![Vaasan yliopisto — UNIVERSITY OF VAASA]

PIA HAUTAMÄKI

Leading with Individual Consideration

Forming Value with Customers in Business Interactions

Julkaisun nimike

Yksilöllinen johtajuus – Arvon tuottaminen yhteistyössä asiakkaan kanssa liiketoiminnan vuorovaikutustilanteissa

Tiivistelmä

Yritysten välinen myyminen ja ostaminen sekä siihen liitetyt odotukset ovat muuttuneet viime vuosien aikana. Tämä tutkimus keskittyy johtajuuden osa-alueelle ja siihen, miten myyntihenkilöstön tulisi vastata uuden yritysasiakkaan odotuksiin ja odotusten tyydyttämiseen asiakkaan ostoprosessin alkuvaiheissa. Tutkimuksen teoreettinen viitekehys rakentuu persoonallisuusteorian ja transformationaalisen johtajuusteorian pohjalle. Tutkimuksen empiirinen osa nojaa kvalitatiiviseen ja kvantitatiiviseen aineistoon, jolloin tutkimusta voidaan metodologisesti kuvata käsitteellä monimenetelmällinen tutkimus (eng. mixed method research). Väitöskirjan ensimmäinen osa tutkii yritysasiakkaan johtamista persoonallisuusteorian ja transformationaalisen johtajuusteorian näkökulmasta, toinen osa tutkii yritysasiakkaiden odotuksia uusiin asiakaskohtaamisiin liittyen haastatteluiden ja persoonallisuustyyppien näkökulmasta. Kolmannessa osassa tutkitaan myyjien odotuksia johtajuudelle asiakaskäyttäytymisen muutoksista johtuen uudessa liiketoimintatilanteessa.

Vuorovaikutustilanteissa tulisi keskittyä tyydyttämään asiakkaan henkilökohtaiset, persoonallisuudesta nousevat tarpeet sekä mahdollistaa sitä kautta esimerkiksi yritysasiakkaan mahdollisuus kokea myyjäyrityksen sitoutuminen yhteiseen tulevaisuuden rakentamiseen. Henkilökohtaisen johtajuuden kautta myyjällä on mahdollisuus kehittyä asiakassuhteiden muodostajana sekä oppia tyydyttämään persoonallisuudeltaan erilaisten asiakkaiden tarpeita optimaalisimmalla tavalla. Asiakkaan tarpeiden mukainen toiminta jo ennen varsinaista uuden asiakkaan kohtaamista ja varsinaisissa kohtaamisissa mahdollistaa myyntiyritykselle paremmat mahdollisuudet onnistua rakentamaan pitkäjänteisiä molempien osapuolten liiketoimintaa kehittäviä asiakassuhteita.

Tutkimus korostaa persoonallisuudesta nousevien tarpeiden tyydyttämisen ja henkilökohtaisen johtajuuden olevan merkittävä tekijä asiakkaiden odotusten täyttämisessä myyjän ja asiakkaan vuorovaikutustilanteissa. Henkilökohtaisella, persoonallisuustyyppitasolla tapahtuvalla vuorovaikutuksella ja transformationaalisella johtajuudella nähdään olevan yhteys myyjän ja uuden asiakkaan vuorovaikutuksellisen arvon kokemuksen muodostamisessa. Tämä tutkimus ehdottaa hyödyntämään myyntiorganisaation johtamisessa sekä myyjän ja asiakkaan vuorovaikutustilanteissa persoonallisuustyyppiteoriaa ja transformationaalista johtajuutta asiakasodotusten täyttämiseksi.

Title of publication

Leading with Individual Consideration - Forming Value with Customers in Business Interactions

Abstract

Business to business (B2B) selling and buying, and expectations towards interactions, have changed in recent years. This dissertation focuses on leadership and on the new business customers' expectations and how salespeople need to satisfy these expectations during the early phases in the customer buying process. The theoretical frame is based on personality theory and on transformational leadership theory. The empirical part is based on qualitative and quantitative data, so that the research may be called as a mixed method research. The first section concentrates on research, from a theoretical point of view, of how business customers' and their individual needs are managed in buyer-seller interactions, the second section focusses on customers' expectations leading up to and during business meetings from the interview and personality type perspective. The third section focuses on sellers' expectations of preferred leadership styles in uncertain business environments.

Companies would need to focus on interactions to satisfy ones' personal needs and to accomplish this during the time leading up to meetings and engaging with a customer to initiate a successful future working relationship together which is of paramount importance. When the seller is led individually, (s)he is also trained to develop better relationships with B2B customers and also to satisfy different kinds of customers' needs which have been identified from their personality types. The satisfaction of customers' needs enables sales organisations greater opportunities to succeed in building long-term relationships which value both parties.

This dissertation highlights the needs arising from different personality types and the individual consideration in terms of personality theory and transformational leadership theory when satisfying customers' expectations. This study recommends utilising individual consideration of the personality theory of MBTI and transformational leadership theory in sales organisations' leadership and in buyer-seller interactions, to be able to satisfy business customers' expectations.

Keywords

Business to business selling, Buyers buying process, Myers Briggs Type Theory, Transformational Leadership, Personality theory

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Contents

PART 1

X

Figures

Tables

Abbreviations

B2B   Business to Business

MBTI   Myers Brigss Type Theory and Indicator

TF-leadership   Transformational leadership

PART 2 – Published studies

This dissertation is based on six appended studies:

I. Hautamäki, P. (Forthcoming). Business to Business Buyer-Seller Interactions – Personality and Transformational Leadership Theories' Perspective. *Accepted to be published in Leadership, Innovation and Entrepreneurship as Driving Forces of the Global Economy.* [1]

II. Hautamäki, P. (2015). Business Buyers' Expectations in Buyer-Seller Encounters – What Really Matters? *International Journal of Social, Behavioral, Educational, Economic, Business and Industrial Engineering,* 9(4), 1325 – 1330. [2]

III. Kaski, T., Hautamäki, P., Pullins, E. & Kock, H. (Forthcoming). Buyer versus salesperson expectations for an initial B2B sales meeting. *Accepted to be published in Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing.* [3]

IV. Hautamäki, P. (2016). The buyers' pre-buying phase – aspects from the personality perspective. *Proceedings of the 14th International Conference of the Society for Global Business & Economic Development*, Montclair: New Jersey. [4]

V. Hautamäki, P. & Routamaa, V. (2016). Personality types in buyer-seller interactions. *Proceedings of the 14th International Conference of the Society for Global Business & Economic Development*, Montclair: New Jersey. [5]

VI. Hautamäki, P. 2015. Sales Leadership in Complex Business Environments. *Proceedings of the 11th European Conference on Management Leadership and Governance Military Academy Lisbon*, Portugal, 12-13 November, 2015. [6]

---

[1] Reprinted with the kind permission from Springer.

[2] Reprinted with the kind permission from Journal of Social, Behavioral, Educational, Economic, Business and Industrial Engineering

[3] Reprinted with the kind permission from Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.

[4] Reprinted with the kind permission of the Society for Global Business & Economic Development.

[5] Reprinted with the kind permission of the Society for Global Business & Economic Development.

[6] Reprinted with the kind permission from Academic Conferences and Publishing International Ltd.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Today's business to business (B2B) organizations are facing many changes and they need to reinvent themselves to survive as the challenges faced are more complex than before. The challenges today are interconnected, and changing one thing will lead to unexpected consequences so that the business environment may seem more uncertain than before. The transformation of this challenging business environment may be partly due to digitalization, increased global competition and market fragmentation. Digitalization can be seen to also affect the changes to how customers serve themselves before, during and after purchase. (Ostrom, Parasuraman, Bowen, Patrício, & Voss, 2015; Spina, Caniato, Luzzini, & Ronchi, 2013.) Additionally, digitalization in the B2B environment has changed the way who determines the value experienced. Previously sales companies made decisions of what is valuable to sell to B2B customers. Today digitalization assists customers to easily obtain more information about the solutions needed. This has brought us to a situation, where the business customer is the one who determines the value and also takes part in the creation of value (Grönroos & Voima, 2013; Vargo & Lusch, 2008). This affects B2B selling which today is a more demanding profession than ever before. If earlier, the salesperson's work was seen to bring product information to customers, today customers' look for salespersons who are able to form value together with the customers, act as change architects and be successful to lift a customer's business on a more contributive level. (Dixon & Tanner, 2012.)

If the earlier marketing theories based their orientation on economic and product issues, today the focus is on interaction and on the value creation between buyer and seller (Lindgreen, Antioco, Palmer, & Heesch, 2009; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Because the offerings and also the needs of customers are more complex, uncertain and knowledge intensive than previously, the customer and their supplier are more dependent on each other (Nordin & Kowalkowski, 2010). However, buyers should not be considered only as rational and cognitive decision-makers but this uncertain and continuously changing business environment should promote the need for sales organizations to adopt a human approach when meeting their customers and take, for example, their emotions and experiences into account (Haas, Snehota, & Corsaro, 2012). This is especially important because the prospective value formed is determined by the customers (Payne, Storbacka, & Frow, 2008; Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008). Sales literature

of the interaction processes from the customers and sellers perspective is scant (Hohenschwert & Geiger, 2015). There have been calls for a greater understanding of the role of relations when forming value experiences between the customer and seller (Grönroos, 1999; Ravald & Grönroos, 1996).

In relationship marketing the focus is on relations, and in this study the focus is on the sales company and its personnel, so that they are able to enhance long-term relationships and, therefore, ensure a continuous, loyal, stable and profitable business. One indication has been to add value on the offered product, for example, by strengthening quality or building supportive services around the product. (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996.) This study identifies that the interaction can be the experienced value itself (see Hohenschwert & Geiger, 2015; Salomonson, Åberg, & Allwood, 2012). Furthermore, because fewer studies have looked as deeply into the interactional phenomenon between buyer and seller, this study tries to solve the relational, interactional and behavioral aspects of value from the business customers point of view, thereby offering sales organizations a deeper understanding of how to form value interactions with their customers. This dissertation focuses on new B2B customers and sellers as human beings and studies the buyer-seller interactions and expectations in this uncertain and demanding business environment. It provides a deeper understanding of the phenomenon around interactional value formation in buyer-seller interactions in the area of B2B buying and selling services. Additionally, all the empirical data in this dissertation was collected from participants who were employed in B2B sales or buying professions during the years 2014-2015, when the data was collected.

Recent changes in the B2B buying process has affected sales organizations. The buying in customer companies is, for example, more sophisticated than before and suppliers, who are able to build long-term relationships and form value with the customer for a long run, are the dream sellers of the B2B buyers early buying phase. Today at the buyers' side, there is a team to take care of the purchasing and even smaller purchases are on the table of companies' management team. Additionally many manufacturing companies and their business buyers look for better profits and increased revenue from the services offered (Nordin & Kowalkowski, 2010). However, often in sales organizations the only link to the buyer organization is the initial B2B salesperson. Often, on the buyers' side, there is also another individual who is taking care of the pre-buying phase and searching for possible partnering supplier companies. Furthermore, these individuals on the buyers' side are able to make decisions about the future

partnering supplier organizations even before the sellers know that the customer has a problem to be solved. When the salespeople have the first contact with the customer, these B2B salespeople need to be able to satisfy customers' needs and form value experience for future cooperation purposes. If these sellers are not able to form experience of value to these buyer organizations representatives, it might be that the sellers are not able to proceed into meeting with these customers and the deals on the demanding B2B selling side will not be closed.

In this study, which focuses on the demanding B2B service sales, the buyers may be categorized as strategic value buyers (Rackham & DeVincentis, 1999). The degree of value experienced during the buyers pre-buying phase, or at the sales meetings, depends on the buyer's profile, for example, what is the customer actually buying and what, from this point, is valuable to this initial buyer. In this commonly used and applicable framework of Rackham and DeVincentis (1999), the customers are divided into three different buyer types: intrinsic value buyers, extrinsic value buyers and strategic value buyers. For the intrinsic buyers the value is the product and there is no need for sales personnel. Often this kind of selling is shifted to the webstores today. Extrinsic value buyers see value additional to the product, the information on how to use the product. This means that sales personnel may offer value to their customers by carrying out accurate needs identification and by advising the customer to solve their specific needs by using and applying the product. Strategic value buyers prefer long-term partnerships where both parties have common goals and often both of these parties need each other to be successful in business. Strategically important to selling and buying is sales service cooperation, where the salesperson is needed to build value together with the B2B customer and where the buyer organizations are looking for long term partner companies.

Studies have shown that buyers in the B2B environment today, look for long-term relationships and their demands come from a more comprehensive perspective and skill set than before (Blocker, Cannon, Panagopoulos, & Sager, 2012; Haas et al., 2012). Moreover, recent studies on B2B sales and value creation have found that value creation is formed between seller and buyer on relational and individual level interactions (Corsaro & Snehota, 2010; Edvardsson, Holmlund, & Strandvik, 2008; Grönroos, 2011; Haas et al., 2012; Hohenschwert & Geiger, 2015). Different B2B sales approaches, such as solution selling, consultative selling and value selling, have proposed that seller activities improve the effectiveness of customer business and from this point of view the salesperson creates value (Anderson & Wynstra, 2010; Terho, Haas, Eggert, & Ulaga, 2012; Tuli, Kohli, & Bharadwaj, 2007). Often, in sales approaches, the focus is on meetings from the start of the relationship between buyer and seller.

Additionally, most research on customer value creation focuses on product-oriented sales, not on the relational aspect of selling (Parasuraman & Grewal, 2000). Moreover, there is a lack of studies which take account of the buyers pre-buying phase (see Jokiniemi, 2013). There are some examples which show that the value formed together with the customer would need to be studied more closely (Echeverri & Skalen, 2011). For example, Tuli et al. (2007) focused on customer solutions and found that customers looked for relational processes during the solution building and the relational process was experienced as a value itself. Additionally, there are many examples of relational processes in selling which have positively affected customers satisfaction and commitment (Grönroos, 2011; Grönroos & Voima, 2013) and also identify the interactive selling process as a value (Edvardsson et al., 2008; Hohenschwert & Geiger, 2015).

According to the changes in business, sales work has recently been defined as the work of a relationship manager (Storbacka, Ryals, Davies, & Nenonen, 2009) and earlier studies on the approach of relationship selling has been found to be an effective way to conduct sales (Crosby, Evans, & Cowles, 1990; Palmatier, Dant, Grewal, & Evans, 2006). However, few studies have got closer to the phenomenon of relationship selling and the meaning of the seller meeting in different interactional phases with another human being. Business customers differ in how they prefer to be approached, how much information they need and how they make decisions (see Myers & McCaulley, 1985). As a result, B2B salespeople must have a deep understanding of their different strategically important business customers and their needs in order to meet their expectations or to help them to see their business possibilities. (Blocker et al., 2012; Dixon & Tanner, 2012; Tuli et al., 2007.)

In addition, it is important for sales organizations to be aware of the kinds of activities B2B buyers look for when searching suitable future partners. Thus, it is important to understand buyers' perceptions of the pre-buying phase activities and of what has the greatest impact on first sight. This is more important in business environments where the buyers require complex solutions and intangibles into which the access is involved only after decisions have been made (Edvardsson et al., 2008; Nordin & Kowalkowski, 2010). Because in B2B service selling, there are often situations where buyers are not able to evaluate the solution and service prior to purchase, therefore the satisfaction of B2B buyers' relational expectations are worthy of consideration. Nevertheless, according to earlier studies, in B2B relationships the value is seen through the entire relationship (Bienstock & Royne, 2007; Kim, 2014), and this is why this study also takes the pre-buying phase into account. Recent changes in buying challenge

salespeople, as different B2B customers in the same company may view the possible value proposals of the cooperation differently. This is also why identifying possible gaps or differences in perceptions is a critical step while forming value with the buyer organization's decision makers (Ulaga & Chacour, 2001) and also during B2B buyers pre-buying phase.

Relationships have been seen to evolve over time and the salespersons' task is to guide the buyers through the relationship development process (Crosby et al., 1990; Dwyer, Schurr, & Oh, 1987). According to earlier studies of relational selling often the approach has concentrated on interactional competences or quality (Biong & Selnes, 1995; Crosby et al., 1990; Jones, Brown, Zoltners, & Weitz, 2005) or on competencies that build trust, gain commitment and develop satisfactory relationships (Doney & Cannon, 1997; Dwyer et al., 1987; Jolson, 1997). In business today the activities that salespeople undertake on an individual level with the customer before and during a meeting are important because expectations frame the customers experienced value resulting from the initial sales meeting (Kenny, 1994), so there will always be expectations which are experienced in earlier business interactions. The best possible situation would be when the expectations are in line with the customer and seller according to Oliver's (1977) expectancy theory. However, there are fewer B2B sales studies on relational partnership initiating, albeit that sales work is gaining more and more relationship building elements (Ingram, LaForge, & Leigh, 2002) where the customers' expectations and their earlier experiences may play a big role in the value experienced. Furthermore, research shows that personal interactions are important for the continuation of a relationship and relationship failures have been traced back to interpersonal problems (Ford, 1980).

The way to build close relationships has often been observed from the adaptive selling skills perspective and this approach has also gained positive results on sales performance and better relationships with the customers (Crosby et al., 1990; Giacobbe, Jackson, Crosby, & Bridges, 2006; Spiro & Weitz, 1990; Williams & Spiro, 1985). Sales literature has frequently discussed adapting to the buyer by using influencing tactics and communication (McFarland, Challagalla, & Shervani, 2006; Weitz, 1981; Williams & Spiro, 1985). Evidence suggests that salespeople, rather than buyers, adapt their approach according to the situation (Edvardsson et al., 2008). Personal similarity is thought to be particularly important in the relationship initiation phase because it increases confidence and feelings of trust (Biong & Selnes 1995), but there is less research to assist, for example, the adaptive selling approach in determining a buyers' "true" personality type. Strategies for communication or learnt influencing tactics may not work if the value forming with the customer takes several interactive

encounters. Without knowing the personal needs behind the expectations, adapting to a customers' needs and satisfying their expectations can be challenging (see for example Myers, 1992). Regardless, it is known that in B2B encounters salespeople need to adapt to different situations and customers to be able to provide tailored solutions (Román & Iacobucci, 2010; Weitz, Sujan, & Sujan, 1986) but, as far as is known, there are few studies of how to concretely adapt to customers' needs.

Additionally in the global environment, the complex needs of customers and buyers' buying habits learned as a consumer, acknowledges the skills of the salespeople to sell tangibles and valuable services to their business buyers in actual buyer-seller encounters (Adamson, Dixon, & Toman, 2012; Jones et al., 2005). Since studies show that nowadays the buyer is the one who starts the business interactions (Agndal, 2006; Overby & Servais, 2005), it is important to closely study business buyers' expectations and needs towards buyers' pre-buying phase and actual interactions, so that salespeople are able to develop a concrete understanding of what type of activities form value experiences to the buyers in their early buying phases (Day & Crask, 2000; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001) and in B2B meetings.

Because there are, as far as is known, only a few studies of the expectations from the buyers' side, this thesis focuses firstly on the study of the expectations of customers in order to be able to adequately address the research problem. Moreover, this study does not use relationship marketing theories, because the data is mostly collected from the consumer side or from the customers who already have good relationships with their suppliers. Often the studies have focused on products and not on services and intangibles, or the studies do not address today's demanding B2B environment's challenges. Additionally, because this study focuses on buyer-seller interactions, it does not take into account the networks influencing the cooperating partners because the phenomenon is complex enough (see Christopher, Payne, & Ballantyne, 1991; Flint, Woodruff, & Gardial, 2002; Håkansson & Ford, 2002). Because of the scarcity of the value formation studies from the customers' point of view, this study examines customers' expectations from different theoretical perspectives to contribute on value formation from the interactional perspective. Moreover, the focus is on new B2B customers and on their and their seller's expectations. This study does not take account of the wider environment which may affect buyer-seller interactions such as buyers' or sellers' supervisors, culture, organizational elements like structures or situational elements.

This dissertation provides an in-depth view of the theory of buyers' expectations and interactions through the use of the Myers Briggs Theory of personality types. Myers Briggs Theory of personality is based on Carl Jung's (1921) personality theory and has been further developed to a measurement called Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), which is a dynamic measure of personality. MBTI is one of the most used tools to define the personality and, in recent times, it has been used largely in organizational studies (Brown & Reilly, 2009; Carroll, 2010; Hautala, 2008; Müller & Turner, 2010) and as a tool in companies in leadership development programs (Hautala, 2005). Additionally, this dissertation examines expectations with Oliver's (1977) expectancy disconfirmation theory to find out how the buyers' and sellers' expectations align. Oliver's (1977) expectancy disconfirmation theory is a cognitive psychological theory which is used most frequently to explain post-purchase satisfaction resulting from expectations, perceived performance and disconfirmation of beliefs. In this dissertation the focus is on buyers and sellers' expectations towards buyer-seller interactions and Oliver's theory (1977) was used to study both B2B buyers and sellers' expectations. In Oliver's (1977) theory disconfirmation occurs when the perceived performance departs enough from the expectation for the buyer to view the expectation to have been incorrect. Disconfirmation can be positive (the performance is better than expected) or negative (the performance failed to live up to the expectation). Disconfirmation, then can positively or negatively influence satisfaction with the salesperson. In social psychology, customer satisfaction is seen to be a function of positive disconfirmation (Oliver & Desarbo, 1988; Oliver, 1977). If expectations are in line between the customer and seller it is referred to as a confirmation of expectations: both parties are satisfied and expectations are met (Oliver, Balakrishnan, & Barry, 1994).

After understanding the expectations of buyers and sellers, it is important to offer sales leadership which fits this complex and demanding environment and help salespeople to form value experiences with the customer by satisfying their expectations. Recent studies have claimed that offering sales leadership knowledge is one of the most important topics for the future salesforce and successful organizations (Ingram, 2004; Ingram et al., 2002). There are many definitions for leadership but the main guideline could be presented in one theoretical study of effective leadership and personalities, that leadership is about acting, things to do and complete (Andersen, 2006). To answering for the gap in sales literature in this complex business environment where the salesperson is in charge of value formation with the business buyer, this study uses the theory of transformational leadership (TF-leadership) to help the salesperson to form experience of value formation with the customer. Additionally, TF-leadership, in this study, is also seen to help sales directors

when they are leading their salespeople to satisfy customers' expectations, so leadership is studied in buyer-seller interactions and from the salespersons point of views.

As noticed in many recent studies the use of TF-leadership in today's complex business environment, should be the base for all leadership activities (Edwards, 2012; Hunt, Osborn, & Boal, 2009). Studies have also shown TF-leadership to lead to increased performance in sales organizations (Humphrey, 2002; MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Rich, 2001). According to recent overall business area studies on TF-leadership, it has resulted in several benefits to different businesses, for example, to a better individual follower performance, well-being, higher productivity levels and greater level of job satisfaction (Arnold, Turner, Barling, Kelloway, & McKee, 2007; Nielsen, Yarker, Randall, & Munir, 2009; Wang, Oh, Courtright, & Colbert, 2011; Wang & Howell, 2012). It might be said that it seems to be a highly promising model to utilize albeit Dubinsky, Yammarino, Jolson, & Spangler's (1995) study recommended transactional leadership activities to sales management settings. As sales literature has shown, in today's buyer-seller interactions salespeople need to have skills to solve business buyers' complex needs, wide-ranging knowledge, work as a value adding advisor to the buyers' and demonstrate competence when playing a key role in building the buyers' desired long-term relationships (Crosby et al., 1990; Dixon & Tanner, 2012; Jones et al., 2005; Marshall, Goebel, & Moncrief, 2003). In contrast this study is disseminating transformational elements of TF-leadership to lead buyers and salespeople and give individual consideration in terms of personality theory of the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) to be able to satisfy expectations.

There are several different measurement options to measure personality, but because MBTI has recently been used largely on leadership and personality studies (Brandt & Laiho, 2013; Brown & Reilly, 2009; Carroll, 2010) and because the connection with TF-leadership has been clarified several times (Brandt & Laiho, 2013; Carroll, 2010; Hautala, 2006), it was decided to also use these theories in this study. When this dissertation is focused to examine buyer-seller interactions, where the salespeople is seen to be the leader of the customer, there also lie an important aspect of how the salesperson is needed to be led that (s)he is able to satisfy his or her customers' expectations. Studies show that leaders' high self-awareness has a connection to effectiveness (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; Bass & Yammarino, 1991). This study shows that this complexity in business environments actively affects sellers therefore, improving self-awareness and individual consideration may increase their success in business. That is why this study sees that transformational elements which have shown to

recently increased follower performance (Wang et al., 2011; Wang & Howell, 2012), will also be beneficial when leading the salespeople. And these same elements may also benefit the sellers work when they are leading their B2B customers.

However, findings show that building relationships is one possible way to improve sales performance and that similar personalities are important in phases where relationships are developing (Biong & Selnes, 1995; Macintosh, Anglin, Szymanski, & Gentry, 1992). This dissertation uses the theory of TF-leadership as an individual level tool for salespeople to lead their business customers in interactions and the personality theory of Myers Briggs as an individual level tool to treat the buyers so that their relational expectations will be satisfied. TF-leadership gives examples of how to lead the buyers on an individual level, however the personality theory is used to go deeper to enable the individual to adapt to one's relational, interactional and behavioral activities towards buyers' expectations.

The aim with this dissertation is to improve understanding of buyer-seller interactions, buyers' needs and expectations and to bring new knowledge to lead valuable relational initiation and interaction phases which are less studied (cf. Edvardsson et al., 2008; Jokiniemi, 2013). While sales literature provides varying definitions of customers experienced value, this dissertation will define value formation as relational, interactional and behavioral and as a dependent variable on both the buyer and the seller.

1.2   Research gaps

Research on B2B sales has not been able to build a model of how to fulfill the buyers' needs in their pre-buying phase or in buyer-seller interactions. In sales, adapting to buyers' needs on an individual level can be said to be one of the central business activities when initiating business relationships (Schurr, 2007; Viio & Grönroos, 2015). Also the salespeople's willingness to adapt is important , because the motivation of salespeople to adapt may act as a converter in the relationship initiation phase (Edvardsson et al., 2008). Since B2B sales professionals are still needed in selling intangibles and in relational buyer-seller interactions (Echeverri & Skalen, 2011; Haas et al., 2012; Hohenschwert & Geiger, 2015; Salomonson et al., 2012), it is necessary to study how the relationships should be initiated based on customers' appraisals, especially when studies show that the interaction itself is seen to add value (Grönroos & Voima, 2013; Hohenschwert & Geiger, 2015). The significance of relational activities has

not been studied as the main driver of enabling systematic value forming experiences in B2B contexts whereas distributing know-how and resources are seen to be central (Blocker et al., 2012; Grant, 2013; Haas et al., 2012; Håkansson, Ford, Gadde, Snehota, & Waluszewski, 2009; Shannahan, Bush, Moncrief, & Shannahan, 2013; Ulaga & Eggert, 2006).

As noted, selling characterizes relational aspects with a long-term perspective and value formation relationally is seen as crucial with buyers (Biong & Selnes, 1995; Ford, 1980; Haas et al., 2012; Verbeke, Dietz, & Verwaal, 2011) and the interactional elements are important to form value with the buyer (Echeverri & Skalen, 2011; Grönroos & Voima, 2013; Haas et al., 2012; Hohenschwert & Geiger, 2015; Salomonson et al., 2012). Interactional selling was studied at the beginning of this century and it was identified that the customer-oriented behaviour of a successful salesperson largely results from the salesperson's ability to create and maintain relationships (Williams & Attaway, 1996). Hence, personal elements can be seen to play an important role when satisfying business customers' expectations in buyer-seller interactions (Biong & Selnes, 1995; Dion, Easterling, & Miller, 1995). However, it is important to understand that there might not be any single best way to implement B2B selling, because salespeople need to adapt to every situation and to every buyer (Román & Iacobucci, 2010). Nevertheless, very little is known about relationship building and adaptation to accommodate buyers' needs (Franke & Park, 2006; Guenzi, Pardo, & Georges, 2007). Additionally there are less studies of dyadic perspective from both buyers and sellers perspectives and how their expectations align (Ahearne, Jelinek, & Jones, 2007).

When customers look for long-term relationships it has been identified that their demands come from a more comprehensive level than previously (Blocker et al., 2012) and it may be seen that the value forming in buyer-seller interactions could have arisen from personal needs and skills to initiate relationships. Dixon and Tanner (2012) defined selling as a 'human-driven interaction', which transforms the traditional interpretation of sales, which is no longer seen to be adequate (Moncrief & Marshall, 2005). Only few studies have focused on the B2B buyers side and studied their needs in today's business environment (Agndal, 2006; Ahearne et al., 2007; Crosby et al., 1990; Overby & Servais, 2005), and there are very few explanations of how salespeople need to sell in this situation (cf. Jones et al., 2005; Korpela, 2015; Subramony & Pugh, 2015). Additionally, most studies focus on the phases during and after the sales meetings, but there is less evidence to show that studies have been carried out into the relational pre-buying phase, the time before the sales meetings (Edvardsson et al., 2008; Jokiniemi, 2013). It is also shown that usually salespeople tend to focus on relationships on a short-

term basis rather than taking a long-term perspective thus the B2B service selling would need to take that into consideration (cf. Viio and Grönroos, 2015).

The TF-leadership model has been shown to positively relate to individual follower performance and is also strongly related to contextual performance as opposed to task performance (Wang et al., 2011). As suggested earlier, transactional leadership would better address salespeople than TF-leadership (Dubinsky et al., 1995). Today the sales leaders' role should be seen primarily as an architect of change (Ingram, Laforge, Locander, Mackenzie, & Podsakoff, 2005). This same change is also suggested by Dixon and Tanner (2012) who claim that salespeople need the skills to act as an architect of change. Sales has earlier been seen to be consistent with task-oriented activities, but this study is placed so that selling should be seen contextually, where also TF-leadership has been found to increase performance (Wang et al., 2011). This study suggests using individual level oriented TF-leadership to lead B2B customers in buyer-seller interactions to fulfill the needs of the business buyers. By doing so it builds a theoretical model of the relational approach to leading customers and building partnerships for the long-term. Earlier studies on the relational selling approach have not acknowledged the elements of TF-leadership and it is seen that, for example, the shared vision and mission that lead to long-term partnerships and context-based information sharing, are more indicative activities of a change architect (Biong & Selnes, 1995; Crosby et al., 1990; Doney & Cannon, 1997; Dwyer et al., 1987; Ingram et al., 2005; Jolson, 1997). Furthermore, as far as is known, salespeople's preferred sales leadership activities have not been studied in leadership literature, there being only a few studies from the followers' perspective (Hautala, 2005; Hautala, 2008; Hautala, 2007; Routamaa, Honkonen, Asikainen, & Pollari, 1997; Routamaa & Ponto, 1994). However, recently sales research has noticed how TF-leadership is used to lead B2B sellers to increase sales performance (Humphreys, 2002; MacKenzie et al., 2001).

According to studies of personality types (measured by MBTI) and TF-leadership, followers who share a similar personality type with their leaders are more likely to develop a strong commitment to their leader (Felfe & Schyns, 2010). It is also shown that people with certain personality types are more transformational leaders than other types (Brandt & Laiho, 2013; Carroll, 2010; Hautala, 2006). When these results are compared to buyer-seller interactions, salespeople using both TF-leadership behaviors and individual consideration in terms of personality, may meet customers' expectations in buyer-seller interactions (Dion et al., 1995; Felfe & Schyns, 2010; Routamaa et al., 1997; Routamaa & Ponto, 1994). Additionally, the study by Dion et al. (1995) revealed that if the customer perceives a connection with the salesperson, sales performance increases and the

customer feels positive towards the sales relationship. One study found that in the medical sector patients' complaints about doctors were concerned largely with communication rather than clinical competence and the authors claimed that poor communication may be due to personality type differences across the need for information and the way of gathering it (Clack, Allen, Cooper, & Head, 2004). Similarly, one study found that sellers' communication skills are significant when determining a buyer's perceived quality of the relationship during the buying process (Parsons, 2002). In sales literature the relational selling approach has identified that relationship initiation is important and that personality factors play an important role when the most effective performer has been identified. These personal factors are based on age, gender, weight, race or appearance on the sellers side (Churchill, Ford, Hartley, & Walker, 1985), and not to the "true" personality types of B2B buyers or sellers. Furthermore, Biong & Selnes (1995) found in their study that personal similarities were more important in low dependence relationships especially where there were many uncertainties.

Research shows that the initial interactions between the B2B buyer and seller may be either constructive or de-constructive (Echeverri & Skalen, 2011). It would be beneficial to have more knowledge in this business environment of what kind of activities form value experiences for the customer and when the customer experiences that initial, constructive interaction. (cf. Echeverri & Skalen, 2011; Ford, 1980; Weitz, 1981). There are few recent studies about demanding business environments, which have taken into account the individual consideration, expectations and preferred needs from the buyers' and sellers' perspective to be able to form value experiences with the customer in buyer-seller interactions. Several studies have called for more research about what really happens in interactive processes between a seller and a customer, how different personality types influence the experience of the value formation with the buyer and what is the best way to lead the buying process to form value with the customer in dyadic situations (Ahearne et al., 2007; Blocker et al., 2012; Dwyer et al., 1987; Grant, 2013; Haas et al., 2012; Shannahan et al., 2013). Nevertheless, there are some studies which have revealed that there are challenges when sales organizations are trying to form value with their customers and often the relational processes are left under consideration from the sellers point of view (Tuli et al., 2007).

Based on these findings, this dissertation aims to answer these theoretical gaps in the buyers' pre-buying phase and in buyer-seller interactions. To address these research gaps in initiating relationships, this study utilizes Jung's (1921) theory of personality and psychological types and the Myers Briggs Type indicator, MBTI. MBTI which is a widely used tool for improving individual understanding and

collaboration with others (Gardner & Martinko, 1996). In this study MBTI is used to understand the individual level expectations and needs of buyers according buyer-seller interactions. The period leading up to meetings and the relational activities between salespeople and customers is an unexamined area and the MBTI is used because it explains individuals' innate preferences behind their expectations (Briggs Myers & Myers, 1993; Brown & Reilly, 2009). Additionally, in one study included in this dissertation, the expectations towards initial sales meetings from B2B buyers and sellers' perspectives have been studied with the expectancy confirmation theory by Oliver (1977) which is largely used on consumer studies. As noted earlier, to be able add to individual consideration by MBTI to lead buyer-seller interactions, the theory of TF-leadership is used to build a conceptual framework for leading the buyer-seller interactions and to lead todays sales personnel.

The aim of this dissertation is to improve understanding of buyer-seller interactions and the relationship initiation phase from the period leading up to the first meeting. The research contributes to the subject by introducing new knowledge of business customers from both professional buyers' expectations and business buyers' expectations and their needs for buyer-seller interactions and how to lead interactions in the context of sales leadership.

1.3   Study objectives and research questions

When concentrating on buyer-seller interactions the main research questions this dissertation seeks to answer is as follows:

How to utilize personality theory and transformational leadership in different phases of buyer-seller interactions in the context of sales leadership?

This study is focusing on the abovementioned research problem by studying the problem from three difference perspectives. First of all, because there are fewer studies relating to the B2B customers' side this study looks at the theoretical perspective that shows how the customers should be led and treated so that their expectations will be satisfied. The second element relates to customers' expectations and uses empirical data to determine what the customers' expectations are before and during meetings and whether there is a connection between personality types and expectations. The third element relates to sellers' appraisals with their managers and how these can aid the seller to satisfy customers expectations in these changing and uncertain times.

These elements are manifested in following secondary questions:

Q1. Could the theories of MBTI and transformational leadership be utilized in buyer-seller interactions to form relational value with the customers? (Study 1)

Q2. What kind of expectations do the business buyers have to the buyer-seller encounters in this changed business situation? (Study 2)

Q3. How do the value creation expectations align for initial sales meetings between buyer and seller? (Study 3)

Q4. Is there a connection between the buyers' expectations to buyer-seller interactions and with the buyers' personality types? (Study 4)

Q5. Why and to what extent buyers' meet salespeople and do the favoured activities arise from personality types of the buyers? (Study 5)

Q6. How salespeople prefer to be led in complex business environments? (Study 6)

As shown in Figure 1, this dissertation attempts to explore the unique and context-based, broad phenomenon with the aim of advancing both the theory and practice. First, this study explores whether the theories of TF-leadership and personality theory of MBTI could be utilized in buyer-seller interactions so that the salespeople would be able to form experiences of value on an individual level and together with their customers. The first study aims to contribute to its secondary question from the earlier studies on TF-leadership and MBTI. Furthermore, this study sheds light on the relational approach of selling by building a model for value formation with buyers from the relational perspective based on TF-leadership and MBTI theories. Secondly, this study tries to clarify the expectations which buyers have towards buyer-seller interactions. Clarity is achieved in studies two, four and five, where study two is more focused on buyers' expectations at a general level in demanding business environments. Study four focuses on the business buyers pre-buying phase and on buyers' expectations towards salespeople's activities before the first sales meeting has been arranged. This study also clarifies the role of the personality types behind business buyers' needs during their pre-buying phase. Study number five, which examines the business buyers' expectations for the actual buyer-seller meetings, focuses on researching the connection to buyers' expectations and to their personality types. Study number three examines the expectations with a dyadic approach by examining both the B2B buyers and B2B sellers' expectations for initial sales meetings and how their expectations align. Thirdly, the salespeople's

preferred leadership is assessed in uncertain business environment and an attempt has been made to find the practices which best support the salespeople's work when striving to fulfill the buyers' needs. With these three elements, this dissertation attempts to extend the understanding of how to lead B2B buyer-seller interactions and B2B customers and salespeople in today's business encounters (see Fig. 1). Furthermore, this dissertation combines the findings of these themes to a model (see Fig. 3).
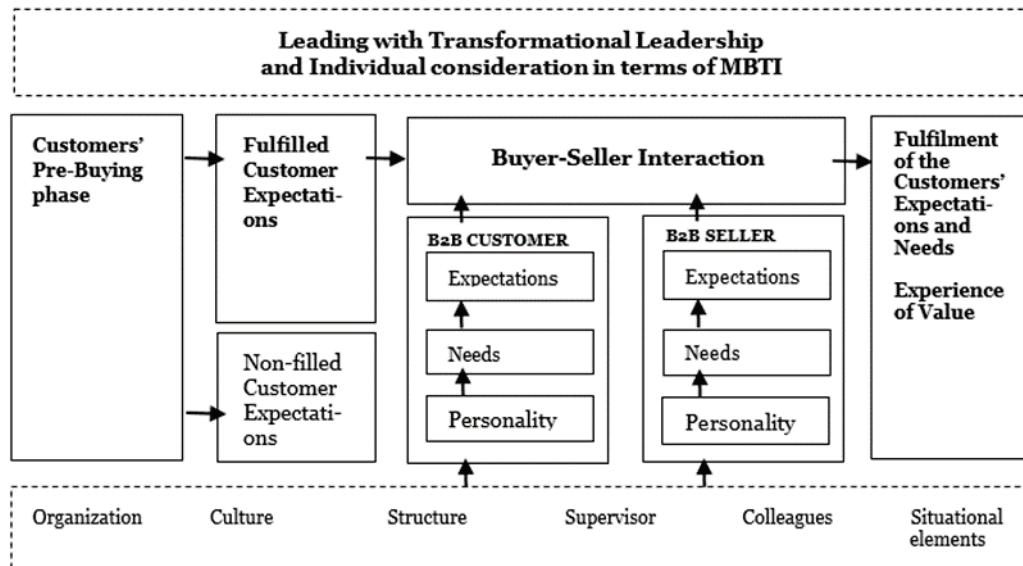
Figure 1.   The framework of the dissertation

The six published studies of this dissertation relate to the abovementioned questions by addressing the research problem. The core of the study is the MBTI personality theory, however, in study two, the theory is not based on the MBTI and in study three, the theory is based on expectancy disconfirmation theory. The aim of this dissertation is to find out beyond the business buyers expectations the way to interact as salespeople to be able to form relational value with the buyers in buyer-seller interactions in a demanding relational B2B selling context. Interactions here means both the buyers' pre-buying phase and the actual buyer-seller meetings. Further, the aim is also to find new perspectives on sales leadership theory because there has been little research in to sales leadership from the followers' point of view. This study adds to the findings from the buyers' side and also the salespeople's preferred leadership expectations and combines these expectations from both sides giving practical insights to an individual level sales leadership which aims to fulfill first the sellers' needs and later, sellers are able to fulfill the customers' needs.

Based on business buyers' expectations and salespeople's leadership expectations, the study will present an individual level model of salespeople fulfilling the buyers' expectations. These same elements are seen to be utilized in sales leaders' work when they are leading their salespeople on an individual level. The word expectation, in the study, means the business buyers' appraisals regarding their interactions with the salespeople and also the salespeople's appraisals of buyer-seller meetings. The salespeople's expectations of sales leadership illustrates salespeople's appraisals of their supervisors to be able to fulfill the customers' relational expectations in the current uncertain and complex business environment.

1.4   Research context

The major part of selling models used all around the world have been created in the US and also the empirical data used on research has been taken from the American business environment. It is claimed that buying and selling concepts in Europe differ from US concepts due to the more domestic way of selling and buying in US. In Europe the cultural aspects also influence buying and selling. Unfortunately, compared to the US economy, sales research in Europe is scarce. In Finland the sales profession has suffered due to the under-appreciation of the role of selling and during the years 2000-2012 only three thesis were related to sales. (Korpela, 2015.) Later, two new sales related thesis' were published by Jokiniemi (2013) and Korpela (2015), in which the focus was on B2B sales. It may say that all the studies on B2B sales will increase the knowledge of European level B2B selling and buying.

Nevertheless, the statistics from Finland show that sales skills and managing the customer's interphases are the core competencies necessary to survive in the demands of globalization and increased competition. In particular, the skills needed to develop long-term collaborations, both nationally and internationally, are seen to be strategic competencies in the near future (Paasi & Wessberg, 2015). It is important to understand that often the value means something else to the customer other than just the initial product. The value may be created via additional services, for example, trustworthiness, of the buying experience or of the business ideas shared in B2B interactions. The value may also be defined as innovative activities originated and developed by both the customer and the whole sales organization.

As in the rest of the global market the market trends in Finland are changing and the needs of customers are changing rapidly. Finnish companies have had

problems answering customers' needs and the lack of sales competencies has been seen to be the problem. It is recommended that Finnish companies should focus on relationship building and on interactions with customers to be able to get engage in deeper dialogues with their customers. (Suomalaisen teollisuuden tulevaisuus, 2014). In Finland the development of products and high technology orientation have affected the aspects appreciated in education and also in business. Often it has been thought that good products will sell themselves. Later, it was recognized that marketing is also necessary. However, there are sales activities to be done so that the companies know how to form value with customers in national and global markets. Additionally, digital opportunities during the buyer pre-buying phase should be seen as an advantage to Finnish companies because this opportunity also helps many small and medium sized companies to grow in international business cost-effectively.

These facts illustrate why this study is also important for the Finnish sales organizations who are conducting business on national and international levels. Studies in this thesis support demanding Finnish sales practices by suggesting an individual level model to lead buyer-seller interactions and to fulfill the buyers' individual needs in context of sales leadership. The empirical data is collected from national and international companies in Finland. All of the sales companies studied offer knowledge-intensive business service solutions to other businesses. These companies assisted the funded research project through a financial support and allowing studies of their salespeople and new customers which included both professional buyers and business buyers.

