A Three Step B2B Sales Model Based on Satisfaction Judgments

Grünbaum, Niels Nolsøe

Published in:
European Scientific Journal

Publication date:
2015

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Citation for published version (APA):
Grünbaum, N. N. (2015). A Three Step B2B Sales Model Based on Satisfaction Judgments. *European Scientific Journal*, *ESJ July 2015 special edition*, 46-64.

A THREE STEP B2B SALES MODEL BASED ON SATISFACTION JUDGMENTS

Dr. Niels Nolsøe Grünbaum
Roskilde University, Denmark

Abstract

This paper aims to provide a coherent, detailed and integrative understanding of the mental processes (i.e. dimensions) that industrial buyers apply when forming satisfaction judgments in adjacent to new task buying situations. A qualitative inductive research strategy is utilized in this study. The insights produces can be applied for selling companies to craft close collaborative customer relationships in a systematic ad efficient way. The process of building customer relationships will be guided through actions that yields higher satisfaction judgments leading to loyal customers and finally to increase in sales and profitability. The specific nature of the developed insight will further make it difficult for competitors' to copy. Thus, processing the guidelines offered by the proposed typology in a successful manner will have the potential to create unique competitive advantages form the selling companies' perspective. The buying center members applied satisfaction dimension when forming satisfaction judgments. Moreover, the focus and importance of the identified satisfaction dimensions fluctuated pending on the phase of the buying process. Based on the findings a three step sales model is proposed comprising of 1. Identification of the satisfaction dimensions the buying center members apply in the buying process. 2. Identification of the fluctuation in importance of the satisfaction dimensions and finally 3. Identification of the degree of expectations' adjacent to the identified satisfaction dimensions.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, loyalty, profitability, buying center, B2B marketing, case study

Introduction

Satisfaction is important for marketers because it is assumed that satisfied customers lead to, rebuy and loyalty. It is thus widely accepted in the body of research that satisfaction is an antecedent for competitive advantage, growth in sales, increase in customer loyalty, and stable and lasting profitability. These positive consequences of satisfaction have empirical support in several studies, for example (Anderson, 1994; Ralston, 1996; Zeithalm et al., 1996) established that satisfaction leads to increased buying intentions. Bolton (1998) demonstrated that increased satisfaction, further, leads to actual rebuy. Furthermore, Anderson et al., (1994) demonstrated, on a firm analytical level, a positive relationship between an increase in satisfaction and profitability. Keiningham et al. (2005) demonstrated that satisfaction and profitability where positively mediated by share-of-wallet and revenue in some situations. Even though there has been a long and intense interest for the satisfaction phenomenon most of the research has departed from a positivistic posture. As noted by Layder (1993), this paradigmatic posture relies on quantitative and experimental techniques to deductively test hypotheses that depart from theory. Albeit, exceptions exists, for example Fournier and Mick (1999), used as qualitative research design to study satisfaction in a business to consumer context yielding more thick, context dependent and holistic findings. More specifically, they suggested and sustained the claim, that the dominant satisfaction model, namely the historically dominant comparison standards paradigm (CS) is insufficient or even irrelevant in some consumer cases (Fournier and Mick, 1999). Furthermore, the development of the CS paradigm departs from a business to consumer (B2C) context, as opposed to a business to business (B2B) context. The latter context surrounded by rather different premises and a conceptual atmosphere that could open up for other methodological approaches and to some extent paradigmatic postures. Applying the generic classification scheme proposed by Grünbaum and Stenger (2013) to dissected the body of literature in a given field, it can be realized that the dominant tendency in satisfaction research is to adopt the same paradigmatic posture (i.e. a positivistic), the same satisfaction formation model (i.e. the disconfirmation of expectations), and often a high degree of similarity in generic research topics). Table 1 below illuminates the classification schema proposed by Grünbaum and Stenger (2013: 71).

Table 1 – Paradigmatic Classification Schema

Paradigm (basic believe system)
Ontology: ***The nature of reality, i.e. what is reality?***
(a) Axioms, (constructivism versus realism)
(b) Focus of research (qualitative versus quantitative)
(c) Quality standards (subjectivity versus objectivity)
Epistemology: ***How do researchers (i.e. particular group) comprehend reality?***
(d) Research design (Evolving emergent versus structured)
(e) Goal of investigation (understanding versus prediction)
Methodology: ***How do we retrieve knowledge?***
(f) Data (word, pictures, movies versus numbers)
(g) Data collecting (interview, observation, documents versus experiment, surveys)
(h) Analysis (inductive, expand or construct theory versus deductive, test of theory)
(i) Findings (holistic, thick versus precise narrow)

Symbols used to classify literature:
■ **Adjacent to a constructivist posture**
□ **Adjacent to a positivist posture**
● **Adjacent to a neo positivist posture**
♦ **Not addressed in study / paper**

Up till now the processes of forming satisfaction in a B2B context seen from a holistic perspective where the social atmosphere is perceived to play an imperative role, is under-researched. This paper aims to fill this gap. Thus, the aim is to create a coherent holistic understanding of B2B satisfaction formation based on a multi case study approach. More specifically, how do buying members evaluated their degree of satisfaction? How can the formation process of satisfaction be understood? The claims in this introducing section are vindicated in the literature section below. Hereafter follows an elaboration of the paradigmatic posture and methodology (i.e. data collection and analysis) that is applied in the study. Subsequently, findings is presented and discussed. Finally, conclusions, managerial and theoretical implications and suggestions for further research are outlined.

