution is integrated into a business group and is supported by an organization whose corporate purpose is to contribute to the common good as a key factor.

In this sense, it can be seen how the bank adapts the organizational philosophy of its corporate brand in terms of a financial services brand identity. Hatch and Schultz (2010) define that, in the case of product

or service brands, they are properly directed to the specific customer, their consumer or prospective consumer as such, while corporate brands should address their communications and strategies generally to their various stakeholders and not just based on their customers. However, although there is a difference between product or service brands and corporate brands, it is important to recognize that the former depends on the latter, as they provide support and credibility, generating differentiation in relation to other companies.

With this in mind, it was possible to identify on the analyzed platforms that the bank's reason for existence derives from the mission objectives of its corporate parent organization, linked to the common good. Thus, this financial institution is based on a commitment to seek the well-being of society, which is evident on the brand's website and blog, where they frequently address topics related to the common good, underserved sectors, and the commitment to individual needs.

Table 2. *Highlights of the bank's brand identity.*

Inclusion: orientation to service and to provide opportunities for progress for all Colombians for the benefit of the common good.
Respect and coherence: coherent behavior and willingness to understand the needs of customers.
Clarity and transparency: a close and simple language that allows the transmission of relevant solutions for clients.

Source: Author's own work from the review of the official website and blog of the case study.

Likewise, and in coherence with the above, the slogan that presents the bank as a "friend", which refers to human traits and a type of service with high closeness, is an element that stands out and synthesizes well the adaptation that the financial brand makes of the philosophy of the corporate brand that supports it. Accordingly, it is possible to appreciate in this slogan an element of the bank's brand identity that translates the purpose of the organization that owns it into a value proposition, maintaining coherence between them.

In summary, it can be indicated that the studied bank highlights in its communications elements associated with the common good, strengthening a culture of savings that encourages the progress of the country. For this reason, this financial entity expresses the key concepts that regulate and define its brand identity, which is very well summarized in its slogan that alludes to anthropomorphic traits, proposing a relationship with customers that goes beyond the functionality of banking services and highlights a service attitude that goes beyond profit-making.

4.2. Customer recognition of the social orientation of the brand

After the document analysis, a survey was conducted on 390 clients of the financial institution in order to determine, initially, the recognition they have of the characteristic factors of the brand identity of the same. The questionnaire applied in this research technique was developed based on the results of the review of the official communication channels presented in the previous section.

As previously noted, the studied bank names itself in its slogan as an entity close to its customers and is characterized by human traits associated with being a "friend," aspects that summarize its brand promise of value. From the survey results, it is observed that 61% of the surveyed clients agree with this characterization that the bank makes of itself in the slogan. In this way, this element can be considered a fundamental aspect of the bank's brand identity. Therefore, if a considerable percentage of surveyed clients agree with the proposed characterization, which is linked to a broad closeness with its clients and its contribution to the common good, it could be indicated that they recognize these characteristics and consider that the bank fulfills its promise of value.

Subsequently, customers were asked about the attributes and values of the studied bank, previously identified in the document analysis, which accounts for the factors by which this brand can be considered as a socially oriented entity. Based on the results, it is evident that the surveyed customers recognize the elements that define the financial institution, considering that 60% of the participating customers believe that the brand does possess the attributes and values declared by it.

According to these results, a significant percentage of respondents associate the bank with factors linked to the common good, elements that these customers recognize and identify in the studied financial brand and that are contained in its slogan. Zamagni (2007) argues that the common good is the good of the relationship itself between people, "bearing in mind that the relationship between people is understood as a good for all those who participate in the relationship" (p. 23), while the total good is conceived as "the sum of individual goods" (p. 23). In this sense, Zamagni (2013) proposes that it is important, to achieve a greater impact on the common good, "that an economic space formed by subjects whose action is inspired by the principle of reciprocity can be consolidated within the market - and not outside of it or against it" (p. 21), "which is of this tenor: I freely give you something so that you can, in turn, give something to others or even to me, according to your abilities" (Zamagni, 2013, p. 245).