The buying organizations in this dissertation include, for example, logistics, retail, professional services and food industries. The salespeople provided access to the buyers by referring the researcher to the corresponding buyer contact person. Later, the researcher asked for additional information about who else participated on the purchasing and buying team. After receiving more information about the buyers' buying teams, these team members were contacted and interviewed. The buyers' roles were divided into two distinct types: business buyers (business managers/executives) and professional buyers (purchasing/ sourcing managers). Studies two, three, four and five studied these abovementioned buyers. In studies three and six, the salespeople studied were the ones who worked at these sales organizations and who attended to this research project as supporting partners.

1.5 Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation consists of an introduction and six published studies (see Table 1). The introduction includes the sections for research gaps, the theoretical background, the methodology, summaries of the studies, overall conclusions and discussion. The aim of the published studies is to fulfill the research gaps on B2B selling and the leadership area and to address the research problem. Additionally, this study aims to provide academic knowledge for companies so they are able to adjust their activities to fit buyers' needs and expectations according to buyer-seller interactions.

Studies one, two, four and six are single authored, and study five is co-authored with professor Routamaa. Hautamäki is the first author and had a major role in writing the theory and findings. Additionally, the data was collected independently by the author. Study three is co-authored with Dr. Kaski, Professor Pullins and doctoral candidate Kock. In study three Hautamäki was responsible for writing the theory and collecting the majority of the data used. Data analyzing was done together with Kaski and Kock and the emerging themes were set up with the whole co-author group. After reviewers' comments, all the co-authors took their parts contributed to the development of the study taking into account the editors' comments. Furthermore, compared to many other studies of personality, measured by MBTI, in these studies the author has interviewed and confirmed every respondents real MBTI-profile in a face-to-face meeting and additionally interviewed the respondents at a different time. This brings more validity to the process of analysis in mixed-method research.

Because there are very few studies relating to the buyers' side of this challenging phenomenon, this research studied first the customers' expectations. Since this study does not focus on the contribution of the buyers' side, the results from customers' were used to increase understanding of how the initial salesperson should initiate relationships to create value experiences with the customer. Additionally, the expectations of the B2B seller of sales meetings was covered in study three. The contribution is focused towards sales literature for a basis for future research on relational selling and so that the sales organizations could adjust their activities to better address customers' expectations. Because there are fewer studies about the customers' side in this recently changed business environment, the decision to start the study from the customers' side was obvious. There is also a need for studies of sales leadership which take into account this demanding business environment as well as the changed leadership needs of salespeople. This topic is covered in study six.

Table 1. Summary of characteristics of articles included in the dissertation

	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Study 4	Study 5	Study 6
Focus	Leading buyer-seller interactions with terms of TF-leadership and MBTI theory	Business buyers' expectations	Buyers and sellers expectations for an initial sales meeting	Buyers' pre-buying phase from their personality perspective	Buyers' personalities and their preferred behavior of sellers in meetings	Salespeople's preferred leadership activities in complex business environment
Research strategy	Conceptual study	Descriptive case study	Descriptive case study	Mixed-method case study	Mixed-method case study	Mixed-method case study
Research context	Buyer-seller interactions	Buyer-seller interactions and buyers' preferred sales actions	Buyer-Seller inital sales meetings and both parties expectations	Buyer-seller interactions and buyers' preferred sales actions from personality perspective	Buyers' expectations from personality perspective to meetings	Sellers' appraisals to their managers concerning the leadership
Data collection methods	Based on earlier literature	Semi-structured interviews, thematic analysis	Dyadic in-depth interviews, emerging themes analysis	MBTI, semi-structured interviews, interpretive analysis	MBTI, semi-structured interviews, interpretive analysis	MBTI, semi-structured interviews, thematic analysis
Buying process phase	Pre-relational phase and buyer-seller interactions	Expectations to meetings	Expectations to meetings	Expectations to pre-buying phase	Personality expectations to meetings	Expectations to buyer-seller interactions
Sample	-	17 business buyers	12 salespeople and 12 buyers	21 business buyers	20 professional business buyers and 51 salespeople	16 salespeople

2   BACKGROUND THEORIES OF THE DISSERTATION

In this chapter the personality theory of MBTI and the transformational leadership theory are briefly presented. The focus is to show the connection between the theories chosen. At the end of this chapter, there are studies which relate to the chosen theories. Because the demanding B2B selling and buyer-seller interactions are the focus of this dissertation, this chapter also clarifies the connection with sales literature, personality theories and TF-leadership.

2.1   Personality theory

This study uses personality theory of MBTI to illustrate the expectations and needs in the customers' pre-buying phase and in the initial buyer-seller interactions. MBTI is a dynamic measure of personality and has a wide-ranging theory behind the measurement. As the focus in this study is the buyer-seller interactions, these interactions are studied in the perspective of personality and leadership. MBTI is one of the most used tools to define personality and leadership. For this research the MBTI was selected because it is an ideal method with which to study this complex phenomenon and because, lately, it has been used largely on leadership studies (Brown & Reilly, 2009; Carroll, 2010; Hautala, 2008; Müller & Turner, 2010).

There are many definitions of personality and it is defined, for example, as a unique aspect of behavior or basically as an essence of man. Allport (1937: 48) has said that "personality is what man really is". In these definitions it is suggested that personality is a part of an individual which most represents him or her as an individual human being. This study is based on a personality theory which may be defined as a set of assumptions which are relevant to human behavior added, as in this dissertation, with empirical definitions of behaviour. Commonly, in personality theory, the psychological environment is seen to determine the individuals' manner and how (s)he responds. Personality theory, of all the psychological concepts, is unique by the perspective that it defines the concept of self. For personality theorists the one important aspect is how the person perceives himself and how the self is viewed as a person. These elements describe the key points in individuals' lives. During the history of psychology, many psychologists ignored the influence of motivation. Nevertheless, personality theorists saw motivation to be important point for understanding human behavior. (Hall & Lindzey, 1957.)

According to Hall and Lindzey (1957) personality theories may be divided into trait, cognitive and motivational units of personality. The science of personality has been studied from three different research traditions of observation which are clinical, correlational and experimental. A clinical approach is one of the approaches which individuals study systematically and in-depth and where French physician Jean Charcot was interested in understanding hysterical patients and started to classify these symptoms. Charcots most famous student was Sigmund Freud who's psychoanalysis personality theory and therapy methods have influenced millions of people all around the world with his terms of id, ego and superego. For clarification, Freud concentrated mostly on clinical observations rather than theory forming and he also worked with Jung (Pervin, 2003). Interestingly Freud and Jung were not trained in medicine, while the origin of personality theory was based more on medicine and medical practices, they practiced as psychotherapists. Their profession, on a more practical side, affected their recognition of psychological science and many years after their achievement they were acknowledged inside the psychological inner circle. (Hall & Lindzey, 1957.)

As Hall and Lindzey (1957) argued, the names of Charcot, Freud, Janet, Jung, McDougall and Stern have a lot to do with the determination of the nature of personality theory. These names have shown the path for many theorists and on which, for example, Gestalt and Stern continued. These theorists focused on unity of behaviour and to the small elements in behaviour. World War II provided an opportunity for personality psychologists to develop assessment and treatment tools for individuals based on grand theories on personality and primary clinical investigations (Pervin, 2003).

There has also been an impact on personality theory in experimental psychology in general and on learning theory. This has led to a better understanding of the nature of constructs and later this psychometric tradition shed light on personality difference studies. Prominent theorists include Helmholz, Pavlov, Thordike, Watson and Wundt. The difference between experimentalists and clinicalists is in their inspiration in natural sciences. Where clinicalists focused on clinical findings and their own reconstructions, the experimentalists focused on observations. (Hall & Lindzey, 1957.) The cognitive approach, to which these abovementioned theories belong, is a general empirical approach which includes topics related to how people process information of themselves and of the world around them. From the cognitive theorist view the personality is seen to show the differences in how different individuals are mentally processing the information (Pervin, 2003).

The correlational approach emphasizes individual differences between people, whereas the experimental approach sees that all people are general in applied laws (Pervin, 2003). The behaviouristic approach of personality may be seen as the opposite approach to the psychoanalytical approach. The behavioristic approach was defined by Bandura (1986), as the result of behavior in interactions with environmental variables. The environment was seen to shape individuals' behaviour through learning. While the behavioristic approach is focused on personality functioning enabling only little attention to individual differences, the trait approach focuses on personality differences in depth. Nevertheless, psychoanalytical theory has combined both of these views. Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) was also keen on behaviorism and later he became interested in psychoanalysis. However, he later became critical towards psychoanalytic approaches based on motivational levels. This is why he developed his own theory of the hierarchy of needs. Maslow's need structure stems from basic biological needs to the more psychological motivations which become important when basic needs are satisfied. (Smith, Nolen-Hoeksema, Susan Fredrickson, & Loftus, 2003.)

These personality theorists have been referred to as rebels in their time. They have exaggerated personality theory so that there are two generalizations. These so called rebels were in medical and experimental science areas, so they questioned or disallowed the assumptions accepted by psychologists and it may be said that personality theory has occupied a dissenter role in psychology. Secondly, the orientation on personality theories is functional, because they have been interested in questions which make a difference in the correction of the organism. Because of their roots in history personality theorists have always been broader in scope and more practically oriented than other psychologists. (Hall & Lindzey, 1957.) Therefore, as B2B selling is a practically oriented profession, these personality theories relate well to this area of study.

As this dissertation is based on MBTI theory, the reason for choosing this personality theory among other is simple. It has gained a lot of attention recently (see Brandt & Laiho, 2013; Brown & Reilly, 2009; Carroll, 2010) and by this Jung's (1921) view on personality has recently attracted a lot of attention. It is prospective because Jung (1921) looked ahead to the person's future development but also retrospective, when taking account of his or her past. Jung's (1921) statement "the person lives by aims as well as by causes" sets Jung apart from Freud because Jung identifies that there is creative development and a search for fullness and accomplishment. Jung's (1921) theory is based on psychological types and not on traits, because it is based on dynamic theory of personality. As a dynamic theory it also gives several opportunities for development processes

between humans. As compared to Jung's statement of a person's aims and causes, the personality exists in relationships between attending parties and a persons' identity is built during the interactions (Harman, 2003).

2.1.1 Jung's theory of personality

In 1906 Freud and Jung met after Jung had read Freud's book on Interpretation of Dreams. Their common route was fruitful but short and in 1913 they terminated their business correspondence. After this disagreement Jung proceeded with his theory of psychoanalysis and method of psychotherapy. Carl Jung has been acknowledged to be one of the greatest thinkers and his theory is referred to as psychoanalytic theory because the analysis is based on unconscious processes. Actually the basis for the psychoanalytical theory is that what we think or do is driven by unconscious processes. (Smith et al., 2003.) Jung's theory as a psychotherapist is unique because he combines the past and the future. In his theory one's behavior is conditioned by individual and essential history and additionally by man's aims and desires for the future. He saw that both the past, practicality and future guide our ways. This is also dissimilarity between Freud's and Jung's views, while Freud see that there is endless repetition of primitive themes, Jung saw that there is always a creative and constant development, man is searching for completeness and accomplishment. Jung's views the individual personality as a product of its history (Hall & Lindzey, 1957). When this thesis focuses on new business encounters, it is essential to view the human as an individual with a past in order to understand the buyers. The expectations do not necessarily have anything to do with this initial seller but (s)he is the one to face these expectations which have been developed during the lifetime of the customer and which are unique to that person.

Jung referred to the structure of a personality as a psyche which consisted of ego, personal unconscious and its complexities, of the collective unconscious and its architypes, the persona, the anima or animus and the shadow. In addition to these systems there are the attitudes of introversion and extraversion and functions of thinking, feeling, sensing and intuition. However, Jung sees that self means the fully developed personality. In the next chapters these components of Jung's psyche will be examined more closely.

In personality theory the unconscious and conscious, as well as the concept of self, have been separated in research. In Jung's theory the ego is the conscious mind which is made of perceptions, memories, feeling and thoughts. The ego is the one which is responsible of the human's feeling of identity and stability. The ego, in Jung's terms, is the person's centre of the personality. The personal

unconscious is connecting the ego and it consists of experiences which were once conscious but have been forgotten. Personal unconsciousness centres are a group of perceptions, feelings, thoughts and memories which exist in the unconscious mind. (Hall & Lindzey, 1957.) This also differs from personality theories of communication and behavioral style measurements (Manning, Ahearne, & Reece, 2012) because personality theories also take into account the person's unconsciousness.

The collective unconscious is the original part of Jung's personality theory and it resembles a store to a memory phase of a man's past. It may also be referred to as a remainder of man's past and as a natural foundation of the whole structure of the personality. Archetype is a structural component of the collective unconscious and it is a universal idea which contains emotions. Archetypes may be treated almost as separate systems within the personality. These systems are called persona, anima and animus and the shadow. The persona is a mask which the person is wearing in response to the demands of social resolution, tradition and to his own inner archetypal needs. The role is assigned by society, that part that society expects him or her to play in life. The purpose of a mask is to make an impression on others and hide the real nature of the person. Persona is the public personality shown to the world which is different to the private personality which exists behind the social stage. (Hall & Lindzey, 1957.) The persona is also the "face" which the sellers meet when meeting the customers for the first time. Persona develops from the archetype and in this case, the buyers' persona consists of earlier experiences in social interactions in which the suggested assumption of a social role has served a useful purpose to this buyers' history.

Anima, the feminine architype in man, and animus, the masculine architype in woman and these architypes by Jung (1921) are the products of cultural experiences of a man with a woman and vice versa. The shadow is archetype, which consists of animal dispositions, which typifies the animal side of the man's nature. It is responsible for the attendance in consciousness and behavior of unpleasant and social reprehensible thoughts and actions. This archetype also gives a strong quality to the personality (Hall & Lindzey, 1957).

In Jung's earlier writings the concept of self was seen to be equal to the psyche or to total personality, but after discovering architypes, self was seen to represent itself through various symbols. The self is like life's goal to which people strive but where they rarely reach. All archetypes motivate man's behavior to search for wholeness. The concept of self is Jung's most important psychological finding. The personality can become fully developed after mid-age, when the person is ready to change the centre of their personality from the conscious ego to the ego

which is midway between consciousness and unconsciousness. This midway location is the culmination of self. (Hall & Lindzey, 1957.) A persons development of self is an individual process so the sellers should be able to meet also whole self's and incomplete self's. As noted in several studies, good self-awareness, and in Jung's terms, midway station on self, help us to focus on another person and this has been seen to positively affect job satisfaction (Nielsen et al., 2009).

Jung (1921) distinguishes two major attitudes of personality, extraversion and introversion. The extraverted attitude orients a person to the outer, objective world and the introversion attitude to the inner, subjective world. Both of these two opposite attitudes are present but one of the attitudes is dominant and conscious. If the ego is extraverted, the personal unconscious will be introverted. Both of these types are capable of enthusiasm but they show it in a different way. For example, what fills the extravert's heart flows out of his mouth while introverts' enthusiasm is something that seals his lips (Jung 1921: 326). Additionally, there are central psychological functions: thinking, feeling, sensing and intuiting. Thinking is intellectual and by thinking it tries to understand the world and self, whilst feeling is the function of value of things which orientates to the subject. Feeling is the subjective function of experiences like anger, happiness and love. Sensing is the reality function which is based on the facts, while intuition is a perception of unconscious processes and contents by expanding models of reality beyond the facts and feelings.

A person has all of these functions which are not often similarly well developed. Usually one of these functions is more highly differentiated and the others play a dominant role in consciousness. If this so-called superior, dominating function is prevented from working, the auxiliary function takes its place. The least differentiated function is called inferior function. Inferior function is unconscious and states itself in dreams. All these differentiated functions have equal strength in the personality. Since the complete actualization of the self is impossible, these functions, called also as attitudes represent an ideal aim of where the person wishes to be. (Jung, 1921.)

2.1.2 Myers Briggs personality theory

The idea of a psychological type was out of favor in psychology for some decades. Types, temperaments and traits are not seen to suit sophisticated psychology and a part of this may be the practical orientation of personality theorists. Nevertheless, the type has a constitutional and environmental base, because it is not seen to be static since type is dynamic and developmental (Myers, 1992). The purpose in MBTI is to make Jung's (1921) theory understandable and useful for

people in their everyday lives. Perception is the way to become aware of environment, of what happens, of other people and of different things. Judgement is the way to make conclusions of what has been perceived. These are the elements in which people differ (Jung, 1921). MBTI is a measurement which may be identified by a self-report concerned with individual reactions which may be called preferences. These preferences, or their combinations, can be defined by the Myers Briggs Type Indicator and later recognized and used in practice.

Further, MBTI is a measurement of a theory by which it is possible to implement theory to practice. So the letters MBTI refers both to the theory and to the measurement. In MBTI the theory postulates dichotomies and, because it is based on theory, it has specific relationships between the scales which lead to sixteen personality types. MBTI is a developmental model and development continues throughout life (Myers & McCaulley, 1985). According to theory, one pole always has the other side which is the opposite preference. The sixteen types are combinations of four letters, for example the most common personality types of the business buyers are ESTJ and ISTJ (Dion et al., 1995; Macdaid, McCaulley, & Kainz, 1995). The main target in MBTI is to identify these four preferences in a person. It is notable, that these preferences are not designed to be a scale to measure trait or behavior. In MBTI the discussion is of a wonted choice between right and left hand options. One might use both hands but most commonly the reaching is done by the hand the person prefers. This is similar if different preferences are compared in MBTI. Often it is assumed to use both poles of each four preferences but most often the first responses happen with the preferred functions or attitudes (Myers & McCaulley, 1985). This is important to salespeople and sales directors as it helps them to understand another person when trying to satisfy their expectations, and also to understand how personality preferences affect buying decisions (see for example Gallén, 2006).

Dimensions in MBTI may be divided into processes and attitudes, and each scale, processes and attitudes, presents two opposite preferences. Attitudes refers to extraversion (E) and introversion (I), processes, as mentioned earlier, are perceptions sensing (S) and intuition (N) and processes of judgement are thinking (T) and feeling (F). The last dimension concerns the style to deal with the outside world and the preferences are judging (J) and perceiving (P). Myers and Briggs extended the model of Jung's with the JP scale, which had been left underdeveloped, although it was implicit in Jung's model.

It is notable that sometimes respondents' self-reporting affects their beliefs about how they would like to be or, for example, another persons' beliefs about them or their environmental beliefs. The items in MBTI are transparent and, like always

in self-reports, the answers can be falsified although, in counseling situations, 75 percent of the customers agree their reports (Myers & McCaulley, 1985). However, it is important to understand that sometimes one does not know what (s)he prefers or how the answers were affected by some other factors, for example, a change situation. Nevertheless, there are also differences which are not explained by type and also several differences within each personality type (Briggs Myers & Myers, 1993).

When type theory is mentioned in this thesis, it refers to Jung's personality theory as interpreted by Isabel Myers and Katharine Briggs in MBTI (Myers & McCaulley, 1985). MBTI as Myers (1980) has put it, is primarily concerned with valuable differences in people and people with opposite preferences. However, each type has its own strengths and weaknesses. The preferences include four different scales which describe opposite attitudes and processes so that scale E-I describes the focus of ones' attention on the outer or inner world like in Jung's (1921) theory. Scale S-N describes the way in which information is perceived or attained, the T-F scale shows how one makes decisions and the J-P scale shows ones' desired lifestyle. Personality types consist of the eight different preferences and when the MBTI test has been completed and confirmed with a certified coach, this type is his or her "true" type according to MBTI. For example, one of the most common B2B buyer types is ESTJ (Dion et al., 1995). It means that this buyer is extravert (E), who likes to orientate to the outer-world with sensing (S) preference, use thinking (T) when making decisions and who has a judging attitude (J) towards the outer world. In this thesis there are studies which focus on types and on initial preferences but also on cognitive or functionality styles or pairs. When focusing on cognitive style, in this study, the focus is on the middle MBTI letters. In the middle letters, one will be the favorite process and in type theory is called as a dominant or first function. The other letter is called a second or auxiliary function. Both of these letters are needed to interact effectively with others, the first function takes the lead and the second one helps. For example ESTJ type, the dominant function is T and the auxiliary is S. Type theory shows that a persons' greatest strengths come from one's favoured functions and this is why it is important to trust these functions and develop them (Myers, 1992).

The dynamics in MBTI can be seen in preferences where the aim is to group people into types where they belong. However, this means that one uses all the preferences at a different time and not at the same time. In most cases one uses the dominant preference . This may also be seen when asked to choose ones' own preferences where most people are able to choose a preference (Myers, 1992). This also strengthens the validity of this research, because MBTI is used to

explain the buyers' preferred expectations and actions and, additionally, the buyers have been measured with MBTI.

The letters in MBTI indicate the direction of the preference and when type is self-reported, there are numbers which indicate the strength of the initial preference. The strength in MBTI shows how strongly the preference has been reported. MBTI shows that all the types are valuable and necessary with their own strengths and weaknesses. MBTI may be used in education to, for example, develop different teaching methods to meet different learning needs, in counselling and career guidance to give direction to a profiled persons' life and in teamwork, in leadership and followership to improve collaboration and communication with others. MBTI is appropriate to use with adults and it is translated and developed in a number of different countries. (Myers & McCaulley, 1985.)

The theory behind the MBTI is to enable us to expect certain differences in specific people and to interact with them more constructively than would be possible without the understanding of the MBTI theory. The type theory illustrates that children are born preferring some functions over others. Environment plays a large role in MBTI, especially when thinking about the development of the type. It may raise the development or discourage the natural type preference. Development in type is seen to be a lifelong process, in youth the main task is to develop the dominant and the second functions and in mid-life people usually gain greater command of the less preferred third and fourth functions. (Myers & McCaulley, 1985.) Jung's (1921) theory identifies youth as being a time for specialization and from the early forties the radical trans valuation which is seen via new interests which are more cultural begins. Middle aged people become more introverted and less impulsive and they value social, civil and philosophical symbols. (S)he may be seen to transform to a spiritual man, as Jung (1921) has termed this situation. This is seen to be the most fundamental event in a persons' life.

Myers and Briggs used Jung's ideas in their dynamic representation of the MBTI types. They assumed that each type has one dominant function which is the leading function. In addition to the dominant function the person will develop his or her secondary or auxiliary function to provide balance between extraversion and introversion. Interestingly the extraverts show their dominant function to the outer world but introverts show their second best function by saving the dominant function to the inner-world usage (Briggs Myers & Myers, 1993). See the characteristics associated with each type in table 2.

In the systems of the personality the interactions reward the contrasting attitudes. If a person has a superior extraversion, and is frustrated in some way, then the unconscious inferior attitude of introversion will seize hold of the personality and apply itself. Jung identifies that opposition exists everywhere in the personality and the content between rational and irrational forces of the psyche never ends. Jung also identifies that conflict is a basic fact of life and that gives energy and without it there would be no personality. Jung's structure of the personality is very complex, not only of the many components but the interactions between these components (Jung, 1921.)

Table 2.   Characteristics associated with each type (Myers & McCaulley, 1985)

ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
"They follow the rules and guard the process."	"They care and do the work."	"They are the ones to put it in writing."	"They analyse the alternatives."
ISTP	**ISFP**	**INFP**	**INTP**
"They do their own thing."	"They are loyal and value driven."	"They act as peacekeepers."	"They work alone for the group."
ESTP	**ESFP**	**ENFP**	**ENTP**
"They fight fires or start them."	"They keep them laughing."	"They can be great integrators."	"They offer solutions and identify opportunities."
ESTJ	**ESFJ**	**ENFJ**	**ENTJ**
"They take responsibility and get things done."	"They bring human comforts to light."	"They are enthusiastic communicators."	"They are leaders. They want not to be led."

This study is focused on buyer-seller interactions and the MBTI gives a deeper knowledge of the persons engaged in these activities and of their expectations based on their personality types. The relationship can be undertaken with full recognition when both of the parties appreciate the other persons', and their own, gifts. This is important for salespeople to understand because they are the leaders of the collaboration, however, the customer often has all the power. There are no good or bad types, there are personality types with different combinations and all people with different or the same preferences may communicate and share the common values. Sometimes collaboration with opposite preferences may need work to achieve understanding but may offer deeper collaboration and increased self-understanding for both (Myers, 1992).

2.2   Transformational leadership

Leadership has been researched for decades and there are hundreds of explanations to it and as Stogdill (1974: 259) has defined "there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept". However, changes in the business environment, where the businesses challenges are more complex than ever, have brought to a situation which calls for more transformational leadership This is an approach which consists of shared processes and which involves putting into action all the leader levels and working units (Burns, 1978). Today, the demanding role of B2B sales professionals has shifted towards relationship building (Payne et al., 2008). There is also a need for a broader perspective in the literature of sales leadership which invites sales leader's into deeper interactions with their salespeople. In recent sales research the concept of TF-leadership has shown to significantly relate to B2B sales performance at the higher levels in sales organizations (Shannahan, Bush, & Shannahan, 2013). Additionally, today's employers are more interested in employees' well-being and as studies have shown, TF-leadership has been found to also have a strong connection with employees' motivation and well-being (Arnold et al., 2007; Nielsen et al., 2009). As B2B sellers today need to have skills for leading the change in customers' organization and the TF-leadership has been suggested to be an effective leadership theory for sales organizations for success (Dixon & Tanner, 2012; Ingram et al., 2005), so, this thesis identifies that it also fits well also to an individual tool for salespersons to lead their B2B customers as well as to leading the B2B sellers. In particular it has been seen to add a distinct advantage to develop stronger buyer-seller relationships (Bass, 1997; Hult, Ferrel, Hurley & Giunipero, 2000).

Burns (1978) was the first person who presented the models of transformational and transactional leadership almost 40 year ago. He saw that TF-leadership increased the motivation and morale of followers. Burns (1978) had already stated that utilizing TF-leadership affects followers' behavior and their readiness to disseminate changes. Several researchers have utilized Burns' (1978) ideas further since then and it is defined in several ways (see for example Bass, 1985; Kouzes & Pozner, 1988; Tichy & Devanna, 1986). Today TF-leadership has gained a considerable amount of empirical research supporting its distinction and in the 90's Bass with his colleagues developed Burns' (1978) TF-leadership concept further and created a tool to measure it, called Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Avolio & Bass, 1990; Bass, 1985).

According the studies and dimensions of TF-leadership, which are presented in the next chapter, have been found to relate positively to each other (Avolio &

Bass, 1988, 1990; Bass, 1985; Yammarino, Spangler, & Dubinsky, 1998). It has shown that leaders who are satisfying their followers are more effective as leaders, and are also most often more transformational than transactional leaders (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; Bass & Avolio, 1994). Additionally TF-leadership is found to be positively related to followers' performance (Avolio & Bass, 1988; Bass, 1985; Dubinsky et al., 1995; Wang & Howell, 2012; Yammarino & Dubinsky, 1994). Furthermore, TF-leadership has been seen to impact positively to productivity levels, to employees' satisfaction level and to their motivation (Arnold et al., 2007; Masi & Cooke, 2000). According to earlier studies, TF-leadership has been shown to bring several positive benefits to organizations. The decision to use TF-leadership theory in buyer-seller interactions in the context of sales leadership is because transformational leadership is based on the understanding of followers' needs. In this study the follower is analogically compared to B2B buyer, but of course with a higher power than followers compared to his or her own supervisor. This study uses the TF-leadership equally in framing the B2B sellers' leadership activities in buyer-seller meetings.

In the late 80's Kouzes and Posner (1988) were interested in resolving how leaders are defined and what they do. They found that the best way for leaders' to lead others is when they are modeling the followers' way, when they inspire with shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act and encourage their followers' by heart. These elements have also continued the in work of Burns (1978) but with an alternative definition of TF-leadership. House (1995) noted that leadership consists of activities that introduce major changes in organisations. Additionally it is important to find the meaning and purpose to work in initial organization. Bass (1985) has stated that leadership is interaction with group members, working as a change agent whose acts affect other people. The leader is also giving the direction to achieve goals and shows the path to achieve them. Yukl (1994) has defined leadership as relation oriented where the leader is expressing concern to others, reducing emotional conflicts, for bettering the relations among others and increasing participation in the group. Many researchers (see for example Blake & Mouton, 1964; Cleveland, 1980) have claimed that leadership should consist of both the task orientation and the relations orientation.

In this study leadership is seen as a process, which consists of cognition, behaviors and attributions of both the leader (B2B seller/sales director) and the follower (B2B buyer/seller) when influencing common goals. Leadership is seen as an interactive two-way process between the seller and the buyer (cf. Bass, 2008). In sales, every customer organization case is seen as an individual process

where essentially both parties hold the power (cf. Burns 1978) but the final power owner is the buyer, because (s)he makes the final decision. Although, the buyer is not the leader of the buyer-seller interactions, here the leader is the B2B seller. However, when the business environment is more complex than before, the leaders tend to provide the vision and show examples of the favoured actions (Tichy & Devanna, 1986).

Kouzes and Posner (1988) define leadership as a relationship, where the leader mobilizes others for shared aspirations. The relationship exists between the one who aspires to lead and those who decide to follow. The decision to follow is often based on leaders' credibility. Kouzes and Posner (1988) underlie its meaning by saying that it is the foundation of leadership. They mean that to be credible leaders should do what they say and that people are more likely to follow those with whom they feel a personal connection. As in Dion's et al. (1995) study based on personality which found that it was important for buyers that a personal connection with the sellers was established.

Tichy and Devanna (1986) define TF-leadership as consisting of innovation, change and entrepreneurship and the task is to align the organization with its external environment to be able to fully address customers' needs. In their book they look for leadership skills especially in change situations and identif that activities of transformational leadership work best and accomplished TF-leadership is a work of an architect of change in an increasingly competitive environment. The first task for a leader to transform the organization is to recognize the need for revitalization, create a new vision and institutionalize the change. As B2B buying and selling has seen change recently, it could be seen as important to adapt these leadership skills to B2B selling (see also Dixon & Tanner, 2012; Ingram et al., 2005).

Most of the studies are from the leaders' side and concentrate on the leaders behavior to find organizational and individual outcomes. The TF-leadership has been found to be an efficient way to lead individuals (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999; Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003; Hetland & Sandal, 2003; Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996). Later researchers have concentrated on the behaviour behind leaders' characteristics to increase the understanding of social processes. Hence, personality (measured with MBTI) has been researched together with TF-leadership to find perceived differences in leadership behaviour studies (Bono & Judge, 2004; Felfe & Schyns, 2010; Hautala, 2006). Hautala (2006) found a relationship between personality, measured with MBTI and with TF-leadership, measured with Kouzes and Posner's (1998) Leadership Personality Inventory (LPI). According to this cited study, personality preferences of extraversion,

intuition and perception were positively associated with leaders' self-reports of TF-leadership. Among followers, the leaders' preference sensing was associated with TF-leadership behaviors by their manager.

This study utilize the TF-leadership model based on Bass' (1985) TF-leadership model. It has been tested in several organizational settings and it has shown to correlate positively with the performance outcome measures (Avolio, 1999; Bass, 1998; Bass et al., 2003), to leadership effectiveness (Lowe, Kroeck & Sivasubmariam, 1996) and to a high level of follower and organizational performance (Barling, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996; Wang & Howell, 2012) and to well-being and satisfaction (Arnold et al., 2007).

2.2.1 Bass' theory of transformational leadership

Bass (1985) continued Burns works because he saw that there is a gap in leadership literature research between social and organizational psychology when trying to understand great leaders and what they do. He thought that earlier social and organizational psychology had studied only weak forces and he wanted to focus on experimental social and organizational sciences, the so called strong forces. Bass wanted to research and understand transformational processes where the expected effort from followers was based on their own confidence and values, and what are they able to achieve was seen to be elevated beyond their expectations. Often, at that time and also later on, the literature has focused on the style of directing, where leaders' focus on tasks. Bass thought that something was missing when the studies were mostly concerned with economic cost-benefit exchange models and he claimed that this works as long as man is rational. Additionally, Bass argued the point of view of motivation in exchange theories studies. He claims that followers' motivation to work cannot be based fully on desired material or psychic payments and he saw that there was a need for a broader view of leadership. This motivation is illustrated well in Bass's wide-ranging works.

Burns (1978) explained leaders to be power holders. Like power itself, the leadership is also relational, collective and purposeful. The aim is to share the power to achieve set purposes. In his theory leadership is looked at with the followership. Burns (1978) sees that followers are acting toward goals representing their values, needs and wants, aspirations and expectations and both from the leaders' and followers' point of view and both parties recognize another party as a person whose purposes are related. Burns (1978) has shown that transactional leaders focus on cost-benefits and economic changes to meet subordinates' material and psychic needs but he also thought that

transformational leaders do not neglect these actions because they recognise these existing transactional needs but focus his or her attention on TF-leadership.

The TF-leader is talented in elevating lower level needs to a higher level according to Maslow's (1954) needs hierarchy. This is the way to go beyond persons' self-oriented concerns. So for the TF-leader, the goal is to move followers up to higher steps on Maslow's (1954) model and exceed the followers' own self-interest (Burns, 1978). In this study in a modern society, in complex business environments between business people, it is seen that needs lie mostly on higher levels. Maslow's (1954) needs levels are existence needs for safety and security, the need for relatedness in love and affiliation and the need for growth in esteem and self-actualization. Burns (1978) saw Maslow's needs as fundamental concerning transformational processes. As in TF-leadership, the leader attempts to succeed in raising his colleagues, followers, customers or tries to build up a greater awareness of the issues of importance (Bass, 1985). Lately it has been found that beyond TF-leadership the leaders are able to motivate followers to predict changes in the business environment and orientate the team members to easily adapt themselves to new environments (Waldman, Ramirez, House, & Puranam, 2001).

Burns (1978) saw that transformation is achieved by raising the level of awareness and consciousness of the value of targeted outcomes and the way of reaching them, by exceeding our own self-interest in the common goal or by altering our needs level on Maslow's need hierarchy. Bass (1985) added to Burns (1978) work by expanding the followers' needs He saw that the elevation can happen without the transform and when Burns (1978) saw transactional and transformational leaders to be opposite to others, Bass (1985) saw that TF-leadership needs both of these but with different amounts. TF-leadership has been seen to be essential to success especially in uncertain and complex environmental times. According to recent studies on TF-leadership, it was identified that by leading transformationally, the leaders also strengthen the use of transactional elements with different organizational levels (Edwards, 2012).

TF-leadership is studied to increase the level of satisfaction and effectiveness by elevating followers' needs and aspiration levels (Bass & Avolio, 1991). Leaders aiming to raise followers' motivational levels may need to strengthen their own self-awareness. Thus, there are studies which have shown that high self-awareness has been shown to bring more effectiveness to leaders' work. (Atwater & Roush, 1992.) When improving one's self-awareness, there is a need to go deeper on personality and behavioral tasks and according to recent leadership

studies, there has recently been an enormous interest towards TF-leadership and personality (Bono & Judge, 2004; Brown & Reilly, 2009; Hautala, 2008).

Bass (1985) divided TF-leadership into four categories and into two emotional components, the charisma and inspirational leadership component and the individualizing and intellectualizing component, which consist of individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation (see Table 3). Opposite to Burns' (1978) work, Bass (1985) saw that the same leaders display both transformational and transactional behaviors. The transactional behaviors are contingent reward, management by exception and laissez-faire leaderships. The conceptual basis for TF-leadership measurement began when Burns (1978) described the TF-leadership based on executives answers about best leaders. Albeit that Bass's MLQ measurement focuses on transformational, transactional and laisses-faire leadership behavior, this thesis utilizes only transformational leadership behavior as an individual level tool for salespeople to lead their B2B customers in buyer-seller interactions and as an individual level tool for sales directors to lead their B2B salespeople, in a more common leader-follower relationship. Only transformational leadership, neither the transactional leadership, was selected because the buyer-seller interactions are distinct from the leader-follower relationship. However, this study sees buyer and seller as equal to each other in relationship, albeit the customer always has the power when making decisions.

Charisma (idealized influence)

It is seen that the reason why followers want to provide leaders with charisma depends on the personality; as much on leaders and followers' personality. However, charismatic leaders have the motivation to influence their followers and their strong self-confidence and beliefs increase their followers' trust in them. Bass (1985) sees charisma as one of the most general and important components of the larger concept of TF-leadership. Charismatic leaders have insights into their followers' needs and hopes. They are also great actors and always "on stage".

Kouzes and Posner (1988) recommend that the leaders have a consensus on shared value because when the values are articulated, they are visible internally and externally. Encouraging people to become involved in sharing the values in their work is important because shared values should be seen in everyone's work. It is has been shown that to make things happen in an organization it is necessary to go way beyond reasons and engage followers' by heart and mind. House (1995) defined charisma to include inspiration, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. According to charisma, because it was representing

many meanings, it was also changed later in Bass' (1985) model to idealized influence for training and for research purposes (Bass, 1999).

Inspirational leadership

Inspirational leadership is seen to be emotionally arousing, stimulating and promoting to followers' efforts. Inspirational leaders can inspire their followers by emotional support and demands which transform the followers' motivation behind the original expectations. Inspirational leaders simply stimulate enthusiasm for the work and build up confidence to attain common goals. Inspirational leaders also provide an example what is expected and add a feeling of pride to the individuals and give personal encouragement to build up confidence (Bass 1985).

An example of inspirational leadership is that leaders' need to diagnose organizations' strengths and weaknesses and match these to the external environment and then get the followers to meet these challenges (Tichy & Devanna, 1986). Bass (1999) has shown that followers want to follow a leader who shows determination and confidence. A TF-leader also communicates the steps to achieve high goals and standards, often transformational leaders also give examples. It is also shown that self-reflection and a willingness to seek feedback and disseminate the new favoured behaviour, is the future of successful managerial jobs. Seeking feedback is also an essential part of the TF-leaders work (Kouzes & Posner, 1988).

Table 3.   Characteristics of transformational leaders (reworked from Bass, 1985)

Elements of TF-leadership	Characteristics of TF-leaders
Charismatic leadership	Sharing vision and mission, head for the future
Inspirational leadership	Communicate the importance of the context
Intellectual Stimulation	Encourage to alter the ways of thinking
Individual Consideration	Treat other person as another human being

Individualized Consideration

Individual consideration has been seen to contribute to followers' satisfaction leaders and to followers' productivity. Individualized consideration is central to

participative leadership which focuses on followers' personal growth and needs and are concerned with decisions affecting their work. These leaders are seen to be friendly, supportive and encouraging towards self-development. According to studies individualized consideration in TF-leadership involves individualized attention and developmental orientation towards followers. (Bass 1985.)

Individualized consideration has followers fully informed about the issues at work and there are no surprises because the leader appreciates the two-way conversations face-to-face or by phone. This make the followers feel that they are insiders and they are a part of the developments. In two-way conversations the followers are also able to ask questions so that there are fewer misunderstandings. The leader is also fully aware of differences in his or her followers' needs. (Bass 1985.) As noted in several studies, when leaders know the different followers individual expectations they have a greater opportunity to meet their followers' individual level expectations and this is also a way for a leader to lead the follower on a more individual level (Hautala, 2006; 2008).

Individualized consideration may be seen also as a leaders concern of followers' welfare, developmental issues and support on personal growth (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Additionally, Avolio (1999) sees that psychological support, warmth, compassion and ability to acknowledge vulnerability are parts of individual consideration in TF-leadership. The impact of TF-leadership on followers' performance has seen to build up development and empowerment, which increases motivation. One study suggests that transformational leaders enable these effects because they influence followers' relational self and identification with the leader (Kark & Shamir, 2002).

Mostly in TF-leadership studies the focus is on leaders and partly on followers. Tichy and Devanna (1986) raise one relevant point when they claim that leaders must be able to also work with the tensions expressed from the middle managers who are working with the major transformation. This also may be analogically transferred to the B2B sales world where salespeople work with customer organizations and try to build a best solution for the customer by working with the best experts from his or her own organization to fulfill the needs of the customer.

Kouzes and Posner (1988) identify that knowing each other is the base for trust building and collaboration and the way to know others is to meet face-to-face. They also recommend increasing the amount of face-to-face interactions depending upon the complexity of the issues. This is a challenge in today's buyer-seller interactions because it is often difficult to get an invitation to the meetings. The Transformational leader also acts as a mentor to his or her followers and

does not give answers, although TF-leaders coach and support the people around (Bass, 1999).

Intellectual stimulation

Intellectual stimulation in Bass' (1985) TF-leadership model is seen to mean leaders' actions which make changes in followers' problem awareness and problem solving. By intellectual stimulation the leaders are able to transcend followers' thinking on a strategic and future-oriented level. Transformational leaders are more proactive in their thinking than reactive.

There are four different types of leading with intellectual stimulation. Bass (1985) has divided these types into: Rationally Oriented Intellectual Stimulation, Existentially Oriented Intellectual Stimulation, Empirically Oriented Intellectual Stimulation and Idealistically Oriented Intellectual Stimulation. Rationally Oriented and Empirically Oriented are transactional whereas Existentially and Idealistically are transformational ways to lead. Existentially oriented leaders use their intellect to support others' ideas and are integrative decision makers. They believe that intellectual understanding happens in interactions where they create new solutions for implementation. These activities, when leading buyer-seller interaction, would be seen to be close to the relational selling approach.

The idealistic way, in intellectual stimulation orientates towards growth, adaptation and creativity among others. These leaders rely on intuitive data and they make decisions really flexibly. Idealistic leaders make decisions with a small amount of information and generate new solutions if it is necessary (Bass, 1985). When the above mentioned idealistic intellectual stimulation into personality type research results is compared to MBTI personality studies, it is shown that typical personality types for leader is to have the N preference of intuitive leaders' personality types. This is not only an advantage to these N leaders but also to S leaders who are able to benefit from this idealistic way to lead (see Routamaa & Hautala, 2009; Vesa Routamaa & Ou, 2012).

Based on the leader-follower observational studies the leaders' have been shown to have characteristics of change architects, they are courageous individuals, they believe in people, they are driven by values and they are life-long learners (Tichy & Devanna, 1986). Kouzes and Posner (1988) defined the leaders' values to be responses to other, moral judgments, commitment to personal and organizational goals. There are also studies on females and males as transformational leaders and studies show that women are found to be more transformational than male leaders and because of this also more effective leaders than men (Bass, Avolio, & Atwater, 1996; Carroll, 2010). Compared to

this the most recent study of transformational leadership and gender found that men saw themselves as more challenging than women and women saw themselves as more enabling and rewarding than men (Brandt & Laiho, 2013).

This study decided to focus on TF-leadership because of its positive outcomes and also because B2B sales today is more contextual than task-oriented and the value is formed together with the customer in buyer-seller interactions. TF-leadership is more likely to reflect social values and to emerge in times affected by uncertainty. TF-leadership has also been seen to be an effective way to lead complex environments (Ingram et al., 2005). The TF-leadership may be seen to suit B2B selling as a way to lead the customer because today customers have several alternatives to choose from and digital tools and globalization have transformed the buying process (Ingram, 2004; Ostrom et al., 2015).