Literature review

There has been a constant and intense focus on varies aspects of satisfaction during the last some 40 years (se for example, Cardozo, 1965; Howard & Sheth, 1969; Locke, 1969; Smith el al., 1969). Thus a steady stream of research has been published in this area. A literature review reveals the following tendencies. First, a mainly positivistic paradigmatic perspective has dominated the satisfaction research. This is illustrated by a meta-analysis by Szymansi and Henard (2001) based on the last approximately last 30 years' of satisfaction research. They were focusing on 517 correlation coefficients from 50 satisfaction studies. The study illustrated that the main part of research was concentrated on antecedents for satisfaction; only 5% focused on consequences of satisfaction (se e.g. Bearden and Teel, 1983; Oliver and swan, 1989; Paulsen and Birk, 2007; Homburg et al., 2003). More interesting, the main part of the 5% research on consequences was on an industrial context (see e.g. Anderson and Sullivan, 1993; Anderson et al., 1994; Paulsen and Birk, 2007). Studies related to satisfaction undertaken after 2001 still demonstrate the same tendency toward departing from a positivistic paradigmatic posture. Eggert and Ulaga (2002:11), for example, applied a survey method, with a randomized sample of 960 purchasing managers. Muhmin, (2000: 642) in similar vein, applied a survey method, 450 questionnaires were distributed resulting in a response rate of 27 percent. Keining et al., (2005: 175) applied data generated via telephone interviewing to test several regression models. Hung & Lin, (2013) and Austen et al., (2012) also used a survey method.

Second, focus has mostly been on antecedents of satisfaction and only to a limited extent consequence of satisfaction. In addition, antecedent orientated research mainly with point of departure in a consumer context has dominated the satisfaction research (Muhmin, 2002; Swan and Trawick, 1993).

Third, focus has mostly been dominated by the disconfirmation of expectations paradigm and also found support in numerous studies (oliver, 1980: 461; Churchill and Surprenant, 1982: 491; Yi, 1990; Singh and Widing, 1991: 31; Spreng et al., 1996:15; Patterson et al., 1997:5; Fournier and Mick, 1990:5; Eggert and Ulaga, 2002: 108). According to the comparison standards (CS) paradigm the formation of satisfaction/dissatisfaction is a result of a process where consumers compare internal cognitive based standards with actual perceived product performance. If there is a discrepancy between pre-buy expectations and perceived received after-buy performance, the consumer can either be satisfied or dissatisfied. If no disparity is experienced the consumer will merely be neutral. Despite the above mentioned empirical support for the CS paradigm critiques also exist (Iacobucci et al., 1995; Yi, 1990).

Summing up, satisfaction research has primarily concentrated on a. the antecedents of satisfaction, b. the extent of satisfaction, c. determination of causal relationships in an a priori satisfaction construction model, and d. quantitative methodological aspects (i.e. validity measurement problems). Thus, the process of forming satisfaction and the social atmosphere is often treated as a 'black box'. The three above mentioned characteristics, namely, a. paradigm rigidity (i.e. ontology), b. consumer context and c. domination of the CS paradigm imply a need for satisfaction studies from other paradigmatic (i.e. ontology) positions that could be more commensurable with business to business characteristics.

Despite valuable insights produces by the historical positivistic dominated perspective, it is for example not appropriated a priori to determine what makes buyers satisfied when applying qualitative paradigmatic lenses. Furthermore, applying an inductively approach to learn more about the system that actually make industrial buyers satisfied has not yet been pursued in previous studies. In addition, there is also a need for a more thorough understanding of the satisfaction phenomenon with point of departure in a B2B context. The B2B context differs from a consumer context (B2C) on a string of important dimensions, where the latter primarily has served as a pivotal point when creating new knowledge about different aspects of the satisfaction phenomenon. To mention some these dissimilarities, industrial actors have, for example, other buying motives, another buying behavior, possesses other buying motives and values. Moreover, they experience more pressure and importance in a novel buying situation and the consequences are vital for both the buying center, the buying organization and for the selling center and selling organization (Webster & Wind, 1972; Sheth, 1973; Robinson el al., 1967; Bunn, 1993; Yang et al., 2011). Based on the literature review, this paper aims to provide a coherent, detailed and integrative understanding of the mental processes (i.e. dimensions) that industrial buyers apply when forming satisfaction judgments in adjacent to new task buying situations. The findings will be qualitative in nature and constitute a typology of B2B buyers' individual and joint mental processes in new task buying situations. Admitted, a rather specific demarcation, that is, new task buying conditions, albeit, the sales volume and monetary worth (i.e. airplanes, trains, ships, production machinery, power plant, wind power, to mentioned some), is huge in a markets dominated by new task buying situations.