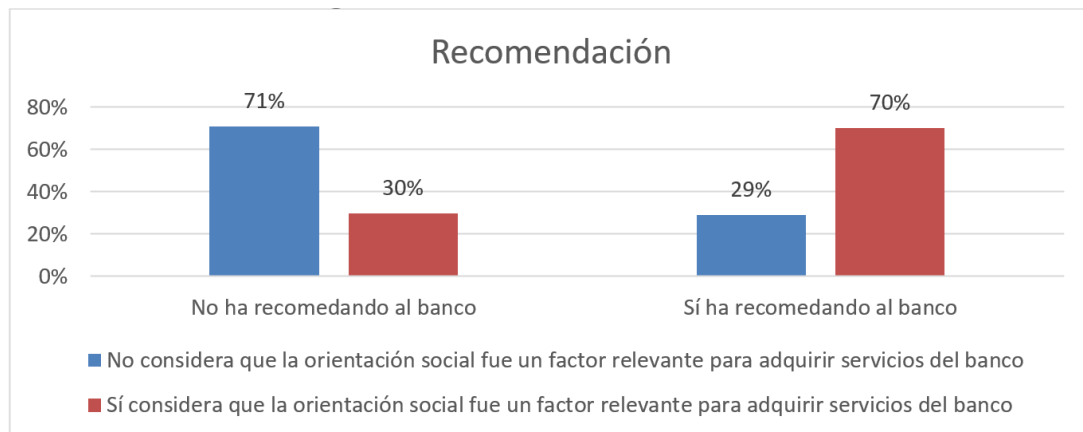
From this perspective, organizations that prioritize the common good, even those with profit-oriented goals, are inserted into this dynamic as economic actors that privilege their relationship with the world, generating an impact that transcends the creation of material wealth. In turn, this stance could inspire individuals to establish relationships with the brand, which would materialize in engagement behaviors such as loyalty or the recommendation of products and services, which would be significantly influenced by the principle of reciprocity, to the extent that a consumer/user would assume these attitudes as a reward for the positive contribution to society of an organization and for feeling identified with its identity.

4.3. Relationship between social orientation and customer Engagement

Based on the previous results, which show recognition of the social orientation of the bank studied, an evaluation of the potential engagement that customers can have with this financial institution was conducted, with the aim of determining whether engagement behaviors such as recommending the brand to others and future willingness to remain customers of the bank are related to this aspect highlighted in its identity.

The survey results indicate that 70% of people for whom the brand's social orientation was a significant factor in their decision to become customers have recommended it. On the other hand, 29% of customers who indicated that social orientation had not been a relevant factor have engaged in this behavior. The data shows that customers who value the bank's social orientation are much more likely to recommend it (Figure 1).

Figure 1: *Brand recommendation.*

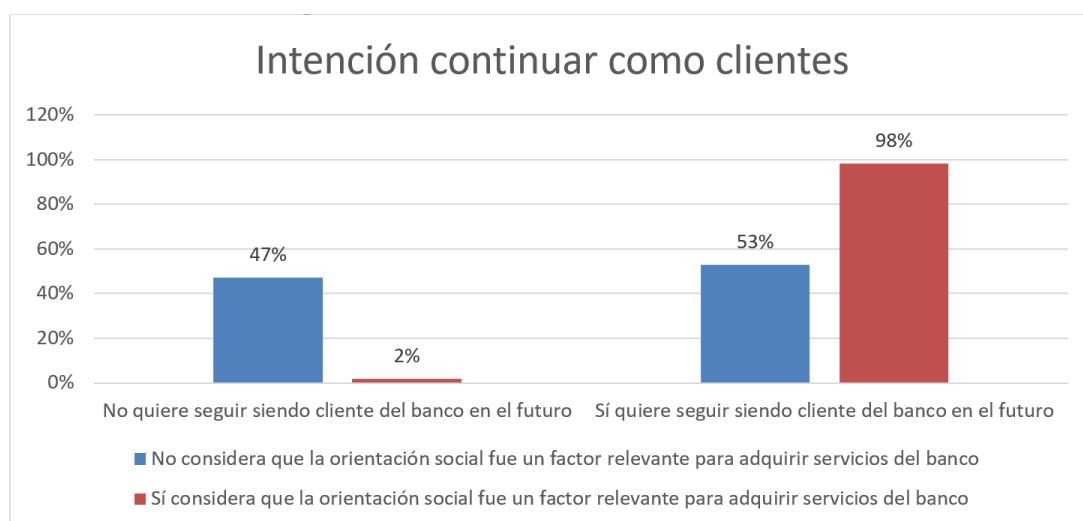


Source: Author's own work.

To statistically test the relationship between the variables, a chi-squared test was performed using a pivot table of the cross between these variables, which yielded a p-value less than 0.05. This result allows rejecting the hypothesis of independence of the variables and shows that there is a dependence between the valuation of the brand's social orientation and the recommendation of the bank.

Similarly, the survey results show that 98% of respondents who consider the bank's social orientation as a relevant factor expressed their intention to continue being customers of the financial institution in the future. In contrast, 53% of clients who do not value this aspect expressed this intention. As can be seen, users who considered the bank's social orientation as a significant element in their decision to become clients express a higher percentage of their intention to maintain a commercial relationship with the brand in the future compared to those respondents for whom this was not relevant. It is even observed that almost all clients who value the bank's social orientation consider continuing to be long-term users of its services (Figure 2).

Figure 2: *Intention to continue being a customer.*



Source: Author's own work.