2.2.2 Studies concerning transformational leadership and personality types

As suggested in the previous chapter, there are several studies which have shown the relationships between MBTI and TF-leadership (Bono & Judge, 2004; Brown & Reilly, 2009; Gardner & Martinko, 1996; Hautala, 2006; 2008; Roush & Atwater, 1992). Atwater and Roush (1992) found relationships between thinking and feeling and TF-leadership and Hautala (2006) between sensing and followers' reports to TF-leadership. There is also a study which did not find any relationships with MBTI and followers reports of TF-leadership (Brown & Reilly, 2009). It may be noted according to Brown and Reilly's (2009) study, that Hautala (2006; 2008) used measures based on Leadership Practices Inventory which is based on Posner and Kouzes (1988), and Brown and Reilly (2009) used Bass's MLQ. Brown and Reilly (2009) found a relationship between MBTI and TF-leadership, but only on two scales of TF-leadership and in self-reports by leaders.

One study concerning MBTI-types and TF-leadership has shown, that leaders who are feeling, F types have been seen to be rated more TF-leader than thinking, T types in studies which have investigated both leaders and their followers (Atwater & Yammarino, 1993). Uusi-Kakkuri and Brandt (2015) found that people who are extraverted, intuitive and feeling types wanted to see more transformational behaviour than the opposite preference pairs. In their study all types wanted to have a transactional or authoritative leader rather than a non-leader. In this same study the rewarding was seen important, but not as important as in overall transformational leadership. It was found that sensing, S types wanted to have an authoritative or transactional leader while the intuitive

did not. One study, which researched leader-follower relationships with MBTI and N-types, noted that leaders seemed to be better at innovating and learning from their own opinion and also from others perspectives. Additionally, in this same study, F-types seemed to succeed better in change management and building relationships from both perspectives. (Berr, Church, & Waclawski, 2000.) Recently TF-leadership and MBTI personality types were researched in a hospital environment and this study found that female leader's preferences for Extraversion, Intuition and Perceiving contributed to act as transformational leaders from the views of others (Carroll, 2010).

It is notable that personality types or the dimensions may dominate one's leadership behavior and have effects on leadership styles over other situational elements. In some cases personality preferences may have a positive effect on situational behaviour or some dimensions may strengthen some of the ineffective parts in leadership behaviour. So the supervisors' own personality is always acting as a filter when interpreting the leadership style necessary for a subordinate (see for example Routamaa et al., 1994). Additionally, studies show that the supervisors' type is always more dominant than the type of a subordinate (see for example Roush, 1992). However, studies of leaders in Finland reveal that most leaders share the extraverted, sensing, thinking and judging preferences (Brandt & Laiho, 2013; Routamaa et al., 1997). This same ESTJ-type has been seen to be the most common for purchasing professionals in the US (see for example Dion et al., 1995).

Hautala (2008) studied the most common MBTI types among managers (ENTJ, ESTJ, INTJ, ISTJ) and their own and their followers' appraisals to their transformational leader behavior with the Finnish version of Leadership Inventory, LPI. This study found the connection between personality types and TF-leadership was that the personality type had an impact on leaders TF-leadership behavior. As a result, the ENTJ and ESTJ managers regarded themselves and their behavior as leader of transformational. Instead the followers ranked the most transformational managers with personality types of ESTJ's and ISTJ's. Most of the followers in this study represented the MBTI profile of ESTJ.

2.2.3 Transform in B2B selling – TF-leadership and personality types in B2B sales studies

Since the recent changes in B2B selling and buying, there are many uncertain and complex sections which call for a better framework for leading selling and sales interactions in different phases and some researchers have implemented TF-

leadership theory to study sales leadership (Dubinsky et al., 1995; J. H. Humphreys, 2002; MacKenzie et al., 2001). Most recently TF-leadership has been implemented in to the B2B sales environment by studying the moral judgment of salespeople and where TF-leadership showed to have a positive connection to influence it (Schwepker & Good, 2010). In customer encounters, TF-leadership has also been seen to support the job satisfaction and commitment of highly educated customer contact personnel (Emery & Barker, 2007). As Ingram et al. (2005) claimed in their study, selling is due to uncertainty and complexity, acknowledging the relational skills of the sellers. This is why also the approach of sales leadership needs to be evaluated again, both in B2B sellers work as their new customers' leaders and in a sales leadership context. Further, some studies have stated that TF-leadership is a relevant tool for leading contextual situations in different levels because of its origin in change situations (Brown & Reilly, 2009; Edwards, 2012; Ingram et al., 2005).

There are studies on relational selling which take account of the similarities between buyer and seller, but the similarity means shared values, cultural elements or goals between organizations (Crosby et al., 1990; Doney & Cannon, 1997). Commitment is also seen to be an important element for cooperation (Anderson & Narus, 1990). It has even been claimed that a firms' success is dependent on the working relationships in B2B business (Anderson, 2004). Additionally, research shows that relationships between customer firm and seller are short-term exchanges and less intense than compared to individual level interactions (Doney & Cannon, 1997; Iacobucci & Ostrom, 1996). As Palmatier et al. (2006) have suggested, expertise and communication are the most effective strategies for building relationships and especially for increasing commitment. They suggest activities to generate benefits, promote customer dependency and to increase similarity to customers. For the salesperson to be able to show expertise and communicate professionally, the activities to raise one's self-awareness may help to better focus on customers' concerns (cf. Atwater & Roush, 1992).

In academia and in practice soft interpersonal skills are seen to emerge as critical determinants to business relationships. Interactional skills are seen to include skills of leadership, like trust-building, cooperation and success in relationships. (McHugh, Humphreys, & McIvor, 2003.) As noted, the salespeople should focus less on products, services and costs and focus on interactive, value forming activities which increase the mutual benefits of customers during the entire buying process (Humphreys et al., 2009). In this study the value is seen to be relational, interactional and behavioral and this value is formed in buyer-seller interactions with both parties where both are involved in each other's practices

(Echeverri & Skalen, 2011; Grönroos & Voima, 2013). Interactional encounters are seen to be a dialogical processes and both of the attending parties are active and are also benefiting from the outcomes (Ballantyne, 2004). It is notable that based on empirical findings, these interactions in the pre-buying phase and in initial meetings may be creative or destructive. The interesting question then is that when the customer experience in Echeverri et al's (2011) words "creative interactions", when will these interactions more probably experience the value forming between the buyer and the seller and in which situations are these interactions destructive.

In recent years the relational exchange paradigm has become one of the most discussed topic in sales (Dwyer et al., 1987; Palmatier et al., 2006). Most of the studies have focused, not surprisingly on the sellers' side (Guenzi et al., 2007; Parsons, 2002). While this research focuses mainly on the B2B customers' side, noteworthy is the recent change which is also evolving, that of recognizing purchasing as a strategic role in organizations and developing their positions as a buyer to be attractive long-term partners to suppliers as possible. Today on the purchasing side, there are increasing discussions of reverse marketing which also sees purchasing to be marketing and which takes important steps in identifying initial buyers' organizations as important and attractive long-term purchasing partners (Humphreys et al., 2009). Reverse marketing may be noticed in buyer-seller interactions. As in sales, it is seen as important for buyers to satisfy the need for important suppliers and to foster relationships with them.

In relationship studies satisfaction is seen as an outcome and as an indicator of success (Crosby et al., 1990; Palmatier et al., 2006). As acknowledged earlier, buyers today are active business partners in interactions to form a collaboration within the salespeople's enhanced levels of value. Notable is that the buyers are the ones who determine the meaning of value (Grönroos & Voima, 2013). Guenzi et al. (2008) studied empirical individual level activities in buyer-seller encounters on account managers' who manage relationships with strategic and large accounts and they suggest adapting relational behavior to interactions to ensure the customer performance for the long-term. Additionally, one study also found, in qualitative research, that relationship benefits had a stronger relationship with relationship value than with the relationships cost (Ulaga & Eggert, 2006). It might claim that there are many studies which highlight the importance of relational value forming but less studies on how to concretely disseminate it (see also Biong & Selnes, 1995).

There are B2B buying and selling studies which have studied cognitive styles (measured by MBTI) of selling which show that cognitive style may have an

influence towards individual's behavior. McIntyre (1991) found that individuals prefer to interact with sellers similar to themselves and it is also shown that there are style-related differences in how individuals solve conflicts. Additionally it is found in another study that ST's are less customer oriented than other cognitive styles, NTs, SFs and NFs (McIntyre & Meloche, 1995). There are seen to be differences in selling and cognitive styles, when NFs are seen to be naturally suited to relationship building and relational selling, while STs feel more comfortable when handling simple task-oriented transactions (Dwyer et al., 1987). As noted by McIntyre and Meloche (1995), the differences in cognitive styles and preferred actions of sellers based on their personality types would need to be taken into account when recruiting new salespeople and also for a more effective use of the sales force.

Interestingly one study on purchasing found that sellers expected increasingly wider communication from buyers in buyer-seller meetings, meaning that open communication and shared expectations regarding what is expected is seen as important. Additionally, sellers' indicated the importance of buyers' responsiveness, meaning that when a situation requires, buyers' should be flexible and responsive to their needs (Humphreys, Williams, & Goebel, 2009). When adding to these results the knowledge that often peoples' individual appraisals anticipate their personality types (Hautala, 2008) and the studies of the most common personality types among salespeople (Dion et al., 1995), these findings of sellers' expectations correlate well to the MBTI theory's dimension of Extraverts (Myers, 1992; Myers & McCaulley, 1985).

The study by Dion et al. (1995) revealed how important it is for salespeople to build a personal connection with the buyer, because it was shown that this affects customers' feelings about their relationship with sellers and it also increased the sales performance. For salespeople to be familiar with the needs of different personalities, this may help them to satisfy buyers' needs. There are also studies which have shown that differences in personality types and especially across the S-N dimension, have determined buyer's experiences of perceived quality and may have led to a conclusion of poor communication skills (Clack et al., 2004; Parsons, 2002). Based on these results, buyers may seem to be willing to choose long-term relationships with sellers who share the way they work, what motivates them and what satisfies them (Macdaid et al., 1995).

There are several studies on adaptive selling in the area of sales referred to as adaptive selling (Weitz, 1981; Weitz et. al., 1986; Spiro & Weitz 1990). Adaptive selling is seen to be behavioural and communicational activities when answering customers' needs. When long-term relationship building, where customers are

heading today, is added to salespersons' activities, it is referred to as the relational approach of selling (Biong & Selnes, 1995). There are studies of salespeople's personality types when they are practicing adaptive selling and it is seen that intuitive and thinking salespeople are seen to practice more adaptive selling than sensing and feeling types (McIntyre, Claxton, Anselmi, & Wheatley, 2000). In addition, McIntyre et al. (2000) found that when a salesperson is NT in his or her cognitive style, this leads more often to adaptability, customer orientation and satisfies the needs of the customer.

The value here could be seen as the intangible compatibility between the salesperson and the buyer. If this is the case, the buyer's preferred style of interaction must be considered in order to create the value experience. As Järlström (2002) in her study found that often different personalities favour spending their time with similar personalities. If this is also the method for customers to select their long-term partners then it is important for sales organizations to understand the far-reaching importance of personality aspects. Based on the studies of the personality types in Finland, the most common types of managers are ISTJ, ESTJ and ENTJ; purchasing managers trend towards ESTJ and ENTJ (cf. Routamaa et al., 2009; Hautala, 2008).

In this dissertation the relational aspect and its interpretations of experienced value is based primarily on personality theory. This makes it possible to study an individual level of expected interactions between buyer and seller and also interactions before the initial meetings. The personality theory, as previously mentioned , is the base for individual behaviour between buyer and seller but while interactions need leadership approach to find the common goal in long-term partnerships, so the theory of transformational leadership is also used. The finding of value as being terminated by the initial customer (Grönroos & Voima, 2013) fits well to this thesis because the theories of MBTI and TF-leadership also highlight different, unique human preferences.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following chapter discusses the philosophical choices made in this dissertation and the reliability and validity of published studies and in used measurement of MBTI. The chapter begins with a discussion of philosophy and of the research strategy. Later the chapter focuses on the design of this dissertation and the research methods used.

3.1 Philosophical choices and research strategy

The Philosophical assumptions always influence the researchers research methods and how the phenomenon is viewed during the research. When researching social sciences the choices which are made clarify the researchers understanding of the world and how to collect the data and clarify the existence. Understanding the social world as a human clarifies the way ontological decision making takes place and the method of gaining understanding of the existence defines the researcher's epistemological decisions. This study is based on nominalism because the world is seen as consisting of actions of humans the social phenomenon is created and modified by (see Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Albeit this dissertation uses empiria of the MBTI as a measure which categories the different personality types to a certain personality type, often this kind of arrangement could be based on an ontological assumption of realism. Since the theory of MBTI is based on a dynamic personality theory and is used in this dissertation as a way to understand the phenomenon from the perspective of expectations towards interactions, so this study sees that social phenomena are created by human actions and the existence refers on nominalism.

Burrell & Morgan's (1979) discussion of the nature of knowledge is divided into anti-positivism, also called interpretivism, and positivism. Interpretivism see that the world may only be understood if involved to studied phenomenon. In this dissertation the researcher's wide experience of B2B selling has affected the choices made. It would be difficult to research a phenomenon in which the researcher has been involved for almost 20 years with a positivism nature. This dissertation focuses on a phenomenon which is influenced from several levels and from different viewpoints. For researching such a complicated phenomenon an interpretation is needed and the researcher must understand the phenomenon from inside, not from outside, which would be the way to conduct epistemologically positivistic research (see Burrel & Morgan, 1979). It may be said that the researcher with subjectivist orientation is to get as close as possible

to the researched phenomenon and this foundation leads to the use of qualitative methods (see Hurmerinta-Peltomäki & Nummela, 2004).

In this dissertation the researcher combines systematically different reasoning logics and uses the abductive approach (Dubois & Gadde, 2002) where the inductive approach starts from empirical phenomenon and builds a theory based on findings, opposite to the deduction is testing hypothesis based on earlier theories. In the abductive approach, the research process includes phases moving back and forth from theory to empiria and back to theory. The whole research process has progressed from the itinerary phase, but the basis to it has been on the collected data. Most clearly the abductive approach is revealed in studies 4-6 where the articles' data is collected by mixed method research methodology, but where the studies are qualitative dominant. Qualitative dominant mixed method research relies on a qualitative, constructivist view of the research process (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). The method used in studies 4-6 are both qualitative and quantitative and are so called mixed method studies, which approach both the theory and practice by attempting to consider several viewpoints. If in the abductive approach the progressing back and forth is typical, so it is in mixed method research and especially here, because this study has used mixed methods in embedded case studies (Creswell & Clark, 2011; Jick, 1979; Yin, 2009), except in study one, which is a conceptual paper and in studies two and three, which are based only on qualitative data.

When in general the personality studies have conducted quantitative data with MBTI measures, the studies have used the nomothetic approach as a methodological viewpoint. This dissertation uses the ideographic approach, because the information was gained close to the subject. When research uses MBTI as a measurement, often results rely only on informant self-reports. In this study, for example, in MBTI measures, all the collected MBTI profiles were confirmed with a time in face-to-face meetings with all the informants who completed their MBTI self-report. Additionally, in the companies whose new customers were studied, these sales organizations contributed to a funded research project and the cooperation also included other interviews, sales meeting observations and video recordings of the buyer-seller interactions. For this dissertation, the data used consists of the new customer interviews, meetings where the customers' MBTI self-reports were confirmed and second round interviews with closer questioning of leadership and buyer-seller interactions. The salespeople interviewed and profiled in studies three, five and six, went through this same procedure (see Fig. 2 of the research design and data collection in this study).

Studies of the Thesis	Embedded Research Design	Timeline	Other activities
Increasing the understanding of B2B environment	Qualitative design		Research team meetings weekly
	Qualitative data collection	11/14 Pilot interviews (Sales)	
		01/15 Interviews (Sales)	Research guiding from supervisor of the student
	Coding (Atlas.ti) and analysis		
Increasing the understanding of customers' expectations	Quantitative data collection (MBTI) and analysis	02/15 Pilot interviews (Buyers)	Transcribing the recorded interviews
		03/15 MBTI questionnaires (Sales/Buyers)	
	Follow up		Interview and fieldnotes
Study 2		04/15 Interviews (Buyers)	Ongoing literature review
Comparing MBTI-types to earlier studies	2. Qualitative data collection and analysis	05-09/15 Confirming respondents MBTI's	
	2. Quantitative data collection (MBTI) and analysis	05-10/15 2. Interviews (Sales/Buyers)	
Study 6		10/15	
Study 3	Interpretation		
Study 4		01/16	
Study 5			
Study 1		03/16	
		04/16	
Deeper understanding of the phenomenon			

Figure 2.   Embedded case study research design and data collection in this study

Whilst the research used a mixed method approach and it is studying the phenomenon of customers' expectations in the sales leadership context, the philosophical theory base may be seen to be pragmatic where the strategies are employed sequentially and different perspectives and approaches are integrated. Pragmatism sees the value of practical knowledge which is defined to be beneficial to the users of the knowledge, uses diverse approaches and acknowledges the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods (see Burrell & Morgan 1979; Creswell et al., 2011). Additionally, it may be said that the purpose of using mixed method research is complementarity because the MBTI and interviews are both examining the same phenomenon from different perspectives, where both methods are seen to overlap each other. By using mixed methods, answering the wider research problem gets best results because it is possible to use the results from one method to enhance or clarify the results of the other method (Caracelli & Greene, 1993). If a simpler research design was applied, it might have overlooked some important aspects. However, using mixed methods advances it to promote deeper and more complex explanations of the phenomenon (see Jick, 1979). This dissertation is researching a topic which has been of interest to the researcher for several years and in which the researcher has also worked. It may be assumed that in these circumstances there is a pre-understanding of the activities undertaken when leading customers in sales. When researching B2B selling it may be seen at a practical level itself, the pragmatist view offers the best possible explanation to the researched phenomenon.

The interpretive research approach looks at the phenomenon from inside and the interpretive view of the data is also in the analysis phase, as well as in data collection phase. Hermeneutics is a theory which researches interpretation and understanding. It states that understanding the phenomenon is based on pre-understanding. It is important that the researcher understands the effects of pre-understanding of the research focus and is correcting the interpretations during the research process (Kakkuri-Knuuttila & Heinlahti, 2006). There are three different parts researched in this dissertation by which the researcher tries to answer the research problem of this thesis. These three parts form the basis by which the researcher tries to interpret the researched data to find deeper explanations step by step. This interpretative circle is the key in hermeneutic theory and is called a hermeneutic circle. When the researcher's pre-understanding of the research topic touch, it is seen to increase the understanding during the whole process. In this dissertation the hermeneutic circle has been closed during the research process because to understand leadership we must first research the needs and expectations of B2B customers in today's complex business environments. Additionally, it demands a focus on

salespeople, to research the expectations of sellers at sales meetings and also their preferred methods of leading selling today which is seen to fulfill the customers' expectations. Additionally, addressing the research problem of this thesis has demanded a focus on one element from the theoretical perspective. Both the theory of hermeneutics and pragmatism have affected the choice of data collection methods and the research strategy.

Research strategy guides the researcher to select research methods and the chosen philosophical assumptions should also be taken into account. The research problem to be answered in this dissertation is: *How to utilize personality theory and transformational leadership in different phases of buyer-seller interactions in the context of sales leadership?* This complex and context-based phenomenon examined in this dissertation is divided into three different parts and six published studies. In this thesis, study one examines the ways to lead buyer-seller interactions based on TF-leadership and MBTI personality theories. Studies two, four and five examine the customers' expectations and needs which need to be fulfilled to be able to form value with customers before the sales meetings. Study three examines both the sellers' and buyers' expectations and how their expectations align, and study six examines the salespeople's preferred activities to sales leadership in complex business environments.

The aim of this research is to offer a substantive model for salespeople to lead and treat customers in complex business environments (see Fig. 3). This is enabled by a mixed method research approach where the B2B customers and salespeople have been studied both with qualitative and quantitative methods. As the phenomenon and research problems are wide and complex, the researcher chose to use mixed methods to be able to address the dissertation research question. It is notable that this study sees using the mixed method approach from the view point that it is examining the same dimension of the research problem. This means that the subject researched is the same and here the subject is the buyer-seller interactions at different phases, before the meetings and during the meetings (see Jick, 1979). The researchers chosen approach is also the way to better understand the phenomenon and identifies that the mixed method approach also offers a way to study customers' and salespeople's viewpoints and perspectives at a deeper level. In mixed method research it is also possible to interpret different phases of the study (Johnson et al., 2007) and this illustrates the use of pragmatic and hermeneutic theories. The ground for mixed methods is to use both qualitative interview methods and quantitative MBTI measures. The studying of customers' expectations and needs is done by semi-structured interviews and with the Myers Briggs Type indicator (MBTI) concentrating on

personality types and cognitive styles. The researcher has tested, in studies four, five and six, the qualitative method findings with the quantitative data findings and by using both these methods it has been possible to obtain valuable additional information (see Hurmerinta-Peltomäki et. al., 2004). The aim was to find the meaning of the collected data by comparing it to the personality type data and identify if there is a connection between buyers' expectations and their personality types as earlier empirical studies on leadership area have suggested (see for example Hautala, 2008; Routamaa & Ponto, 1994). Comparing the different data sets to each other to discover answers to research problem may also be called methodological triangulation (Johnson et al., 2007: 114; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998: 18). This dissertation has used the term mixed methods because both qualitative and quantitative methods have been used. Mixed methods were used in study five to enable the same data to be analyzed by different kinds of qualitative methods and later quantitative data analysis This has facilitated the assessment of the qualitative data by sheading new light on the qualitative findings. As mixed method literature highlights, it is important to define the type of mixed methods used (Johnson et al., 2007). See the summary of the methodological choices in Table 4.

Table 4.   Methodological choices in this thesis

Research philosophy	Methodology
Ontology	Ideographic approach
Epistemology	Interpretivism
Research theory	Pragmatism
Reasoning	Abduction
Research strategies	Mixed method research, multiple case studies
Data collection	Myers Briggs Type Indicator, Individual interviews

This dissertation is based on multiple case studies which are presented in a number of different published studies. As triangulation was used, the phenomenon is studied from different perspectives but additionally different methods are used to find answers to the researched phenomenon. The research process itinerary and the research strategy in this dissertation may also be called an emergent strategy, which means that the strategy has born step by step and it was not based on strict planning. This research process suits mixed method research design well All the methods serve their own purpose and this study has applied the data sequentially by using a qualitative dominant approach and with

the purpose of exploring the phenomenon of expectations to buyer-seller interactions in complex business environments which is, so far, unexamined. Although the least dominant method, quantitative measures inspired the interpretation of the findings and improved the theoretical discussion (see Hurmerinta-Peltomäki et al., 2004.) While this thesis is positioned epistemologically on interpretivism, changes, for example in organizational strategy, may affect to the findings (see Pettigrew, 1990). An epistemological approach is also close to social constructivism, which is not only defining the truth but it also describes the social reality (see Kakkuri-Knuuttila et al., 2006). However, as the researcher's background is in the topic being researched, interpretivism describes the epistemological choices better (see Burrel & Morgan, 1979).

3.2 Validity and reliability

A case study research strategy was a suitable method to study phenomenon in this dissertation because the phenomenon is complex and influences the research problem on many levels. Multiple case studies were chosen with the aim of describing the phenomenon with a deep understanding of the research problem (Eisenhardt, 1989). The interviews often lasted up to one and a half hours each and may be more or less described as in-depth case studies. Because the research was done as part of a research project the data collection did not stop when the saturation point was reached (see Hurmerinta-Peltomäki et al., 2004). All the respondents offered to the researcher were interviewed and this positively influenced validity. Additionally, 51 salespeople and 38 business buyers and professional buyers were interviewed twice (see Fig. 2). Further, all of the respondents have been profiled with MBTI in face-to-face meetings. All of the buyers' pre-hand filled MBTI-profiles which have been confirmed to show the "true" personality profile of the respondent. As always in self-reports the answers can be falsified and in this study three of the MBTI self-reports and their "true" types were changed in face-to-face profiling sessions. It may be said that this correlates well to earlier studies on profiled persons' self-report agreements (see Myers & McCaulley, 1985).

The data collection took place mostly during the year 2015. Where the focus is to study business interactions where the context is complicated and fast-changing, even the smallest changes may influence the findings. For example, changes in selling strategies during the research process may affect the research (see Pettigrew, 1990). From this perspective the overall validity of the dissertation may be seen to be high. However, this thesis is based on contextual multiple case

studies and when the environment changes the results still hold in this specific context (see Dubois & Gadde, 2002). Nevertheless, as the study is made on certain industries and in cases, the findings may not be generalized (see Pettigrew, 1990).

The data collection included the dyadic approach to answer the research question. Both sides, the salespeople who led the buyer-seller interactions and also the customers who meet these sellers, were interviewed. As there is a research gap in the theory on followers' appraisals to their leaders' leadership styles, it was decided not to interview the actual sales leaders (see Hautala, 2006; 2008). However, the data collection included interviewees from both relationship sides, buyers and sellers, so it validates the findings (cf. Brennan & Turnbull, 1999). Additionally, this dyadic data was collected with mixed method research which enabled a deep understanding from the qualitative perspective and tested the environment from the quantitative perspective. Also abductive reasoning was used which made it possible to create new models based on the case studies (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). In addition, this mixed method research used methodological triangulation, which may allow for a higher validity and therefore greater confidence (see Jick, 1979).

The research strategy used in this dissertation builds a strong ground for a high validity in this thesis. Additionally, work in a research group offered the researcher a way to work in close cooperation with more experienced researchers and also to partly benefit from the investigator triangulation from the view of validity (see Denzin, 1978). The analysis on a higher level was done by the whole research group, for example, the coding was created by the whole group using software called Atlas.ti. The research project members met systematically almost every week and discussed the preliminary findings. This may be seen to positively affect the validity of the study (cf. Ihantola & Kihn, 2011).

As a doctoral student the researcher has been able to work in close cooperation with the thesis supervisor whose broad knowledge, understanding and experience has been gained during the last 30 years in academia. The relationship with the supervisor was not new because the collaboration started already when the researcher was doing her master thesis. These relational and individual aspects, as also this dissertation claims, are positively influencing this dissertations' validity.

3.3   Instrument and its reliability and validity

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) - Reliability

Reliability measures how consistently the selected instrument measured what it is designed to measure. MBTI is severally used as a self-assessment measure in the academic world and also in practice which is successfully applied in education, clinical, counseling and business settings (see more Carlson, 1985). MBTI consists of four bipolar dimensions: extraversion-introversion, sensing-intuition, thinking-feeling and judging-perceiving. The major interest around the use of MBTI is that there a consistency of remaining in the same MBTI type. The other interest deals with variance in reliability estimates which is attributable to the respondents' characteristics.

The reliability estimates are expected to vary and this depends on the respondents understanding of themselves and additionally of the statistical procedures adopted. One assumption which has derived from MBTI observations is that there are people who have a good type development and these people are more likely to know their "true" personality type. If so, they are more likely to be able to report their type consistently. And if so, these samples will show higher reliabilities than samples consisting of lower-development people. In MBTI, these lowest reliabilities are expected to occur in the TF-index. MBTI is designed to use X and Y split-half scores and the split-half reliabilities of continuous scores for a number or a group. Split-half scores are developed from logical split halves of the full scale used for computing split-half reliabilities. (Myers et al., 1985.)

Studies show that internal consistency reliabilities of the four MBTI scales are acceptable for adult groups. In summary, test-retest reliabilities in MBTI show consistency. Estimated reliabilities of type categories have appeared to be satisfactory in most cases (Carlyn, 1977). When there is a change in type it is likely in one preference and in scales where the first reported preference was low (Myers et al., 1992). When one has a low score in one preference it is important to understand that it just means that one did not vote that initial preference very often. Low scores are quite common between young people and it just means that this preference is not as clear to the respondent (Myers 1992). Carlyn (1977) for example found that scores of college students appeared to be reasonably stable over times in type categories but older respondents' scores seemed to be even more stable.

The forms used in MBTI are F, G and form AV. G is standard form for the general use, form F is comparable to form G, but includes some additional unscored research items. Form AV is a self-scoring version. Form F is the most commonly

used form and contains 166 items which respondents are forced to choose (Carlson, 1985). This study used the form F (the Finnish research version) of the MBTI. According to Järlström (2000), the internal consistency coefficients in using the F-version of the scales ranged between -,65 to -,87 and the results of the reliability of the studies indicate relatively good internal consistency.

The measurements used with the MBTI is one of the most used measurements in organizations, for example, in leadership development programs (Hautala, 2006). A large number of the respondents in this study already had their MBTI-profile before the study. In almost all cases the respondents received the same personality type results as they did when they were tested on a previous occasion. This shows higher reliabilities towards MBTI in this study and probably for this reason, additionally when measuring higher reliability and validity, there were only three people whose self-report was not correct compared to their "true" type. When the sample consisted of adults close to the mid-age or older, to the self-reports highly affected their type dynamic and the third preferences' existence. When the researcher is accredited to use MBTI, it gives more validity to the process for the respondent to identify his or her own personality type and also to understand the effect of third preference to his or her personality type development.

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) - Validity

Validity means that the instrument measures what it is intended to measure. The purpose of MBTI is to classify a person to their "true" types, where Jung's theory describes preferences that exist and MBTI indicates these preferences. MBTI distribution is often presented in type tables which have been compared with another population (SRTT) (see Part 2 and studies four and five). These type distributions themselves provide evidence for construct validity. For example, if occupational type distribution tables include more than the predicted types based on theory, it may be said that the type table contributes to construct validity. Additionally, there are many correlations between samples and instruments. In MBTI the correlations have their limitations for construct validity and they report only the four preferences at one time, nor all of the sixteen dynamic types (Myers et al., 1992).

According to type theory extraversion means the attitude to the outer-world. Outer-world attitude has been manifested at different times with correlation scales from -.70 to -.40. Extraversion is also measured with other instruments like MMPI, 16PF and Maudsley. Additionally, there is a correlation between extraversion and with the selling of intangibles which is also the focus of this study. (Myers & McCaulley, 1992). Introversion type theory has also found

significant correlations from r-.75 to r-.40 which include measures of occupation and social introversion and correlations with being a silent type which shows a need for privacy (Myers et al., 1992).

Sensing is perceiving by way of the senses and is concerned with present reality. Perceptions follow the preference sensing of realism and preference for the concrete. Scales have correlated significantly in the range of -.67 to -.40 and have included orientation to reality, practical outlook and economy. Sensing has correlated largely to occupations which require careful attention to detail. (Myers et al., 1992.) In comparing this to professional buyers' work it is not surprising that S-preference was over presented in buyers MBTI types (see studies four and five).

Intuitive is one perception which leads to possibilities and attractions. Intuition leads to fields where work needs abstract levels or where there is a need to develop new areas. Personality scales from r-.62 to r-.40 correlated with intuition and are, for example complexity, academic interest, theoretical independence and a desire to use thinking capabilities. (Myers et al., 1992.)

Thinking as a judgment associates with analytical, logical and skeptical approaches or being distant in interpersonal relationships. Different personality characteristics have correlated with thinking between r-.57 to r-.40. These characteristics are, for example, achievement and assertiveness. MBTI studies have additionally found a substantial number of thinking types in working areas like business, law and technical fields. Feeling as a judgment is defined by subjective values and feeling is also characterized as a concern for other people and interpersonal warmth. Scales associate significantly with feeling judgment (r-.55 to r-.40) and include measures of concern for others, social service and interest in other people. (Myers et al., 1992.)

In type theory the JP scale is concerned with the point of sufficient evidence and decision making based on evidence. A judging attitude makes the decisions quickly whilst the perceiving attitude wants to leave the options open. Judging is often associated with desire for control and decisiveness. Personality scales of judging have correlated with forms from r-.59 to r-.40 and includes, for example, self-control and achiever personality. In type theory the attitude of perceiving is associated with spontaneity and change as a challenge. Scales of personality correlated with perceiving (r-.57 to r-.40) are for example autonomy and impulse extraversion. (Myers et al., 1992.)

One example of the validity correlations are the self-assessments which are based on the type theory and self-observation which are used to validate or correct the

MBTI reports (Myers et al., 1992). Gardner and Martinko (1996) found in their MBTI review internal consistencies above -,75 for all four scales. It may be said that the evidence in MBTI of the criterion based relations concerning occupations are consistent with the type theory. According to the MBTI's F form used in this study, which is the Finnish research version, indicates relatively good internal consistency. The best internal consistency scales are E/I, T/F and J/P. Although it may be said that the results show adequate internal consistency. Additionally, the earlier results suggest that the questionnaire consistently measures the same thing (see Järlström, 2000) and the construct validity can be defined as fairly good (Hautala, 2005). As Carlyn (1977: 471) has acknowledged "The Indicator appears to be a reasonably valid instrument which is potentially useful for a variety of purposes".

4   MAIN RESULTS IN STUDIES

This thesis includes six published studies and all of the studies focus on B2B customers' expectations and fulfilling these expectations before sales meetings, and during the buyer-seller interactions to be able to form value and be able to satisfy customers' expectations. Five of the studies are published in refereed international conference proceedings and one is submitted and revised to a refereed academic journal. This section summarizes the main results of these six studies and explains the main contributions which address the research problem. The refereed published studies are included at the end of this dissertation to the part 2.

4.1   Study 1: Business to Business Buyer-Seller Interactions – Personality and Transformational Leadership Theories' Perspective

Study 1, "Business to Business Buyer-Seller Interactions – Personality and Transformational Leadership Theories' Perspective," theoretically examines the leading of buyer-seller interactions. In this study the salesperson has been seen as a leader of the customer. Both of the parties in B2B interactions are heading for long-term collaboration to save costs and to gain competitive advantage. Unlike most other studies in this field, this study's examination focus is on salespeople and how they need to lead and treat their contact persons to satisfy their expectations and needs. This study contributes to relational sales literature in demanding business environments and when the buying has changed, by offering a model to lead and treat customers so that their needs will be fulfilled.

This published study contributes to sales literature by utilizing the theories of TF-leadership and the personality theory of MBTI. This study recommends disseminating the theory of TF-leadership on an individual level and with individual consideration so that the salesperson is able to satisfy his or her customers' expectations. MBTI has been used in sales area studies on adaptive selling area, but today, when it is acknowledged that the salesforce do strategically important work when forming value with their customers in buyer-seller encounters, it is recognized that further study in this area is necessary instead of focusing on adaptive selling, the relational selling which initiates the long-term relationships with the customers. As noted, this study is focusing on the relational selling approach, which leads to a long-term collaboration and increases the sales activities to a higher strategic level. If the salespeople are not

able to satisfy customers' needs, for example, during their pre-buying phase, there might not be any further meetings. This is why it is suggested that salespeople use individual level practices which have been studied to improve the performance and satisfaction of a follower, in this case the B2B customer.

Earlier sales studies have not been able to build a model for relational buyer-seller interactions but this study does it by using the theories mentioned. It brings new facets from the TF-leadership aspect to relational selling where it suggests salespeople lead customers in buyer-seller interactions by using visual stimuli. Making the contextual benefits visible challenges the customer intellectually and takes account of human doubts and concerns. As a tool for salespeople the theory of TF-leadership offers a model to satisfy B2B customers' expectations in initial sales meetings, whereas the theory of MBTI and the results of earlier studies on most common personality types of B2B buyers would be needed to use in initial meetings but also in customers' pre-buying phases.

This study contributes to the research problem by suggesting that by utilizing the personality theory of MBTI and transformational leadership theory in buyer-seller interactions the salesperson is able to fulfill the customers' relational, interactional and behavioral needs of the customers and contribute to the relational selling approach (see Fig. 3). Additionally, it is suggested that by satisfying customers' needs, the salespeople are also able to form value with customers in buyer-seller interactions.
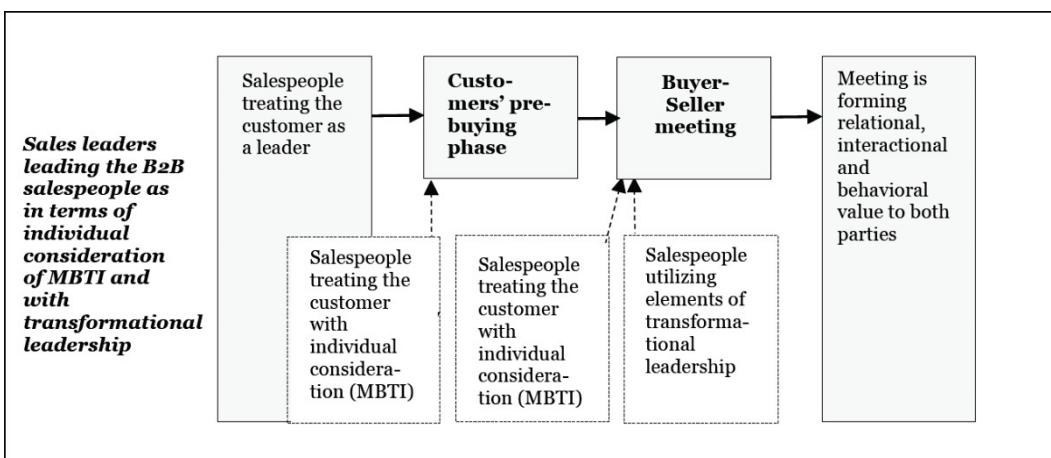
Figure 3.   A model to buyer-seller interactions in terms of individual consideration with MBTI and with TF-leadership in the context of sales leadership

4.2 Study 2: Business Buyers' Expectations in Buyer-Seller Encounters – What Really Matters?

Study 2, "Business Buyers' Expectations in Buyer-Seller Encounters – What Really Matters?" explores the business buyers' expectations towards buyer-seller encounters in changed business environments. In this published study the focus is on studying customers, both business buyers and professional buyers. The data was collected using qualitative methods and semi-structured interviews and the data was analyzed thematically.

This study strengthens the results of B2B selling and personality types, the role of perceived similarity as a reason for customers to continue collaboration with the initial salespeople. Additionally, it sheds light on rarely studied literature relating to the customers' side by highlighting the customers' expectations towards buyer-seller encounters in this complex business environment.

This study also contributes to this thesis's research problem by illustrating that business buyers expect, in buyer-seller encounters, that they are met as humans and individually. Business buyers also expect that the salespeople need to be able to identify their needs and aim to build long-term relationships. As the research problem aims to find answers on how to utilize TF-leadership and personality theory, this published study shows that business buyers expectations would be addressed by ensuring sellers have the necessary leadership skills, especially TF-leadership behaviours and individual consideration in terms of MBTI, to be able to be meet customers human needs. TF-leadership and its individual consideration would be a helpful tool on an individual level to be able to take account of business buyers concerns. Secondly by disseminating the TF-leadership, especially charismatic leadership, which would be found to be beneficial by buyers, salespeople would share the vision and mission of the cooperation between the two parties and this would lead to long-term collaboration in the future.

Additionally this study reveals and strengthens the need for studies based on personality theory because it found buyers' expectations mostly illustrate the expectations of most common buyer's personality measured with MBTI, ESTJ type (Dion et al., 1995). The study also suggests that salespeople need to adjust their activities as expected to be able to satisfy B2B customers' expectations in buyer-seller encounters and by adapting to buyers' personality types.

4.3   Study 3: Buyer versus salesperson expectations for an initial B2B sales meeting

Study 3, "Buyer versus salesperson expectations for an initial B2B sales meeting" examines B2B buyers and sellers' expectations to the buyer-seller encounters. In this study it is assumed that value creation occurs when sellers match or exceed buyers' expectations. In other words, the potential value is created when the salespeople do what is expected for and with the customer while applying expected behavior in an initial sales meeting.

The data in this study was collected qualitatively with in-depth, open-ended questions and by encouraging respondents to give examples which focused on their personal work role and thoughts on their work Detailed discussions were held of recent successful and failed sales/sourcing cases with which they had been involved and thematic broad questions were raised that allowed them to speak freely about issues that they felt were important. The data was collected after each phase and it helped to build a deeper understanding of the phenomenon during two separate interview rounds.

The theory was based on an approach by Oliver's (1977) expectancy disconfirmation theory. This cognitive psychological theory is mostly used to explain post-purchase satisfaction resulting from expectations and mainly on consumer studies. According to Oliver's theory (1977), expectations are anticipated or predicted and disconfirmation may occur when the experienced interaction departs from the expectation of the buyer. Disconfirmation may be positive (the performance is better than expected) or negative (the performance failed to live up to the expectation). If expectations are in line between the customer and seller there is a confirmation of expectations: both parties are satisfied and expectations are met (Oliver et al., 1994).

The findings of this study provide a variety of new insights which suggest that today's salespeople do not seem to meet customers' important expectations. Buyers' expectations seem to be shown in the areas of business acumen, innovativeness, future orientation, long-term relationships and responsiveness to customers' specific situations. This study shows that salespeople's expectations to create value for customers primarily was about their solutions as well as based on their personal skills and behavior. Customers' value expectations were based on a deep understanding of his or her specific business and salespeople's ideas and insights on new ways of doing things in this business. They also related to the service provider's capability to serve and support the change taking place in the customer's business.

4.4   Study 4: The buyers' pre-buying phase – aspects from the personality perspective

Study 4, "The buyers' pre-buying phase – aspects from the personality perspective" examines the buyers' pre-buying phase and their preferred activities from salespeople. This study focuses on business buyers and professional business buyers to examine to what extent and why the buyers' meet salespeople and do these favored activities arise from their personality types. The empirical data was collected from 21 business buyers' with an MBTI personality type indicator and from interviews to examine, from a personality perspective, the business buyers' considerations why and in what extent they meet salespeople.

There is less known about the buyers pre-buying phase and this study contributes to the phase before meetings so that the sales organizations would be able to organise their activities to be in a better position to form value and fulfill the needs of customers during this unstudied phase. Additionally, there are fewer studies of this new environment where the customers are often the ones who start the buying process and this study also contributes to the sales literature. There are also fewer studies about the sales area which has used personality theories to find answers to customers' preferred salesperson activities. Almost all the sales and personality type studies were written in the middle of the 90's. As sales consists of more elements of relationship building the understanding of personal differences is an important aspect to clarify to be able to form value with the customer's during their pre-buying phase.

This study shows that the changed business environment affects the salesperson's ability to arrange sales meetings with the business buyers'. According to the analysis, three main themes were discovered which affect the salespeople's ability to arrange sales meetings. It was found that the business buyers meet only if they have a problem to solve and that the buyers are the ones to make the first contact. It may be said that the salespeople's influence needs to be gentle during pre-relational phase. Additionally, business buyers are well prepared for the buyer-seller meetings and they look for answers as to how the sales organization could help them in their challenging situation even before the sales meetings. This may mean that these cooperative intentions which sales organizations are asked to do before the sales meetings, may also affect the buyers' decisions about whom they will meet.

This study contributes to this thesis's research problem by suggesting that business buyers should be given preference, because it illustrates that buyers are willing to meet salespeople when given preference and sales organizations need

to adjust their activities to better relate to business buyers' personality types. Additionally, the study also contributes to the sales literature by adding new knowledge of the buyers' preferred salesperson activities during their pre-buying phase which is largely under examined.

4.5   Study 5: Personality types in buyer-seller interactions

Study 5,"Personality types in buyer-seller interactions" examines the connection of business buyers' expectations to buyer-seller interactions and the buyers' personality types. The data for the study was conducted with the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator by profiling 20 professional business buyers and 51 professional salespeople. To better understand the buyer's expectations, the personality types were compared to conducted qualitative interviews.