The insights produces in this study, can further be applied for selling companies to craft close collaborative customer relationships in a systematically and efficiently way. The process of building customer relationships will be guided through actions that yields higher satisfaction judgments leading to loyal customers and finally to increase in sales and profitability. The specific nature of the developed insight will further make it difficult for competitors' to copy. Thus, processing the guidelines offered by the typology in a successful manner will have the potential to create unique competitive advantages from the selling companies' perspective.

Table 1 below provides an overview of the augmented tendencies above.

Paradigmatic perspective	Study object / context	Satisfaction model
➢ ***Mainly positivistic*** ➢ ***Correlation coefficients*** ➢ ***Questionnaires*** ➢ ***Survey studies*** ➢ ***Hypothesis testing***	➢ *Antecedents of satisfaction (e.g. product variety, website design, perceived quality etc.)* ➢ *Consumer context*	➢ *Disconfirmation of expectations*

Paradigmatic posture and methodology (type, collection and analysis of data)

Justified in the review of literature in the preceding section an inductive qualitative research strategy was adopted in this study. More specifically, a case study was undertaken, designed as a summation design (1) according to Grünbaum (2007). This is a research strategy that is particular suitable to apply when facing a B2B context (Wesley et al, 1999; Halinen & Törnross, 2005). More specifically, three manufacturing enterprises operating on the B2B market was purposeful selected which is a common and acceptable practice when conduction qualitative research

(Kuzel, 1999). The data of the study constituted both primary data, namely words, generated through interviews, and partly secondary data namely words as well as numbers. More concrete, internal and external financial reports, notes about the buying process and resumes from relevant meeting related to the buying process.

The qualitative, semi-structured interview and the "written documents" method were used to collect the empirical data (Yin. 1994: 78-80). The duration of data collection spanned approximately 7 months in all the case companies. In the period organizational members of the buying center was identified and interview. Thus, a key informant approach was utilities, which is an accepted and commonly used technique within qualitative studies (Campbell, 1955; John and Reve, 1982: 519; 263-264: Gilchrist and Williams, 1999: 71-79). To enhance robustness of the information retrieved from the informants they were initially interviewed together and later individually in order to evaluate the similarity of the provided information under the two different situations.

Patton's (1990: 169-183) operates with 16 different sampling techniques, three of these techniques were used, namely: a. "Theory based", b. "Intensity and c. "Stratified purposeful". Besides these techniques a number of selection criteria were applied for instance "choose the case where you can learn the most" (Stake, 2000: 446). Table 2 below provides an overview of actions taken pertinent to creating a coherent research design.

Based on the study purpose point of departure was taken in firms operation on the business market, that had been involved in many purchasing processed with new-task characteristics, thereby insuring that the buying member participant posed rich, detailed, specific and update new task buying experience. Data analysis was based on the pattern matching technique advocated by Yin 1994: 106-108; Patton, 1990: 385-387. The truth value was enhanced by applying four techniques namely, a. objectivity/conformability (i.e. tape recording of interview, literal transcription, explicitly demonstrating the basis of interpretations, case report was submitted to member check). b. reliability/consistency, (i.e case study protocol), c. Internal validity/authenticity, (i.e. pattern matching, rival propositions, triangulation (data, researcher, theory), trying to create a close relationship between theory, unit of analysis and identified patterns), d. external validity/transferability, (i.e. holistic and deep descriptions was produced, multi-case design, separate cross-case analysis).

Table 2 Methodological choices

Paradigmatic posture	Case selection criteria	Data analysis	Validity and reliability
➢ **Qualitative** ➢ **Inductive** ➢ **Emergent** ➢ **Case study**	➢ Most learning ➢ Sufficient and specific new-task buying experience ➢ A certain size of firm B2B firms ➢ Resemblances/differ-ences ➢ Accessibility to the field	➢ Pattern matching technique	➢ Objectivity/conforma-bility ➢ Reliability/consistency ➢ Internal Validity/authenticity ➢ External validity/transferability