To statistically verify the relationship between these variables, a chi-square test was performed, which showed that, like with the recommendation variable, the p-value, in this case, is also less than 0.05. This result indicates that there is a dependence between the variable of the evaluation of the social orientation of the brand and the intention to continue being a customer of the bank.

Based on these results, it can be indicated that, for this case study, the appreciation of the brand's social orientation is related to the emergence of engagement behaviors in customers, in that those people who significantly value this aspect presented higher levels of recommendation and intention to continue being customers of the bank, a result that is supported by the fact that a large percentage of the respondents recognize this factor as a characteristic trait of the studied bank and that configures its brand identity.

Thus, by highlighting its social orientation and presenting itself as a sort of friend to its customers, it could be argued that the bank seeks to generate value based on emotional and experiential benefits, configuring itself as a hedonic brand with anthropomorphic traits. This validates what has been proposed in studies such as those conducted by Hollebeek (2012), Goldsmith and Goldsmith (2012), and Franzak *et al.* (2014), which suggest that brands that generate value based on focal characteristics and benefits arouse higher levels of excitement in their customers, which in turn impacts their ability to stimulate commitment behaviors such as greater loyalty and recommendation (Smaoui and Behi, 2011). Similarly, and in line with the findings of Jiménez-Marín *et al.* (2021), the studied bank presents itself as a brand that facilitates the lives of its users through its financial services and social stance, positioning itself to its customers as an entity with a purpose that transcends profit-seeking objectives.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

The objective of this research was to analyze the relationship between brand social orientation and customer engagement behaviors, such as loyalty and recommendation, in order to determine a possible dependence between this variable and these attitudes of commitment.

The results show that customers for whom the social orientation of the brand was a significant factor showed a greater willingness to be loyal to this institution and to recommend it than those for whom this factor was not relevant in their initial decision to acquire its services. Through the chi-square test, it was possible to confirm that there is a dependence between the variable of valuation of the social orientation of the brand and the engagement behaviors of recommendation and intention to continue being a customer of the studied bank.

The fact that a high percentage of customers recognize the characterization that the bank makes of itself as being a sort of "friend" and consider that the brand does have attributes and values related to contributing to the well-being of society, suggests that this orientation is a factor that can encourage engagement towards the brand, taking into account that this social stance can be considered as a strategy of generating value based on emotional and experiential benefits.

These results have implications that could be very significant for brand management, insofar as legitimizing oneself from the positive impact on society would have an effect on the emergence of commitment behaviors such as repurchase and recommendation from the notion of reciprocity. This means that customers would have the disposition to purchase products or services and recommend them to others based on the premise of supporting a socially responsible entity with which they have a bond that goes beyond the utilitarian relationship based on the functional attributes of the goods it offers.

It is logical that customers are willing to be loyal to a brand and recommend it if they are satisfied with the quality of the products or services provided. However, it is clear that engagement-related behaviors arise as a result of an experience that is so relevant, significant, and differentiated that it is difficult to stimulate in today's scenario, where all organizations are concerned with raising their quality standards, and even more so to sustain this type of feeling over time, given that people can get used to the experience of being a customer of a particular brand from the functional aspects.

For this reason, the quality of products/services, a functional aspect, and social orientation, which can be assumed to be an aspect with a high emotional and experiential load, are factors that are considered to be important in fostering commitment behaviors such as recommendation and repurchase. However, the social orientation, taking the studied case as a reference, could be a very significant element to stimulate these attitudes, especially considering that it can generate a relevant relationship with customers, an aspect that must be strengthened in the service experience and in communications so that it can be a much more prominent element and, therefore, have an effect in stimulating engagement in this important audience.

It is interesting that the studied bank adapts the corporate brand philosophy that supports its own brand identity, maintaining the essence of what the organization proposes and expressing it, based on its service offerings, through characteristics that are well summarized in its slogan. This coherence is considered a very interesting and exemplary aspect for other brands, in that the organization, owner of the financial entity and ultimately receiving the income it generates, determines an organizational philosophy that must be transferred to its portfolio of brands. In this sense, this philosophy allows a corporate brand to have a reason for existence that transcends profitability, configuring, at the same time, greater coherence in its commercial offer, and with greater potential to establish relationships of commitment with customers and even collaborators, contributing to the common good of society, which should be a goal that every contemporary organization pursues.

Finally, this study presents limitations inherent to the case research type. It would be pertinent to compare brands like the studied bank with others that do not have a social focus, in order to evaluate the intensity of commitment behaviors in their clients. Likewise, it is also considered opportune to apply techniques such as discourse analysis to communication pieces, with the intention of identifying whether brands translate their identity into them and integrating units of analysis such as the organization's employees, as they are the ones who must project the identity to the clients with whom they have contact.

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