Earlier studies have not merely concentrated on the customers side, neither have measures recently been carried out by MBTI. This study contributes to earlier personality studies by also finding the preference of Introversion, I and Introversion and Sensing, Is' from the personality types of the professional buyers in a Finnish setting. Earlier studies had shown in Finland that purchasers represent mostly EN's and ES's. This study correlates to the earlier findings which show that the typical buyer type is ESTJ. As large number of the professional business buyers in this study worked in a manager position, the study also correlates with the earlier studies on managers' personality types. Additionally, this study show that the dimension J/P separates sellers and buyers from each other when mostly professional buyers are J-types and sellers P-types. This dimension and these differences may be seen from the buyers' perspective as sellers' attitudinal problems because they are rarely prepared for meetings properly.

This study shows that buyer's expectations for sales interactions are influenced by their personality, which can be used to the advantage of sales organizations to satisfy the buyers expectations. If the buyer's and seller's approach to communication do not match, it may provide grounds to terminate the relationship. This study supports this claim, particularly in situations where the professional buyer was the judging, J type and interacting with a perceiving, P type salesperson. This study shows that professional buyers often favor interactions where salespeople listen carefully and answer questions in full. These findings confirm the MBTI theory that introverts, I require time to think before proceeding and that sensing, S types look for facts and detailed

information. The study aims to clarify the expectations that business buyers have for buyer-seller interactions from the point of view of the buyer's personality.

This study contributes to the research problem by confirming that personality types play an important role in the formation of value in buyer-seller interactions. It may be concluded that personality is a key matter when fulfilling buyers' expectations in buyer-seller interactions and when aiming to build up a long-term professional relationship.

4.6 Study 6: Sales Leadership in Complex Business Environments

Study 6, "Sales Leadership in Complex Business Environments" examines empirically how salespeople prefer to be led in a complex business environment and what kind of leadership they prefer from their leaders. This mixed-method research studied sales leadership through interviews and with the measure of MBTI cognitive styles. This study interviewed 16 salespeople with semi-structured interviews and with quantitative method of MBTI. The analysis was done thematically.

As in management and leadership literature, there are fewer studies from the followers' side, albeit it is seen that both the supervisors' and followers' communication and understanding is affected. This study contributes to the sales leadership literature by interviewing the B2B salespeople about their appraisals' of their leaders in this new and changed business environment.

Additionally, this study contributes by measuring salespeople with MBTI, because latest researches on sales area with MBTI have been done more closely than in the 90's. Sales has changed since then from promotional aspects to relationship building and in relationships building the personality perspective seems to be an important aspect to take into account. This study contributes via empirical data by suggesting that salespeople would be need to lead in terms of individual consideration of MBTI and with the use of coaching, by displaying trustworthy behaviour towards the salespeople's activities and to make it possible for salespeople to work in a team when creating competitive services and solutions for customers.

Further, this study illustrated that the sales organizations rewarding policies do not support the way of doing business in today's complex environment. It seemed to be common procedure to reward salespersons for their individual work, albeit the best results in value formation with the B2B customers will be achieved

together with the sales team consisting salespeople and experts from the solution's area. These findings correlate to the earlier findings of the control systems limiting role towards sellers work in fulfilling the B2B customers' complex needs.

5 CONTRIBUTION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter the contribution of the whole thesis and conclusions will be presented. A Theoretical contribution (see Table 5) as well as practical implications and limitations together with recommendations for further research will be presented.

Table 5. The contributions of the six published studies

	Main theme	Type of study	Contribution
Study 1	Leading B-S interactions	Theoretical review	Theoretical model (see Fig. 3), practices to be utilized in B-S interactions and sales leadership
Study 2	Buyers expectations to B-S interactions	Empirical study, interviews	Buyers expect to perceive personal similarity, collaboration on a long-term basis
Study 3	Buyers and sellers expectations of B-S meetings	Empirical study, interviews	Buyers and sellers' expectations of B-S meetings do not align, Oliver's expectancy theory (1977) used in B2B setting
Study 4	Buyers expectations of pre-buying phase	Empirical study, interviews, MBTI	New knowledge of the buyers' expectation to pre-buying phase, buyers' expectations arise from their personality types
Study 5	Buyers and sellers' expectations of B-S interactions	Empirical study, interviews, MBTI	New knowledge of buyers MBTI profiles (I/IS), new knowledge of personality type differences between buyer and seller in J-P scale
Study 6	Sellers expectations of sales leadership	Empirical study, interviews, MBTI	Sellers prefer to be led by individual consideration and by selling in a team

This dissertation has tried to answer the research problem below:

How to utilize personality theory and transformational leadership in different phases of buyer-seller interactions in the context of sales leadership?

In this dissertation the first focus was to study customers' value expectations. This was because there are less studies from the B2B buyers' side in this new changed business environment (cf. Grönroos & Voima, 2013). According to this change the buyers' complex needs, uncertain business environment and buying behaviors adapted from the consumer side have also affected the sellers work. The thesis tried to first answer how the seller would be able to fulfill the customers' relational, interactional and behavioral expectations in the buyers' pre-buying phase and in buyer-seller interactions. It also focuses on buyer-seller interactions which cover the business customers, both professional buyers' and business buyers, relational pre-buying phases and initial buyer-seller meetings.

This study proceeded one phase at the time which, little by little, increased the understanding of the topic. The main interest in the beginning was to focus on actual face-to-face interactions. During the data collection it was found that the buyers' buying process has changed. After noticing this change it was obvious to also focus on the buyers' expectations in their pre-buying phase, up to the time before meetings because it seemed to affect the partnerships chosen.

It was found that during the business customers pre-buying phase, when the customer has identified a business problem by themselves, and if the expectations according to the buyers' pre-relational buying phase have been satisfied, the customer is willing to meet the seller or the representatives of the sales organization. The B2B customers' satisfaction is seen to increase if the customer is treated as preferred. If the sales organizations' representative has been able to treat the customer on an individual level in terms of individual consideration, the seller is more likely able to set up a meeting with this initial customer. This study suggests utilizing individual consideration, in terms of the Myers-Briggs personality theory, to the interaction phases with the B2B customers before the initial face-to-face meeting. If the B2B seller has been able to make a good first impression, by treating the buyers' representative as preferred on an individual level and forming experiences of value, the seller is more likely able to proceed with a meeting with the customer. Secondly, the study suggests utilizing TF-leadership to be able to lead the customer in buyer-seller meetings and individual consideration in terms of MBTI personality theory to be able to treat the buyer according to their preference. This means that with the help of TF-leadership the seller is able to lead the buyer to fulfill their

expectations, especially in buyer-seller meetings and with the help of personality theory the seller is able to treat the buyer according to their preference.

5.1 Theoretical contributions

Studies in this thesis have tried to answer the secondary questions so that with a combination of the answers from the secondary questions all the published studies are address the research problem of the dissertation. The dissertation was build phase after phase by first focusing on customers' expectations, and simultaneously trying to solve the relational research gap, then conducting the MBTI measures of personality types to find deeper knowledge to form value with customers by giving them individual consideration. As study 3 and its dyadic approach illustrates, today's salespeople fail to accurately gauge customers' important expectations. Buyers seem to set increasingly high expectations, especially in the areas of business acumen, innovativeness, future orientation, long-term relationships and responsiveness to customers' specific situations and salespeople seem to have a different emphasis compared to the expectations of buyers. Additionally, when comparing business buyers' expectations and their MBTI personality types, it was found that the expectations correlate to their personality types. As studies focused on followers and their expectations of preferred leadership behaviours have identified, these followers' expectations have been seen to arise from their personality types (cf. Hautala, 2008).

This leads to the theoretical contribution of this thesis that the salespeople should lead their customers' by individual consideration to be able to fulfill the needs of another person in the different phases during buyer-seller interactions. This is especially important during the buyers' pre- buying phase where sellers are able to make a good first impression and by treating the buyers as preferred to be able to form experiences of value and proceed to a meeting. The research calls for unstudied buyers' pre-buying phase (Edvardsson et al., 2008; Jokiniemi, 2013), this dissertation contributes new knowledge to sales literature of the B2B buyers' expectations during their pre-buying phase. According to the studies in this thesis during buyers pre-buying phase studies revealed that the buyers' expectations arise as a need based on their personality types (Myers et al., 1992). Moreover, as Grönroos & Voima (2013) suggested, the value is defined by the customer, so this study is contributing to the theory by exchanging the concrete meaning in this study in the context of demanding B2B buying and selling. The buyers' experiences of value are small things which illustrate the typical needs of a common buyer personality type. These small things are for example; does the sales organization provide rapid answers to the customer organization's queries;

is the seller allowing time for the buyer to prepare his own work while the buying process is ongoing or is the seller providing the buyer with the necessary pre-information. Additionally, it would be beneficial if the B2B seller worked systematically and that his or her work is controlled and handled. It is also important that the B2B seller is doing the follow-ups as promised and that the seller is listening to the customer and giving the impression of a professional way of working in business. These examples are important when developing an initial impression of sales organizations and their sellers. Additionally, all information relating to services and solutions, references and the financial situation of the sales company should be easily available so that the buyer is able the get a proper first-sight of the sales company. All of these activities reveal the preferred way of doing business for most B2B buyer personality types (Myers et al., 1992).

According to the pre-buying phase results of this study, this contribution has arisen from the individual level of the interviews of the buyers and sellers and their MBTI personality profiles. This study found that fulfilling another persons' needs on an operational level should be recognized as strategically important to the success of a company in a demanding B2B business environment. The fulfilling of buyers' expectations happens when the seller is adapting his or her own relational, interactional and behavioral approach to how the buyer prefers to be treated. When preferred activities on an individual level have occurred in the pre-buying phase, the buyer is more willing to proceed to meet with the seller. Further, if the buyers' individual needs, which arise from their personality types, are also met in a buyer-seller meeting it is more likely they will proceed into a partnership (cf. Myers et al., 1992). This thesis is also adding new concrete knowledge on how to form value experiences on a practical level in buyer-seller meetings. As acknowledged, the sales literature has not been able to offer a model for relational value formation (Biong & Selnes, 1995; Echeverri & Skalen, 2011; Grönroos & Voima, 2013). This dissertation is offering a model for a relational approach to future studies which makes a theoretical contribution to sales literature in this new changed business environment.

Furthermore, when salespeople have been able to proceed to a meeting they need to give consideration to the individual needs and the TF-leadership theory necessary to be able to satisfy buyers' expectations. By disseminating TF-leadership the salespeople are able to address buyers' expectations during the buyer-seller meetings concerning long-term relationship building, innovative approach, future orientation and be responsive to the customers' specific situations. Because the value is ultimately determined by the customers (Grönroos & Voima, 2013), the sellers need to have a model for leading the customer in today's complex business environment (Biong & Selnes, 1995; Ford,

1980). Applying the TF-leadership approach to buyer-seller interactions makes it a theoretical contribution to relational sales literature which have mostly focused on quality or interactional competencies, to trust building, commitment and for relationship development (Biong & Selnes, 1995; Crosby et al., 1990; Doney & Cannon, 1997; Dwyer et al., 1987; Jones et al., 2005). According to business customers' expectations in this changed business environment, the contribution via TF-leadership behaviors and more closely with the charismatic leadership will be made by leading the customer to a common future via sharing the vision with the customer organization and by trying to find commonalities in the methods of doing business by building up the sense of cooperation. Sales studies have called for more research of relational selling and of how to build relationships (Biong & Selnes, 1995; Ingram et al., 2002; Williams & Plouffe, 2007), with charismatic leadership the B2B seller is able to ensure long-term relationship building and also to have concrete examples. Sales literature has called upon sellers to act as change architects (Dixon & Tanner, 2012) and this study advances the sales theory by applying inspirational leadership. Instead of informing the customer of the features of the products is it guiding salespeople to raise the discussion to a contextual level and leading the communication to a strategic level and by opening up the conversation at this level the way is paved for forthcoming cooperation. Sales studies have suggested challenging the customer in buyer-seller interactions (cf. Rapp et al., 2014). With the help of TF-leadership and intellectual stimulation, the B2B seller is able to challenge the customer as suggested, but additionally it takes challenging further by aiming to alter the customers' way of thinking and by providing new ideas for customers to do business.

Recently interactional value formation has attracted a great deal of interest from scholars and research calls for solutions to solve how sellers would need to create relational value in buyer-seller interactions at a more comprehensive level (Blocker et al., 2012; Echeverri & Skalen, 2011; Haas et al., 2012; Hohenschwert & Geiger, 2015). In TF-leadership, individual consideration will give concrete examples of how to meet another person and relate to their human characteristics when, for example, handling the individual concerns and worries of buyer organizations. Individual consideration may also be seen when assisting the buyer to sell in new, altered ways of doing business in their own internal organization and they are better able to help the buyer with this process.

The relational approach is largely unstudied in sales literature (Biong & Selnes, 1995) and thus salespeople have recently been defined as relationship managers. The theory of TF-leadership brings the buyer desired aspects to the buyer-seller meetings. It is known that buying and purchasing is more sophisticated today

and that today's customer's demands are higher than before. Additionally, often the salesperson needs to satisfy the whole management team's wishes. The model of TF-leadership and especially the charismatic leadership and intellectual stimulation adds to the meetings the future orientation and the activities which will build long-term partnerships. As study three found, the business buyer looks for business acumen and deep knowledge of the selected customers' business area presented as in a sales organizations case examples in buyer-seller interactions. It is important to be well-prepared and give intangible value by giving examples of how the seller would be able to take their business to a higher level.

As this study shows, sellers in these multinational companies do not aim for long-term relationships or they are not thinking about future orientation. This may be due to sales leadership, which seems to reward quantity of sales, thus the focus should be on quality as well as for ensuring long-term orientation with compensation and reward policies (cf. Lassk & Shepherd, 2013). This study proves that in uncertain business environments the old experiences of quantity as the more calls you make the more sales you get is not working in today's demanding B2Bworld. Further, it is important to disseminate inspirational leadership from TF-theory to be able to offer new insights and innovative approaches for business because today's buyer needs to be able to find all the information needed before meetings. Previously it was enough to communicate product information but today the customer expects to hear new insights to their situation and form value together in interactions based on their business situation. This means that salespeople need to have skills similar to the TF-leadership element of inspirational leadership and close to intellectual stimulation which is an advantage to the customer because it alters their way of thinking and allows them to be guided by salespeople to newer innovative insights.

Individual consideration is explained in this study to be relational activities with another person from his or her appraisals based on their preferred personality perspective. Individual consideration and meeting buyers' needs as a person are important issues in face-to-face meetings from the point of view that the partnership will spring to life. As seen in this dissertations' published studies, both buyers and sellers, do not have time to listen to product information or basic facts which they are able to retrieve from digital sources. The operational level, meaning here the B2B sellers work should lead, and treat, their customers on an individual level and get deeper collaboration with the help of understanding the needs of different personality types. Studies 4-6 show that most common MBTI personality types among buyers and among sellers correlate to the earlier results

on personality types on buyer and seller types (see for example Dion et al., 1995). The buyers were ESTJs, ESTPs and ISTJs as compared to sellers' personality types which are mostly ESTPs. This brings us to a theoretical contribution according to the experienced value formation during the buyers' pre-buying phase and buyer-seller interactions (see Ahearne et al., 2007; Edvardsson et al., 2008; Jokiniemi, 2013). This study show that the typical B2B buyer looks for proper follow-ups before the meetings and after the meetings, controlled behavior, systematic proceeding and linear proceeding. As noted in the buyers MBTI personality profiles the most common way to live life as a buyer is a systematic and controlled way, in MBTI the judging, J preference. This preference, and its expectations towards cooperation, may be seen in the examples above. When this is compared to the most common seller profiles according this study, they represent the preference perceiving, which commends the spontaneous way of living. For spontaneous, preference P, the favoured way of living is to go with the flow and make decisions as late as possible to be able to collect all the information possible (see Myers et al., 1985). When J-types favour quick decision making and systematic proceeding, it may be that P-type is not able to form experiences of value for the J-type B2B customer. This part contributes to sales literature (Biong & Selnes, 1995; Hohenschwert & Geiger, 2015; Salomonson et al., 2012) by suggesting sales organizations adjust their activities and ways of working to form value for the J-type B2B customers.

This dissertation is also offering new knowledge to personality type literature by showing that, with the Finnish buyers' sample, there are, among the business buyers (for example business unit directors, CEO's and other managers) and professional business buyers (for example sourcing managers, purchasing managers, purchasing directors) also I's and IS's (cf. Schaubhut & Thompson, 2008). This is an important point to be taken account of in sales organizations. When the seller prefers Introversion, the buyer needs time to make his or her own opinion and decision first before (s)he is ready to go forward. If the seller does not give enough time and space to the buyer, they may terminate the whole forthcoming relationship. With the help of the MBTI theory and individual consideration, the seller is able to understand why this initial buyer needs to have time to make his or her own decisions (see Myers, 1992).

5.1.1. Leading buyer-seller interactions

The first part of this thesis concentrates on the sellers' side and tried to give a conceptual answer to the research question. As a result, study 1 adds to the relational value formation at a strategic level in terms of TF-leadership. In this study the salesperson is seen to be the customers' leader and this study adds to the buyer-seller leadership interactions aspect of the relational value formation (Biong & Selnes, 1995; Ford, 1980; Jolson, 1997) while adding the elements of TF-leadership; the charismatic leadership, inspirational leadership, intellectual leadership and individual consideration, which are seen to serve the customer and the sales organization at a strategic level. This study contributes to sales literature by offering a model to lead the customer or, as a sales leader, to lead the salespeople. This study contributes to the research problem by suggesting the use of TF-leadership in buyer-seller meetings. The study contributes to sales literature by adding a model that sellers are able to focus on long-term relationships which is what B2B buyers are looking for. As recently shown often sellers focus on short-term goals when cooperating with their customers (Viio & Grönroos, 2015). This study adds to demanding B2B service sales calls a model of TF-leadership and by following these sales leadership behaviors it helps the seller to focus the customer on a long term relationship and to form value that relates to the customers' preferences. Due to the demanding business environment, this study also recommends the use of TF-leadership in leading both the customers and the salespeople.

Additionally, the study adds the personality theory perspective to sellers' value formation with customers. This personality theory of MBTI and its individual consideration is seen as an operational level activity and therefore it is individually forming relational value to the business buyer in the way (s)he prefers. Individual level consideration with the help of MBTI is seen to add experiences of value for the buyer when they are in the early phases of his or her pre-buying phase. The study contributes to sales literature (see for example Haas et al., 2012; Hohenschwert & Geiger, 2015; Salomonson et al., 2012; Tuli et al., 2007) by offering examples for this relational value formation by giving examples to sellers of how salespeople should cooperate with the most common buyer cognitive style, ST. Additionally this study enlarges the use of MBTI theory in a changed B2B selling and buying context (see for example Brock, 1994).

5.1.2. Buyer expectations to buyer-seller interactions

Secondly, this thesis concentrated on customers' expectations because there were very few recent studies of the customers' expectations (Agndal, 2006; Ahearne et

al., 2007; Grönroos & Voima, 2013; Overby & Servais, 2005). The study is contributing to sales literature with this new knowledge of buyers' expectations towards buyer-seller interactions. Study 2 found that the buyers expect to see perceived similarity, commitment from salespeople' activities, the right attitude, confidence in their own behavior and preciseness in working. As the personality studies have shown, the expectations arise from the needs of people, here from buyers' own personality types (Hautala, 2005; 2006; 2007) and the findings from study 2 reveal the most common personality types of buyers and their preferred expectations (see Dion et al., 1995). As addressed in study 1, the salespeople should be able to at least adapt to their own activities to fit to the buyers most common cognitive style of ST to be able to satisfy customers' needs and treat buyers as preferred, especially during their pre-buying phase, to be able to proceed into meetings. This is a minimum level for sellers to be able to recognize the buyers' preferred way of working and to be able to form experiences of value with the customer.

In terms of individual consideration of MBTI, the perceiving preference, P may be seen as something other than precise actions. This is due to the J-P dimension, in which salesperson often prefer to live a spontaneous life, where as ESTJ and ISTJ buyers look for a systematic way of living (see Routamaa et al., 2009). The spontaneous way of living may also be seen by a judging person as non-commitment, because it might be that the P-type did not prepare well enough for the meeting or (s)he thought that the activities before the meeting may be better handled when they met the customer (Myers et al., 1985). Study two contributes to the research problem in the same way as studies four and five in that the other person needs to be addressed as their preferred style (Routamaa et al., 1997). If the treatment does not happen in the preferred way the expectations of the other person may not be fulfilled and it may be that the expected experiences of value formation will not be achieved. As found in study four this may be a reason why the seller has not proceeded after the pre-buying phase to the meeting, or from meetings to a long term partnership. This also adds an important extension to the study by Echeverri et al.'s (2011) illustrating an individual level example of destructive value creation. Additionally, this study sheds light on, and gives examples of, the culminating episodes which might have seen to be the determinations of the whole buyer-seller relationship (see Ford, 1980).

These same elements were also found in other buyers' studies, where the dimension of the MBTI theory did not match. When selling has changed from a transactional level to relationship building the needs are more on a comprehensive level (Blocker et al., 2012). Study five shows that value is seen as

the intangible compatibility between the salesperson and the buyer. In these cases the buyer's preferred interaction type must be considered in order to form value and retain the personal connection (see also Dion et al., 1995). Study four found that the buyers experienced that the sellers' attitude was not good enough, for example, the buyer felt that the seller had not prepared well enough for the meeting. This study addresses the research problem by highlighting the importance of different personality types when initiating the relationships and building up the feeling of commitment for future cooperation (Biong & Selnes, 1995; Crosby et al., 1990). The abovementioned bad attitude from the buyers' point of view in study four may address a possible misunderstanding which may be attributed of the different personality types between seller and buyer. It may for example be a cause of the differences of JP preferences where the P-type seller is looking for more information from J-type buyer, but this buyer is looking for systematic proceeding from seller, who is not yet ready to proceed or has not understood that quick decision maker J would be ready to close the case (cf. Hautala, 2007).

It is important to have a deep understanding of one's own personality type as a seller because it might be that, after the needs of STs are fulfilled, the buyers starts (ST types) to appraise the opposite preferences and higher levels on their need structure. As Bass (1985) stated, almost 40 years ago, often in business Maslow's lower level need structures are already satisfied and the consideration should be focused to fulfill the needs of the higher levels. This means, in personality type context, that these ST-types are willing to learn from interaction elements which are natural to NF-cognitive styles. This was partly seen in studies when buyers were expecting the big picture and future orientation of sellers, which is reminiscent of typical N-type expectations (Myers et al., 1992). When this same dilemma is put in TF-leadership context, communicating the product information to the customer is not enough because all the information may already have been searched during the buyers pre-buying phase, especially in a case when the buyer is ISTJ (Routamaa et al., 2009). Buyers look for purpose behind the solution and relationship building, the common vision, sense of mission, support and encouragement and these same expectations arise from the sellers' side as appraisals to their leaders (see study 6).

The role of personality types should be seen as a way to succeed in initiating new relationships and making a good first impression (cf. Biong & Selnes, 1995). The sales training in the sales organizations should include aspects where B2B sellers are able to increase their self-awareness (cf. Roush & Atwater, 1992) and after this, sellers with sales leadership consisting of individual consideration are also more likely to be ready to meet their customers with the help of individual

consideration. The published studies 2-5 show that if the customers are not treated as preferred, it may be a reason to terminate the forthcoming interaction. These preferred activities should be taken seriously by the sales organizations, because the opposite way of working was seen as non-committed collaboration for the long-term or of a bad attitude by the seller (Clack et al., 2004). Since the personality types play a key role in fulfilling the expectations of B2B customers when forming value experiences with the customer, also the practical side should benefit by study one's table of preferred activities based on most common buyers' cognitive style personality. It is also notable that adapting to the customers' preferred relational approach is important in meetings, but more important is for sales organizations, during buyer' pre-buying phase, to be able to proceed into actual meetings (cf. Edvardsson et al., 2008).

Since the sales literature has not succeeded in building a model of buyer-seller interactions for satisfying the expectations of B2B customers, this thesis contributes additionally by offering a model which utilizes the elements of TF-leadership to be used in buyer-seller interactions. Furthermore, the findings in studies 3-5 of buyers' valued sales activities during and before the sales meeting should be seen as value added.

5.1.3. Leading salespeople in changed business environment

As study six and its results illustrate, the salespeople's appraisals with their supervisors' consist of activities that transformational leaders often engage in, for example, giving support, having time for discussions of complicated customer challenges and using coaching as a method of leadership (cf. Dixon & Tanner, 2012). The model of TF-leadership fits well with these appraisals and as individual consideration takes into account the needs of different personality types, it allows the followers' development as a person and their individual growth.

This dissertation also contributes at a strategic level in demanding B2B selling situations (cf. Blocker et al., 2012). As selling has changed to a strategic level activity in companies, the salesperson or the sales leader needs to be able to also fulfill the other party's strategic level concerns. Today salespeople meet concerns which are contextual, and often the problems and challenges met are different compared to other customer. A recent study on TF-leadership was found to contribute positively to the context-based situations, instead of task-orientation (Brown & Reilly, 2009). This dissertation also sheds light on further studies using the TF-leadership theory in the sales area (Ingram, 2004). Since earlier research on sales management has suggested using transactional leadership in

sales (Dubinsky et al., 1995), according to this study's contribution, TF-leadership may also be seen to fit in sales organizations in these complex and uncertain times.

Today, the demanding work of B2B sellers may also be seen to reveal context-based working, especially when looking at different demanding and complex customer cases. Additionally when customers look for change agent activities, relational activities are seen to form value (Dixon & Tanner, 2012; Hohenschwert & Geiger, 2015). Sales literature has not been able to offer a model to lead customers' which would satisfy customers' expectations and furthermore form value with the customer. This study had tried to fill this gap by viewing the sales activities as strategic level activities by utilizing individual consideration in terms of personality theory of MBTI and the theory of TF-leadership to be used in buyer-seller interactions. This study suggests using these same methods in sales leadership to be able to better lead the fulfillment of customers' expectations.

This dissertation strengthens the evolving relational approach of selling paradigm by offering a model (see Fig. 3) based on sellers' appraisals to fulfill the customers relational, interactional and behavioral needs to be able to form value with the customer in their pre-buying phase and also during actual buyer-seller meetings. This study offers new knowledge based on sellers appraisals for leadership in this new and changed business environment and it also contributes new findings to leadership literature (Carroll, 2010; Hautala, 2005; Hautala, 2008; Routamaa et al., 1997).

5.2   Practical implications

This dissertation should be seen as beneficial from the salespeople's and sales organizations leaders' perspective. Published studies have shown that the buyers' way of conducting purchasing has changed and it has also seen some practical examples for success in forming value with customer who have presented in buyers' pre-buying phase and in initial buyer-seller meetings. From the managerial perspective it would be wise to note the importance of the buyer' pre-buying phase. If the sales company loses this initial new customer organization, it may take several years before the buyer organizations can search for a new supplier again.

As sales organizations commonly offer sales training to sellers, it would be important to ensure that the salespeople get first hand training in TF-leadership skills. Additionally, like this study has suggested, the first contact is important and as this is when value experiences with customers are formed. During the

early buyer interactions it would be important to offer personality type differences training to the salespeople and illustrate how to adapt to a different type. This training could start first with sellers completing their own personality self-report and after that confirm the sellers "true type" with the accredited MBTI coach. After increased self-awareness the training could continue in more depth to forming value to different personality types according different interactional encounters like virtual meetings, email exchanges, phone calls etc.

This dissertation shows that differences in the JP-dimension may cause a lot of harm for both buyers and sellers. Sales leaders should make sure that if the sales team consist typically of P-types, that they understand the expectations of J-types. P-type as a seller is able to learn the basic behaviour according preparation, leading the interactions systematically, how to use time effectively and how to appreciate time tables and how to do the follow-ups. Additionally, it is beneficial to sellers to understand the differences in the EI-dimension. If the buyer is an I-type, it is important to give them time and space. Studies in this dissertation show that if the seller is, for example, talking too much and if the buyer is not being given time to contribute, the interaction has not built up to a dialogue and it may be that the buyer is not experiencing value formation.

Additionally, sales organizations should understand, on a concrete level, what this means as this study shows that buyers were mostly ESTJs, ESTPs and ISTJs, as compared to the most common sellers' personality type which is ESTPs. This means that sellers would also need to understand the personality type differences of each type level. When the ESTP-seller is meeting buyers with the personality type of ESTJ or ISTJ, the seller is much more short-tempered than ESTJs and ISTJs so that long term reflective working may be challenging for ESTP-sellers. ESTJs and ISTJs also look for facts and details which is not naturally in the ESTPs comfort zone. These, for example, are areas which would need to be practiced in sales training and experienced via leadership activities in sales teams.

Sales organizations should also ensure that their webpages are offering information to different personality types, for example, enough facts for S types and fast ways to leave contact information for J-types. It is also important to implement efficient business model processes after receiving contact requests, so that for example, the J-types, receive contact from the sales organization as soon as possible for to enable them to proceed in the buying process according to their own buying preferences. More or less, the webpages should serve customers with professional content including financial information of the company and also professional information about the services and solutions offered.

Additionally, this study reveals that sales companies would need to focus on recruiting as many different personality types as possible. This would benefit a sales organization because it would be able to develop the best sales team to address each customers individual buying needs according to their personality type. As also shown, the most common personality type in this sample on the sellers' side was ESTP. Based on the results of B2B sellers' customer orientation, which have been shown to lead to long-term orientation, ST-types have been seen to be less customer oriented than other cognitive styles (Dwyer et al., 1987; McIntyre et al., 1995). This is why it is recommended to focus on the recruitment of NF-types who are more naturally orientated towards relational selling activities (McIntyre et al., 1995).

This dissertation also illustrates the changed business environment, where customers search for suitable sales organizations. In this case the customer organizations buyers want to search for the suitable sales organisations as it is part of their role. This dissertation, and especially study four shows that nowadays customers are using skills learnt as consumers when searching for the right supplier. This was not a focus of this dissertation, but, several times, the respondents raised the topics according influence of digitalization into today's buying and selling. This is why also sales organizations should adjust their activities to better fit the customers' changed buying process.

Additionally, sales organizations should make changes to their reward systems so that the compensation policies support the team working in B2B sales. And as study six suggest, the sales leaders themselves should also lead sellers by TF-leadership and with the help of individual consideration of MBTI. Notably sales leaders seem to lead using the directive style. For future purposes, it would be beneficial to recruit N- and F-types to sales leader positions, since these preferences in leader positions have been successful in innovation, in relationship building and also in change management activities (Berr et al., 2000). In addition, the managerial value of the findings should also be seen as valuable to purchasing departments whose interest is on reverse marketing or when the aim is to build collaborative relations with certain profiled prospective suppliers.

In Europe there are only a few studies relating to B2B selling. This thesis is contributing new knowledge, for Finnish sales organizations, of B2B customers' expectations and of the ways to form value with customers in today's demanding buyer-seller encounters (cf. Korpela, 2015).

5.3 Limitations and recommendations for further research

This thesis used mixed method research methodology to focus on three different parts of leading buyer-seller interactions in demanding business environments. Published study one was based on theory, published studies two and three used qualitative interview data and remaining studies, 4-6 used mixed-method research by combining the qualitative interviews data and the quantitative data of MBTI.

This thesis focuses, to a certain extent, on selected industries and their customers with a limited quantity of respondents. The study fulfills the definition of a case study and the results do not aim to generalise the findings and they are not intended to apply to other industries or contexts. However, the findings of this study are relevant to be tested in other contexts, for example, on an initial and specific business area or tested in a wider buying context. One limitation to take into account is the scarcity of quantitative data, as it might be said to be satisfactory when the dissertation is seen to be qualitative dominant mixed-method research (see more Hurmerinta-Peltomäki & Nummela, 2006).

The studies in this thesis do not cover all the research themes which may affect salespeople's activities with the customers. These themes may, for example, be the sellers' organization and its culture, leadership climate, the structure of the organization, sellers' relationship with his or her supervisor, colleagues and the possibility for teamwork. These same themes affect customers from his or her own organisations point of view.

In today's demanding B2B sales meetings the tactics to adapt to customers' style is not enough anymore (see for example McFarland et al., 2006) and this dissertation recommends that successful meetings also need leadership skills. This thesis did not utilize the measures of TL-leadership to define the sellers approached leadership behavior nor the buyers approached leadership behavior. Thus, this study used the wide empirical knowledge, and its positive outcomes, which leadership researchers have contributed to TF-leadership for almost 40 years.

When the researcher is familiar with the researched topic, there is always a threat of being too involved with the topic and being influenced by preconceptions which can be a limitation during the data analysis and interpretation phase (see Ihantola & Kihn, 2011). It can also be seen as an advantage as there are two sides of a coin. However, from the beginning it has been recognized that

preconceptions may affect the research but it may be seen as an asset when deciding on research design and methodological choices.

Future research in this field could examine how the expectations of business buyers could be developed in contemporary buyer-seller interactions. As Whipple & Frankel (2000) suggest, not many professionals have got training in relationship skills and future research could also examine how salespeople can determine the MBTI type of a buyer when they encounter buyers during the pre-buying phase or buyer-seller interactions and to what extent adaptation is possible to be able to initiate long-term partnerships. As studies on the interactional value formation side have also shown, there is still a need to know exactly what happens in buyer-seller interactions to be able to alter the old ways of doing things to today's level. Additionally, according to the interest in this dissertation, it would be beneficial to test quantitatively if the most successful sellers' already utilize the elements of TF-leadership to the buyer-seller meetings.

References

Adamson, B., Dixon, M., & Toman, N. (2012). The end of solution sales. *Harvard Business Review*, *July-Augus*, 60–68.

Agndal, H. (2006). The purchasing market entry process-A study of 10 Swedish industrial small and medium-sized enterprises. *Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management*, *12*, 182–196. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pursup.2006.10.004

Ahearne, M., Jelinek, R., & Jones, E. (2007). Examining the effect of salesperson service behavior in a competitive context. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *35*(4), 603–616. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-006-0013-1

Allport, G. (1937). *Personality. A. Psychological interpretation.* London: Constable & Company LTD.

Andersen, J. A. (2006). Leadership, personality and effectiveness. *Journal of Socio-Economics*, *35*(6), 1078–1091. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socec.2005.11.066

Anderson, J. C., & Wynstra, F. (2010). Purchasing higher-value, higher-price offerings in business markets. *Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing*, *17*(1), 29–61. https://doi.org/10.1080/10517120903000363

Anderson, J., & Narus, J. (1990). A model of distributor firm and manufacturer firm working partnerships. *Journal of Marketing*, *54*(1), 42–58. https://doi.org/10.2307/1252172

Arnold, K., Turner, N., Barling, J., Kelloway, E., & McKee, M. (2007). Transformational leadership and psychological well-being: the mediating role of meaningful work. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *12*(3), 193–203. https://doi.org/10.1037/1076-8998.12.3.193

Atwater, L., & Yammarino, F. (1992). Does self-other agreement on leadership perceptions moderate the validity of leadership and performance predictions? *Personnel Psychology*, *45*(1), 141–164. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.1992.tb00848.x

Avolio, B. (1999). *Full leadership development: Building the vital forces in organizations.* Sage Publications.

Avolio, B., & Bass, B. (1988). *Transformational leadership, charisma, and beyond. In Emerging leadership vistas. International leadership symposia series.* (J. G. (Ed) Hunt, B. R. (Ed); Baliga, H. P. (Ed); Dachler,

& C. A. (Ed) Schriesheim, Eds.). England: Lexington Books/D. C. Heath and Com.

Avolio, B., & Bass, B. (1990). *Transformational leadership development: Manual for the Multifactor leadership questionnaire*. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologist Press.

Avolio, B. J., Bass, B. M., & Jung, D. I. (1999). Re-examining the components of transformational and transactional leadership using the Multifactor Leadership. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *72*(4), 441–462. https://doi.org/10.1348/096317999166789

Ballantyne, D. (2004). Dialogue and its role in the development of relationship specific knowledge. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing,* 19(2), 114–123. https://doi.org/10.1108/08858620410523990

Barling, J., Weber, T., & Kelloway, E. K. (1996). Effects of transformational leadership training on attitudinal and financial outcomes: A field experiment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *81*(6), 827–832. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.81.6.827

Bass, B. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. Free Press: Collier Macmillan.

Bass, B. (1998). *Transformational leadership: Industry, military and educational impact*. NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Bass, B. (2008). *The Bass handbook of leadership. Theory, research and managerial applications* (4th ed.). New York: Free Press.

Bass, B., & Avolio, B. (1994). *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Bass, B. M. (1997). Personal selling and transactional/transformational leadership. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, *17*(3), 19-28.

Bass, B. M. (1999). Two Decades of Research and Development in Transformational Leadership. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *8*(1), 9–32. https://doi.org/10.1080/135943299398410

Bass, B. M., Avolio, B. J., & Atwater, L. (1996). The Transformational and Transactional Leadership of Men and Women. *Applied Psychology*, *45*(1), 5–34. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.1996.tb00847.x

Bass, B. M., Avolio, B. J., Jung, D. I., & Berson, Y. (2003). Predicting unit performance by assessing transformational and transactional leadership.

The Journal of Applied Psychology, *88*(2), 207–218. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.88.2.207

Bass, B. M., & Yammarino, F. J. (1991). Congruence of self and others' leadership ratings of naval officers for understanding successful performance. *Applied Psychology*, *40*(4), 437–454. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.1991.tb01002.x

Berr, S., Church, A., & Waclawski, J. (2000). The right relationship is everything: Linking personal preferences to managerial behaviors. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, *11*(2), 133–157. https://doi.org/10.1002/1532-1096(200022)11:2<133::AID-HRDQ4>3.0.CO;2-T

Bienstock, C. C., & Royne, M. B. (2007). The differential value of information in industrial purchasing decisions: Applying an economics of information framework. *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, *37*(5), 389–408. https://doi.org/10.1108/09600030710758446

Biong, H., & Selnes, F. (1995). Relational selling behavior and skills in long-term industrial buyer-seller relationships. *International Business Review*, *4*(4), 483–498. https://doi.org/10.1016/0969-5931(95)00028-3

Blocker, C. P., Cannon, J. P., Panagopoulos, N. G., & Sager, J. K. (2012). The Role of the Sales Force in Value Creation and Appropriation: New Directions for Research. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, *32*(1), 15–28. https://doi.org/10.2753/PSS0885-3134320103

Bono, J. E., & Judge, T. A. (2004). Personality and transformational and transactional leadership: a meta-analysis. *Journal of applied psychology,* 89(5), 901. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.89.5.901

Brandt, T., & Laiho, M. (2013). Gender and personality in transformational leadership context: An examination of leader and subordinate perspectives. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, *34*(1), 44–66. https://doi.org/10.1108/01437731311289965

Brennan, R., & Turnbull, P. W. (1999). Adaptive Behavior in Buyer–Supplier Relationships. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *28*(5), 481–495. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0019-8501(99)00057-7

Briggs Myers, I., & Myers, P. (1993). *Gifts differing. Understanding Personality Type*. US: Consulting Psychologist Press, Inc.

Brock, S. (1994). *Introduction to Type® and Selling*. Mountain View, CA: CCP Inc.

Brown, F. W., & Reilly, D. M. (2009). The Myers-Briggs type indicator and transformational leadership. *Journal of Management Development*, *28*, 916–932. https://doi.org/10.1108/02621710911000677

Burns, J. (1978). *Leadership*. Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside Limited.

Burrell, G., & Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological paradigms and organisational analysis*. London: Heinemann.

Caracelli, V., & Greene, J. (1993). Data analysis strategies for mixed-method evaluation designs. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *15*(2), 195–207. https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737015002195

Carlson, J. G. (1985). Recent Assessments of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. *Journal of Personality Assessment*. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa4904_3

Carlyn, M. (1977). An assessment of the Myers-Briggs Type indicator. *Journal of Personality Assessment*. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa4105_2

Carroll, G. (2010). *An Examination of the Relationship Between Personality Type, Self Perception Accuracy and Transformational Leadership Practices of Female Hospital Leaders*. Carroll, G. K. (2010). An examination of the relationship between personality type, self perception accuracy and transformational leadership practices. Doctoral dissertation, Bowling Green State University.

Christopher, M., Payne, A., & Ballantyne, D. (1991). *Relationship Marketing: bringing quality customer service and marketing together*. Oxford, UK: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Churchill, G., Ford, N., Hartley, S., & Walker, O. (1985). The determinants of salesperson performance: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *22*(2), 103–118. https://doi.org/10.2307/3151357

Clack, G. B., Allen, J., Cooper, D., & Head, J. O. (2004). Attitudes Personality differences between doctors and their patients: implications for the teaching of communication skills. *Medical Education Medical Education J1 - Medical Education*, *38*(0), 177–186. https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2923.2004.01752.x

Corsaro, D., & Snehota, I. (2010). Searching for Relationship Value in Business Markets: Are We Missing Something? *Industrial Marketing Management*, *39*(6), 986–995. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2010.06.018

Crosby, L., Evans, K., & Cowles, D. (1990). Relationship quality in services selling: An interpersonal influence perspective. *Journal of Marketing*, *54*(3), 68. https://doi.org/10.2307/1251817

Creswell, J., & Clark, V. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. US: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Day, E., & Crask, M. R. (2000). Value assessment: the antecedent of customer satisfaction. *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior*.

Denzin, N. (1978). *The Research Act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. New York: Praeger.

Dion, P., Easterling, D., & Miller, S. J. (1995). What is really necessary in successful buyer/seller relationships? *Industrial Marketing Management*, *24*(1), 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1016/0019-8501(94)00025-R

Dixon, A. L., & Tanner, J. F. (2012). Transforming Selling: Why it is Time to Think Differently about Sales Research. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, *32*(1), 9–14. https://doi.org/10.2753/PSS0885-3134320102

Doney, P. M., & Cannon, J. P. (1997). An Examination of the Nature of Trust in Buyer-Seller Relationships. *Journal of Marketing*, *61*(2), 35–51. https://doi.org/10.2307/1251829

Dubinsky, A. J., Yammarino, F. J., Jolson, M. A., & Spangler, W. D. (1995). Transformational Leadership: An initial Investigation in Sales Management. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*. https://doi.org/10.1080/08853134.1995.10754018

Dubois, A., & Gadde, L. E. (2002). Systematic combining: An abductive approach to case research. *Journal of Business Research*, *55*(7), 553–560. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963(00)00195-8

Dwyer, F. R., Schurr, P. H., & Oh, S. (1987). Developing buyer-seller relationships. *Journal of Marketing*, *51*(2), 11–27. https://doi.org/10.2307/1251126

Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of management review*, 14(4), 532-550.

Echeverri, P., & Skalen, P. (2011). Co-creation and co-destruction: A practice-theory based study of interactive value formation. *Marketing Theory*, *11*(3), 351–373. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593111408181

Edwards, G. (2012). Transformational Leadership across Hierarchical Levels in UK Manufacturing Organizations. *Leadership & Organization*

Development Journal, 33(1), 25–50.
https://doi.org/10.1108/01437731211193106

Edvardsson, B., Holmlund, M., & Strandvik, T. (2008). Initiation of business relationships in service-dominant settings. *Industrial Marketing Management, 37*(3), 339–350.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2007.07.009

Edvardsson, B., Tronvoll, B., & Gruber, T. (2011). Expanding understanding of service exchange and value co-creation: a social construction approach. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 39(2), 327–339. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-010-0200-y

Emery, C., & Barker, K. (2007). The effect of transactional and transformational leadership styles on the organizational commitment and job satisfaction of customer contact personnel. *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict, 11*(1).