Findings

In this section the results will be compared across the three cases. Similarities and differences will be explained, and implications will be drawn from the results. Probing of buying experiences was based on the actual purchase of a laser cutting machine, a CNC operated production machine and finally, a powder lacquering machine in the three case companies. The purchase price for the three machines was in the price range €530,000 - €650,000 and the operational lifetime in the range of ten to fifteen years. The buying process typically lasted approximately 14 month from recognition of need/screening of the market to delivery of the machine. Buying center members all perceived a high risk, high complexity and high strategic importance in connection with the examined purchases. Several satisfaction dimensions were identified in the three case companies. They were generated based on interpretations of the data generated during the interviews. A satisfaction dimension thus comprises homogeneous issues of high perceived importance to the informants. The informants had different degree of expectations related to the identified satisfaction dimensions. Thus, some satisfaction dimensions are more expected to be fulfilled than others. For example, it is for all the case companies important that the information provides by the potential supplier is of high quality and that the prospect supplier demonstrates a high willingness to share all relevant information and the degree of trust is high. This leads to a satisfaction dimension marked "trustworthiness". A satisfaction dimension that is very important to the members of the buying center because of the new task buying situation they are facing. Therefore, a lower than expected performance on this satisfaction dimension may with high probability lead to a rejection of the supplier in the early phase of the buying process. Put differently, a failure to meet such a satisfaction dimension will go beyond the span of tolerance of the buyer and further lead to a serious consideration about exclude the potential supplier from the buying process. In like manner, a satisfaction dimension that is connected with a low degree of expectation beholds features that can transform a prospect supplier to the chosen supplier. A satisfaction dimension with low expectation is more unconscious in nature and is perceived in a more abstract way by the buyer. They are rare, and because of the unconscious nature the potential suppliers must be close to the buying center, and be able to identify and understand the needs of the buying center members better than the members themselves do. Such a supplier skill will create real value to the buying organization and enhance the probability of winning the sales. Table 3 below depicts the identified satisfaction, what they constitute, and the degree of expectation of the satisfaction dimension in the three case companies.

Table 3, Satisfaction dimensions and degree of expectation from buyers' perspective

Case company 1 (CC1)	Case company 2 (CC2)	Case company 3 (CC3)
Technical (generic), the quality of the purchased machine, and output & quality of the parts produced by the machine, the performance etc. This is a basic satisfaction dimension. This is key and thus a very expected dimension. ▪	**Technical (generic)**	**Technical (generic)**
Service (generic) refers to suppliers' service organization, performance, quality etc. A very expected dimension. ▪	**Service (generic)**	**Service (generic)**
Trustworthiness (generic), quality of information, willingness to share information, lever of trust etc. A very expected dimension. ▪	**Trustworthiness (generic)**	**Trustworthiness (generic)**
Financial (generic), refers to purchase price, operation cost etc. ▪	**Financial (generic)**	**Financial (generic)**
	Distance (one-off), geographic & organization culture and values □	**Flexibility (one-off),** future-orientated □
	Empathy (one-off), understanding of CC2 situation and problems that arises, willingness to help □	**Accuracy (one-off)**, all must be as agreed, no deviation is accepted ▪
		Image (one-off), environmentally correct, green aspects etc. □

▪ High degree of expectation □ Low degree of expectation

Besides identification and elaborations of the nature of satisfaction dimension two general traits ascended form the analysis of data. Namely, degree of homogeneity of satisfaction dimensions and fluctuations of important of satisfaction dimensions pending on the buying process phase.

Trait 1Degree of homogeneity of satisfaction dimensions

Regarding identical satisfaction dimensions the following satisfaction dimensions was identified: a. the technical dimension, b. the service dimension, c. the trustworthiness dimension and d. the financial dimension (price, operating costs etc.). The technical dimension consisted of factors such as the quality of the purchased machinery, the quality of the molded output, efficiency and performance of the machinery etc. The service dimension consisted of aspects that were related to suppliers' service provider organization, for instance the actual service level and service quality. The trustworthiness dimension consisted of close observation of the suppliers' ability to fulfill promises, to provide accurate and sufficient information and to meet deadlines. Finally, the financial evaluation dimension consisted of the initial cost, the operation cost, scrap value, lifetime estimates etc. of the machines. These four satisfaction evaluation dimensions were disclosed in all case companies; consequently they can be expected to be present in similar companies, i.e., they are of a generic nature.

Table 3 moreover, illustrates that a number of unique satisfaction dimensions where identified, namely the empathy and distance dimension in case company CC2 and the flexibility, accuracy and image dimension in case company CC3. In the case of CC2, the explanation is found in the special strategy this company has developed, where they focus on profitable fulfilling of customized needs of the buyer. For this company, the extreme degree of customization has in fact been a key success factor to survive in a highly competitive and turbulent marketplace. In the same vein, the satisfaction dimension in CC3 originates from the remarkable growth rates the company has realized since the president conceived a simple but vigorous idea. That is, a component part innovation which is now widely applied throughout the companies' product program. In high novelty buying situation we can expect to find one-off satisfaction dimension partly due to the qualitative inductive approach applied to discover insights and partly due to the unique context that a given case company is embedded in. This is in principle a transferable realization with the implication that there is a window of opportunity to craft a successful collaborative buyer-seller relationship.

Trait 2, Fluctuations of important of satisfaction dimensions

The important of the satisfaction dimensions fluctuated pending on the buying process phase. The service satisfaction dimensions were very important in all case companies. In the CC2 it was even perceived as the most important satisfaction dimensions. Furthermore, the service satisfaction dimension revealed a satisfaction paradox in CC2. It was a satisfaction paradox that implied the importance of the time span in a high novelty buying situation. Contrary to former researchers' findings (Cardozo, 1965; Oliver, 1980; Anderson et al., 1994), that unexpected negative variations in suppliers performance would lead to dissatisfaction, this was not the case in CC2. Because the buying members firmly believed that the supplier would take any necessary corrective action to solve the unexpected problems, they postponed their evaluation judgment. Prior positive interaction experience with the supplier was the main reason for this mental postponement process.

In other words it is crucial to try to understand the sources of unsatisfactory episodes and furthermore to solve the problems fast and effectively. A supplier should thus strive to be proactive in the dialogue with the buyer about incipient dissatisfaction. More specifically, this can be achieved performing rigorous after-sales-service. A display of the above mentioned supplier behavior would increase the probability of a high total perceived buyer satisfaction retention rebuy and loyalty. This is especially imperative because buyers of production equipment often plan to invest in more of the similar or almost similar production equipment in an effort to reduce the transaction costs which can be quite extensive. It appears that there exists some kind of "lots" mentality in the studied case companies that amplifies the consequences of the final satisfaction judgment, both in a negative and in a positive direction. The first purchase of production equipment, or probably of any high novelty business to business purchases, can be labelled as a test buy, with a very high probability of some direct measureable positive consequences, if the buyers' expectations are fulfilled. In all the case companies, the technical satisfaction dimension was perceived as very important. Nonetheless, the analysis of the data indicated that the evaluation process where based on quite other satisfaction dimensions than the technical. How is this then possible? This can be understood by dividing the buying process in phases.

The buying members divided the buying process in three mental phases. Namely, a. the ex-ante buy phase, b. the buying decision phase and c. the post-buy phase. The first mentioned phase comprised activities such as need recognition, preliminary composing of a buying center, specification of need, drawing up election criteria, supplier scanning and screening. A considerable effort is put in this phase which has durations of 6-9 months. In the buying decision phase, the supplier was finally and irreversible selected. Besides this the phase comprised, delivery and installation of the purchased equipment. Moreover, the staff of the buying organization was trained by employees from the supplier organization. The duration of the buying decision phase lasted typically from 2-4 weeks. This also means that switching cost increased considerably in this phase. Additionally, the members of the buying center tended to be more positively biased in their future satisfaction judgment of the selected supplier, i.e., because they unconsciously tried to support the crucial and costly supplier election decision. In the post-buy phase the evaluation activities are gradually reduced unless unexpected episodes appear. After a period of approximately 6 moths the constant evaluation activities performed by the buying members are completely dormant. If, however, something unexpected important happens the evaluation activity will be reactivated.

Focus in buying Process phases

In the ex-ante purchase phase focus was on trustworthiness (accuracy, observance of deadline etc.), as the buying center members did not want to go on with untrustworthy suppliers. They simply believed that initial failures would continue, for instance a less than promised quality of the purchase machinery or that the service level' and service quality would be lower than agreed etc. In the ex-ante purchase phase, they also focused on the level of congruency between the purchase price and the budgeted purchase price (e.g. the financial dimension).

In the buying decision phase, there was an incipient focus on the service dimension. Thus, we have a situation where the technical satisfaction dimension is of high importance to the buying members, however, they do not focus on this satisfaction dimension in the first two phases of the buying process but first in the third and last phase, the post-buy phase. This means that a prospect supplier that has primarily focused on the technical satisfaction dimension and paid little attention to the trustworthiness and financial satisfaction dimension never reaches to the final phase of the buying process. How can this be explained when the technical dimension was perceived as the most important satisfaction dimension in two of the case companies? Simply because it was not possible to assess the performance of the machinery (i.e. the technical satisfaction dimension) before it had been delivered and installed etc. In the same vein, operational cost could also first be evaluated in the post-buy phase. Thus, aspects of the financial satisfaction dimension were important in both the ex-ante buy phase and in the post-buy phase, albeit, because of different aspects. Table 4 below illustrates a systematic relationship between the satisfaction dimensions and thus the asymmetrical importance during the time span of the buying process, discussed above.

Table 4, Taxonomy of generic satisfaction dimensions

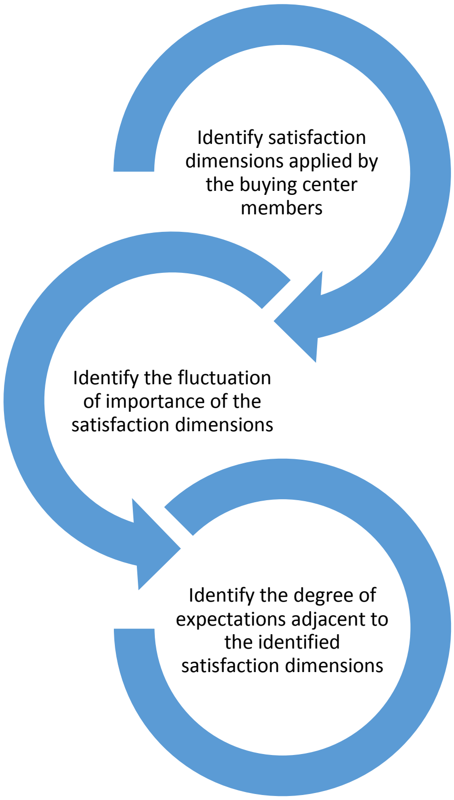
Buying Phases ⟹	***Ex-ante buy phase***	***Buying decision phase***	***Post-buy phase***
Satisfaction dimensions ⇩			
Technical	□	□	▪
Service	□	▪	▪
Trustworthiness'	▪	□	□
Financial	▪	□	▪