Felfe, J., & Schyns, B. (2010). Followers' personality and the perception of transformational leadership: Further evidence for the similarity hypothesis. *British Journal of Management, 21*(2), 393–410.
https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8551.2009.00649.x

Flint, D. J., Woodruff, R. B., & Gardial, S. F. (2002). Exploring the Phenomenon of Customers' Desired Value Change in a Business-to-Business Context. *Journal of Marketing, 66*(4), 102–117.
https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.66.4.102.18517

Ford, D. (1980). The development of buyer-seller relationships in industrial markets. *European Journal of Marketing, 14*(5/6), 339–353.
https://doi.org/dx.doi.org/10.1108/EUM0000000004910

Franke, G. R., & Park, J. E. (2006). Salesperson Adaptive Selling Behavior and Customer Orientation: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Marketing Research, 43*(4), 693–702. https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkr.43.4.693

Gallén, T. (2006). Managers and strategic decisions: does the cognitive style matter? *Journal of Management Development, 25*(2), 118–133.
https://doi.org/10.1108/02621710610645117

Gardner, W. L., & Martinko, M. J. (1996). Using the Myers-Briggs type indicator to study managers: A literature review and research agenda. *Journal of Management.* https://doi.org/10.1016/S0149-2063(96)90012-4

Giacobbe, R., Jackson, D. J., Crosby, L., & Bridges, C. (2006). A contingency approach to adaptive selling behavior and sales performance: selling situations and salesperson characteristics. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management, 26*(2), 115–142.
https://doi.org/10.2753/PSS0885-3134260202

Grant, A. M. (2013). Rethinking the Extraverted Sales Ideal: The Ambivert Advantage. *Psychological Science, 24*(6), 1024–1030. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797612463706

Grönroos, C. (1999). Relationship Marketing: Challenges for the Organization. *Journal of Business Research, 46*(98), 327–335. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963(98)00030-7

Grönroos, C. (2011). Value co-creation in service logic: A critical analysis. *Marketing Theory, 11*(3), 279–301. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593111408177

Grönroos, C., & Voima, P. (2013). Critical service logic: making sense of value creation and co-creation. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 41*(2), 133–150. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-012-0308-3

Guenzi, P., Pardo, C., & Georges, L. (2007). Relational selling strategy and key account managers' relational behaviors: An exploratory study. *Industrial Marketing Management, 36*(1), 121–133. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2005.03.014

Haas, A., Snehota, I., & Corsaro, D. (2012). Industrial Marketing Management Creating value in business relationships : The role of sales. *Industrial Marketing Management, 41*(1), 94–105. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2011.11.004

Hall, C. S., & Lindzey, G. (1957). *Theories of Personality.* US: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Harman, G. (2003). No character or personality. *Business Ethics Quarterly, 13*(1), 87. https://doi.org/dx.doi.org/10.5840/beq20031316

Hautala, T. (2005). The Effects of Subordinates' Personality on Appraisals of Transformational Leadership. *Journal of leadership & organizational studies,* 11(4), 84-92. https://doi.org/10.1177/107179190501100407

Hautala, T. (2006). The relationship between personality and transformational leadership. *Journal of Management Development, 25*(8), 777–794. https://doi.org/10.1108/02621710610684259

Hautala, T. (2007). Impact of followers' type on their expectations of leaders: An individual consideration in transformational leadership. *Journal of Psychological Type, 67*(4), 30–37.

Hautala, T. (2008). TJ leaders as transformational leaders: Followers' and leaders' appraisals. *Journal of Psychological Type, 68*(9), 78–88.

Hetland, H., & Sandal, G. M. (2003). Transformational leadership in Norway: outcomes and personality correlates. *European Journal of Work*

and Organizational Psychology, *12*(2), 147–170.
https://doi.org/10.1080/13594320344000057

Hohenschwert, L., & Geiger, S. (2015). Interpersonal influence strategies in complex B2B sales and the socio-cognitive construction of relationship value. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *49*, 139–150.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2015.05.027

House, R. (1995). *Leadership in twenty-first century: A Speculative inquiry*. In The changing nature of work. (A. Howard, Ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Humphrey, R. H. (2002). The many faces of emotional leadership. *Leadership Quarterly*, *13*(5), 493–504. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(02)00140-6

Humphreys, J. H. (2002). Transformational leader behavior, proximity and successful services marketing. *Journal of Services Marketing*, *16*(6), 487–502. https://doi.org/10.1108/08876040210443373

Humphreys, M., Williams, M., & Goebel, D. (2009). The mediating effect of supplier oriented purchasing on conflict in inter-firm relationships. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, *24*(3/4), 198–206.
https://doi.org/10.1108/08858620910939741

Hunt, J. G., Osborn, R. N., & Boal, K. B. (2009). The architecture of managerial leadership: Stimulation and channeling of organizational emergence. *Leadership Quarterly*, *20*(4), 503–516.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2009.04.010

Hurmerinta-Peltomäki, L Nummela, N. (2004). *First the Sugar, Then the Eggs… Or the Other Way Round? Mixing Methods in International Business Research. In Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods for International Business*. (R. Marschan-Piekkari & C. Welch, Eds.). UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd.

Hurmerinta-Peltomäki, L., & Nummela, N. (2006). Mixed Methods in International Business Research: A Value-added Perspective. *Management International Review (MIR)*, *46*(4), 439–459.
https://doi.org/10.1007/s11575-006-0100-z

Håkansson, H., & Ford, D. (2002). How should companies interact in business networks? *Journal of Business Research*, *55*(2), 133–139.
https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963(00)00148-X

Håkansson, H., Ford, D., Gadde, L., Snehota, I., & Waluszewski, A. (2009). *Business in networks*. London: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Iacobucci, D., & Ostrom, A. (1996). Commercial and interpersonal relationships; Using the structure of interpersonal relationships to understand individual-to-individual, individual-to-firm, and firm-to-firm relationships in commerce. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 13(1), 53–72. https://doi.org/10.1016/0167-8116(95)00034-8

Ihantola, E.-M., & Kihn, L.-A. (2011). Threats to validity and reliability in mixed methods accounting research. *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management*, 8, 39–58. https://doi.org/10.1108/11766091111124694

Ingram, T. N. (2004). Future Themes in Sales and Sales Management: Complexity, Collaboration, and Accountability. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, *12*(4), 18–28.
https://doi.org/10.1080/10696679.2004.11658528

Ingram, T. N., LaForge, R. W., & Leigh, T. W. (2002). Selling in the new millennium: A joint agenda. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *31*(7), 559–567. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0019-8501(02)00175-X

Ingram, T. N., Laforge, R. W., Locander, W. B., Mackenzie, S. B., & Podsakoff, P. M. (2005). New Directions in Sales Leadership Research. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, *25*(2), 137–154. https://doi.org/10.1080/08853134.2005.10749055

Jick, T. (1979). Mixing qualitative and quantitative methods: triangulation in action. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *24*(4), 602–611.

Johnson, R., Onwuegbuzie, A., & Turner, L. (2007). Toward a definition of mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, *1*(2), 112–133.

Jokiniemi, S. (2013). *" Once again I gained so much " – Understanding the value of b-to-b sales interactions.* Publications of Turku School of Economics, Series A.

Jolson, M. A. (1997). Broadening the Scope of Relationship Selling. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, *XVII*(4), 75–88. https://doi.org/10.1080/08853134.1997.10754112

Jones, E., Brown, S. P., Zoltners, A. A., & Weitz, B. A. (2005). The Changing Environment of Selling and Sales Management. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, *XXV*(2), 105–111. https://doi.org/10.1080/08853134.2005.10749052

Jung, C. (1921). *Psychological Types. The Collected Works of C. G. Jung.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Kakkuri-Knuuttila, M., & Heinlahti, K. (2006). *Mitä on tutkimus? Argumentaatio ja tieteenfilosofia.* Gaudeamus Kirja. Yliopistokustannus, HYY Yhtymä.

Kark, R., Shamir, B., Avolio, B., & Yammarino, F. (2002). *The dual effect of transformational leadership: Priming relational and collective selves and further effects on followers in Transformational and Charismatic Leadership: The Road Ahead 10th Anniversary Edition (Monographs in Leadership and Management, Vol.* (B. J. Avolio & F. J. Yammarino, Eds.). Emerald Group Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-357120130000005010

Kenny, D. (1994). *Interpersonal perception: A social relations analysis.* US: Guilford Press.

Kim, H. (2014). The role of WOM and dynamic capability in B2B transactions. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, *8*(2), 84–101. https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIM-12-2013-0082

Korpela, P. (2015). *Towards a contextual understanding of B2B salespeople's selling competencies – An exploratory study among purchasing decision-makers of internationally-oriented technology firms.* Publications of Turku School of Economics, Series A.

Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (1988). *The Leadership Challenge. How to Make Extraordinary Things Happen in Organizations.* US: Jossey-Bass, Wiley Print.

Lassk, F. G., & Shepherd, C. D. (2013). Exploring the relationship between emotional intelligence and salesperson creativity. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management,* 33(1), 25-37. https://doi.org/10.2753/PSS0885-3134330103

Lindgreen, A., Antioco, M., Palmer, R., & Heesch, T. Van. (2009). High-tech, innovative products: identifying and meeting business customers' value needs. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, *24*(3/4), 182–197. https://doi.org/10.1108/08858620910939732

Lowe, K. B., Kroeck, K. G., & Sivasubramaniam, N. (1996). Identifying Common Methods Variance With Data Collected From A Single Source: An Unresolved Sticky IssueEffectiveness Correlates of Transactional and Transformational Leadership: A Meta-Analytic Review of the MLQ Literature. *Leadership Quarterly*, *7*(3), 385–425. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(96)90027-2

Macdaid, G., McCaulley, M., & Kainz, R. (1995). *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator: Atlas of Type Tables.* Gainesville, FL: Center for Applications of Psychological Type, Inc.

Macintosh, G., Anglin, K. A., Szymanski, D. M., & Gentry, J. W. (1992). Relationship Development in Selling: A Cognitive Analysis. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management.* https://doi.org/10.1080/08853134.1992.10753925

MacKenzie, S. B., Podsakoff, P. M., & Rich, G. A. (2001). Transformational and Transactional Leadership and Salesperson Performance. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science.* https://doi.org/10.1177/03079459994506

Manning, G., Ahearne, M., & Reece, M. (2012). *Selling today: Partnering to create value.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education Inc.

Marshall, G. W., Goebel, D. J., & Moncrief, W. C. (2003). Hiring for success at the buyer-seller interface. *Journal of Business Research*, *56*(4), 247–255. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963(02)00435-6

Masi, R., & Cooke, R. (2000). Effects of transformational leadership on subordinate motivation, empowering norms, and organizational productivity. *The International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, *8*(1), 16–47. https://doi.org/dx.doi.org/10.1108/eb028909

McFarland, R. G., Challagalla, G. N., & Shervani, T. A. (2006). Influence Tactics for Effective Adaptive Selling. *Journal of Marketing*, *70*(October), 103–117. https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.70.4.103

McIntyre, R., & Meloche, M. (1995). Cognitive Style and Customer Orientation. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, *10*(1), 75–86. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02249271

McIntyre, R. P., Claxton, R. P., Anselmi, K., & Wheatley, E. W. (2000). Cognitive Style as an Antecedent to Adaptiveness, Customer Orientation, and Self-Perceived Selling Performance. *Journal of Business and Psychology,* 15(2), 179–196. https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1007775208983

Moncrief, W. C., & Marshall, G. W. (2005). The evolution of the seven steps of selling. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *34*(1), 13–22. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2004.06.001

Myers, I. (1992). *Introduction to Type. A Description of the Theory and Applications of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.* Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologist Press.

Myers, I., & McCaulley, M. (1985). *Manual: A Guide to the Development and Use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.* Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologist Press.

Müller, R., & Turner, R. (2010). Leadership competency profiles of successful project managers. *International Journal of Project*

Management, *28*(5), 437–448.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2009.09.003

Nielsen, K., Yarker, J., Randall, R., & Munir, F. (2009). The mediating effects of team and self-efficacy on the relationship between transformational leadership, and job satisfaction and psychological well-being in healthcare professionals: A cross-sectional questionnaire survey. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, *46*(9), 1236–1244. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2009.03.001

Nordin, F., & Kowalkowski, C. (2010). Solutions offerings: a critical review and reconceptualisation. *Journal of Service Management*, *21*(4), 441–459. https://doi.org/10.1108/09564231011066105

Oliver, R. (1977). Effect of expectation and disconfirmation on postexposure product evaluations: an alternative interpretation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *62*(4), 480–486. https://doi.org/dx.doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.62.4.480

Oliver, R. L., & Desarbo, W. S. (1988). Response Satisfaction Determinants in Judgments. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *14*(4), 495–507.

Oliver, Balakrishnan, P. V., & Barry, B. (1994). Outcome satisfaction in negotiation: A test of expectancy disconfirmation. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *60*(October), 252–275. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1006/obhd.1994.1083

Ostrom, A. L., Parasuraman, A., Bowen, D. E., Patrício, L., & Voss, C. A. (2015). Service Research Priorities in a Rapidly Changing Context. *Journal of Service Research*, *18*(2), 127–159. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670515576315

Overby, J. W., & Servais, P. (2005). Small and medium-sized firms' import behavior: The case of Danish industrial purchasers. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *34*(1), 71–83. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2004.08.001

Paasi, J., & Wessberg, N. (2015). *VTT For Industry. Successful business at Finnish manufacturing companies beyond 2020 - Four scenarios*. VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland Ltd.

Palmatier, R. W., Dant, R. P., Grewal, D., & Evans, K. R. (2006). Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Relationship Marketing: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Marketing*, *70*(4), 136–153. https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.70.4.136

Parasuraman, A., & Grewal, D. (2000). The impact of technology on the quality-value-loyalty chain: a research agenda. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 28*(1), 168–174.

Parsons, A. L. (2002). What Determines Buyer-Seller Relationship Quality? An Investigation from the Buyer's Perspective. *Journal of Supply Chain Management, 38*(2), 4–12. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-493X.2002.tb00124.x

Payne, A. F., Storbacka, K., & Frow, P. (2008). Managing the co-creation of value. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 36*(1), 83–96. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-007-0070-0

Pervin, L. (2003). *The Science of Personality.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Pettigrew, A. (1990). Longitudinal field research on change: theory and practice. *Organizational Science, 1*(3), 267–292. https://doi.org/dx.doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1.3.267

Rackham, N., & DeVincentis, J. (1999). *Rethinking the Sales Force: Redefining Selling to Create and Capture Customer Value. McGraw-Hill Education.* US: McGraw-Hill Education.

Ravald, A., & Grönroos, C. (1996). The value concept and relationship marketing. *European Journal of Marketing, 30*(2), 19–30. https://doi.org/10.1108/03090569610106626

Rapp, A., Bachrach, D., Panagopoulos, N., & Ogilvie, J. (2014). Salespeople as knowledge brokers: a review and criticue of the challenger sales model. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management,* 34(4), 245–259.

Román, S., & Iacobucci, D. (2010). Antecedents and consequences of adaptive selling confidence and behavior: A dyadic analysis of salespeople and their customers. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 38*(3), 363–382. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-009-0166-9

Roush, P., & Atwater, L. (1992). Using the MBTI to understand transformational leadership and self-perception accuracy. *Military Psychology, 4*(1), 17. https://doi.org/dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15327876mp0401_2

Routamaa, V., & Hautala, T. (2009). *Katse naamion taa – Itsetuntemuksesta voimaa (A Look behind the Mask - Powered by Self-Knowledge).* Vaasa: Leadec-Kustannus.

Routamaa, V., Honkonen, M., Asikainen, V., & Pollari, A.-M. (1997). Psychological Type and Leadership Styles - Subordinates' Point of View.

Proceedings of the Leadership and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Second International Conference. Washington, USA.

Routamaa, V., & Ou, J. (2012). Managers' recruitment – The companies' most strategic decision China, USA and Sweden compared. In *2nd Annual International Conference on Human Resource Management and Professional Development for the Digital Age* (pp. 142–143). Singapore: Global Science and Technology Forum. https://doi.org/10.5176/2251-2449_HRM&PD12.17

Routamaa, V., & Ponto, V. (1994). Situational Leadership and the MBTI Types of Certain Finnish Managers. *Proceedings of The Myers-Briggs Types Indicator and Leadership: An International Research Conference. National Leadership Institute. Maryland, USA.*

Salomonson, N., Åberg, A., & Allwood, J. (2012). Communicative skills that support value creation: A study of B2B interactions between customers and customer service representatives. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *41*(1), 145–155. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2011.11.021

Schaubhut, N., & Thompson, R. (2008). *MBTI® Type Tables for Occupations* (2nd ed.). US: CPP.

Schurr, P. H. (2007). Buyer-seller relationship development episodes: theories and methods. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, *22*(3), 161–170. https://doi.org/10.1108/08858620710741869

Schwepker, C. H., & Good, D. J. (2010). Transformational Leadership and its Impact on Sales Force Moral Judgment. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, *30*(4), 299–318. https://doi.org/10.2753/PSS0885-3134300401

Shannahan, K., Bush, A., & Shannahan, R. (2013). Are your salespeople coachable ? How salesperson coachability, trait competitiveness, and transformational leadership enhance sales performance. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *41*, 40–54. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-012-0302-9

Shannahan, R. J., Bush, A. J., Moncrief, W. C., & Shannahan, K. L. J. (2013). Making Sense of the Customer's Role in the Personal Selling Process: A Theory of Organizing and Sensemaking Perspective. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, *33*(3), 261–276. https://doi.org/10.2753/PSS0885-3134330302

Smith, E., Nolen-Hoeksema, Susan Fredrickson, B., & Loftus, G. R. (2003). *Atkinson and Hilgard's Introduction to Psychology* (14th ed.). US: Wadsworth.

Spina, G., Caniato, F., Luzzini, D., & Ronchi, S. (2013). Past, present and future trends of purchasing and supply management: An extensive literature review. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *42*(8), 1202–1212. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2013.04.001

Spiro, R. L., & Weitz, A. (1990). Conceptualization, measurement and Nomological Validity. *Journal of Marketing*, *27*(1), 61–69. https://doi.org/10.2307/3172551

Stogdill, R. M. (1974). *Handbook of leadership: A survey of the literature.* New York: Free Press.

Storbacka, K., Ryals, L., Davies, I. A., & Nenonen, S. (2009). The changing role of sales: Viewing sales as a strategic, cross-functional process. *European Journal of Marketing*, *43*(7/8), 890–906. https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560910961443

Subramony, M., & Pugh, S. D. (2015). Services Management Research: Review, Integration, and Future Directions. *Journal of Management*, *41*(1), 349–373. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206314557158

Suomalaisen teollisuuden tulevaisuus. (2014). *Kilpailukyky vaatii rohkeita innovaatioita.* Suomalaisen teollisuuden tulevaisuus –tutkimus-sarja. Deloitte, Suomi.

Sweeney, J. C., & Soutar, G. N. (2001). Consumer perceived value: The development of a multiple item scale. *Journal of Retailing*, *77*(2), 203–220. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-4359(01)00041-0

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (1998). *Introduction to mixed method and mixed model studies in the social and behavioral sciences: Paradigm wars and mixed methodologies in Mixed Methodology. Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.

Terho, H., Haas, A., Eggert, A., & Ulaga, W. (2012). Industrial Marketing Management " It " s almost like taking the sales out of selling '— Towards a conceptualization of value-based selling in business markets. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *41*(1), 174–185. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2011.11.011

Tichy, N., & Devanna, M. (1986). *The transformational leader.* CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Tuli, K. R., Kohli, A. K., & Bharadwaj, S. G. (2007). Rethinking Customer Solutions: From Product Bundles to Relational. *Journal of Marketing*, *71*(July), 1–17. https://doi.org/dx.doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.71.3.1

Ulaga, W., & Chacour, S. (2001). Measuring Customer-Perceived Value in Business Markets. *Industrial Marketing Management, 30*(6), 525–540. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0019-8501(99)00122-4

Ulaga, W., & Eggert, A. (2006). Value-Based Differentiation in Business Relationships: Gaining and Sustaining Key Supplier Status. *Journal of Marketing, 70*(January), 119–136. https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.2006.70.1.119

Uusi-Kakkuri, P., & Brandt, T. (2015). Preferred leadership behaviours by different personalities. International *Journal of Business and Globalisation,* 15(4). https://doi.org/10.1504/IJBG.2015.072518

Waldman, D., Ramirez, G., House, R., & Puranam, P. (2001). Does Leadership Matter? CEO Leadership Attributes and Profitability Under Conditions of Perceived Environmental Uncertainty. *Academy of Management Journal, 44*(1), 134–143. https://doi.org/10.2307/3069341

Wang, G., Oh, I.-S., Courtright, S. H., & Colbert, A. E. (2011). Transformational Leadership and Performance Across Criteria and Levels: A Meta-Analytic Review of 25 Years of Research. *Group & Organization Management, 36*(2), 223–270. https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601111401017

Wang, & Howell, J. M. (2012). A multilevel study of transformational leadership, identification, and follower outcomes. *Leadership Quarterly, 23*(5), 775–790. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2012.02.001

Vargo, S., & Lusch, R. (2004). Evolving to a new dominant logic for marketing. *Journal of Marketing, 68*(1), 1–17.

Vargo, S., & Lusch, R. (2008). Service-dominant logic: Continuing the evolution. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 36*(1), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-007-0069-6

Weitz, B. A. (1981). Effectiveness in Sales Interactions: a Contingency Framework. *Journal of Marketing, 45*(1), 85–103. https://doi.org/10.2307/1251723

Weitz, B., Sujan, H., & Sujan, M. (1986). Knowledge, motivation, and adaptive behavior: A framework for improving selling effectiveness. *The Journal of Marketing, 50*(4), 174–191. https://doi.org/10.2307/1251294

Verbeke, W., Dietz, B., & Verwaal, E. (2011). Drivers of sales performance: a contemporary meta-analysis. Have salespeople become knowledge brokers? *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 39*(3), 407–428. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-010-0211-8

Viio, P., & Grönroos, C. (2015). How buyer–seller relationship orientation affects adaptation of sales processes to the buying process. *Industrial*

Marketing Management, 52, 37-46. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2015.07.013

Whipple, J., & Frankel, R. (2000). Strategic alliance success factors. *Journal of Supply Chain Management,* 36(2), 21–28.

Williams, B. C., & Plouffe, C. R. (2007). Assessing the evolution of sales knowledge: A 20-year content analysis. *Industrial Marketing Management, 36*(4), 408–419. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2005.11.003

Williams, K., & Spiro, R. (1985). Communication Style in the Salesperson-Customer Dyad. *Journal of Marketing Research, 22*(4), 434–442. https://doi.org/10.2307/3151588

Williams, M., & Attaway, J. (1996). Exploring salespersons' customer orientation as a mediator of organizational culture's influence on buyer-seller relationships. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management, 16*(4), 33–52. https://doi.org/10.1080/08853134.1996.10754072

Yammarino, F. J., & Dubinsky, a J. (1994). Transformational leadership theory: Using levels of analysis to determine boundary conditions. *Personnel Psychology, 47*(4), 787–811. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.1994.tb01576.x

Yammarino, F. J., Spangler, W. D., & Dubinsky, A. J. (1998). Transformational and contingent reward leadership: Individual, dyad, and group levels of analysis. *The Leadership Quarterly, 9*(1), 27–54. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(98)90041-8

Yin, R. K. (2009). Case Study Research: Design and Methods. (L. Bickman & D. J. Rog, Eds.), Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research (Vol. 5). Sage Publications. https://doi.org/10.1097/FCH.0b013e31822dda9e

Yukl, G. (1994). Leadership in Organizations (3rd ed.). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview questions for salespeople

Background

- Could you just shortly explain of your background? What kind of working history do you have?
- Could you explain a bit closer your work?
- Could you explain what kind of work day is typical for you? Work week? With whom do you work?
- If you cannot explain any typical days: What kind of working days do you have? And what kind of things affect to your working life? If this is difficult: What kind of day did you have yesterday?

Sales work

- Could you please explain one new sales case and its phases from the beginning to its end?
- What kind of things and phases was included to this case?
- How did the negotiations begin? How long did the process take?
- What kind of interaction did you have with your customer? With whom did you discuss from the customer organization?
- With whom did you work internally?/who participated to customer interaction? How was this working with customer coordinated?
- Did the customer raise up objections? How did you handle these objections?
- Was this case typical? Why?/Why not?
- What kind of other sales activities do you have or do?
- Are your activities always same to every customer?
- How do your customers differentiate of each other's?
- Do you have routines which you always do similarly in different customer cases?
- How do you choose your activities with different customers?

Narratives / examples?

- Could you please give an example of a successful customer case? What happened?
- Why was this case so successful?
- Could you give an example of a failed customer case?
- Why did this case fail?
- Why did this customer choose another supplier? What went wrong? What would you do now differently?
- Could you give an example of a case which first seemed to be successful and afterwards didn't not succeed?
- What happened?

- Could you then tell about a customer case which was at the beginning hard but in the end changed to be a success?
- Do you remember cases which have risen discussions in your internal team/company?
- What happened? Why did this case raise up several discussions? What happened later on?
- Are you able to remember any occasions which have affected positively to you? That made you worried? Angry? Could you explain what happened?

Emotions and atmospheres in sales work

- How much do you pay attention to feelings in customer interaction/meetings? In your opinion, how will the good feeling arise?
- Do you actively try to recognize feelings of your customer? Or your own feelings?
- How in your opinion the feelings affect to your ow activities during the interactions/meetings? How do the feelings affect after the meetings?
- Do you have experiences or feelings that customers are not telling all relevant information to you?
- How do you act if you get this kind of feeling?
- Is there any signals that you may know that are you able to close the deal or not?
- Could you tell an example of this? How typical this is?
- Which things affect positively to you in your sales work?
- Could you give an example? How typical this is?
- What is hard in your sales work?
- Could you give an example? How typical this is?
- What is the most complicated in your work? Could you give some examples?
- How do you recover of failures or disappointments?
- How do you take care of your own attitude and positive feelings before customer interactions?
- (If sales director: How do you as a sales team supervisor take care your team members' feelings? And how do you try to influence to your team's feelings positively?
- What kind of sellers are needed today?
- What is from your point of you the most essential things in selling and in succeeding in selling?
- Do you have some kind of sales philosophy?
- What kind of person are you as seller? What kind of seller would you like to be?

Thema questions

Before the meetings

- How do you decide in which sales opportunities do you focus on and to which you do not focus
- How do you evaluate personal chemistry and other factors related to it?

- How do you prepare to the meetings? What kind of things do you take into account?
- How do you evaluate your new customer before first meeting?

Interactions

- What things are important when you meet your new customer first time face to face?
- Are you trying to evaluate your customer's behavior somehow in first meetings? How do you do it?
- How is this affecting to it how you continue discussions? Do you for example somehow change your own activities/behaviors?
- How is this affecting to discussions if there are more than one people attending from the customer side?
- What is the importance of meeting face to face with the customer?
- Has this changed during the years?
- How do you try to take into account customers worries or fears?
- How do you see that customer's worries or fear may be noticed?
- How do you try to identificate customers' perceived risks?
- How do you build up trust in a new customer cases?
- How is it seen that trust has developed?
- What is challenging when building trust?
- What do you think that customers look for happen in meetings?
- Could you share an example? How typical this is?
- Have you noticed somehow untypical expectations or requests?

After the meetings

- Is there sometimes situations that new meetings do not proceed? Why?
- What kind of things affect on customers decision making process?
- What kind of role in your opinion the feeling and emotions have? What about relationships?
- Have you met situations where you think that there is something else also behind the decision making? Not only what you have heard?

Sales activities on a general level

- You told just about your sales activities and routines. Do your activities differ of other sellers activities? How? If so, why?
- Is this a good or bad thing? Why?
- What kind of internal cooperation do you have during new sales cases?
- In which sales phases do you have internal cooperation?
- Do you have in your company some common rules / models / activities for doing sales?
- What kind of rules? How does this guide your way to do selling?
- Why are these models / activities used in your company?
- Where do you meet your customers?
- How often do you meet your customer at fairs/networking forums/seminars/on leisure?

- How do you identificate customers' needs? What kind of needs do your new customers have? Do their needs differ?
- How much do you try to find or communicate benefits on personal level instead of business benefits?
- What kind of benefits do you usually sell? How effectively is it possibly to demonstrate these benefits to disseminate later on customers' business?
- Have you found any other ways to add value to your customer additionally to your solution? New knowledge? Resources? Contacts?
- What kind of targets do you have to your sales work? How is your work evaluated?
- How do you feel these targets? How does it affect to your work?
- How do you feel about being a part of your company?

Sales management

- How is the selling been managed at your organization?
- What kind of support do you get? Could you give examples?
- What kind of things would you focus on if you would work in sales management?
- In your opinion, what are the most important activities and target for sellers in your company?

Ending the interview

- How would you develop your way of doing sales?
- Do you have something to add? Something that I didn't ask and you think it is important in sales?

Appendix 2. Interview questions for buyers

Background and working as a business buyer

- Could you please tell shortly about your background? How did you proceed to this work position?
- Could you explain shortly what kind of tasks and topics are included to your work daily? Weekly?
- How do you participate or influence to the buying or purchasing process at your organization?
  - o Of what kind of purchases do you make decisions?
  - o In which phase do you attend to decision making?
- Of what kind of buying do you make decisions?
  - o Who is it in your organization who finally make the decision?
- Could you tell from your point of you that how you do you are work with new supplier organizations who offer services and solutions?
- What is the most essential thing when buying services?
- What kind of person are you as a buyer?
- Could you describe some of your newest purchasing processes and its phases? If you have examples on new business cases, please explain that one.
- What kind of phases are included to this kind of cases?
- What was the starting point for the interactions?
- What kind of interaction did you have with the sellers? With whom did you have discussions?
- Did you raise up some objections? Or contesting questions? What kind of questions did you present? In your opinion, how did the seller handle your objections?
- With whom did you work internally?/who participated to seller interactions? How was this working with seller coordinated?
- Was this case typical? Why?/Why not?
- Are your activities always same to every seller?
- How do sellers differentiate of each other's?
- Do you have routines which you always do similarly in different supplier cases?
- What kind of feelings did arise during this buying process? In which situations?
- Could you please give an example of a successful supplier case? What happened?
- Why was this case so successful?

- Could you give an example of a failed supplier case?

- Why did this case fail?

- What are the things in buying/purchasing that you feel happy for? Could you tell an example?

- What is hard in your work as a buyer? Could you tell an example?

Before the meeting

- How do you find your new suppliers?

- How do you evaluate your new business seller or these supplier organizations before meetings?

- Do you know these sellers personally or via some networks?

- What kind of expectations do you have towards possible new suppliers?

- How personally oriented these relationships are? How often these persons change?

- How often these new business relationships spring to life from old contacts? Or from the networks to be known already earlier?

- How would these relationships to be developed?

- What need to be happen that you change supplier or that you buy from a company that you do not know beforehand?

Interaction encounters

- (Who are the ones to set up the meetings?)

- How do you prepare yourselves to new business meetings?

- To what kind of things do you keep attention to when you meet new sellers or other supplier's representatives?

- How does it differ to meet new seller compared to an old, already known seller?

- What is affecting to it that do you continue sales discussions?

- Who are the ones in your organization who take part to buying and purchasing and affect to decision making and purchasing? How?

  o Are there other people than professional buyer who take part into buying in your organization?

  o How professional buyers are internally cooperating with other personnel in your organization?

- How do you internally consider and define your need for buying?

- What kind of meaning has the interaction to the buying/purchasing?

- Do you keep attention to the atmosphere or feelings when doing buying? How does it build up?

- o How do you think feelings affect to buying? Or does it?
- Are you trying to define sellers behavior in meetings? Is sellers behavior affecting to your decision?
- What is affecting that the trust build up between seller and buyer? Or will not build up?
- Do the sellers have sometimes untypical activities? What kind of activities?
- How well are sellers able to recognice/identificate your needs or wishes?
- How the best sellers identificates your needs?
- How widely are you able to tell about your needs? Do you sometimes need to hide some of the needs?
- How do suppliers/sellers understand your possible concerns/worries/risks when you are buying new solutions? Or in disseminating new things?
- What kind of things affect to that is the deal decision going to be made or not?
- Are you able to tell an example? How typical this is?
- If there is only a small differenties, what is the things which in the end affect to the solution?
- Do you sometimes feel that the seller is not always telling you everything?
- Is there any signs that you may be sure that this will be the solution? Or that this is not the solution?
- What other kind of benefits additionally to the offered solution do you have of your relationships with the sellers? Or of the meetings with the sellers?
- How does it affect to buying situations or interactions, if in the meetings are more seller than just one?
- Do you feel that the interaction has changed in recent years with the sellers? If so, how?

Internal activities

- How typical these behaviors as a buyer are when you do the buying?
- Do you have some formal buying/purchasing activities in your company which guide your way to do selling?
  - o What kind of activities and how these guide your way to do selling?
  - o Why these models / activities are used in your organization?
- In what kind of situations do you ask for requests? Why? And when not?
- What kind of seeing differences may be when doing decisions? Do you sometimes have conflicts when making decisions?

- Has your own buying / working as a buyer culture changed in recent years? If so, how?

- Leading the buying/purchasing? How is the buying/purchasing or selling managed in your organization?

- How and what kind of support do you get to buying?

- What kind of things would you focus on management (if you would be the leader of your department)?

- What are the most important tasks in buying and/or targets in your organization?

Ending the interview

- How should in your opinion to develop your buying/purchasing activities?
- In which activities would you like sellers to work on a better way?
- Do you have something to add? Something that I didn't ask and you think it is important in sales?

Appendix 3. Interview questions (2) for salespeople

A. Name of the informant

B. Main work tasks in sales
- Could you for start tell a bit about how people are led who work in sales and meet customers?
- What kind of support do you get to your sales work and for meeting your customers?
- Do you have situations in your sales work that you need others support? Could you give an example of this?
- Are you working in teams or in pairs? How does it work?
- How your organizations management or others in your organizations could better support your collaboration or doing thing together? What is working well and what should be developed more?
- Do you see that kind of leading in your organization which is not supporting your sales work or meeting new customers?
- How do you tune yourself to meet your customer in a personal level? To meet the customer with the right feeling and attitude?

MBTI profile confirmation and discussion

Interview continues
- How do you meet customer on a best way that you are able to satisfy customers' needs? Could you give an example of this?
- According to your strengths. Have you noticed that you use your strengths to satisfy your customers' needs? If so, could you tell an example if this?
- How do you work if you notice that you are different with your customer? If your chemistry is not meeting?
- How do you feel working with a customer for a long-term if you do not have the so called chemistry?
- What kind of positive or negative emotions do you express when meeting with the customer? How is this affecting into meetings?
- What kind of affects do the digitalization have in your opinion into sales work?
- What else do you have into your mind according sales work?

Appendix 4. Interview questions (2) for buyers

A. Name of the informant
B. Work tasks as a buyer

- Could you for start by telling a bit about how people are led who work in buying and meet sellers?
- What kind of support do you get to your buying work and for meeting your new suppliers?
- Do you have situations in your buying organization that you need others support? Could you give an example of this?
- Are you working in teams or in pairs? How does it work?
- How your organizations management or others in your organizations could better support your collaboration or doing things together? What is working well and what should be developed more?
- Do you see that kind of leading in your organization which is not supporting your buying/purchasing work or meeting new supplier?
- How do you tune yourself to meet your new suppliers in a personal level? To meet the sellers with the right feeling and attitude?

MBTI profile confirmation and discussion

Interview continues

- What kind of expectations do you have towards meetings? Are you able to see similarities in your expectations and in your own personality type?
- How have you noticed sellers to accommodate their activities if there is not chemistry?
- How do you feel working with a customer for a long-term if you do not have the so called chemistry?
- Do your situations in buying into which you need support from others in your organization?
- Do the sellers try to find out decision makers?
- Those ones who influence to the decision making? Do they try to meet them?
- How are the sellers able to get to know buyers real needs? Or how are they able to get into hidden needs?
- How may you notice that the seller really want to help the buyer? That the seller is truly heading for a partnership for a long-term?
- How do you feel situations where the seller is expressing emotions or asking your emotions as a buyer?
- What kind of positive or negative emotions do you express when meeting with the customer? How is this affecting into meetings?
- What kind of positive or negative emotions do you express when meeting with the customer? How is this affecting into meetings?
- What kind of affects do the digitalization have in your opinion into purchasing/buying?
- What else do you have into your mind according work as a buyer?

PART 2 - PUBLISHED STUDIES

The second part of this dissertation contain reprints of the original published or manuscripts of the forthcoming studies

PUBLISHED STUDIES

I.   Hautamäki, P. (Forthcoming). Business to Business Buyer-Seller Interactions – Personality and Transformational Leadership Theories' Perspective. *Accepted to be published in Leadership, Innovation and Entrepreneurship as Driving Forces of the Global Economy.*

II.   Hautamäki, P. (2015). Business Buyers' Expectations in Buyer-Seller Encounters – What Really Matters? *International Journal of Social, Behavioral, Educational, Economic, Business and Industrial Engineering,* 9(4), 1325 – 1330.

III.   Kaski, T., Hautamäki, P., Pullins, E. & Kock, H. (Forthcoming). Buyer versus salesperson expectations for an initial B2B sales meeting. *Accepted to be published in Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing.*

IV.   Hautamäki, P. (2016). The buyers' pre-buying phase – aspects from the personality perspective. *Proceedings of the 14th International Conference of the Society for Global Business & Economic Development*, Montclair: New Jersey.

V.   Hautamäki, P. & Routamaa, V. (2016). Personality types in buyer-seller interactions. *Proceedings of the 14th International Conference of the Society for Global Business & Economic Development,* Montclair: New Jersey.

VI.   Hautamäki, P. 2015. Sales Leadership in Complex Business Environments. *Proceedings of the 11th European Conference on Management Leadership and Governance Military Academy* Lisbon, Portugal, 12-13 November, 2015.

Business to Business Buyer-Seller Interactions
– Personality and Transformational Leadership Theories' Perspective
Pia Hautamäki[1]

ABSTRACT

The literature has observed that business-to-business (B2B) selling is transitioning to relational partnerships with customers and long-term collaborations with suppliers to achieve a competitive advantage and reduce costs. Studies have made it clear that personal similarities between the initial salesperson and buyer can improve cooperation in buyer-seller interactions, and this interactional aspect offers value to customers. According to recent studies, the way salespeople initiate a partnership with their contact people is an important part of relational value formation. Nevertheless, this subject is rarely discussed in the literature. This study addresses this gap by adding personality theory and the theory of transformational leadership to illustrate how different customers with different personality types want to be treated by salespeople before and during buyer-seller interactions. This study recommends using these theories in buyer-seller interactions to meet the customers' relational, interactional and behavioural needs.

Keywords*:* Business to Business; initiating relationship; Myers Briggs Type Personality Indicator; MBTI; transformational leadership; selling.

Available online after embargo period.

---

[1] Sales teacher, Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki, FINLAND.
[1] Ph. D. Student at the University of Vaasa, FINLAND.
pia.hautamaki@gmail.com

Business Buyers' Expectations in Buyer-Seller Encounters

Pia I. Hautamäki

Abstract—Selling has changed. Selling has taken on aspects of relationship marketing and sales force play a critical role in developing long-term relationships between buyers and sellers which is seen to serve the company's targets and create success for a long run. The purpose of this study was to examine what really matters in buyer-seller encounters and determine what expectations business buyers have. We studied 17 business buyers by a qualitative interview. We found that buyers appreciate encounters where the salesperson face the buyer as a way he or she is as a person, map the real needs to improve buyers' business and build up cooperation for long-term relationship. This study show that personality matters are a key elements when satisfying business buyers' expectations.

Keywords—Business-to-Business, Business buyer-seller encounters, Business buyer, Expectations, Perceived similarity, Personal selling, Personality types.

I. INTRODUCTION

IN today's business world, it is challenging to specialize from competitors' solutions and services. Almost all companies on the same industry have the same solutions, services and technologies. The interesting part is that the only differing thing may be the sales force. Research shows that the sales is moving all the time closer to the relationships marketing, thus, often the salesperson is the only link between the business buyer and the sales organization. In marketing and sales literature, we lack of exact information what really happens in encounters between the business customer and the salesperson in this changed environment. Although the business and marketing research has discussed several years about sales and sales management's important role in developing and maintaining cooperative relationships and value creation. Hence, the sales literature haven't been able to define business customers' expectations whereas this study is positioned [1], [4]-[7], [13]. Additionally, salesperson's selling activities are expected to change in the near future due to the fact that there is plenty of information available where to choose. It is said that 58 percent of buyers have made their purchasing decision before even meeting the salesperson for the first time [3]. Selling is different today than before. The transactional sales will move into digital channels and the salespersons will move to those encounters which require personal selling activities. These changes challenge the salespersons and sales organizations. If the salesperson has managed to get a meeting with a business buyer, the buyers' expectations need to be satisfied. Hence, the skills of the sales

force are becoming more important than ever. This rapidly changed business situation and complexity requires of a salesperson self-efficacy and confidence towards own personality and behavior [4], [5], [7], [20]. Furthermore, salespeople need to have a deep knowledge to be able to help customers' to see different possibilities to do business. Salesperson need to see their role as an architect of change for their customers [5].

Today's business buyers' are not prone to spend their time in sales meetings if the meeting isn't satisfying their expectations. This takes a salesperson to a new situation. How to spend the given time? The literature isn't paid enough attention to the buyers' expectations of what should happen in a meeting, what really satisfies the buyers' expectations nowadays, and how the buyers' understand the value, how they define the most discussed topic in marketing and sales literature.

In this study, the aim is to define the buyer's expectations of the buyer-seller encounters in this changed situation. There is an increasing interest in the recent sales literature to examine the role of sales, interpersonal skills, the importance of communication and interaction while creating the value, rethink the customer solutions, needs identification and transforming the sales [1], [2], [5], [7], [17], [18], but nor from the point of view of the buyers. Because of the changes in business the sales profession is more demanding than earlier and it is necessary to study expectations to the buyer-seller encounters' within the scope of this new situation. In the literature is a cap on business buyer's side and especially now in this complex environment it is important to study expectations.

This study concentrates on the buyer-seller interaction from the buyer's point of view and to the business buyers' expectations based on the Myers-Briggs personality theory. Approach in this study is qualitative interview which allows, instead of the previous studies, to understand the question of buyer's expectations on a deeper level. This research found out that the personality facts plays a big role in buyers' expectations to the buyer-seller encounters. This study reveals that the buyers' expect the salespersons to approach them at the same kind like the buyers' are and by acting responsibly, offering solutions that fit to the buyer's needs now and in the future. And that the value should be developed based on buyer's personality types.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Business sales profession is defined in the marketing and sales literature many ways but in [5] the sales literature it is

Sales teacher Pia Hautamäki is with the Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, Business and Sales Program, Helsinki, Finland (phone: +358 40 415 6 827, e-mail: pia.hautamaki@gmail.com).

defined as a

"Phenomenon of human-driven interaction between and within individuals/organizations in order to bring about economic exchange within a value creation context".

This definition of the sales is transforming the sales and giving it to a meaning on a human-driven phenomenon. Marketing and sales literature have discussed lately more about value creation in buyer-seller encounters [1], [7], [8], although on practical side, the sales organizations have begun to better respond to buyers' demands and behaviors by co-creating and interacting with their customers' [17]. Like discussed earlier, in the extant sales literature only a few studies revolve the interaction-based understanding what sales person's really do or should do to fulfill buyers' needs or even how to better understand human perceptions and draw out buyers latent needs and motivations [7], [8].

Today sales profession contributes to conceive buyer value by mapping buyers' needs and fulfilling these needs in a cooperation with the business buyer. The role of sales is demanding and the demands are more and more from a comprehensive perspective and skills set than earlier [1]. This may due of a buyers' complex business and solution needs to which may be challenging to find answers without cooperation, activities together and customer requirements definition with the sales organizations. Buyers are also different and they differ how they prefer to be approached, how much information they need and how they make decisions. Anyhow, the salespeople need to have a deep knowledge of a different buyers' to be able to help buyers' to see their possibilities [1], [5], [20].

The Myers-Briggs personality theory has particular relevance for the sales organizations since following buyers' needs, interaction, and behaviors in buyer-seller encounters will help to identify the personal level expectations of a buyer. One study of a successful buyer-seller relationships found that buyers (here purchasing-agents) and sellers were classified into a small number of personality types and reveled similarity with Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) [4]. Multiple studies in Finland have also been able to classify managers with these same personality types by using the MBTI [10], [14]-[16].

MBTI is a personality indicator which illustrates the relationships with personality types and particular behavior. MBTI is based on personality theory and it is an assessment tool for understanding psychological preferences for using the four dichotomies: Extraversion – Introversion, Sensing – Intuition, Thinking – Feeling and Judging – Perceiving. MBTI contains 16 personality types, which are different kind of combinations of the dichotomies [12].

In MBTI indicator the Extroversion reflects the orientation to the outer world of people and the Introversion inner world of concepts and ideas. The Sensing measures individual's perceptions that are likely to rely on observable facts or on Intuition relying on meanings, relationships and possibilities. The third scale extent the decision making where Thinking reflects the logical consequences and whether something perceived to be true or false and the Feeling on subjective

feelings proceeded with personal or social values. The last scale is extended by Briggs and Myers based to Jung's work. In this scale the Judgment measures the individual adopts a judging attitude and aims to regulate and control his or her life and Perception extent being relatively open minded and preferring to adapt to what happens [12].

Results show that the most common sellers' personality type was the most common type also by buyers. The researched most common personality types of the buyers types were ESTJ and ISTJ, altogether 52,5 percent of the respondents [4] got one of these types profile. If we just look at the functional pairs, the letters in MBTI and in the middle, we find that on buyers the most common pairs was in this study ST [4].

Functional pair ST reveals a sensing and thinking preferences and this means that with these buyers' types the salesperson should focus on facts. In an interaction, ST-customer focuses on the specific details and to the logical implication of these specifics. Other researchers have results of a management level where function pair ST has been privilege over the other while pair NT has been playing supportive role [10]. For the NT-pair buyers is important to focus on logical options with which to fill unique needs. In an interaction the NT-customer tends to focus on the general concept or big picture and to how large picture possibilities create logical options [12]. The aforementioned study in Finland on manager's personality types is comparative with these results and the type ENTJ seems to be a common type between managers [15].

Many scholars have studied the model of adaptive selling and the need for salespeople to adapt their behavior to the customer's behavior [19]. Although, [5] reveals that salesperson's personality type didn't have significant unilateral influence to sales performance or to a trust towards salesperson. However, they found that if the buyer perceives similarity with the salesperson, it is linked to sales performance and the buyers' perception of a positive sales relationship.

Buyer-seller encounters builds up on to an interaction with the persons who meets which is based to cognitive processes, personality and needs [12]. On this point of view the salesperson isn't the only one affect the sales, hence the outcomes of the sales effort are the results of an interaction between buyer and seller. It can be said that the salespeople today build specific value into a relationship in interaction situations with the business buyer [1], [21].

Concerning the value creation literature, it is seen that the value is produced in between the buyer and seller, in an interaction. The interaction between the business buyer and salespeople is an important action for the businesses. These encounters are situations to relate each other's and combine actives and resources. This is why the interaction should be seen as having the value itself. Value is a certain relationship and enacted by parties in interaction and in each buyer-seller interactions each party will develop the ideas themselves which is creating value to them [9]. Still there is a lack of knowledge how value is created in practice and what is the

role of interaction in value creation [17].

Reference [17] explained the interaction as a value itself with a theory of organizing where members of organizations seek to gather information, which they try to interpret. Organizing is defined to as something what happens when individuals communicate. In one study [17] of value creation and communication the researchers used a theory to illustrate three communicative skills as attentiveness, perceptiveness and responsiveness. The attentiveness is defined as a supporter of customers' cognitive elements of customers' value process and in this the focus is on customer. Secondly, perceptiveness support the cognitive, behavioral and emotional aspects by reflecting the listener's attempt to understand the message and thirdly, responsiveness, which support the customers' cognitive as well as value creation by reflecting the level of understanding or agreement between the interaction parties.

A study [17] was made between customers and customer service representatives' (CSR). CSRs profession in on a frontline like the sales profession do and they're often, both professions, the primary point of contact before, during and after the first purchase and due to this the human interaction is essential in both cases. These communicative skills are important in buyer-seller encounters in order for the salesperson to assess the buyer to understand better the buyers' personality and expectations to the interaction (attentiveness), while interpreting the customers' needs and asking more questions (perceptiveness) and while the customer is restating the salesperson's question to make sure, that he or she has interpret or understood correctly the meaning (responsiveness).

Reducing customers' uncertainty and help the customer feel comfortable is relevant for personal and relationship selling, when salespersons' need to map customers' needs, motives and cues of customer behaviors that salesperson know what to do next [1], [5], [11], [19]. In these situations is important to understand the behavior and expectations of different personal types and to have a skills to lead the interaction to find the customers real needs. One study [20] found that there is a gap how customers and business suppliers think about the customer needs. They argue that high percentage of core needs of a customer are either overlooked or neglected by suppliers. While the aim is in business to build long-term relationships, the salespersons should be able to find the customers' real needs and act accordingly to build a comprehensive solution. One earlier mentioned study [17] also demonstrated that CSRs communicative skill responsiveness made it possible to reach mutual understanding between the customer and the salesperson, which is studied to be a vital aspect of value creation.

Nowadays salespersons encounters with the business buyers' are vital for the long-term relationships. Salesperson can add value to the business buyer by being part of their customers' conversations that is already occurring. The salespersons' should be able to challenge the existing paradigms and this way affect to buyers' decision making processes [5]. As act as a challenger and as a change architect in sales encounters need a high-level self-efficacy of a

salesperson. Self-efficacy, which means the person's belief about his/her capabilities to perform, was found to have a direct influence on the level of effort salesperson expended in selling tasks [11]. The high-level of self-efficacy might be seen as a confident behavior by business buyers' or can be perceived as acts like attentiveness, perceptiveness and responsiveness communication behavior.

III. Research Approach

This paper aims to reveal qualitatively the expectations of the business buyers towards buyer-seller encounters and what matters most in these encounters. The research goal is to analyze the business buyers' interviews and to find out their expectations and fulfilling the literature cap by contributing the marketing and sales literature with the empirical data of the expectations of the business buyers in complex business environment.

Our research method is qualitative and the semi-structured, open-ended interviews have been recorded, documented and analysed thematically. We got the buyers to this research via our larger on-going research project where we research eight service companies in Finland and B2B-selling. Four of the companies are big, internationally working and the rest of the companies are smaller. These business buyers are the customers of these eight B2B-companies and were referred to us by their sales departments' salespersons. All of the informants had at least three years' experience of purchasing and they worked as a purchasing directors or managers, project managers, managing directors and as business directors.

IV. Method

We interviewed 17 business customers independently during the year 2014. One interview lasted about one hour and the questions asked covered questions on buyers' expectations about sales meetings, experiences of successful meetings and failed meetings and how differences of salespeople affect to the meetings. We also questioned that what is valuable for the buyers in a meetings. The interviews were made at the business buyer's offices, in a silent environment.

The method we used for analysis was thematic. We tried to find themes based on the theory from the data concerning customer expectations. We analysed the data individually and brought up the findings. After this we compared these findings and noticed that the findings were same in research group. After this, the citations to these themes were chosen. It may be said whereas the findings of the data were agreed by research group that the validity of themes was high.

V. Key Findings

Based on our analysis three critical selling aspects were identified that define business buyers' expectations.

A. Business Buyers' Expect to Perceive Similar Personality Approach in a Sales Meeting than They Are

The personality matter was what business buyers' raised up in interviews openly. The fact that businesses concentrate on

long-term relationships was the base for that why the seller's personality type approach was important for the business buyers'. One business buyer said while discussed about the things, which are important in purchasing that *"...because I'm a buyer and I know... that for these products there are many sellers, so it might be... that if I don't feel like cooperating with this person in the future... I'll ask for other offers and I try to find another person to cooperate with... because I'm the decision maker and the one searching for a supplier... I need to be sure that there is going to be good and easygoing cooperation..."*

And one said *"...it is important that it is easy to talk with a seller... that you speak the same language, and that it is easy to get along... it is important especially after the purchase decision has been made... that you know that you'll get the support also afterwards..."* and *"I just go with the one that I feel that the relationship feel best... I mean with the one... that is just natural to do things... with the one the relating was kind of relaxing..."* or *"you just want that the person responses to the things to which you're interested in..."* or *"with someone's it is just easier than with the others... of course the facts also... but this psychological thing is somehow more important..."*. And even one business customer said that *"of course, if there are two sellers who have the same offering, I would buy from the one who I like more"*.

Based to the interviews, it was a clear implication that the personality fit matters. Business buyers aim to build long-term relationships and the perceived feeling about potential cooperation in the future remarks. Even when the business buyers' had the competitive situation between the salespersons one business customer illustrated: *"of course it might be in a situation... if the prices have been looked to be in the right level... so that the personality might be the reason which makes the last choice point... that how I make the buying decision..."*

B. Business Buyers' Expect the Salesperson to Take Responsibility in the Meetings to Help the Customer to Find His or Her Real Needs and to Offer the Solution to These Needs

The interviews show that the salespersons have a lot to do to find the buyers' real needs in buyer-seller encounters. Business buyers complained salespersons attitude and their interest towards the buyer. One buyer said *"it is just that there aren't enough questions about the customer's needs... that you just go with your product or with the service..."* and one when asking how salespersons map the needs *"...that they are really individual... I understand that it is really difficult to find good salespersons... but I think... it is more about the attitude, that others just have a basic package what they sell and they're not really interested what the customer really needs.. it's more what they have in their portfolio... and the others then are truly interested in what we need and they try to fit their offering to us that way..."*

Business buyers related the need identification to the salespersons attitude, not to the skills. Here one says *"...if the salesperson's attitude is arrogant or feels like he doesn't*

care... so in these cases it is really easy to stop the discussions there... you feel that you don't want to continue with this person anymore or you don't want either in the future...". The salesperson's attitude was important for the buyers and one buyer described *"of course the whole meeting affects but if he has been listening... but still just leaves the things open... it is not confident... and if you just come up with the feeling that the case isn't going to be handled... that he hasn't understood our needs and he doesn't take them seriously... so it just feels that our case isn't important... "*.

Even in the cases when the price was negotiated and the buyers thought that it was on right level buyer pointed *"plus they need to be truly interested about it... that it's not just an offer between the other offers... that they also show that they're interested in our decision..."*.

When asking have the sales meetings changed somehow in ten years the business buyers' said that the time for the meetings is decreased and there isn't time to waste: *"the meetings are shorter and things need to happen much faster... added value need to be created in a much more shorter time..."* and by asking that how the salespersons should develop their working, one buyer responded: *"yes... they could actually think a bit more about that relationship thing... if you really think that it's discussion about the long-term relationship building... not about short-term goals... but that, they should really concentrate in seeing how during the meetings... how the cooperation develops... so that is that... when they just sell the thing that they got and how it works... but ok, if we do the cooperation so what we got now ... it is not important at all... the importance lie in where we are going together..."*.

After the interviews and documenting, it was interpreted that the buyer's would like to spend their time some other way than in pointless meetings hearing of the sales organizations products, features and benefits. One buyer added: *"that it is of course important that the salesperson listens and identifies our needs but it would be beneficial to us that they will tell us how these products and services help our life... not so that we after the meeting try to think that what do we do with these solutions.... that is something we don't want to spend our time on..."*

It was found that in the salesperson's skills level concerning the need identification might be seen differences. One buyer reflected his working history on purchasing and reflected: *"it is so from other side to the other... they've really different kind of knowledge in this... some of the salespersons do really have skills but the others don't..."*. While the interviewer where asking the reasons for this and is the possibly reason the work experience, a buyer said *"I don't think so. I think the attitude towards the customer is the thing. That you're naturally interested in the customer and you want to listen the customer and you just do questions... that you don't start within that attitude that you know already all the meaningful things... no, it is not about the age, it is about the attitude."*

C. Business Buyers' Expect the Salespersons to be Confidence on Their Own Skills and Capabilities and Do Their Job as Promised

Interviews illustrate the buyers' expectations towards salespersons' performance in the buyer-seller encounters. The business buyers highlighted several times that it is not about the sales person's age or about the working experience. It is like one buyer said: *"I think it is the professionalism, the things that you focus on... That you're able to explain, how the offered solutions could fit into our business area and to us… this kind of professional behavior is something that I put my attention to…"* or *"it doesn't matter if you don't know but if you admit it and are able to find out… and then after a couple of hours I got the email from this salesperson… that he checked it and it goes like this…"*

The activities after the sales meeting were accounted as an important aspect announced by business buyers. Additionally, the buyers accounted the systematic behavior style in follow-ups and the preciseness with the starting times at the meetings. When asking about the elements of unsuccessful meetings the business customers articulated the importance of preparation before the meetings. They brought aspects like: *"…some signals could be if the person is late and if the papers are not in the order… or the situation isn't somehow handled… if they haven't prepared…* or *"they don't know anything about our business…"* and *"you assume that they have visited our website... but many doesn't have a clue…"*

VI. DISCUSSION

This study shows that the perceived similarities in personality types matter and is even more important in buyer-seller encounters than earlier. It might even be an excuse not to start cooperation if the buyers' and sellers' approaches to communicate don't match. Sales has transformed from transactional selling towards relationship building. Business buyers meet the salespersons when they have a need develop their business. Often the businesses by themselves move to a stage where they need to do changes. In these cases they start to analyse the possible partners for the cooperation. The task for the sales organizations seems to be here the change architect, who maps the customers' business problem, their needs and wants and offers the complex solution to this need, on that way how the buyers' want the value added.

The value here could be seen intangible, something which is produced in co-creation with the salesperson and the representatives of the customer organization. It is something which may consist of the co-operating persons' interests, of their personality preferences, of their beliefs and of the business needs. The expected solution pounded with the value creation is unique and is fitted to this long-term relationship. It might be something which is not easy to change and is built for a longer time.

The results of this study may have brought one new aspect to the salespersons profession. While interviewing the business buyers of unsuccessful buyer-seller encounters, the buyers talked about the sellers' attitude towards their needs. It may be interpreted that there might be areas for developing the salesperson's attitude. It may also be assumed that the skills for need identification require development. Results show that salespersons focus to their own products and services more

than to business buyer. This may be interpreted that the salespeople don't appreciate or take seriously enough the buyer and the buyers' needs and wants. It may be also interpreted as poor sales skills in need identification. Although, the business buyers interviews could be analysed that they are seriously building long-term relationships and trying to find solutions how to develop their business with chosen sales organization. If the business buyer was not satisfied to salesperson's accountability, it might be a reason to meet other possible sales organizations and their salespersons'.

The business buyers' seem to appreciate preciseness in salespersons' behavior. Based on the researches of the personality types, the most common personality types for the manager's in Finland are ISTJ, ESTJ and ENTJ and for the purchasing manager's types ESTJ and ENTJ. This means that the types with functional pair ST appreciate personalized facts, responsible acting and logical implications. Hence, the functional pair NT extents the general concept, big picture possibilities and values, which fit in the needs now and in the future. In addition to this, all these types prefer the preference Judging, J and this preference admires organized style of life. The results might show that the business buyers' preferences relate to the earlier studies [4], [15], [16].

VII. CONCLUSION

This study show what kind of expectations do the business buyers' have towards buyer-seller encounters in this changed complex business environment. Resulting of chosen qualitative research methodology, this study help to understand deeper the phenomenon of B2B buyer-seller encounters and how the complexity affects to buyers' expectations.

This study demonstrates that the importance of the different personalities and their expectations plays a key role in nowadays business relationships due to the aim to build up long-term cooperation. While aiming to short-term relationships, the personality type affect may be lower.

In long-term relationships, which increase businesses competitive advantage, the cooperation partners and the persons' similarity is important. Similarities in personality types affect to aim the goal of expectations. This study found three important aspects of expectations which may affect to the salespersons' success in the sales meetings. These expectation aspects are perceived personality similarity, attitude and responsibility, confident behavior and preciseness.

For the future research, it would be beneficial to know what specifically the process of selling value is in the complex contemporary business environment and how should the sales persons proceed in a meeting at the point in which new buyer-seller meetings have decreased.

REFERENCES

[1] Blocker, C. P., Cannon, J. P., Panagopoulos, N. G. & Sager, J. K. (2012), "The Role of the Sales Force in Value Creation and Appropriation: New Directions for Research" Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management. Winter 2012, Vol. 32 Issue 1, p. 15-28.

[2]   Borg, S. W. & Johnston, W. J. (2013): The IPS-EQ Model: Interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence in a sales process. Journal of Selling and Sales Management 1 (winter 2013), 39-51.
[3]   CEB 2013, Corporate Executive Board. Downloaded 18.1.2015: http://www.executiveboard.com/exbd-resources/content/digital-evolution/index.html
[4]   Dion, P., Easterling, D. & Miller, S. J. (1995): What is really successful buyer/seller relationships? Industrial Marketing Management, Vol. 24, 1.
[5]   Dixon, A. & Tanner, J. F. (2012): Transforming Selling: Why it is Time to Think Differently about Sales Research. Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management, Vol. 32 (1), 9-13.
[6]   Doney, P. M. & Cannon, J. P. (1997): An Examination of the Nature of Trust in Buyer-Seller Relationships. Journal of Marketing. , Vol. 61, (April), 35-51.
[7]   Haas, A., Snehota, I. & Corsaro, D. (2012). Creating value in business relationships: The role of sales. Industrial Marketing Management. Jan 2012, Vol. 41 Issue 1, p.94-105.
[8]   Hohenschwert, L. (2012). Salespeople's value creation roles in customer interaction: An empirical study. Journal of Customer Behaviour. Vol. 11 (2), 145-166.
[9]   Håkansson, H., Ford D., Snehota, I. & Waluszewski, A. (2009). Business in Networks. Wiley & Sons.
[10] Järlström, M. (2000). Personality preferences and career expectations of Finnish business students. Career Development International, Vol. 5 (3), 144-154.
[11] McMurrain, R. Srivastava, T. & Homes, T. (2002). The impact of self-efficacy and adaptive selling in a personal selling context. American Marketing Association. Journal of Selling & Major Account Management.
[12] Myers, I. & McCaulley, M. H. (1990): Manual. A Guide to the Development and Use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®. CA: Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc.
[13] Rodriguez, M., Dixon, A., & Peltier, W. (2014): A review of the interactive marketing literature in the context of personal selling and sales management. Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing, Vol. 8, 4, 294–308.
[14] Routamaa, V. (2011). Personality Types and Entrepreneurial Orientation. In. Enterprise Management in a Transitional Economy and Post Financial Crisis. Ed. Joel Glassman, China: Nanjing University.
[15] Routamaa, V. & J. Ou (2012). Cultures and Managers' Type Structures: A Comparison of China, Finland and South Africa. Proceedings of the The 16th International Business Research Conference. Dubai April 2012
[16] Routamaa, V., Yang, H. & Ou, J. (2010). Managers' Type Distributions in Three Continent - Do Cultures Matter, Proceedings of the Seventh Psychological Type and Culture—East and West: A Multicultural Research Symposium, Honolulu, Hawaii, January.
[17] Salomonson, N., Åberg, A & Allwood, J. (2012). Communicative skills that support value creation. A study of B2B interactions between customers and customer service representatives. Industrial Marketing Management, Vol. 41, 1.
[18] Shannahan, R. J., Bush, A. J., Moncrief, W. C. & Shannahan, K. L. J. (2013): Making sense of the customer´s role in the personal selling process: A theory of organizing and sense making perspective. Journal of Selling & Sales Management, 3 (summer 2013), 261-275.
[19] Spiro, R. & Weitz, B. (1990): Adaptive selling: Conceptualization, measurement, and nomological validity. Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. 27, 1.
[20] Tuli K., Kohli, A. & Bharadwaj, S. (2007): Rethinking Customer Solutions: from product bundles to relational processes. Journal of Marketing, 71 (July), 1-17.
[21] Weitz, B., Sujan, H. & Sujan, M. (1986): Knowledge, motivation, and adaptive behavior: a framework for improving selling effectiviness. The Journal of marketing, Vol. 50, 4.

Kaski, T., Hautamäki, P., Pullins, E. and Kock, H.:

Buyer versus salesperson expectations for an initial B2B sales meeting

Abstract

Purpose

The purpose of this paper to explore the value creation expectations of salespeople and buyers for initial sales meetings and to investigate how such expectations align.

Design

We applied expectancy disconfirmation theory and conducted a qualitative study among 12 B2B service salespeople and 12 buyers. The data includes 46 in-depth interviews collected during two separate interview rounds.

Findings

We discovered that buyers' and sellers' expectations differ and that buyers' expectations are not reasonably satisfied. Buyers expect more business acumen, innovativeness, future orientation, long-term relationships and responsiveness to their specific situation from sellers. As salespeople´s expectations to create value for customers primarily stem from the solutions they sell as well as from their personal skills and behavior, there is need for sellers to focus on the gaps indicated in this study.

Value

We believe that these findings can benefit sales organizations in how they create value with new customers and how salespeople can align their actions with customers more effectively.

Keywords Buyer-seller relationship, Sales interaction, B2B Sales, Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory, Buyer Satisfaction, Value-added

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The landscape of selling is changing, perhaps due to an increased focus on services as well as the large amount of information available for customers to use during their purchasing process. Additionally, customers are willing to cooperate with fewer partners and save on costs by developing a business with these more strategic partner companies (Andersen and Kumar, 2006; Boyd and Spekman, 2004). Therefore, acquiring new business customers is more difficult than before, and the traditional product-oriented sales strategies may lack effectiveness today. With these changes, buyer expectations have potentially evolved and academics need to explore these changes. Anecdotally, we know that salespeople don't always meet the buyer expectations, and that expectations may be higher where more complex value is created and the salesperson becomes a point of differentiation. Yet, to date, no one has documented the types of expectations salespeople may fail to meet. There is a need to identify the most significant types of expectation failures (or gaps) in order to improve sales effectiveness and provide a theoretical approach to understanding where gaps may arise. The situation is further exacerbated by the changing nature of these expectations, which evolve over time. In this paper, we employ expectancy disconfirmation theory and a qualitative research design to explore ways in which buyer and seller expectations fail to align. Given the value creation nature of selling today, understanding these gaps will allow salespeople to more effectively deliver value.

In the extant literature, there is a consensus about the salesforce's critical role in creating value and building strategic customer relationships (Boyd and Spekman, 2004; Homburg *et al.,* 2009; Lane and Piercy, 2004). Researchers also acknowledge that value creation increasingly occurs in interactions with customers (Vargo and Lusch, 2008). At the same time, academics have yet to come together on a precise definition of customer value creation in sales interactions (Blocker *et al.,* 2012; Haas *et al.,* 2012; Hohenschwert and Geiger, 2015).

This situation leads firms to turn to the salesforce, which adds value as a source of differentiation. This new role has increased demand for adaptability and customization while necessitating problem-solving and creativity (Blocker *et al.,* 2012; Dixon and Tanner 2012; Rackham 2011; Schmitz and Ganesan, 2014). Despite this change, most research on customer value creation

focuses on product-oriented sales, not on the relational aspect of selling services (Parasuraman and Grewal 2000). In order to create value, salespeople must understand customers' expectations concerning value creation, and they must act appropriately in initial sales interactions to satisfy value creation expectations (Blocker *et al*., 2012; Haas *et al.*, 2012; Hohenschwert and Geiger*,* 2015). Customer satisfaction with the initial meeting can remarkably impact future sales potential. Thus, there is a gap in the extant sales literature, which fails to advance our understanding of customers' expectations and how salespeople can fulfill them. We believe it is now more important than ever that we understand the expectation gaps, and that we need a theoretical framework to advance this understanding.

In this study, we look at both sides of the dyad, focusing on B2B buyers and sellers who participate in initial sales meetings. By doing so, we seek to understand what buyers expect from salespeople to create value, and what salespeople think they need to do to create value for customers. We base our study in the current practice of buying and selling by conducting two rounds of interviews with 12 salespeople and a sampling of their B2B customers, altogether 46 qualitative in-depth interviews. Because expectations frame the customers' experienced value resulting from the initial sales meeting (Kenny, 1994), we apply Oliver's (1977) expectancy disconfirmation theory to find out how the buyers' and sellers' expectations align. The findings have the potential to help salespeople better understand how they need to act to effectively meet prospective customers' expectations and to co-create value with them.

The paper is structured as follows. In the first section, we review the literature on value co-creation and the theory of expectancy disconfirmation. In the methodology chapter, we explain how we iteratively conducted the data collection and analysis process. In the findings section, we present how sellers' and buyers' expectations align and how salespeople can more effectively gauge what is expected of them. Finally, in the discussion, we elaborate on the contribution, limitations, future directions and managerial implications of our findings.

Satisfying customer expectations for initial sales meetings

Creating value in sales interactions

Recently, academics have focused intensively on value creation studies, including the B2B selling context (Eggert and Ulaga*,* 2002; Hansen *et al.,* 2008; Hohenschwert, 2012; Lapierre, 2000; Ulaga and Eggert, 2006). Since the introduction of the concept of value co-creation (Vargo and Lusch*,* 2004, 2008), the value and sales research has gradually shifted its focus from a linear and controlled understanding of sales to more relational views (Dixon and Tanner, 2012; Haas *et al.,* 2012). Such studies consider the value in sales to be co-created during the interaction between the seller and the customer in a relatively unplanned way. However, value research from an interactional perspective remains scarce (Flint *et al.,* 2002; Haas *et al.,* 2012; Hohenschwert and Geiger*,* 2015). Thus, interaction is not seen as only one activity of a business; rather it becomes the primary means for companies to systematically relate and combine their activities, knowledge, and resources with each other (Vargo and Lusch*,* 2004, 2008; Haas *et al.*, 2012; Grönroos, 2011; Grönroos and Ravald, 2011). Consequently, value emerges as an outcome of the joint activities.

Value as an outcome, however, is ultimately determined by the customers (Vargo and Lusch, 2004, 2008; Grönroos, 2011, Payne *et al.,* 2007). Therefore, it is important to pay more attention to customer's business needs and expectations (Dixon and Adamson, 2011; Haas *et al.,* 2012). In this paradigm, the key task for salespeople becomes identifying and understanding customer expectations for the initial sales meeting. The challenge is that customers tend to differ from each other greatly, making it difficult for salespeople to identify and fulfill expectations every time (Batt, 2000; Grönroos, 2011). Sales meetings are quite idiosyncratic in nature: sales processes vary considerably from customer to customer and tend to have an unplanned, even 'chaotic' nature. Salespeople's actions should therefore vary according to the needs, characteristics and expectations of the customer (Batt, 2000; Hohenschwert, 2012; Payne *et al.,* 2007).

The value literature has only recently begun to address the role of the salesperson in creating and delivering value (Corsaro and Snehota, 2010). There have been few attempts to define and conceptualize value-based selling. Kaario *et al.* (2003) define value-based selling as understanding and improving the customer's business in a proactive manner. According to Terho *et al. (*2012), value-based selling comprises three salient dimensions: (1) understanding the customer's business model, (2) crafting the value proposition, and (3) communicating customer value. Salespeople need

to comprehend the customer's business in order to reflect on how the company's own offering is positioned regarding the customer's operations (Töytäri, Alejandro, Parvinen, Ollila, & Rosendahl, 2011)

Value-based selling comprises skills seldom found among traditional product salespeople, such as consultative and calculative capabilities. Thus, value-based sales force is more complex to train and retain (Töytäri *et al.,* 2011). Usually salespeople tend to focus on relationships which resembles short-term tactics, rather than seizing a long-term perspective (Viio and Grönroos, 2015).

Viio and Grönroos (2015) take a value-based sales process adaptation perspective and suggest that value-based business engagement happens when both seller's and buyer's relationship orientation is high. Then also sales process adaptation is high, and both parties' mindsets are relational and focus on expected long-term gains and mutual value creation over time.

The degree of value created during the sales interaction also depends on the buyer's profile, for example what kind of things the customer is actually buying. The commonly used and applicable framework of Rackham and de Vincentis (1999) can assist us in this study too. According to Rackham and De Vincentis (1999) the customers may be divided into three different buyer types: intrinsic value buyers, extrinsic value buyers and strategic value buyers. For the intrinsic buyers the value is the product and there is no need for sales personnel. Extrinsic value buyers see value additional to the product, the information of how to use the product. This means that sales personnel may offer value to their customers by doing the needs identification properly and by advising the customer to solve their specific needs by using and applying the product. Strategic value buyers head for long-term partnerships where the aim is a win-win situation where the both parties have common goals. In this study which focus on demanding service sales, the buyers may be categorized as s strategic value buyers and extrinsic value buyers.

Here, we assume value creation can occur when sellers match or exceed buyers' expectations. In other words, the potential value is created when the salespeople deliver or exceed what is expected by the customer while applying expected behavior in an initial sales meeting.

Expectancy disconfirmation theory in initial sales meetings

We take a novel approach, applying Oliver's (1977) expectancy disconfirmation theory to the B2B sales context. This cognitive psychological theory is used most frequently to explain post-purchase satisfaction resulting from expectations, perceived performance and disconfirmation of beliefs. According to Oliver's theory (1977), expectations are anticipated or predicted. Meanwhile, perceived performance is how the person perceives what actually happens (for example in the initial sales meeting). Disconfirmation occurs when the perceived performance departs enough from the expectation for the buyer to view the expectation to have been incorrect. Disconfirmation can be positive (the performance is better than expected) or negative (the performance failed to live up to the expectation). Disconfirmation, then can positively or negatively impact satisfaction with the salesperson. In social psychology, customer satisfaction is seen to be a function of positive disconfirmation (Oliver, 1977; Oliver and DeSarbo, 1988). If expectations are in line between the customer and seller, there is a confirmation of expectations: both parties are satisfied and expectations are met (Oliver *et al.,* 1994).

So far, the expectancy disconfirmation theory has been most notably used to explain business to consumer (B2C) purchase behaviors (Oliver, 1977, 1980; Oliver and DeSarbo, 1988; Oliver *et al.*, 1994). Here, we use the expectancy disconfirmation theory to creating value in initial B2B sales meetings. We claim that the buyer's experience of created value with the seller is partially shaped by his or her own expectations going into the meeting (Kenny, 1994). Additionally, the seller's behaviors are partially shaped by his or her own expectations going into the call (Abelson *et al.*, 1968). Thus, reasonable alignment between these expectations is important in order to prevent negative disconfirmation.

Some studies have shown that higher level expectations often lead to negative disconfirmation and dissatisfaction (Tse and Wilton, 1988; Oliver, 1977, 1980; Oliver *et al.,* 1988; Swan and Trawick, 1981). There are alternative ways to look at such expectations. First, customers' high level expectations may lead to negative disconfirmation. Another possibility is that there may be ideal expectations of what "should happen" (Tse and Wilton, 1988), leading to negative disconfirmation. In today's business environment, it may be challenging for salespeople to satisfy buyers' high, ideal or "should happen" expectations. It is very important to be mindful of buyers' value

expectations in sales meetings in order to address what they find valuable. Failure to do so can result in negative disconfirmation leading to dissatisfaction. But understanding the expectations also provide the foundation for which expectations can be met, and potentially exceeded. If positive disconfirmation can be achieved, customers may recognize true valued added.

Methodology

Our methodology follows a typical inductive qualitative research structure (Eisenhardt 1989; Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). The data was constantly revisited based on emerging topics and themes, thus developing a theoretical understanding of the phenomenon. The benefit of the iterative process is to enable the building of a deeper understanding of the empirical material while conducting the research and simultaneously developing theory (Dubois and Gadde, 2002; Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

Accordingly, our data collection was organized into two separate rounds of key informant interviews. In the first phase, we conducted a series of in-depth interviews without any hypothesis *a priori*. These interviews involved broad open-ended questions aiming to explore the salespeople's and customers' personal views of how they think (how they make sense) and how they act when doing B2B selling or buying. Interviews consisted of three parts: 1) interviewees' personal work role and thoughts on his/her work, 2) detailed discussion of recent successful and failed sales/sourcing cases with which they had been involved, and 3) thematic broad questions that allowed free space for informants to talk about issues that they felt were important. The aim was to encourage people to openly reflect on and make sense of their personal experiences, instead of explaining their company's official policies, processes or target state for the objects of discussion. It should be noted that the empirical data used here is part of a larger multidisciplinary research project. Therefore, in most cases, there was already some level of mutual trust established prior to the interview sessions.

Based on the themes emerging from the first round, we conducted a second round of interviews focusing on specific topics that arose from the empirical material. The interview technique involved asking the informant broad questions about new sales encounters and related expectations: What kind of expectations do you/your company have towards potential new suppliers/salespeople? What is important in initial sales meetings for you? Could you give an example? As can be seen, the

questions were formed in such a way that they could not be answered with only couple of words; required and encouraged the interviewee to talk more.

Sample

We conducted interviews with both sides of the dyad in order to best determine where there were matches (zero disconfirmation; buyers expectations likely met), as well as potential for both negative and positive disconfirmation (buyer expectations that the seller did not anticipate and seller expectations that went beyond buyer expectations, respectively). We used a sample of twenty-four (24) in-depth qualitative interviews with B2B salespeople, and an additional twenty-two (22) in-depth qualitative interviews with customers referred to us by these salespeople. Table I describes the salespeople's side of the dyad.

Table I The dataset information - salespeople interviews

Industry	Size	Job title	Sex	Experience*	Interviews
ICT	Large	Sales Director	M	High	1
ICT	Large	Key Account Manager	M	Medium	2
ICT	Large	Sales Manager	M	Medium	1
ICT	Large	Business consultant	M	High	2
HR services	Large	Business Manager	M	High	2
HR services	Large	Sales Director	M	High	1
HR services	Large	Sales Manager	F	Medium	2
HR services	Large	Service Director	M	Medium	1
Consulting services	SME	Sales Director	M	High	1
Consulting services	SME	CEO	F	Medium	1
Consulting services	SME	Specialist	M	Medium	2
Consulting services	SME	Specialist	M	High	2
Industrial services	Large	Sales Director	M	High	2
Industrial services	Large	Key Account Manager	M	Medium	2
Industrial services	Large	Key Account Manager	M	Medium	1
Industrial services	Large	Sales Manager	M	Medium	1

* Experience level: Low experience 0-3 years, medium experience 4-9 years, high experience over 10 years.

Table II The dataset information - buyer interviews

Industry	Size	Job title	Sex	Experience*	Interviews
Global logistics	Large	Sourcing Director	F	High	2
Global logistics	Large	Managing Director	M	High	2
Global logistics	Large	Advisor	M	Medium	2
Retail	Large	Area Director	F	High	2
Retail	Large	Account Manager	M	High	2
Retail	Large	Sourcing Manager	M	Medium	2
Food industry	Large	Purchasing Manager	M	Medium	2
Food industry	Large	Purchasing Director	M	Medium	2
Food industry	Large	Purchasing Manager	M	Medium	2
Professional services	Large	IT Manager	M	Medium	2
Professional services	Large	Customer Experience Director	F	High	2

* Experience level: Low experience 0-3 years, medium experience 4-9 years, high experience over 10 years.

All salespeople are from multinational companies offering knowledge-intensive business service solutions to other businesses. Our sample of salesperson interviews includes four salesperson interviews from each of these companies, including sales managers, salespeople and experts. All of them have responsibility for practical selling work. The aim was to obtain a representative sample across all types of employees who participate in the sales process in one way or another. Table II details the buyer interviews.

All customers, including professional buyers and business buyers, represent new customers for the sales firms. The customer firms represented logistics, retail, professional services and food industries. The salespeople provided us access to customers (buyers) by referring the corresponding buyer contact person to us. Later, researchers asked for additional information about who else participated on the buying team. We then contacted and interviewed another two key people from the buying team. The buyers' roles are here divided into two distinct type of roles: business buyers (business managers/executives) and professional buyers (purchasing/sourcing managers).

Data Analysis

The analysis approach in this study was open ended and exploratory. A sound qualitative data analysis includes findings that are done in the context of the setting for the case currently under

inspection (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). Understanding the whole situation benefits the research more than details regarding separate factors. To gain a proper holistic picture regarding the context of each company, we used earlier collected secondary data, including general business information, observation data and fieldwork notes.

We applied a narratives analysis to identify patterns, similarities and differences (Abbot, 2008; Squire *et al.,* 2008). When we compared narratives of successful and failed cases, as told by salespeople and buyers, we identified strong narratives from both groups, often repeated narratives or ones told as given for granted, so-called dominant narratives. In earlier studies, for example, organizational studies have examined aspects, such as change, identity and strategy in terms of narratives and stories (Barry and Elmes, 1997; Brown *et al.,* 2009; Reissner, 2011, Vaara, 2002); however, in sales studies, narratives have been less discussed.

To aid in consistency in the analysis process, the interview data were initially coded (classified) based on a scheme developed by the research team using software called Atlas.ti. This classification included, for example, high-level thematic topics as well as examples of various sales cases. In the further stages of this analysis, three researchers independently identified depth themes related to expectations of salespeople or buyers from the full set of interviews. After completing this initial analysis, the researchers met to reach consensus on the overall themes and to resolve any disagreement. The session was facilitated by a fourth researcher who provided an external perspective. This researcher was familiar with the work but had not done the thematic analysis. Alignment in the initial analysis was very close, and the validity of these general themes was high. In the next phase of the analysis, each researcher was assigned one-third of the dataset and conducted more detailed analysis using the lenses of jointly agreed upon themes. This second round of analysis provided us with a more precise view of the selected themes and how they appeared in the data.

Results

During our iterative analysis, we began to see reoccurring patterns related to the expectations that align between salespeople and buyers, and those that do not. According to the analysis, there were nine main themes developed by the analysis process. We considered those themes against

the expectancy disconfirmation theory. Table III presents a summary of the findings. Then, we discuss the matching themes between the buyers and sellers (no disconfirmation). Finally, we provide a discussion of the themes with a negative disconfirmation where buyers' expected more from the sellers and were not satisfied.

Table III Summary of the analysis themes and the alignment of buyer vs. seller expectations

Analysis Themes	Buyers Expectations
Creating dialogue	Zero disconfirmation
Innovative approach	Negative disconfirmation
Long-term partnerships	Negative disconfirmation
Knowledge/expertise	Zero disconfirmation
Customer insight	Negative disconfirmation
Active listening	Negative disconfirmation
Follow-up	Negative disconfirmation
Tailored solutions	Negative disconfirmation
Adaptability	Zero disconfirmation

The themes in the column "Zero disconfirmation" clearly carry across most sellers and buyers, meaning that the expectations of buyers match those of sellers. Themes in the "negative disconfirmation" column were expected merely by customers. It is notable that, in many themes, the situation is not black and white. In fact, some of themes in "negative disconfirmation" territory were somewhat present in both, but were viewed differently or lacking implementation. Surprisingly, we discovered that there were no positive disconfirmations from the buyer's perspective. However, we found a couple of themes expected more by sellers than buyers: a strong belief in the power of personal relationships and the importance of competitive service solutions and competitive pricing. As customers did not seem to view these themes in the same light, we will not go through these two themes in detail. When elaborating on the results, we focus on themes with zero disconfirmation and negative confirmation from the buyers' perspectives.

Zero disconfirmation: Both sellers and buyers expectations align

Creating dialogue

As the theme of creating dialogue between sellers and buyers clearly carried over for both sellers and buyers, it turned out to be a key construct in selling intangible business services and solutions. Our data reveals that dialogue is seen as a means to contextualize sellers' general knowledge and value propositions. Both parties also viewed dialogue as a means to building trust and credibility. Therefore, to create value, it is of the utmost importance for salespeople to engage customers in a shared dialogue. Moreover, we found that buyers in higher positions had stronger expectations for a dialogue. In addition, buyers' perceptions regarding the strength of the dialogue tended to influence their view on the potential value of the offering and the supplier relationship.

Many buyers mentioned that the presentations did not interest them, but if there was a real dialogue, there could be something promising. Here are a couple of examples illustrating how salespeople and customers discuss dialogue:

> *...so presentations probably don't interest me; there are no points of common interest. But when the discussion is ongoing, then perhaps there is some potential. If (it has been) a monologue, then it's like thanks, we'll be in touch. But if it has been a proper discussion, then there could be a number of action points afterwards… (Professional buyer, Sales company 1, ICT services)*

> *I hope to get into a dialogue mode as early as possible… (Business buyer, Customer company 1, Logistic services)*

> *Just a workshop of four hours, with the customer, you can start exploring together in depth to see what it could be… whether there are any similar needs, whether they differ from each other… whether you are moving from a physical work flow to an electronic work flow, etc. (Salesperson, Sales company 1, ICT services)*

It is notable that the need for creating a good dialogue was more common among "pure" service sales cases, whereas companies selling "add-on" service solutions linked to their physical

equipment seemed not to recognize the need for dialoguing to the same extent. They viewed dialogue as more of a small-talk type of discussion in order to build a personal connection.

Knowledge/expertise

Both parties agreed that the salesperson should be knowledgeable, knowing their products and understanding the company's capability very well. This finding aligns well with many earlier studies suggesting the important role of expertise and trust in building relationships. For example, previous research has pointed out that perceived expertise of salespeople increases the level of trust and also affects the level of satisfaction (Liu and Leach, 2001).