▪ High degree of focus □ Low degree of focus

Based on the idea of satisfaction dimensions with fluctuation importance and focus pending on the phase of a given buying process, and furthermore, the idea about different degree of expectations of the satisfaction dimensions, it is possible to propose a three step B2B sales model. The purpose of the steps is in an efficient way to enable members of the selling organization to get a deep understanding of the mental processes that are taking place among the buying center members. Furthermore, it represents a logical manual of what to look for and focus on, when trying to understand and interpret needs and wants in a new task buying situation. Additionally, to transform the offering of the selling organization in a unique way that is hard to copy for competitors and, moreover, creates value to the buying center.

The knowledge can only be retrieved inductively and trough a rather time consuming process. The process furthermore calls for a high degree of trust and motivation for closeness between both participatory members of the buying and the selling organization. Albeit, the outcome of the time consuming process is satisfied B2B new task buyers with a high probability of displaying repetitive and loyal buying behaviour. This will potentially lead to higher profitability in the supplier organizations and to a unique value creation in the buying organization. The three step B2B sales model is illustrated in figure 1 below.

Figure 1 A three step B2B sales model based on satisfaction judgments



Lastly, a symbiosis of the nature of the satisfaction dimensions, their interplay and important elements from the perspective of the buying center, is offered in form of an integrative framework. Moreover, managerial guidelines are presented as a consequence of the insights created in this study. Table 5 below depicts this integrative framework of the results and the managerial implications. On the vertical axis satisfaction dimensions are displayed. On the first top horizontal axis the three buying phase are displayed and on the second top horizontal axis are the managerial implications displayed. Specifically, the framework presents specific guidelines depending on identified satisfaction dimension and buying process phase. For example, according to the framework a seller confronted with a new task buying situation that is in the ex-ante phase of the buying process should regarding the technical satisfaction dimension provide high quality information about technical and performance aspects. Moreover, demonstrate quality by visiting customers (historical buyers) and set up possibility for communication between the prospect buyer and the existing customer. Duration of the new task buying process, and activities in the buying phase is also offered in the framework.

Table 5 Integrative framework of findings and implications

Satisfaction dimensions	Ex-ante buy phase	Buying decision phase	Post-buy phase
	Managerial implications		
Technical (generic)	Provide high quality information about technical and performance aspects. Demonstrate quality by visiting customers (historical buyers) □	No particular activities ▪	Create coherence between buyers expectation about efficiency and performance of machinery and actual perceived performance □
Service (generic)	Explain service quality and performance. Be specific. Make monetary guarantee if promises and response time is not meet □	High focus on securing service quality and on training buying organizations employees' □	High focus on fast actions if unsatisfactory episodes arises □
Trustworthiness (generic)	High focus on all aspects □	No particular activities ▪	No particular activities ▪
Financial (generic)	High focus on securing congruity between actual purchase price and budget price □	No particular activities ▪	High focus on securing congruity between actual purchase price and budget price □
One-off satisfaction dimensions	Search for unique satisfaction dimensions	Clarify unique satisfaction dimensions as they can be the key to win the contract if they are unexpected	No particular activities because expectations' related to one-off satisfaction dimensions have been encounter at this point
Activities in the three buying phases	Specification of need and market screening	Supplier choice and installation of production equipment. Training of production staff	Gradual reduction of evaluation activities
Duration	6-9 month	2-4 weeks	4-6 month, but can be activated again if unexpected episode occurs

▪ High degree of focus □ Low degree of focus

Conclusion

An integrative framework was developed in this paper which can help to get a better understanding of some of the psychological processes that take place in a high novelty business purchase. Furthermore, the integrative framework with the notation of fluctuation in importance when forming satisfaction judgement during the buying process makes it possible to craft specified marketing strategy actions at a given time in the buying process. Furthermore, a three step sales model was introduced. Namely, (1) Identify the satisfaction dimensions the buying center members apply in the buying process. (2) Identify the fluctuation in importance of the satisfaction dimensions. (3). Identify the degree of expectations' adjacent to the identified satisfaction dimensions.

Managerial Implications

As noted in the discussion about degree of expectations type adjacent to a satisfaction dimensions because a satisfaction dimension with a low degree of expectation represents a unique opportunity for the supplier to create a strong preference. This is due to the asymmetrical relationship between performance and expectations (e.g. the surprise element). The above-mentioned satisfaction paradox illustrates another interesting area. In this paradox situation, suppliers' could, in certain circumstances, influences the final satisfaction outcome even if the performance had been significantly lower than expected during the buying process. It is in other words possibly at the end of a high novelty business-to-business purchase to create the crucial feeling of high buyer satisfaction albeit that unexpected negative episodes were a part of the buying process. This stands in sharp contrast to a consumer context where satisfaction judgments are formed more quickly and thus are harder to change again. More specifically, this demonstrates that the supplier needs to focus and allocate sufficient resources to handling complaints and solving potential conflicts.