Here, both parties seemed to agree that strong knowledge and expertise is a minimum criterion for value delivery, though the customers may have reported it a little more strongly. Still, the point seems well-known by the salespeople, so the probability of meeting customer expectations in this area should be relatively high. Even though this was clearly a topic identified by both parties, there is still potential for misalignment as customers typically expect salespeople to demonstrate their knowledge more from the customers' perspective and within their industry context:

> *…they know in great detail which way the button goes in any given situation. But to be able to better look at it from this side of the table, so to speak… whether he understands what we mean, because I have noticed that we can speak using the same terminology but the meaning of the terms is different to us. (Business buyer, Customer company 1, Logistic services)*

> *We are especially strong in that... they'll start using our knowledge in many ways... we discuss how we do things, go through processes in their context… (Salesperson, Sales company 2, HR services)*

Adaptability

Many salespeople mentioned adaptability as an important factor, claiming that it is critical to adapt to the industry sector and the members of the buying team present in the initial sales meeting. They highlighted the necessity of fitting oneself to the status of customers' buying process. For example, one salesperson had the following to say:

> *Different customers have a different pulse. Say I go to the metal workers' union, they breathe at a different pace than, say, a high tech lab or somewhere; there, the pace is different. Your own way of working also has to, you kind of have to adapt to the customer's pace. (Salesperson, Sales company 1, ICT services)*

Customers viewed this topic a bit differently. They clearly mentioned that they expect salespeople to follow their course of action and style of working. We can assume that adaptability is implicitly included in expectations even if it is not discussed explicitly by buyers. One purchasing director from the food processing industry explains it this way:

> *Sometimes even big negotiations fail because salespeople come here and behave in a way not acceptable for us. It could be too arrogant attitude…pushing their own view too hard. Or it could be unsuitable terms of collaboration for us (Purchasing director, Customer company 4, Food industry).*

Negative disconfirmation: Buyers expect more

Customer insight

When discussing services, customer's experienced value is highly context dependent, as claimed in the so-called value-in-use axiom (Vargo and Lusch, 2004, 2008). Thus, to design a customer's business, one must have a broad and in-depth understanding of it. Compared to salespeople, customers did talk much more and on a deeper level about customer insight. A strong customer insight was often included as part of narratives of success or failure:

> *Let us start from the fact that salespeople need to know their customer's daily activities, their way of working, processes, background, etc., such a lot that he would be able to foresee the potential issues customers may face, risks, etc. (Business buyer, Customer company 1, Logistic services).*

> *I expect salespeople to understand our business and strategy so well that they can pick up all the needed pieces of information, all the signals from our discussions and then make a proposal most feasible for us….so I don't need to know everything. (Business buyer, Customer company 2, Retail industry)*

> *… it was about huge global issues not just any small daily purchases (…) But they genuinely knew where I came from. I was impressed by that. (Business buyer, Customer company 3, Professional services)*

Unlike buyers, sellers did not underline the importance of customer insight in their interviews. Sometimes, salespeople may try to diminish the role of customer insight arguing that customers are more or less similar to each other. However, some salespeople did bring it up, often discussing it on a "title level" only, not being able to specify the meaning to the same extent as buyers. Thus, buyers' expectation of in-depth customer insight did seem not to align with the sellers'. Sellers identified this requirement, but did not recognize the height of customers' expectations. Thus, this topic represents a large area of potential failure in selling services to new B2B customers.

Long-term partnership

Our analysis reveals several instances demonstrated that buyers tend to expect and value relationships that are future oriented, functional and easy for them. Buyers often cited a preference for long-term relationships. For instance, they noted that they liked to know each other's companies and people better, thus making collaboration more effective. Moreover, in our study, business buyers especially mentioned the desire to find a kind of a "social fit" and "cultural fit" between the companies, indicating that "soft" values may have an important role, too.

Customers clearly stated that they expect to deal with a fewer number of partners who are really committed to contributing and co-developing their business now and in the future. Customers seemed to figure out how well salespeople understood their context: do they really have the knowledge and competence to handle this situation? Finally, they seemed to know already during the initial sales negotiations whether or not these people would easily be able to handle the upcoming issues and changes during the use phase of the service. Some business buyers emphasized that the sales contract is just a starting point, and problems will start later anyway. A couple of quotes indicate these expectations:

> *It's actually about a long-term relationship and not a one-off sale, that they (salespeople) could really see how the activities can be developed during the*

relationship... We want to build the success and build it in a way that allows us to find new lines of business. This continuous development is what you would expect a lot more of from salespeople as continuous service providers, so that's crucial. (Business buyer, Customer company 1, Logistic services)

...I want to see the organization behind him. Is it strong enough to serve our business? It is not just a one person show… (Professional buyer, Customer company 4, Food industry)

On the salespeople' side, we merely saw a tendency to sell quickly for many customers. For some reason, salespeople did not worry much about the use value (value-in-use) for customers. Therefore, we conclude that the long-term relationship aspect also demonstrates a negative disconfirmation, offering salespeople an opportunity and possible avenue to improve customer satisfaction.

Innovative approach

This piece of analysis results was slightly surprising and offers new insight on buyers' expectations. It became very clear that buyers in business services are seriously looking for new innovation, novel perspectives and knowledge on how to improve or renew ways of working in their businesses. Some pieces of recent research point in the same direction, claiming that salespeople need to be able to question the customer's existing business practices and offer new ideas (Dixon and Tanner, 2012; Boyd and Spekman, 2004; Rapp *et al.,* 2014). Surprisingly enough, several professional buyers even brought this point up in their talk as being a very much desired and rarely seen behavior from professional sales people. The expectation of new perspectives and ideas is typical for business buyers. Some professional buyers happen to agree with them:

…to have skills to present their offering from different perspectives or of many alternatives…often anyway it is just offered like we requested. And we aren't the professionals in every aspect… (Business buyer, Customer company 2, Retail industry)

> *...it is a good sales interaction when, both sides of participants, can see that 'Wow...that was an inspiring discussion!' So that something new emerged during the interaction, something that nobody expected before (Business buyer, Customer company 3, Professional services)*

Listening to business buyers' stories, we can conclude that professional service selling and buying, as a way of working, could be considered an innovation activity between the business professionals of two companies. The innovative approach is a clear misalignment of expectations as salespeople seemed to largely concentrate on selling their predefined product, service packages or solutions.

Follow-up

Customers reported that they strongly expected the salesperson to be proactive and responsive in contacting, interacting and following up. They clearly expected to be part of a professional sales relationship. This kind of expected service attitude seems to be understood by the salespeople, so the probability of meeting customer expectations in this environment should be relatively high. However, buyers' narratives for failed cases often referred to underperformance in this area, or at least dissatisfaction regarding salespeople's follow-up performance.

A number of both business and professional buyers – customers who work with these same salespeople and firms – told us that they experienced a lack of follow up. A business service buyer clearly indicated that he had concerns over the whole interaction process and the credibility of the supplier due to issues in follow up:

> *There should more contacting and checking that the things are going fine…. I mean, for instance, a salesperson could at least make a phone call every now and then. Even couple of minutes to ask how is it going. At least some kind of contact. (Business buyer, Customer company 2, Retail industry)*

Only a few salespeople discussed expectations of follow-up. One salesperson discussed how requirements for follow-up had been increasing:

> *It's also changed in that you have to be able to do more; the customer requires more confirmation nowadays (Salesperson, Sales company 1, ICT services)*

Another sales manager also described the importance of follow-up:

> *The starting point is that we'll keep the promised schedules…if we start to underestimate promises… it may not be something you later count on. Also, if I promise to check out something, for example if our technical guy has screwed up… so I'll fix it straight away. (Sales manager, Sales company 4, Industrial services)*

Sometimes it seemed that this activity was identified and known by the salespeople; however, it was not commonly implemented. Only if there was a customer complaint did some salespeople begin to follow up well. Follow up was often discussed by buyers as an area where salespeople failed to live up to expectations, thus representing a negative disconfirmation.

Active listening

With the concept of active listening, we mean salesperson behavior where he or she is able to genuinely listen, be present for the customer and continue the customer's line of action. When we asked our interviewees an open question on what is important in selling, a significant number of salespeople pointed out the importance of "good" listening:

> *The ability to listen is everything. The customer can usually, if you give them a chance, they can usually give you all the necessary information in just one meeting or one phone call. You just need the ability to find it. (Salesperson, Sales company 1, ICT services)*

However, this well-known important aspect of selling was frequently not executed. In our interviews with buyers, they observed a lack of listening. There were a number of examples where customers suffered from a lack of active listening or processing, a failure to demonstrate interest or adjust the dialogue accordingly. One professional buyer describes his feelings in the following manner:

> *It's sometimes frustrating to listen to the pitch about the product or the service when you know that it doesn't suit you...And they talk for an hour, and five minutes in you realize that it is not going to work, that you are not interested. (Business buyer, Customer company 1, logistics)*

These examples demonstrate that in addition to follow up, salespeople also fail to implement some basic aspects on pair with customer expectations. Failing to listen may cause frustration and lack of trust and credibility, which may lead to losing the sale. Therefore, we interpret active listening as negative disconfirmation.

Tailored solutions

Salespeople seemed to value the technical competitiveness of their services and solutions over the exact fit to customer needs. The variety of customer needs was often undervalued in salespeople narratives. In turn, buyers invariably wanted salespeople to truly understand their needs and to customize the solution to their unique needs.

> *You can see that it's the same thing they sell to all companies...And then there's the need...I have often wondered why so little attention is paid to it, when it's probably the be-all and end-all of everything. (Business buyer, Customer company 1, Logistic Industry)*

> *The kind of seller who understands our needs better than we do, that's kind of a good salesperson. A seller who isn't selling too much, just what we need. (Purchasing manager, Customer company 4, Food industry)*

While the salespeople seemed to be able to cite the importance of this aspect, there was little evidence that it was actually being done. The customers were clear that this failure would be a deal breaker and cited numerous instances where salespeople still provided canned products and presentations. Perhaps tailoring represents another area where salespeople fall short of meeting customer expectations, leading to negative disconfirmation.

Discussion

Our findings suggest that today's salespeople fail to accurately gauge customers' important expectations. Buyers seem to set increasingly high expectations, especially in the areas of business acumen, innovativeness, future orientation, long-term relationships and responsiveness to customers' specific situations. Salespeople seem to have a different emphasis and tone compared to the narratives of buyers. Salespeople expect to create value for customers primarily from the

solutions they sell, as well as from their personal skills and behaviors. They often emphasize their own role and capabilities in making a sale. On the contrary, customers' value expectations are based on a deep understanding of his or her specific business/industry and salespeople's ideas and insights on new ways of doing things in their business. They also related to the service provider's capability to serve and support the change going on in the customer's business. Customers expect these aspects to become clear through a dialogue with salespeople even as early as the initial sales meeting.

It is notable, too, that there was high variability in how salespeople referred to specific requirements of service selling. Companies and salespeople coming from a product/technology background did not emphasize the long-term collaboration, innovative approach or in-depth customer insight. In turn, those representing pure business services had differing and more aligned expectations with the customers as they focused more on dialogue and the specific context instead of pre-defined solution proposals. Understanding these gaps adds to the literature on B2B selling and value co-creation, as no one has yet identified how successful salespeople are at meeting buyer expectations in buyer-seller meetings.

Theoretical implications

The qualitative work reported in this paper sheds more light on how the value creation process is established in initial buyer-seller meetings by exploring the expectations of each party. Specifically, we look at the dynamic context of B2B service solution selling, which has not yet been fully explored in the literature. This study makes an empirical contribution by expanding the use of expectancy disconfirmation theory to the B2B sales literature. Our work contributes to the extant literature by proposing the applicability of assimilation theory in the B2B setting. From the methodological perspective, our study suggests that a qualitative approach with dyadic data could be helpful to enrich extant understanding of any given phenomena in B2B buyer-seller relationships.

Moreover, the use of narratives could further deepen the existing knowledge. Finally, our results support some earlier studies arguing that the buyer-seller relationship and creating dialogue between salespeople and customers could be value for the customer as such. This seems to be especially relevant view in B2B service selling context. The relationship marketing-oriented literature,

especially the new S-D logic, stresses the importance of value co-creation through a relational development process with dialogical interaction (see e.g. Ylimäki and Vesalainen, 2015; Hohenschwert and Geiger, 2015).

Managerial Implications

The findings of this study provide a variety of new managerial insights on expectation alignment between buyers and sellers. To better fulfill the gaps between the customers' and salespeople´s expectations, we suggest numerous potential development activities for firms to be considered. Some of them are more short-term low-hanging fruits and others require long-term and more strategic development efforts. Considering sales work being more cross-functional team-work oriented could possibly narrow-down the gaps of innovativeness and long-term collaboration. Business buyers seem to evaluate seller organization's capabilities in addition to salesperson's individual performance. Firm's internal collaboration and capabilities across the organization evidently become visible for customers during the sales interaction. Collaborating and ideating with colleagues also can enhance new ideas to emerge. There are many studies supporting this idea too. Recently, Hao and Feng (2016) suggest that buyer-supplier ties provide access to marketing and/or production knowledge and Jean, Chiou & Sinkovics (2016) state that joint learning can lead to radical innovation.

As innovativeness is seen as a competitive advantage for customers, service sales professionals should consider being innovation initiators, while having open dialogue regarding the possibilities for the customer's business. Salespeople would be more effective in not building ready-made solution proposals, but rather start with knowing the customer's business and creating potential ideas for new ways of doing things and achieving the best possible solutions. The more concrete solution proposal could be created together with the customer through dialogue. Sales companies operating in service industries need to continue working to get away from production-centric logic and to keep focusing on the customer's business.

Our analysis also reveals that knowing the customer's industry and specific business logic may be more important than salespeople previously assumed. We suggest sales organizations consider how to ensure industry expertise in sales situations, either by using teams or industry

specialists as salespeople. At a minimum, salespeople must be trained in this knowledge. This may help to get closer to the customer and to achieve credibility and trust. A firm industry knowledge base allows for deeper dialogue, as desired by the customers.

This shift apparently calls for more quality and less quantity in sales work, thus challenging sales strategy, performance metrics and evaluation, as well as compensation and reward policies. This may be an area where conventional wisdom, such as the more calls you make the more sales you get, may no longer hold. Sales managers need to assure that evaluation emphasizes the ability and willingness to fulfill the customers' expectations. This will likely mean rebuilding performance metrics, compensation and reward practice.

More low-hanging fruits could be investments in active listening skills and sales process follow-up actions. It is notable that proper dialogue requires that participants are listening and responsive, continuing each other's line of action and correcting one's own interpretations rather than waiting for a suitable moment to push one's own agenda. Instead of being a monologue that potentially destroys value, a dialogue engages and invites both parties to work on the "same side of the table." Even awareness of active listening behavior can be the first step towards more successful sales encounters. Also follow-up practices could be relatively easy to implement to one's sales process and everyday work routines.

Our analysis revealed how expectations can differ based on individuals' positions at the organizational level and positions in the business line versus in centralized purchasing organizations. The buying center participants influence the variance and construction of customer expectations. Thus, it is important for salespeople to be aware of the variety of individual preferences and perspectives. Based on the findings we interpret that often there might be a miss-match of behaviors of salespeople vs. buyers that is stemming from the different personality types. In particular, professional buyers seem to expect systematic and exact working style throughout the purchasing process. On the other side, salespeople seem to prefer more flexible maneuvering thus creating potential mismatch of expectations.

Sales managers should find this work helpful in recruiting, training and coaching salespeople for increased success on initial sales calls in complex service selling businesses. Such information

is critical to success as obtaining initial face-to-face sales meetings with new potential customers is becoming ever more difficult. Attention should be paid to hiring those salespeople with a clear set of expectations that align with what customers actually expect from them. Managers should assure that existing salespeople understand these expectations and are capable of implementing them into practice. There is clear need to have more practical exercise, first-hand feedback and reflection to learn basic and critical skills like active listening.

The findings of this study should also influence on how sales work is generally seen and understood. It seems that public opinion and media underestimates the requirements of today's B2B selling. Our findings suggest that the B2B sales work may be more demanding than generally seen. It requires, on tops of substance expertise, high degree of business skills, innovativeness, creativity and excellent interactional skills.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we set out to understand how buyer expectations in today's complex value creating selling situations are or are not met by salespeople today. Doing so is important as the salesperson has evolved into a value creator and differentiator in many complex selling situations. This paper provides a first glimpse at understanding how the meeting or failure to meet buyer expectations may manifest. We uncover specific areas corresponding to value creation where buyers express dissatisfaction, and that do not match what sellers say will be necessary to be effective at selling. We also show the applicability of expectancy disconfirmation theory for understanding the buyer-seller initial meeting, which likely sets the stage for later success. We believe that this paper will both illuminate future research in the area, provide a theoretical foundation on which to build further studies, and also inform sales management practice.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

As this study is based on qualitative data, future work should consider testing the findings reported here. Observations of how these expectations actually play out in initial sales meetings would help to confirm our understanding. Our findings are based on interview data, situations occurring outside the actual sales interaction. Therefore, this information is based on what key informants reflect on in their experiences and opinions. In such data, one could question whether informants speak truth. As

full anonymity and confidentiality was agreed in written research contract, there is no reason to believe that informants were speaking other than their genuine opinion and experiences. Even if our dataset represents dyadic buyer-seller pairs, it is worth to recognize that customers may talk of other experiences than this specific dyad also. It has been shown that earlier experiences with other sellers may affect customers' perceptions and opinions (see e.g. Abelson et al, 1968).

Further research should confirm these findings using authentic data from the sales interaction situations. In addition, testing these findings in other non-service or simpler settings would be valuable in understanding the boundaries of these findings. Such research would also help analyze the differences that might be present in various selling contexts. Further research can also look at how the salesperson's expectations translate to behaviors within the sales meetings. Finally, our dataset consists of multinational companies based in Finland. Therefore, further studies are needed to identify potential cultural differences.

References

Abbot, H. P. (2008), The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom.

Abelson, R. P., Aronson, E., McGuire, W. J., Newcombe, T. M., Rosenberg, M. J., and Tannenbaum, P. H. (Ed.) (1968), Theories of cognitive consistency. Rand McNally, Chicago.

Andersen, P.H. and Kumar, R. (2006), "Emotions, trust and relationship development in business relationships: A conceptual model for buyer-seller dyads", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 35, pp. 522–535.

Batt, R. (2000), "Strategic segmentation in front-line services: matching customers, employees and human resource systems", *International Journal of Human Resource Management,* Vol. 11 No. 3, pp. 540–561.

Barry, D. and Elmes, M. (1997), "Strategy Retold: Toward a Narrative View of Strategic Discourse", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 429–452.

Bebko, C.P. (2000), "Service intangibility and its impact on consumer expectations of service quality", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 9–26.

Blocker, C.P., Cannon, J.P., Panagopoulos, N.G. and Sager, J.K. (2012), "The Role of the Sales Force in Value Creation and Appropriation: New Directions for Research", *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, Vol. 32 No. 1, pp. 15–28.

Boyd, D.E. and Spekman, R.E. (2004), "Internet Usage within B2B Relationships and Its Impact on Value Creation: A Conceptual Model and Research Propositions Internet Usage Within B2B Relationships and Its Impact on Value Creation: A Conceptual Model and Research Propositions", *Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing*, Vol. 11 No. 1-2, pp. 9–34.

Brown, A.D., Gabriel, Y. and Gherardi, S. (2009), "Storytelling and Change: An Unfolding Story", *Organization*, Vol. 16 No. 3, pp. 323–333.

Corsaro, D., and Snehota, I. (2010). "Searching for Relationship Value in Business Markets: Are We Missing Something?", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 39 No. 6, pp. 986–995.

Dixon, A.L. and Tanner, J.F. (2012), "Transforming Selling: Why it is Time to Think Differently about Sales Research", *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, Vol. 32 No. 1, pp. 9–14.

Dixon, M. and Adamson, B. (2011), The Challenger Sale: Taking Control of the Customer Conversation, Portfolio Hardcover, Knoxville, TN.

Dubois, A. and Gadde, L.E. (2002), "Systematic combining: An abductive approach to case research", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 55 No. 7, pp. 553–560.

Eggert, A and Ulaga, W. (2002), "Customer perceived value: a substitute for satisfaction in business markets?" *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, Vol. 17 No. 2-3, pp. 107–118.

Eisenhardt, K.M. (1989), "Building Theories from Case Study Research." *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 14 No. 4, pp. 532–550.

Eisenhardt, K.M. and Graebner, M.E. (2007), "Theory building from cases: Opportunities and challenges", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 50 No. 1, pp. 25–32.

Flint, D.J., Woodruff, R.B. and Gardial, S.F. (2002), "Exploring the Phenomenon of Customers' Desired Value Change in a Business-to-Business Context", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 66 No. 4, pp. 102–117.

Grönroos, C. (2011), "Value co-creation in service logic: A critical analysis", *Marketing Theory*, Vol. 11 No. 3, pp. 279–301.

Grönroos, C. and Ravald, A. (2011), "Service as business logic: implications for value creation and marketing", *Journal of Service Management*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 5–22.

Haas, A., Snehota, I. and Corsaro, D. (2012), "Creating value in business relationships: The role of sales", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Elsevier Inc., Vol. 41 No. 1, pp. 94–105.

Hansen, H., Samuelsen, B. M., and Silseth, P. R. (2008), "Customer perceived value in B-t-B service relationships: Investigating the importance of corporate reputation", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 37 No. 2, pp. 206–217.

Hohenschwert, L. (2012), "Salespeople's value creation roles in customer interaction: An empirical study", *Journal of Customer Behaviour*, Vol. 11 No. 2, pp. 145–166.

Hohenschwert, L. and Geiger, S. (2015), "Interpersonal influence strategies in complex B2B sales and the socio-cognitive construction of relationship value", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 49, pp. 139–150.

Homburg, C., Wieseke, J., and Bornemann, T. (2009), "Implementing the Marketing Concept at the Employee–Customer Interface: The Role of Customer Need Knowledge", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 73 No. 4, pp. 64–81.

Jean, R.-J. B., Chiou, J.-S., & Sinkovics, R. R. (2016). Interpartner learning, dependence asymmetry and radical innovation in customer-supplier relationships. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, *31*(6).

Kaario, K., Pennanen, R., Storbacka, K. and Mäkinen, H.-L. (2003), Selling Value: Maximize Growth by Helping Customers Succeed, WSOY, Juva.

Kenny, D. A. (1994), Interpersonal perception: A social relations analysis. The Guildford Press, New York.

Lane, N. and Piercy, N. (2004), "Strategic Customer Management", *European Management Journal*, Vol. 22 No. 6, pp. 659–668.

Lapierre, J. (2000), "Customer-perceived value in industrial contexts", *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 122–145.

Liu, A. H. and Leach, M. P. (2001), "Developing Loyal Customers with a Value-adding Sales Force: Examining Customer Satisfaction and the Perceived Credibility of Consultative Salespeople", *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, Vol. 21 No. 2, pp. 147-157.

Oliver, R. L. (1977), "Effect of expectation and disconfirmation on postexposure product evaluations: an alternative interpretation", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 62 No. 4, pp. 480-486.

Oliver, R.L. (1980), "A cognitive model of the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction decisions", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 17, pp. 460–470.

Oliver, R.L. and DeSarbo, W.S. (1988), "Response Satisfaction Determinants in Judgments. Done", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 14 No. 4, pp. 495–507.

Oliver, Balakrishnan, P. V. and Barry, B. (1994), "Outcome satisfaction in negotiation: A test of expectancy disconfirmation", *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 60 No. October, pp. 252–275.

Parasuraman, A. and Grewal, D. (2000), "Serving Customers and Consumers Effectively in the Twenty-First Century: A Conceptual Framework and Overview", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science,* Vol. 28 No 1, pp. 9–17.

Payne, A. F., Storbacka, K., and Frow, P. (2007), "Managing the co-creation of value", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 36 No. 1, pp. 83–96.

Rapp, A., Bachrach, D., Panagopoulos, N. and Ogilvie, J. (2014), "Salespeople as knowledge brokers: a review and critique of the challenger sales model", *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management,* Vol. 34 No. 4, pp. 245–259.

Rackham, N. (2011), "Some Difficult Issues in Selling Today," Keynote speech delivered at the Sales Educator's Academy, Rollins College, Winter Haven, FL, June 2.

Rackham, N. and De Vincentis, J. R. (1999). Rethinking the sales force, 1st ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Schmitz, C. and Ganesan, S. (2014), "Managing Customer and Organizational Complexity in Sales Organizations", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 78 No. 6, pp. 59–77.

Reissner, S. C. (2011), "Patterns of stories of organisational change", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 24 No. 5, pp. 593–609.

Sherif, M. and Hovland, C. I. (1961), Social judgment: Assimilation and contrast effects in communication and attitude change. Oxford, England.

Strauss, A. L. and Corbin, J. M. (1998), Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory. Thousand Oaks, CA.

Squire C., Andrews, M., and Tamboukou, M. (2008), "What is narrative research?", In: Andrews, M., Squire, C., and Tamboukou, M. (Ed.), Doing Narrative Research, SAGE Publications, London, pp. 1–21.

Swan, J. E. and Trawick, I. F. (1981), "Disconfirmation of expectations and satisfaction with a retail service", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 57 No. 3, pp.49–67.

Terho, H., Haas, A., Eggert, A., and Ulaga, W. (2012), "It's almost like taking the sales out of selling'—Towards a conceptualization of value-based selling in business markets", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 41 No.1, pp. 174–185.

Tse, D.K. and Wilton, P.C., (1988), "An Consumer Satisfaction Formation: An Extension", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 25 No. 2, pp. 204–212.

Töytäri, P., Alejandro, T. B., Parvinen, P., Ollila, I., and Rosendahl, N. (2011), "Bridging the theory to application gap in value-based selling", *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, Vol. 26 No.7, pp. 493–502.

Ulaga, W. and Eggert, A. (2006), "Value-Based Differentiation in Business Relationships: Gaining and Sustaining Key Supplier Status", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 70 No. January, pp. 119–136.

Vaara, E. (2002), "On the Discursive Construction of Success/Failure in Narratives of Post-Merger Integration", *Organization Studies*, Vol. 23 No. 2, pp. 211–248.

Vargo, S. and Lusch, R. (2004), "Evolving to a New Dominant Logic for Marketing", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 68 No. 1, pp. 1–17.

Vargo, S.L. and Lusch, R.F. (2008), "Service-dominant logic: Continuing the evolution", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 36 No. 1, pp. 1–10.

Viio, P. and Grönroos, C. (2015), "How buyer-seller relationship orientation affects adaptation of sales processes to the buying process." *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 52, pp. 37–46.

Ylimäki, J., & Vesalainen, J. (2015). Relational development of a service concept : *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, *30 Iss 8 p*(8), 939–950.

THE BUYERS' PRE-BUYING PHASE – A VIEW FROM THE PERSONALITY PERSPECTIVE

The buyers' pre-buying phase – A view from the personality perspective

Pia Hautamäki, pia.hautamaki@gmail.com

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki, Finland

THE BUYERS' PRE-BUYING PHASE – A VIEW FROM THE PERSONALITY PERSPECTIVE

Abstract

Buyers have the control in the business world and they have more information available to them than ever before. Recent studies indicate that business to business (B2B) buyers have already decided where to buy without even meeting the salespeople involved. However, fewer studies have focused on the period before the actual sales meeting and considered the buyers' point of view, although this would provide important information for sales organizations. This study analyzed 21 buyers using the MBTI personality type indicator, and involved interviews conducted to examine the B2B buyers' considerations from the personality perspective in terms of why and to what extent they deal with salespeople. This study found that personality plays an important role when predicting the buyers' interest in meeting the salespeople. Hence, buyers are willing to meet salespeople when treated as preferred and sales organizations need to adjust their activities to better suit B2B buyers' personality preferences.

Keywords: Business to Business, B2B, Buyer, Pre-Buying Process, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, MBTI, Personal Selling, Personality

THE BUYERS' PRE-BUYING PHASE – A VIEW FROM THE PERSONALITY PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

In recent years, businesses have increasingly started to operate globally because their customers' needs are more complex than before (Jones, Brown, Zoltners, & Weitz, 2005; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). This change in business can also be seen in the way B2B salespersons do their job. B2B sales organizations concentrate on selling intangibles, while tangible products have moved to web stores where B2B buyers are able to complete the purchase independently, given that the transaction does not require the selling activities of a salesperson. The global environment, complex needs and customers' buying habits learned as a consumer have combined to place B2B salespeople in a new situation when selling intangibles and different kinds of services to their customers. The sales literature needs research to help sales organizations understand the B2B buyers' changed buying processes (Adamson, Dixon, & Toman, 2012; Dixon & Tanner, 2012; Marshall, Goebel, & Moncrief, 2003), and thus to be able to adjust their activities to secure buyer-seller meetings.

Because the B2B buyers' awareness of services and solutions available has increased it is important to arrange a meeting, where sales organizations are able to form value with B2B buyers. If, during the early buying process, the buyers are not, convinced about a sales organizations' potential to satisfy their needs or to form value for their business, it might be that the organisations are not even able to get an appointment with these customers. However, few studies focus on the buyers' perspective (Agndal, 2006; Ahearne, Jelinek, & Jones, 2007; Crosby, Evans, & Cowles, 1990; Liang & Parkhe, 1997; Overby & Servais, 2005), and there are hardly any explanations of how salespeople need to sell in this new business environment (cf. Jones et al., 2005; Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995; Subramony & Pugh, 2015). Additionally, most studies focus on the phases during and after the sales meetings, but the pre-process, the time before the sales meeting, is understudied (Stiakakis & Georgiadis, 2009).

However, world and business environments have changed due to digitalization when customers can access a huge amount of information about their required service or solution (Verbeke, Dietz, & Verwaal, 2011). For example, in terms of the study of CEB (2012), the average customer has made almost 60% of his buying decision even before meeting the salespeople. Nevertheless, traditional selling companies still largely focus on contacting prospective customers, while the possibilities for smoothing the sourcing process are numerous for B2B buyers (Verbeke et al., 2011). This means that the reasons for engaging customers in time-consuming face-to-face meetings comes in to question. Additionally, studies have shown that buying companies now have a more significant role in the purchase initiation phase than ever before (Andzulis, Panagopoulos & Rapp, 2012; Opreana & Vinerean, 2015; Adamson et al., 2012).

This means sales organizations are in a new situation, and need to understand how salespeople are able to ensure that they are going to be the ones invited to the buyer-seller meetings. It is necessary to understand the B2B buyers' pre-buying

THE BUYERS' PRE-BUYING PHASE – A VIEW FROM THE PERSONALITY PERSPECTIVE

phase because organisations aim to establish long-term relationships while trying to increase effectiveness and reduce costs (Anderson & Narus, 1990; Kim, 2014; Rackham & De Vincentis, 1998; Ulaga & Sharma, 2001); if a sales organization is unable to secure appointments, it will lose these customers to competitors in the long term. Therefore, this study aims to examine the pre-buying phase from the personality perspective. More precisely, the paper sheds light on the B2B buyers' preferred actions of the sellers in the time span between the buyer initiating interest and the first meeting between buyer and seller. This period between initiating interest and the first meeting is referred to here as the buyers' pre-buying phase in demanding B2B service selling. It is a question of 'first sight effect', a kind of halo effect. The halo effect can have a powerful influence on the impressions we form of others. All the first impression information is interpreted differently by different personality types, cognitive styles and personality preferences. The style, for example, of internet pages, the way the service or intangibles are described, the way the email is answered, the way the virtual contact or phone call is answered, will have a different affect and create a different first impression on each B2B buyer. The first impression determines whether the cooperation continues or not. Personality types have very different ways of speaking, writing, and describing and will display different body language and behavior. That is, the first non-personal encounter may be the crucial stage to ensure the connection. How to manage this first impression problem in practice is challenging. The information received before the meeting should give a versatile array of information, and the salespeople should be able to interpret the preferences of contacting buyers.

In this study, based on theoretical descriptions of the personality types, the expectations and experiences of the B2B buyers during the first moments of a meeting in the buyers' pre-buying phase will be analyzed in order to increase knowledge and understanding of the importance of first impressions and preferred activities of B2B buyers in the selling process.

Theoretical background

Selling in a changed business environment

Recently, the whole world has faced huge changes in communication and information sharing. Interaction has changed, because if before there was only one solution to a problem, nowadays it is known that there might be several alternative possibilities to solve a problem. It may be said that interaction has changed from a one-to-one situation to many-to-many interaction and often via digital channels (Peterson & Merino, 2003). This overall change in communication has affected the way in which purchasing is viewed and carried out by consumers but it is said that these learnt consumer habits affect the way B2B buyers operate, and that buying items online has also expanded into B2B business (Adamson et al., 2012; Kho, 2008; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004).

THE BUYERS' PRE-BUYING PHASE – A VIEW FROM THE PERSONALITY PERSPECTIVE

The changes in communication and information sharing have also altered the way in which businesses need salespeople. Historically, providing product information was part of the salesperson's job, but today information can be freely retrieved from the Internet (Boyd & Spekman, 2008; Verbeke et al., 2011). Nowadays, one important element of the salesperson's job is to build individual long-term partnerships between buyer and seller organisations (Jones et al., 2005). From the B2B buyers' perspective, the stable and development-oriented, relationally operative supplier offers a competitive advantage in fast-changing business environments, especially when competing with companies that operate globally (Sheth & Sharma, 2008; Ulaga & Eggert, 2006). From the sales organizations' point of view, developing long-term partnerships makes it possible to be profitable and to form more stable environments in which to do business (Crosby et al., 1990; Sheth & Sharma, 1997; Storbacka, Ryals, Davies, & Nenonen, 2009).

In addition, it is important for sales organizations to be aware of the kinds of activities B2B buyers look for when searching suitable future partners. Thus, it is important to understand buyers' perceptions of pre-meeting activities and of what makes a good influence. This is more important in business environments where the buyers require complex solutions and intangibles (see Nordin & Kowalkowski, 2010). In B2B service selling are situations where buyers are not able to evaluate the solution and service prior to purchase, hence the satisfaction of B2B buyers' relational and interactional expectations are worthy of consideration. Nevertheless, according to earlier studies, in B2B relationships the value is seen through the entire relationship (Bienstock & Royne, 2007; Kim, 2014; Roth, Money, & Madden, 2004), and this is why this study takes the pre-buying phase into account. These changes challenge salespeople, as different B2B buyers may view the possible value proposals of the cooperation differently. This is also why identifying possible gaps or differences in perceptions is a critical step while forming value with the buyer organisation's decision makers (Ulaga & Chacour, 2001) also during B2B buyers pre-buying phase.

Given that B2B buyers have access to all relevant information, including intangibles, and actively search out new suppliers for different business situations, salespeople's relational and interactional competencies play an even bigger role in forming partnerships (Echeverri & Skalen, 2011; Haas, Snehota, & Corsaro, 2012; Hohenschwert & Geiger, 2015; Hohenschwert, 2012). If a current supplier has been able to build trustworthiness and a good relationship with the B2B customer organisation, and is willing to develop the cooperation as planned, the partnership will continue as long as both parties feel satisfied. Changing the partner is expensive and takes a lot of time, and businesses see that developing current supplier relationships ensures better results than changing a partner (Anderson & Narus, 1990; Boyd & Spekman, 2008).

Personality types

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) can assist sales organizations in identifying the B2B buyers' preferred actions and in building a good first impression during their pre-buying phase. As one study from the purchasing perspective

THE BUYERS' PRE-BUYING PHASE – A VIEW FROM THE PERSONALITY PERSPECTIVE

illustrated personality may have a direct influence on the buying and people, on the buyer's and seller's side, when the different personality types and their needs have been understood (Preis, 2003). Additionally as leadership studies have shown, by knowing the expectations of different personality types, the possibility to meet another person individually and treat as preferred, is higher (Hautala, 2007). There are several ways to conceptualise and assess personality, and this study will focus on the MBTI. This personality assessment is based on Carl Jung's theory of psychological types and reports personality types on four scales: Extraversion – Introversion, Sensing – Intuition, Thinking – Feeling and Judging – Perceiving (Myers, 1990).

According to Myers (1990), the MBTI is primarily concerned with the differences in how people focus their attention, absorb information, make decisions and adapt to situations. The eight preferences are combined into sixteen types, each representing a certain set of characteristics (Myers & McCaulley, 1985). These preferences are (Myers, 1990):

- Extraversion (E): Interested in people and things in the world around them
- Introversion (I): Interested in the ideas in their minds that explain the world
- Sensing (S): Interested in what is real and can be seen, heard and touched
- Intuition (N): Interested in what can be imagined and seen with 'the mind's eye'
- Thinking (T): Interested in what is logical and works by cause and effect
- Feeling (F): Interested in knowing what is important and valuable
- Judging (J): Interested in acting by organising, planning and deciding
- Perceiving (P): Interested in acting by watching, trying out and adapting

The communication style of each type differs; for example, extraverts prefer face-to-face interactions and the opportunity to discuss decisions, while introverts are likely to prefer written communication and time to work on their own to think through a decision before it is made. Sensing types desire specific and concrete information with which to make decisions or solve conflicts, whereas intuitive types prefer more general communication and decision-making in which other potential connections are also considered. Thinkers prefer communication that handles tasks and decision-making based on logic where all cause and effect relationships are discussed; feelers want more personal communication where they are recognised as individuals, and in their value-based decision-making strive to ensure everyone is included. Judging types want clear and decisive communication, quick and firmly made decisions and resolved conflicts to be forgotten, while perceiving types prefer wide-ranging communication and to gather sufficient information before making a decision; any conflicts should be discussed before a final resolution is made (see Myers & McCaulley, 1985).

The study by Dion et al. (1995) of successful buyer-seller relationships found that purchasers and sellers often possessed the same few MBTI types; the most common personality types in sellers were also the most common buyer types.

THE BUYERS' PRE-BUYING PHASE – A VIEW FROM THE PERSONALITY PERSPECTIVE

The ESTJ and ISTJ personality types totalled 52.5% of the individuals surveyed, and ST was the most common functional pair (Dion et al., 1995). Likewise, Macdaid, McCaulley and Kainz (1995) found personality types ISTJ and ESTJ to account for over 52% of purchasing agents. Multiple studies in Finland have also been able to classify managers into these same personality types (Järlström, 2000; Routamaa, 2011; Routamaa & Ou, 2012; Routamaa, Yang & Ou, 2012). The functional pair ST reveals sensing and thinking preferences, which means that the salesperson should focus on facts when interacting with a ST buyer. In an interaction, the ST customer focuses on details and the logical implication of the specifics. On the contrary, the NT customer tends to focus on the big picture and on how this generalisation can create logical options (cf. Myers & McCaulley, 1985). According to earlier studies and the most common purchaser's personality types ESTJ's and ISTJ's, the needs of the types are slightly different. According to Myers & Myers (1980) ISTJ's are systematic, take responsibility, are hardworking and enjoy an enormous number of facts, whilst ESTJ's are analytical, impersonal, executive, strong in reasoning power and interested in transformation. The E-I scale is seen to have a strong impact on Sensing preference and it strongly divides these personality types in to different categories. For example, Hautala (2007) found that ESTJ's are more receptive to trust and encouragement than ISTJ's. However, both of these types prefer tasks more than people, are quick decision makers and like to have clearly set instructions. One difference between these typical purchaser types is how they adapt to the changes and to new things. Whilst ESTJ's need to have the theory first and after this concrete examples, ISTJ's think that if the old methods are found to be suitable, why bother to change to new ones (Routamaa & Hautala, 2009). This is important to B2B sellers to understand that they truly need to have the facts, concrete examples and a plan for proceeding.

As shown in the statistical relationship between the MBTI personality type and self-indicated preferred work environment (Järlström, 2000), it might be seen that buyers are willing to choose sellers that work towards meeting their needs for a long term relationship. Furthermore, Clack, Allen, Cooper and Head (2004) found in their study of the medical sector that patients' complaints about their doctors concerned their communication, not their clinical competence. The authors claim that poor communication may be due to personality type differences across the SN dimension. From the buyer-seller area, it has been found that sellers' communication skills are seen to be significant in determining the buyers' perceived quality of the relationship during the buying process (Parsons, 2002). Overall, when there is not necessarily room for a meeting in the pre-buying phase, it is important that sellers aim to satisfy the buyers' needs during interactions in channels other than face-to-face. These must be positively experienced, so that the buyer will arrange a meeting first and probably complete the purchase later (see Moon, 2002).

THE BUYERS' PRE-BUYING PHASE – A VIEW FROM THE PERSONALITY PERSPECTIVE

Methodology

This study used qualitative dominant mixed method research (see Hurmerinta-Peltomäki & Nummela, 2006) to examine this complex phenomenon of the pre-buying phase to enhance the understanding of B2B buyers' considerations for meeting the sellers. The methodology in interviews is based on the inductive qualitative research structure (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). The data was based on emerging themes because the aim was to increase the theoretical understanding of the pre-buying phase and to what extent buyers meet salespeople. In order to identify this new buying situation and changed business environment, this study also used a quantitative method by profiling the informants using the MBTI personality indicator to find explanations for B2B buyers' reflexions.

The focus of this study was interviews with new B2B buyers, using a set-up that forms part of an ongoing larger research project on B2B selling and buying in Finland. This research project involves seven sales companies and nine customer companies, which were referred to the researchers from the sales organizations' sellers. From these nine customer companies in Finland, twenty-one different B2B buyers were interviewed. The informants worked as business buyers or as professional buyers. The business buyers worked in roles such as business unit director, managing director or as an expert or coordinator; the professional buyers had roles including purchasing manager or head of a purchasing department. As shown in Table 1, 15 of the 21 participants worked as professional buyers, and the rest were business buyers.

TABLE 1. INTERVIEWS AND INFORMANTS

Customer Groups	Amount of companies in the group	Business sector	Number of professional business buyer interviews	Number of business-buyer interviews	TOTAL
Customer Group 1	2	Logistics	3	2	5
Customer Group 2	1	Furniture industry	1	2	3
Customer Group 3	1	IT industry	1	1	2
Customer Group 4	1	Food industry	3	0	3
Customer Group 5	1	Professional services	1	1	2
Customer Group 6	3	Industrial services	6	0	6
TOTAL			**15**	**6**	**21**

The business buyers interviewed worked for companies operating in different business areas such as logistics, consultancy, IT, retail, machinery, furniture and the food industry. In the logistics business area, two companies and their results are grouped to the same customer group, which is also the case for industrial services, where three companies are grouped to the same customer group (group six). The B2B customer companies studied were all buying machinery services, HR services or IT services. The interviews focused on the broader point of view of B2B buying, and the questions did not concentrate only

THE BUYERS' PRE-BUYING PHASE – A VIEW FROM THE PERSONALITY PERSPECTIVE

on a particular buying process.

All of these nine, new, buying companies were referred to this project by their sellers and were willing to participate. This project with the sales organizations built a confidential environment for B2B buyers to participate in the interviews, and each of the 21 buyers were interviewed on two separate occasions. All 42 interviews were taken into account when analysing the data. The semi-structured interviews consisted of three different elements: background information relating to the informant's work as a B2B buyer, questions raised before the sales meeting and central questions regarding how the organization operates in buying situations. The second round of interviews focused more on the buyer organization's policies, the activities they participate in before the sales meetings and how salespeople need to interact with their buyers.

The first interviews with the buyers lasted approximately 60–90 minutes, and the second round of interviews, which were held between two and five months later, took around 30–60 minutes. After the interviews all of the participants, including the 21 buyers, were emailed a link to complete the MBTI. After all interviews were completed the participants met with an accredited MBTI-coach and checked whether their self-evaluated MBTI matched their real personality type. Participants who received low scores (7 points or less) on one dimension of the MBTI, confirming of the dimensions with the MBTI-coach were made with a time. It was determined that all of the participants had been assigned the correct MBTI. A Finnish version of the MBTI is translated and validated by Routamaa's research team at the University of Vaasa, Finland; according to Järlström's (2000) study, the construct validity and reliability of this version was confirmed during a validation process lasting several years.

All of the data collected during the interviews was transcribed after the interviews, and coded by the research group. Identification of the themes to emerge from the 42 was carried out independently. After the analysis, the research group discussed the findings, and during project meetings interpretations or thoughts to arise during the individual analysis were deepened and resolved. The findings were agreed by the research group, and the validity of the themes was high.

The interviews were analysed without systematically searching for the participants' personality types. After analysing the qualitative data and selected findings, which revealed the different B2B buyers' expectations of preferred seller activities before sales meetings, both data sets were combined. After this, citations were confirmed with another MBTI researcher with a deep knowledge of the MBTI theory. After analysing every participant's transcribed text, the author compared the MBTI types to the findings. Therefore, the validity of the analysis is high.