Researchimplications

We need more longitudinal and process orientated knowledge about the psychological processed that goes on but individually and among members of the buying center. This, I believe is best facilitated by using a naturalistic research paradigm. More knowledge is needed about the "lots" mentality. Is it true that organization often buys in numbers when facing high novelty buys? It is possible to imagine a number of reasons that support this idea. For instance; a. that the buying center tries to utilize the existing equipment to minimize costs, b. the availability of more sophisticated technological solutions will increase as time goes by, c. by waiting the buying organization knows if the increase in activity level is a permanent trend or merely a temporary tendency, d. trying to minimize transaction costs. In like manner, the notation of the mental postponement process mentioned above requires further elaboration. Lastly, speculations about differences in the span of tolerance depending on level relationship orientation need more elaboration.

References:

Anderson, E. W. (1994), “Cross-Category variation in customer satisfaction and retention”. Marketing Letters 5 winter, pages 19-30

Anderson, E.W and Sullivan (1993), “The Antecedents and consequences of customer satisfaction for firms”, Journal of Marketing Sience, Vol 12, No. 2, spring, pages 125-143.

Anderson, E.W, C, Fornell and D.R. Lehmann (1994), “Customer satisfaction, market share, and profitability: Findings from Sweden”, Journal of Marketing, 58, July, pages 53-66.

Bearden, W.O. and J.E. Teel (1983), “Selected determinants of customer satisfaction and complaint reports”, Journal of marketing research 20, February, pages 21-28.

Bolton, R.N. (1998), “A dynamic model of the duration of the customer’s relationship with a continuous service provider: The role of satisfaction”, Marketing Science, 17,1. Pages 44-65.

Bunn, M.D. (1993), “Taxonomy of buying decision approaches”. Journal of marketing, 57, pages 38-56.

Campbell, D.T. (1955), “The informant in quantitative research”, The American Journal of Sociology, 60, pages 339-342.

Cardozo, R.N. (1965), “An experimental study of consumer effort, expectations, and satisfaction”. Journal of marketing research , Vol. II, August, pages 244-249.

Churchill, G.A. and C. Surprenant, “An investigation into the determinants of customer satisfaction”, Journal of marketing research 19, pages 491-504.

Denzin, N.K. and Y.S. Lincoln (1994), Handbook of qualitative research, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Eggert, A., and W. Ulaga (2002), “Customer perceived value: a substitute for satisfaction in business markets? Journal of business and industrial marketing, Vol. 17 No. 2/3, pages 107-118.

Fournier, S., Mick, D.G. (1999), “rediscovering Satisfaction”, Journal of Marketing, Vol. 63, pp. 5-23.

Geertz, C. (1973). *Thick descriptions: toward an interpretive theory of culture*, In Geertz C., The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays. New York: Basis Books.

Gilchrist, V. J. & Williams, R. L. (1999), ‘*Key informant interview’*, In Crabtree B.J. & Miller, W.L. 2 ed. Doing qualitative research. Saga publications, Thousand Oaks, pages 71-88.

Grünbaum, N. N. (2007), “Identification of Ambiguity in the Case Study Research Typology: What is a Unit of Analysis?”, *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 78-97.

Grünbaum, N.N. & Stenger, M., (2013), "Dynamic Capabilities: Do They Lead to Innovation Performance and Profitability?" The IUP Journal of Business Strategy, Vol. X, No. 4, pp. 68-85.

Guba, E.G. & Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). *Competing paradigms in qualitative research*. In Denzin N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. Handbook of qualitative research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 105-117.

Halinen, A., and Törnross J.Å. (2005), "Using case methods in the study of contemporary business networks". *Journal of business research 58, Pages 1285-1297.*

Howard, J.A. and Sheth J.N. (1969), "The theory of buyer behaviour". New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Hung, P.H. and Lin, C.K. (2013), "More communication is not always better? The interplay between effective communication and interpersonal conflict in influencing satisfaction". Industrial Marketing Management 42, pp. 1223-1232.

Iacobucci, D. Ostrom A., and Grayson, K. (1995), "Distinguishing service quality and customer satisfaction: The voice of the consumer". Journal of Consumer Psychology 4 (3), pp. 277-303.

John G. and Reve. T (1982), "The reliability and validity of key informant data from dyadic relationship in marketing channels". *Journal of marketing Research, 19, November, pages 517-524.*

Johnston, W. J. and Lewin J.E. (1996), "Organizational Buying Behaviour: Toward an integrative framework," Journal of business research 35, January, pages 1-15.

Keiningham, T.L. Perkins-Munn T., Aksoy, L. and Estrin, D. (2005), "Does customer satisfaction lead to profitability? – The mediating role of share-of-wallet". *Managing service Quality, Vol. 15 No 2, pages 172-181.*

Knauer. V. (1992), "Increasing customer satisfaction", United State Office of consumers Affairs. Pueblo, CO.

Kuzel, A. J. (1999). *Sampling in qualitative inquiry*. In Crabtree, B.F. & Miller, W.L. 2 ed. Doing qualitative research, pp. 33-45. Sage publications. Thousand Oaks.

Layder, D.,"*New Strategies in Social Research".* Polity Press, Cambridge, (1993).

Light, R., Singer J.J. and Willett J.B. (1990), By Design: Conduction research on higher education, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Locke, E.A. (1969), "What is job satisfaction?", *Organizational behavior and human performance, 4. November, pages 309-336.*

McQuiston, D.H. (1989), "Novelty, complexity and importance as causal determinants of industrial buying behavior", Journal of marketing, April, Vol. 53 pages 66-79.

Miles, M.B. & Huberman, M.A. (1994). *An Expanded Sourcebook – Qualitative Data Analysis*, 2 edition, Saga, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Morse, J.M. (1989), Qualitative nursing research: a contemporary dialogue, Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Muhmin, A.G.A (2002), "Effects of suppliers' marketing program variables on industrial buyers' relationship satisfaction and commitment". *Journal of business & industrial marketing, Vol. 17 No. 7, pages 637-651.*

Oliver, R.L. (1980), "A Cognitive Model of the Antecedent and Consequences of Satisfaction Decisions". *Journal of Marketing Research, 17, November, pages 460 - 469.*

Oliver, R.L., and John E. Swan, J.E. (1989), "Consumer Perceptions of Interpersonal Equity and Satisfaction in Transactions: A Field Survey Approach", *Journal of Marketing, 53, April, pages 21-35.*

Patterson, P.G., Johnson, L.W., and Spreng, R.A. (1997), "Modeling the Determinants of Customer Satisfaction for Business-to-Business Professional Services*". Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science. Vol. 25, No. 1, pages 4-17.*

Patton, Michael Q.(1990), Qualitative evaluation and research methods, Newbury Park, CA: Sage 2nd ed.

Paulsson, & Birk (2007), "Satisfaction and repurchase behavior in a business-to-business setting : investigating the moderating effect of manufacturer, company and demographic characteristics". *Industrial marketing management.*Elsevier. Vol. 36. pp. 983-997.

Puto P.C., Patton W.E. and King R.H. (1985), "Risk handling strategies in industrial vendor selection decisions". *Journal of marketing, pages 89-95.*

Ralston, Roy W. (1996), "Models Maps Out Sure Path to Growth in Marketplace". Marketing News, 30, (11), 12.

Robinson, P. J., Charles W. Faris C.W. and Wind Y. (1967), *Industrial Buying and Creative Marketing*, Allyn and Bacon Inc., Boston.

Singh**,** J. and Widing R.E. II (1991), "What Occurs Once Consumers Complain? – A Theoretical Model for Understanding Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction Outcomes of Complaint Responses". European Journal of Marketing, Vol. 5, NO. 5, pages 30 – 46.

Sheth, J. N. (1973), A model of industrial Buyer Behavior, Journal of Marketing, 37.

Sheth, J. and Sisodia S.R. (1999), "*Revisiting Marketing's Lawlike Generalizations*". Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, volume 27, NO. 1, pages 71-87.

Smith, P. C., Kendall, M.L. and Charles L. Hulin C.L. (1969), "The Measurement of Satisfaction in Work and Retirement". Chicago: Rand McNally.

Spreng, R.A., Dixon A.L. and Olshavsky R.W (1993),"The Impact of Perceived Value on Satisfaction". Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior, 6, pages 50 – 55.
Spreng, R. A., MacKenzie, S.B., and Olshavsky, R.W. (1996), "A Reexamination of the Determinants of Consumer Satisfaction". Journal of Marketing, Vol. 60, pages 15-32, July.
Stake, R. E. (2000): "Case studies". In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln, Handbook of qualitative research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pages 435-454.
Swan, John E. and Fredrick Trawick (1993), "Consumer satisfaction research 1983 to 1992: accomplishments and future directions", Journal of consumer satisafactio, dissatisfaction and complaining behaviour, Vol. 8, pages 1 – 10.
Szymanski, D. M., and Henard D.H. (2001), "Customer satisfaction: A meta-analysis of the empirical evidence", Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Vol. 29, NO. 1, winter, pages 16-35.
Webster, Frederick E. and Yoram Wind (1972), *Organizational Buying Behaviour*, Prentice – Hall, INC., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.
Wesley, J.J. Leach, M.P. and Lui, A.H. (1999), "Theory testing using case studies in business-to-business research. Industrial marketing management, 28, pages 201-213.
Yang, J., Alejandro T.G. B. and Boles, J. S.(2011), "The role of social capital and knowledge transfer in selling center performance". Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing 26/3, pages 152-161.
Yi, Y., (1990), "A Critical Review of Consumer Satisfaction", in Zeithaml, V., A., (ed.), "Review of Marketing", 1990. American Marketing Association, Chicago, pages 68-123.
Yin, Robert K.,(1994) "Case study research – design and Methods", Sage Publications, Second Edition.
Zeithaml, V., Leonard, B.L. and Parasuraman A. (1996), "The Behavioural Consequences of Service Quality". Journal of Marketing, 60, april, pages 31-46.