Findings

Personality type data

THE BUYERS' PRE-BUYING PHASE – A VIEW FROM THE PERSONALITY PERSPECTIVE

The personality type distribution of the buyers is presented in Table 2. The sample is small but is considered an accurate representation of the occupation. The personality types of the B2B buyers correlates to earlier findings (Dion et al., 1995; Macdaid et al., 1995), thus the most common personality type among B2B buyers is ESTJ (33%), with ESTP (19%) being the second most common type. Almost 62% of the buyers represent the cognitive style of ST, and this also corresponds with the results of Dion et al. (1995) and Macdaid et al. (1995). STs are practical, fact and detail-oriented and logical decision makers who prefer a structured and planned environment. According to Myers (1992), ST's may look before meetings for detailed information, plan progression and details about the supplier and the offerings (see also Routamaa et al., 2009).

TABLE 2. BUSINESS BUYERS' PERSONALITY TYPE DISTRIBUTION

Business Buyers

N = 21

ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
N = 1	N = 1	N = 0	N = 1
% = 4.76	% = 4.76	% = 0.00	% = 4.76
¢	¢		¢
ISTP	**ISFP**	**INFP**	**INTP**
N = 1	N = 0	N = 0	N = 1
% = 4.76	% = 0.00	% = 0.00	% = 4.76
¢			¢
ESTP	**ESFP**	**ENFP**	**ENTP**
N = 4	N = 0	N = 2	N = 2
% = 19.05	% = 0.00	% = 9.52	% = 9.52
cccc		cc	cc
ESTJ	**ESFJ**	**ENFJ**	**ENTJ**
N = 7	N = 0	N = 0	N = 1
% = 33.33	% = 0.00	% = 0.00	% = 4.76
ccccccc			¢

	N	%
E	16	76.19
I	5	23.81
S	14	66.67
N	7	33.33
T	18	85.71
F	3	14.29
J	11	52.38
P	10	47.62
IJ	3	14.29
IP	2	9.52
EP	8	38.10
EJ	8	38.10
ST	13	61.90
SF	1	4.76
NF	2	9.52
NT	5	23.81
SJ	9	42.86
SP	5	23.81
NP	5	23.81
NJ	2	9.52
TJ	10	47.62
TP	8	38.10
FP	2	9.52
FJ	1	4.76
IN	2	9.52
EN	5	23.81
IS	3	14.29
ES	11	52.38
Sdom	6	28.57
Ndom	5	23.81
Tdom	10	47.62
Fdom	0	0.00

Note: ¢ = 1 person.   Print date:

Over 76% of the buyers are extraverts, who are ready to discuss openly and make firm decisions if they find the seller to be open and someone who lets ideas run freely. It may be said that extraverts are overrepresented in this study, as only 24% of the buyers are introverts. According to Myers (1990), it could be that the buyers look to the sellers' openness to share their own knowledge and to be active. Additionally, it would be an advantage if the information sharing included new and unique insights. Extraverts prefer to communicate face-to-face and to form new and world-bettering ideas in informal interactions, so it would be important to engage extraverts in interactions even before the initial sales meeting.

THE BUYERS' PRE-BUYING PHASE – A VIEW FROM THE PERSONALITY PERSPECTIVE

Nearly 70% of the buyers are S-types who require detailed information and need private time to absorb the details and conditions prior to proceeding to the meeting. According to Myers (1990), it is typical for this type to ask for more information or call a peer to ask for references about the initial supplier. S-type may also strictly prepare based on the suppliers' offerings and their company, and will often compare the details to earlier suppliers. For them, it is important to have, for example, all the information on the webpages, and as clearly as possibly. If S-types find a mismatch on the suppliers' webpages or when contacting, it may be a sign of weakness in the view of the S-type as a buyer. As noted, B2B buyers are often ES's, and it is typical that they take full advantage of the situation. (Routamaa et al., 2009).

This study shows that a preference for thinking, T, is, like the sensing S, overrepresented as nearly 90% of the respondents present as a T-type. Thinkers prefer communication that deals with tasks and decision making that is based on logic, where all cause-and-effect relationships are discussed. They may be seen as analytical and impersonal when attempting to find explanations. For the thinker the time before meetings must be used effectively and task-oriented information gathered promptly. The thinker may be seen as unfriendly because to them the most important objective is to complete the required tasks. To satisfy a T-type buyer before the sales meeting may require strengthening the apparent cooperation through salespeople offering logical data and short and task-oriented interactions. Often ET's are critical and analytical and for B2B sellers it would be beneficial to find out what the buyers concerns are during their pre-buying phase to be able to secure the meeting (Routamaa et al., 2009.)

In this study, 52% of the buyers represent a preference for judging, J, which means they favour an organised and systematic way of living. For the J it is important to be well prepared and this type do things as promised. Hence, they prefer an effective way of doing things, like to make decisions and they also look for the same kind of behaviour in others. According to Myers (1990), before sales meetings, judging types would favour, for example, the webpages straight results or benefits that they are able to make decisions. In the MBTI results, there was found to be only a small difference between the J-type and the spontaneous P-type and nearly 48% of the buyers represented the spontaneous preference. While the J types are energised by an organised way of living, spontaneous types are the opposite. The results indicate, according to personality theory (Myers 1990), that the J buyers look for concrete and clear proceedings, while P-types respond well to surprises and changes, and look for the supplier to offer understanding in informal interactions.

It is notable that this study consisted mostly of buyers of types ESTJ or ESTP. Other studies (see Dion et al., 1995; Macdaid et al., 1995) found also ISTJ buyers. In this study, six of the respondents worked as business buyers and fifteen as professional buyers. Of the professional buyers, five worked as the head of a purchasing department and this may have affected the results. As in managerial positions there are more extraverts than introverts (see Järlström, 2000; Routamaa, 2011;

THE BUYERS' PRE-BUYING PHASE – A VIEW FROM THE PERSONALITY PERSPECTIVE

Routamaa et al., 2012).

ESTJ and ESTP types differ on Judging and Perceiving dimension. ESTJ's may be referred to as executive types, because they like to give orders and get things done, whereas ESTP's are usually easy-going and enjoy life but are also realistic and practical. As a person, ESTJ's prefer early set goals, a planned way of life, whereas ESTP's think the opposite way. ESTP's want to keep their options open as long as possible to be able to find out as much as possible about the decision that is to be made (Myers & Myers, 1980). The sellers who manage to organize face-to-face interactions with the ESTP's during the early phases of buying are in a better position in case of possible future cooperation. ESTP's learn by doing and they need help when making decisions. Opposite are ESTJ's who enjoy getting things done and the main goal is to close things and move to the next task. They dislike ineffectiveness and it might be difficult to ensure interactions during their pre-buying process (see Routamaa et. al., 2009).

Interview data

The interviews show that the changed business environment can be seen in the buyers' way of buying and the kind of activities and actions they prefer from B2B sellers. Additionally, the buyers' expectations and preferred activities may illustrate their personality types. According to the analysis of the interviews, three main themes clearly illustrate today's business buyers' pre-buying phase; buyers meet when they have a need, they are the ones to make the first contact and they look for answers to their problems before the actual meetings.

Business buyers meet salespeople if they have a need. Buyers talked a lot about how the internal business life has changed, and that they are now busier and need to make decisions and plans faster than before. They said that salespeople are active, but they do not have time to answer phone calls, and if they do not recognise the caller's number, they do not answer or call back. Almost all buyers said that when they have a need or problem to solve, they are ready to meet salespeople. Often this is a situation where the buyers are searching for suitable long-term suppliers. When the business buyer is aware they have a problem that they need to solve this can be seen as the start of the whole buying and decision-making process. These examples above clearly show the common behaviour pattern of ESTJ's.

It was evident that changing suppliers is not a favourable action (see also Boyd et al., 2008). If the company decides to change supplier and takes the time to find a new one it is often due to dissatisfaction with the current supplier. The participants mentioned that they are ready to meet other suppliers or start meeting with new suppliers in that category in cases where the current supplier is not satisfying their needs. Dissatisfaction often arose when the supplier was not providing the best quality or when the buying organisation wanted to shift their buying activities from buying products to buying the whole service package. The examples here relate to these situations:

THE BUYERS' PRE-BUYING PHASE – A VIEW FROM THE PERSONALITY PERSPECTIVE

- *"Actually we started to look something else… when the current supplier… their activities quality was not so good anymore… And actually it was only cleaning service and our goal was to have a full service package, where we can have it all…" (Customer group 4, Professional business buyer, ESTJ)*

- *"…yeah, it was so that we had to terminate the contract with the supplier… the quality was not what we had agreed… we had to made a tendering procedure… of course our current supplier was invited to participate… I of course resolved the qualifications for the tendering... and the aim was not to decrease the price… we needed to have better quality… and this was also the reason for changing the supplier at the end…" (Customer group 6, Professional business buyer, ESTJ).*

These comments clearly illustrate the behaviour of ESTJ types, which was one of the most common types of buyers in this study. When the decision has been made to change the supplier ESTJs can be tough when the situation calls for it. They like to run these kinds of projects to reach the objectives within a certain schedule (see Hautala, 2007; Routamaa et al., 2009).

It also became clear that buyers look for expertise and interactional encounters during their pre-buying. It might be that in some cases the buyer has a problem and they try to find suppliers to help them resolve it. One professional business buyer (*Customer group 6, Professional business buyer ENFP*) said:

- *"…we do not necessarily define our requirement… we start, together with the suppliers, the definition process to find the optimal solution to us… we of course use the expertise of these suppliers… so in our business… we have often these kinds of interactional sessions with the sellers…".*

ENFP-types are innovators and they are enthusiastic about new possibilities and try to find solutions to challenges. The earlier comment clearly describes ENFPs' willingness to initiate new projects, and they also want to do so while interacting with others (see Myers & Myers, 1980). In this citation the buyer's personality is not the most typical personality type of buyers. It is important that sellers understand the demands of most common personality types of a buyer but, for example, in this case the buyer would not be satisfied just for S-type answers such as facts. For this reason it would be important for the seller to be able to understand the needs of all the different personality types. However, this study shows that there are also P-type B2B buyers who appreciate the practical ways to proceed in their tasks so, in these cases, the sellers might have better opportunities to interact with the buyer before the initial meeting (see Routamaa et al., 2009.)

The buyers' common opinion was that they do not need salespeople to explain things that they are able to find out for themselves, for example, on the Internet. They said that salespeople are needed when companies try to find solutions, when they want to understand their situation better and when they want solutions to improve their business. This was the time to arrange a meeting. They also appreciate it when salespeople are the ones who are able to make decisions. Buyers also

THE BUYERS' PRE-BUYING PHASE – A VIEW FROM THE PERSONALITY PERSPECTIVE

commented that if the problem concerns technology they would like to deal with a person who is able to understand and explain technical aspects. Some of the buyers said that they appreciated it if the sales organisation is able to send a sales team to the buyer-seller meeting to help them address their problem. These appraisals of suppliers clearly illustrate the sensing, S, preference and the need to have the facts behind the decisions because they rely on explicitly stated matters (see Hautala, 2007; Myers & Myers, 1980). In this data almost 70% of the buyers were S-types.

Business buyers are the ones who make the first contact. After the company has decided to change their supplier or find a new one the pre-buying process begins when the buyer team look for suitable sales organisations. Buyers had different ways to start this phase. The most common way was to search for the suitable company on the Internet by visiting company webpages or via social media, for example, LinkedIn. Some of the buyers said that they ask for recommendations from their business network or make an Excel sheet of possible suppliers who they already know. Participants also said that they use Google, as one explained:

- *"...I often collect a list so that I know what different suppliers offer... and often I just start to search the suitable one with Google..." (Customer group 6, Professional business buyer, ESTJ).*

This behaviour of an ESTJ-type shows the logical approach they have. They are also quick decision makers and, indeed, sometimes judge too quickly. However, the suppliers' websites need to easily offer the facts required, although they will not be on ESTJ buyers' suppliers lists anymore (see Hautala, 2008; Myers & Myers, 1980).

The business buyer is the one who initiates contact with the sales organisation. After they have found suitable sales organisations they contact the sales department and ask the salesperson or team to attend a meeting. Interviewed buyers said that they contact their new prospect suppliers personally. Sometimes the salesperson is lucky and is offering the correct and necessary service at the right moment, and is able to obtain a meeting with a buyer, but this seemed to be rare. In cases where the discussion relates to a larger service and solutions, business buyers do not want to meet the supplier; instead they may ask for offers and after that meet the most promising suppliers. For example, these points were raised:

- *"Yeah... we take the contact to salespeople... often these sellers are active in social media and we can already ask for assistance... often salespeople respond quickly... and are really active in social media with their customers..." (Customer group 1, Business buyer, ESTP)*

- *"... yes... we look at the Internet a lot... search for suppliers... different alternatives... and that is also the way to come closer to the suppliers of services and producers of products... " (Customer group 2, Business buyer, ESTJ).*

These examples demonstrate the difference between a preference for judging, J, and perceiving, P. While the ESTP is satisfied with what he or she experiences in real-time and with quick interactions with the prospective suppliers, the ESTJ-type focuses

THE BUYERS' PRE-BUYING PHASE – A VIEW FROM THE PERSONALITY PERSPECTIVE

on realistic information and the here-and-now practicalities. However, as this study shows, there might be both preferences, J and P on the buyers' side and it might be that the sellers may find it easier to arrange meetings with P-types, who want to hear and see things by themselves (see Myers & Myers, 1980; Routamaa et al., 2009).

It seems the common procedure during the pre-buying phase is to first ask for offers and then go through the offers in detail. After that, there might be an opportunity to be able to meet the buyer. For example, these comments highlight the buying process procedure:

- *"...we went through all the offers really thoroughly, and at that point I also entered the buying process... we discussed the offers together in our team and we decided to meet some of them. We took meetings with four suppliers and of the four we picked two with whom we continued..." (Customer group 1, Business buyer, ENTJ)*

- *"yes... it starts from our side... I do not have time to meet if I do not get any benefits of it... when we have a need... we need to find someone to solve it..." (Customer group 2, Professional business buyer, ESTJ)*.

Both of these examples illustrate the typical behaviour of the judging, J, preference. In this study, as shown earlier, over 50% of the buyers represented this preference. Judging does not mean judgmental; rather, it means the desire to live an organised and controlled life, as J-types like to make decisions, head for closure and get things settled (see Hautala 2008; Myers & Myers, 1980). This study also shows that in today's pre-buying phase, B2B customers want to ask for a request before meeting the salespeople and the quality of the request is predicting the possibility to get the meeting with the customer.

Buyers look for answers for their business needs even before the meetings. During the interviews, we asked business buyers about their activities before meeting the possible new supplier. It was found that buyers prepare properly for the sales meetings, and additionally expect and look for the same from the salespeople. It might be seen that the sellers' activities before the sales meetings are situations where the buyer organisation is testing sales organisations and analysing whether this company could be their next long-term supplier. All the participants said they had visited the sales organisations' webpages before meeting, and some had asked for more information beforehand by email and phone. Almost all the buyers said they always check a sales company's financial numbers before sales meetings. This interviewees' comments confirm this proper preparation during the pre-buying phase:

- *"... I even check their financial situation beforehand and if their situation is ok... I let them come and meet us... often this is difficult because it is so old information... but anyway it gives you a hint and direction about their situation..." (Customer group 6, Professional buyer, ESTJ).*

Often, the cognitive style of the ST means they want to be sure of all the facts relevant to the forthcoming decision making. ST-types need systematic decision-making quantitative measures and this checking of suppliers' financial information is typical

THE BUYERS' PRE-BUYING PHASE – A VIEW FROM THE PERSONALITY PERSPECTIVE

behaviour for ST-style buyers (see Walck, 1996).

The interviewees commented that they also look in advance at the suppliers' online news section and explore what new offerings they have. If the buyer is not familiar with the new things he will prepare himself and discuss the issues with their internal experts before the forthcoming sales meeting. The buyers also mentioned that they often call their friends who work for other companies and check what kind of experience their peers have of this company and their offerings. For example:

- *"… before the first meeting I investigate the company, what kind of company it is… what do they do… what kind of things are going on there… then I talk internally and check how our things are… Before the meeting I also prepare my colleagues for our situation and to this company, to their offerings and situation…" (Customer group 6, Professional business buyer, ESTJ)*

- *"… and then it needs to happen… that the person has prepared for our situation and for what we really need… I need to have an image about a well-tailored presentation for us… that it is not a general company presentation…or too general… it needs to be specified to our situation and to the things that we look for…" (Customer group 2, Business buyer, ESTJ).*

According to the comments, ESTJ buyers are well prepared for the meetings and they look for proper preparation from the salespeople's side too. It is notable that ESTJs are intolerant of inefficiency so if the salespeople are not prepared for the meeting it might be said that their behaviour does not build trust in the eyes of a buyer (see Hautala, 2006; Myers, 1990).

It was found that buyers want to develop their own business and this might be a reason for meeting salespeople to get answers or to look at the problem from the other point of view, and for determining how other companies solve similar problems. One said that they try to find information about how this potential supplier has solved similar problems before, for example, via social media discussion forums. To get answers to their problems some sent a business case to the salesperson before the meeting and, as one previous comment shows, this initial business case was used as an example for the meeting. Often, the buyer team had discussed the forthcoming meeting in their own meetings to build a common understanding of the kind of problems and cases they want to concentrate on when meeting salespeople.

Results

This study illustrates that the new and changed business environment challenges B2B salespeople. It reveals that business buyers do not meet with salespeople if they do not have a clear understanding of why they are meeting and they also want to be the ones who make the first contact. The reason for meeting was either due to some form of business problem, the need to change the supplier or the need to define the solution, or business need, in conjunction with the suppliers. It is also

THE BUYERS' PRE-BUYING PHASE – A VIEW FROM THE PERSONALITY PERSPECTIVE

important to be well prepared in terms of the customer's cases and ready to offer insights to buyers' business situations, necessarily before the meetings. It also seems to be common to ask for a request before the actual meetings.

In MBTI data, the most common cognitive style was ST. The results from the interviews reflect the MBTI theory and the activities ST buyers prefer to see from suppliers to get a good first-insight. The STs prefer real-time operational problem solving and if they have concerns regarding the suppliers' offerings or if the seller is not treating them as preferred, they do not want to meet the salespeople (see Myers et al., 1990; Walck, 1996). If the buyer has a reason for meeting they want to have some answers already before the meeting. This is typical for a ST-style person because the decision-making process is analytical and systematic and based on facts (see Routamaa et al., 2009). If the salesperson is not offering these facts to the ST-buyer, they are not satisfying the customer's expectations during their pre-buying phase. It also became clear that customers do not meet if they feel that they do not have a reason for it. This is common impersonal behaviour for the thinking, T, preference. These studied B2B buyers overrepresented the preference T, with 70%. It was seen that the results of buyers' expectations rely on their personality types.

Sales literature has often paid attention to quantitative data, such as the number of calls per customer or the amount of meetings held (Plouffe, Williams, & Wachner, 2008). Nevertheless, findings of this study show that if the salespeople behave too actively the buyers may feel their interaction is pressing them too much. These findings correlate to MBTI theory, where the most common buyer types in this study, ESTJs, are seen to be analogic and willing to make decisions by themselves; ESTJs think that conduct should be ruled by logic and that their own behaviour should be governed accordingly (see Hautala, 2008).

This study also shows that business buyers want to focus on their daily tasks and on their actual suppliers to improve these relationships, and thus achieve effectiveness and reduce costs (see also Cummins, Peltier, Schibrowsky, & Nill, 2014; Kim, 2014). If the current supplier is not interested in developing the buyer-supplier relationship and the buyer remains dissatisfied, they may start to look for a new supplier. In these circumstances the buyer is the one who contacts the sales organisations and, for example, asks for an offer at first. After buyers have compared received offers they select the sales organizations that they want to meet to hear more about how they have solved similar challenges in their reference cases. These activities reveal the basic way of acting in an ST style, although it is notable that extraverts, E, like face-to-face interactions with other people. Here, there might be an opportunity for the salespeople to suggest a short interaction with the customer, for example, over the phone or in a virtual meeting (see Myers et al., 1985).

When salespeople are invited to meet the representatives of a B2B buyer organisation the buyers look for consultancy and new knowledge and that sellers have prepared well for the case in-house. This is an extremely important element to recognise in sales organizations. If sales management has focused to increase quantity of meetings it is important to ensure that

THE BUYERS' PRE-BUYING PHASE – A VIEW FROM THE PERSONALITY PERSPECTIVE

salespeople have the time to get properly acquainted with the buyers' situation to be able to apply innovative approaches, as Verbeke et al. (2011) also suggests. This is important if there is an extraverted buyer on the other side, which as this study confirms, with the finding of 76%, is often the case. Additionally, according to the MBTI theory, the sensing, S, types are not keen to adopt new actions and even dislike new problems. For the personality type distribution in this study talented, innovative salespeople are needed to achieve success with S-types (see Myers et al., 1980).

Conclusion

This study found that the B2B buyers want to be the ones who begin the collaboration with sales organisations. The trigger for this pre-buying process may be a business problem or need, dissatisfaction with a current supplier or an interest in increasing knowledge about business possibilities.

It is notable that when the business buyer has a problem they call sales organizations to get results or information. If the required service or solution needs to be found buyers' will find new suppliers through the Internet, searching with Google, social media tools or by contacting their own business networks. It was also noticed that the B2B buyer meets the salesperson with the aim of building long-term relationships. It may be said that they have salient beliefs regarding contacted sales organisations because if the relationship works out as planned, one of these sales organizations might be a potential new long-term business partner. This study illustrates the importance of positive first impressions on the possible new suppliers. If the first interactions during the buyers pre-buying phase is not adding value, or if the buyers are not treated as preferred, the relationship will not continue. This study shows that the first impression which B2B buyers get during their pre-buying phase paves the way for proceeding with the initial sales organization.

Theoretical contributions

This study reveals that personalities play an important role when buyers are in the early phase of their buying process. It was found that buyers' interest in meeting the salesperson depends on how they are treated and if they find early interactions with the sales organization valuable. If the buyer is treated as they would like, (s)he is more likely to meet the seller. This correlates well to Hautala's (2007) results, where ST-types and their expectations revealed a persons favoured way of interacting. Additionally, the number of extraverts, E, in this study, which amounted to nearly 70% of the buyers and the interviewees, reveal that according to personality theory, buyers want to talk openly about the business challenges with the suppliers and they are ready to meet after they get ST-type favoured facts.

This study brings new knowledge to the sales literature from the buyers' side (see for example Agndal, 2006; Ahearne et al., 2007; Crosby et al., 1990; Liang & Parkhe, 1997; Overby & Servais, 2005) and of the buyers' buying process in this changed business environment (Boyd & Spekman, 2008; Jones et al., 2005; Verbeke et al., 2011). This study also contributes

THE BUYERS' PRE-BUYING PHASE – A VIEW FROM THE PERSONALITY PERSPECTIVE

new knowledge relating to the buyers' pre-buying phase which is currently understudied (Stiakakis & Georgiadis, 2009). Additionally, this study brings new knowledge to sales literature by using the MBTI theory and MBTI types to illustrate the business buyers' interest in meeting salespeople during their pre-buying phase. As shown in this study the initial interpretations of the salesperson and his or her actions affects the buyers decision to proceed with the relationship. It may be said that this study illustrates, with its mixed-method approach, the importance of first impressions in the selling process.

Managerial contributions

This study gives practical guidelines for sales management to transform their practices to better reform their business activities and behaviour in relation to the buyers' needs before having the scheduled meeting with the buyer. Even the fact that the business buyers have prepared properly for the meeting may confirm the earlier studies' findings that often the buying decision is largely made before even meeting the sellers (Adamson et al., 2012; Giamanco et al., 2012; Prahalad et al., 2004; CEB, 2012). Additionally, this study shows that the first impression and request sent to the B2B buyer plays a key role when customers' are deciding whom to meet.

The findings illustrate that buyers have moved from having a passive role to taking an active role in buying. This study explains why sales organisations should develop their web presence and early activities with the buyers, since B2B buyers start their pre-buying phase by searching for information on the Internet and these are the encounters where buyers get their first impressions of initial sales organizations. Sales managers need to increase their sales personnel knowledge regarding this digital way of influencing buyers' pre-buying process (see Adamson et al., 2012; Prahalad et al., 2004).

Sales managers should find this study beneficial when planning their salespersons' activities. Companies spend a lot of money on training that aims to increase salespersons' activity level and enthusiasm. This study shows that business buyers may actually view too much activity as a negative experience. Business buyers, who in this study are largely ST-types, may interpret this high level of activity as a form of pressure, especially if they do not have a current problem to solve. Sales managers should also consider whether their company webpages and the content have implications for attracting ST buyers' attention in this new business environment where buyers can choose between several sales organisations, nationally and globally.

As found in this study, the differences in personality types of buyers would be need to be taken into account during the buyers pre-buying phase because this is the time when buyers evaluate the possibility of a long-term partnership. Furthermore, in recruiting new salespeople it would be beneficial to concentrate on intuitive, N, types because studies show that, for example, ENTJ's were considered to be high in relationship orientation (Hautala, 2008; Routamaa et. al., 1997) and NT and NF salespersons are seen to be more customer-oriented than ST's (McIntyre & Meloche, 1995).

THE BUYERS' PRE-BUYING PHASE – A VIEW FROM THE PERSONALITY PERSPECTIVE

On a sales management level it is important to develop salespeople's skills to meet the buyers' personality type needs during their pre-buying phase to be able to secure the meeting with a good first impression. Further, it is important to be well prepared because large number of B2B buyers are Judging, J types. This is why sales leaders need to ensure that salespeople have enough time to prepare themselves for the interactions with new buyers. Studies on MBTI show that buyers and salespeople often share the same personality types. For this reason it would also be beneficial if the selling side could be more intuitive, N, those who naturally are able to help S-types to bring up new possibilities, communicate and view future changes positively (see Myers, 1990; Myers et al., 1980).

Limitations and future research

This study is based on mixed-method research data, from the business buyers' point of view, with quantitative and qualitative data gathered from nine new customer companies. Future studies could consider the empirical testing of these findings on a larger scale involving different industries and companies, or with a greater number of MBTI personality indicator profiles.

In future, it could be profitable to focus a study on different digital channels and their influence on the pre-buying phase. In this study the research focused on buyers' personality types and their influence on the buyers' pre-buying phase and on their interest in meeting with the salespeople. It found that changes in the business environment have affected the B2B buyers' buying process in several ways and that the first impressions have an important influence on securing a meeting with the buyer. This is why future work could consider the salesperson's interactional and communicative competencies required to succeed in this changed business environment and, from that perspective, what kind of skills a salesperson must possess. There is also an undoubted need for sales management research concerning the fulfilment of business buyers' needs and the importance of business networks.

References

Adamson, B., Dixon, M., & Toman, N. (2012). The end of solution sales. Harvard Business Review, July-August, pp. 60-68.

Agndal, H. (2006). The purchasing market entry process-A study of 10 Swedish industrial small and medium-sized enterprises. *Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management*, *12*, 182–196. doi:10.1016/j.pursup.2006.10.004

Ahearne, M., Jelinek, R., & Jones, E. (2007). Examining the effect of salesperson service behavior in a competitive context. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *35*(4), 603–616. doi:10.1007/s11747-006-0013-1

Anderson, J., & Narus, J. (1990). A model of distributor firm and manufacturer firm working partnerships. *Journal of Marketing*, *54*(1), 42–58. doi:10.2307/1252172

THE BUYERS' PRE-BUYING PHASE – A VIEW FROM THE PERSONALITY PERSPECTIVE

Bienstock, C. C., & Royne, M. B. (2007). The differential value of information in industrial purchasing decisions Applying an economics of information. doi:10.1108/09600030710758446

Boyd, D. E., & Spekman, R. E. (2008). Internet Usage Within B2B Relationships and Its Impact on Value Creation : A Conceptual Model and Research Propositions Internet Usage Within B2B Relationships and Its Impact on Value Creation : A Conceptual Model and Research Propositions, (August 2013), 37–41. doi:10.1300/J033v11n01

Chakraborty, G., Srivastava, P., & Warren, D. L. (2005). Understanding corporate B2B web sites' effectiveness from North American and European perspective. Industrial Marketing Management, 34(5), 420–429. doi:10.1016/j.indmarman.2004.09.008

Clack, G. B., Allen, J., Cooper, D. & Head, J. O. (2004): Personality differences between doctors and their patients: implications for the teaching of communication skills. Medical Education, 38(2), p. 177–186. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2923.2004.01752.x

Crosby, L. A., Evans, K. R., & Cowles, D. (1990). Relationship Quality in Services Selling : An Interpersonal Influence Perspective, *54*(July), 68–81.

Cummins, S., W. Peltier, J., A. Schibrowsky, J., & Nill, A. (2014). Consumer behavior in the online context. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, *8*(3), 169–202. doi:10.1108/JRIM-04-2013-0019

Dion, P., Easterling, D., & Miller, S. J. (1995). What is really necessary in successful buyer/seller relationships? *Industrial Marketing Management*, *24*(1), 1–9. doi:10.1016/0019-8501(94)00025-R

Dixon, A. L., & Tanner, J. F. (2012). Transforming Selling: Why it is Time to Think Differently about Sales Research. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, *32*(1), 9–14. doi:10.2753/PSS0885-3134320102

Echeverri, P., & Skalen, P. (2011). Co-creation and co-destruction: A practice-theory based study of interactive value formation. *Marketing Theory*, *11*(3), 351–373. doi:10.1177/1470593111408181

Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building Theories from Case Study Research. *Academy of Management Review*.

Eisenhardt, K. M., & Graebner, M. E. (2007). Theory building from cases: Opportunities and challenges. *Academy of Management Journal*, *50*(1), 25–32.

Haas, A., Snehota, I., & Corsaro, D. (2012). Industrial Marketing Management Creating value in business relationships : The role of sales. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *41*(1), 94–105. doi:10.1016/j.indmarman.2011.11.004

Hautala, T. (2005). The Effects of Subordinates' Personality on Appraisals of Transformational Leadership. Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies, 11(4), 84–92. doi:10.1177/107179190501100407

Hautala, T. M. (2006). The relationship between personality and transformational leadership. Journal of Management

Development, 25(8), 777–794. doi:10.1108/02621710610684259

Hautala, T. M. (2007): Impact of followers' type on their expectations of leaders: An individual consideration in transformational leadership. Journal of Psychological Type, 67:4, 30–37.Hautala, T. (2008). TJ leaders as transformational leaders: Followers' and leaders' appraisals. Journal of Psychological Type, 68:9, 78–88.

Hohenschwert, L. (2012). Salespeople's value creation roles in customer interaction: An empirical study. *Journal of Customer Behaviour*, *11*(2), 145–166. doi:10.1362/147539212X13420906144679

Hohenschwert, L., & Geiger, S. (2015). Interpersonal influence strategies in complex B2B sales and the socio-cognitive construction of relationship value. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *49*, 139–150. doi:10.1016/j.indmarman.2015.05.027

Jones, E., Brown, S. P., Zoltners, A. a, & Weitz, B. a. (2005). the Changing Environment of Selling and Sales Management. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management, XXV*(2), 105–111. doi:Article

Järlström, M. (2000). Personality preferences and career expectations of Finnish business students. *Career Development International*, *5*(3), 144–154. doi:10.1108/13620430010371919

Kho, N. D. (2008). Successfully Surfing the Marketing 2.0 Wave. (cover story). *EContent*, *31*(4), 28–32.

Kim, H. (2014). The role of WOM and dynamic capability in B2B transactions. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, *8*(2), 84–101. doi:10.1108/JRIM-12-2013-0082

Liang, N., & Parkhe, A. (1997). Importer Behavior: the neglected Counterpart of International Exchange. *Journal of International Business Studies*, *28*(3), 495–530. doi:10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8490109

Marshall, G. W., Goebel, D. J., & Moncrief, W. C. (2003). Hiring for success at the buyer-seller interface. *Journal of Business Research*, *56*(4), 247–255. doi:10.1016/S0148-2963(02)00435-6

Macdaid, G., McCaulley, M. H. & Kainz, R. I. (1995). Myers-Briggs Type Indicator: Atlas of Type Tables. Gainesville, FL: Center for Applications of Psychological Type, Inc.

McIntyre, R. P. & Meloche, M. S. (1995). Cognitive Style and Customer Orientation. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 10(*1), pp 75-86.

Myers, I. (1990). Introduction to Type. A Description of the Theory and Applications of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologist Press.

Myers, I. & Myers, P. (1980). Gifts differing. Understanding Personality Type. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologist Press.

Myers, I. & McCaulley, M. (1985). Manual: A Guide to the Development and Use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologist Press.

THE BUYERS' PRE-BUYING PHASE – A VIEW FROM THE PERSONALITY PERSPECTIVE

Nordin, F., & Kowalkowski, C. (2010). Solutions offerings: a critical review and reconceptualisation. *Journal of Service Management*, *21*(4), 441–459. doi:10.1108/09564231011066105

Overby, J. W., & Servais, P. (2005). Small and medium-sized firms' import behavior: The case of Danish industrial purchasers. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *34*(1), 71–83. doi:10.1016/j.indmarman.2004.08.001

Parsons, A. L. (2002). What Determines Buyer-Seller Relationship Quality? An Investigation from the Buyer's Perspective. *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, *38*(2), 4–12. doi:10.1111/j.1745-493X.2002.tb00124.x

Peterson, R. a, & Merino, M. C. (2003). Consumer Information Search Behavior and the Internet. *Psychology & Marketing*, *20*(2), 99–121. doi:10.1002/mar.

Plouffe, C. R., Williams, B. C., & Wachner, T. (2008). Navigating Difficult Waters: Publishing Trends and Scholarship in Sales Research. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, *28*(1), 79–92. doi:10.2753/PSS0885-3134280106

Prahalad, C. K., & Ramaswamy, V. (2004). Co-creating unique value with customers. *Strategy & Leadership*, *32*(3), 4–9. doi:10.1108/10878570410699249

Preis, M. W. (2003). The Impact of Interpersonal Satisfaction on Repurchase Decisions. *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, *39*(3), 30–38. doi:10.1111/j.1745-493X.2003.tb00157.x

Rackham, N., & De Vincentis, J. (1999). Rethinking the sales force: Refining Selling to create and capture customer value. McGraw Hill.

Roth, M. S., Money, R. B., & Madden, T. J. (2004). Purchasing processes and characteristics of industrial service buyers in the U.S. and Japan. *Journal of World Business*, *39*(2), 183–198. doi:10.1016/j.jwb.2003.08.008

Routamaa, V. (2011). Personality Types and Entrepreneurial Orientation. In. Enterprise Management in a Transitional Economy and Post Financial Crisis. Ed. Joel Glassman, China: Nanjing University.

Routamaa, V. & Hautala, T.M. (2009). Katse naamion taa – Itsetuntemuksesta voimaa (A Look behind the Mask - Powered by Self-Knowledge). Vaasa: Leadec-Kustannus. 152 s.

Routamaa, V., Honkonen, M., Asikainen, V. & Pollari, A-M. (1997). Psychological Type and Leadership Styles - Subordinates' Point of View. Proceedings of the Leadership and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Second International Conference. Washington, USA.

Routamaa, V. & Ou, J. (2012). Managers' Recruitment – The Companies' Most Strategic Decision - China, USA and Sweden Compared. Proceedings of the 2nd Annual International Conference on Human Resource Management and Professional Development for the Digital Age (HRM & PD 2012). September. Indonesia.

Routamaa, V., Yang, H. & Ou, J. (2010). Managers' Type Distributions in Three Continent - Do Cultures Matter. Proceedings

THE BUYERS' PRE-BUYING PHASE – A VIEW FROM THE PERSONALITY PERSPECTIVE

of the Seventh Psychological Type and Culture—East and West: A Multicultural Research Symposium, Honolulu, Hawaii, January.

Sheth, J. N., & Parvatiyar, A. (1995). The evolution of relationship marketing. International Business Review, 4(4), 397–418. doi:10.1016/0969-5931(95)00018-6

Sheth, J. N., & Parvatiyar, A. (1995). The evolution of relationship marketing. *International Business Review*, *4*(4), 397–418. doi:10.1016/0969-5931(95)00018-6

Sheth, J. N., & Sharma, A. (1997). Supplier relationships: Emerging issues and challenges. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *26*(2), 91–100. doi:10.1016/S0019-8501(96)00153-8

Sheth, J. N., & Sharma, A. (2008). The impact of the product to service shift in industrial markets and the evolution of the sales organization. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *37*(3), 260–269. doi:10.1016/j.indmarman.2007.07.010

Stiakakis, E., & Georgiadis, C. K. (2009). E-service quality: comparing the perceptions of providers and customers. *Managing Service Quality*, *19*(4), 410–430. doi:10.1108/09604520910971539

Storbacka, K., Ryals, L., Davies, I. A., & Nenonen, S. (2009). The changing role of sales: Viewing sales as a strategic, cross-functional process. *European Journal of Marketing*, *43*(7/8), 890–906. doi:10.1108/03090560910961443

Subramony, M., & Pugh, S. D. (2015). Services Management Research: Review, Integration, and Future Directions. *Journal of Management*, *41*(1), 349–373. doi:10.1177/0149206314557158

Ulaga, W., & Chacour, S. (2001). Measuring Customer-Perceived Value in Business Markets. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *30*(6), 525–540. doi:10.1016/S0019-8501(99)00122-4

Ulaga, W., & Eggert, A. (2006). Value-Based Differentiation in Business Relationships: Gaining and Sustaining Key Supplier Status. *Journal of Marketing*, *70*(January), 119–136. doi:10.1509/jmkg.2006.70.1.119

Ulaga, W., & Sharma, A. (2001). Complex and Strategic Decision Making in Organizations: *Industrial Marketing Management*, *30*(5), 427–440. doi:10.1016/S0019-8501(99)00099-1

Verbeke, W., Dietz, B., & Verwaal, E. (2011). Drivers of sales performance: a contemporary meta-analysis. Have salespeople become knowledge brokers? *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *39*(3), 407–428. doi:10.1007/s11747-010-0211-8

Walck, C. L. (1996). Management and Leadership. In Hammer (Ed), MBTI Applications. A Decade of Research on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologist Press.

Personality Types in Buyer-Seller Interactions

Pia Hautamäki, pia.hautamaki@gmail.com

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki, Finland

Vesa Routamaa, vesa.routamaa@uva.fi

University of Vaasa, Finland.

PERSONALITY TYPES IN BUYER-SELLER INTERACTIONS

Abstract

Operations in sales and purchasing have become increasingly complex. Business-to-business (b-to-b) markets now focus on intangibles and services rather than tangibles. Due to this change in the business market, long-term partnerships between sales and buying organizations have become more important. Sales have also seen a recent shift towards developing relationships and value-based sales interactions; interest in seeing value formation from an interactional perspective is on the rise. As a result, it is important to understand a buyer's value expectations for sales interactions from the perspective of their personality type. This study aims to determine the expectations that business buyers have for buyer-seller interactions from the point of view of the buyer's personality. Using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, 20 professional business buyers and 51 professional salespeople were analysed. To better understand the buyer's expectations, the personalities were compared and qualitative interviews were conducted. It was found that a buyer's expectations for sales interactions are influenced by their personality, which can be used to the advantage of sales organizations to satisfy the buyer.

Keywords: business-to-business, buyer-seller interaction, professional business buyer, complex business environment, expectation, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, MBTI, personal selling, personality types

Introduction

Given the current commercial climate, it can be challenging to distinguish one's business offerings from the solutions and services sold by competitors; most companies in an industry provide the same services and technologies. Interestingly, the sales team and their interactional activities towards buyers may be the one aspect that sets a business apart. Research shows that the selling process is moving towards maintaining relationships; often, the salesperson is the only link between the business buyer and the sales organization (Dixon & Tanner, 2012). The sale takes place between the business buyer and the salesperson on a personal level (Echeverri & Skalen, 2011; Hohenschwert & Geiger, 2015). Current sales literature lacks information about the relation-based interactional business environment (Corsaro and Snehota, 2010; Eckheverri et al., 2011; Hohenschwert et al., 2015; Salomonson et al., 2012), and so research has been increasingly interested in value and value formation (Blocker, Cannon, Panagopoulos, & Sager, 2012; Haas, Snehota, & Corsaro, 2012). However, there are very few studies from the buyer's point of view (Hohenschwert & Geiger, 2015; Salomonson, Åberg, & Allwood, 2012).

PERSONALITY TYPES IN BUYER-SELLER INTERACTIONS

This study tries to fill the gap in sales literature by focusing on the buyer's perspective and examining their interactional value expectations for sales interactions. The sales literature to date does not appear to have been able to define the buyer's relational and interactional expectations (Blocker et al., 2012; Dion, Easterling, & Miller, 1995; Dixon & Tanner, 2012; Doney & Cannon, 1997; Grönroos & Voima, 2013; Haas et al., 2012; Rodriguez, Dixon, & Peltier, 2014). Recent studies show that a business buyer's expectations for the initial sales meeting differ from those of the salesperson. Buyers believe that salespeople lack professional preparation and follow up, innovativeness, organizational commitment, long-term partnerships and customer insight (Kaski, Hautamäki, Pullins, & Kock, in press). The sales literature does not address the buyer's expectations of what should happen in sales interactions, nor does it define the process of relational orientation in sales (Biong & Selnes, 1995; Sheth & Sharma, 2008). Therefore, salespeople require more knowledge of the relational aspects of buyer-seller interactions from the perspective of personality to better understand and define how the buyer interprets the interactional value formation (Echeverri & Skalen, 2011; Hohenschwert & Geiger, 2015). This study will focus on the personality types of buyers and look for interactional expectations beyond psychological needs with the aim of determining the buyer's personal expectations of the sales interaction.

Selling activities are required to continually evolve into an interactional approach since information about products, solutions, services and where to buy is readily available (Adamson, Dixon, and Toman, 2012; Kim, 2014). Research indicates that if the buyer was at one time passive in the buying process (Cash & Crissy, 1964), today the impetus is on the buyer to initiate business interactions (Agndal, 2006; Liang & Parkhe, 1997; Overby & Servais, 2005). As selling has changed from selling products to selling services and intangibles, buying may also be seen as a shift from the transactional buying of products to the relational buying of solutions and intangibles. This change will affect sales organizations; transactional selling will shift to digital channels and salespeople will move towards relational selling activities (Adamson et al., 2012; Rackham & De Vincentis, 1999). The relational and interactional skills of the sales force are becoming more important than ever, and this rapidly changing aspect of business requires a salesperson's self-efficacy and confidence in their own personality and behaviour (Dion et al., 1995; Haas et al., 2012; Tuli, Kohli, & Bharadwaj, 2007). Furthermore, salespeople need to be able to help customers see different possibilities in their role as an architect of change for their customers (Dixon & Tanner, 2012). This study will examine sales interactions from an individual perspective between the salesperson and the business buyer, where the buyer's interactional expectations need to be met (see Baumann & Le Meunier-FitzHugh, 2014; Hohenschwert & Geiger, 2015).

Since the sales profession has become more demanding than ever, it is necessary to study expectations for buyer-seller

interactions within the scope of this new reality. Sales literature often focuses on the salesperson's perspective with relatively few studies from the business buyer's point of view (Blocker, Cannon, Panagopoulos, & Sager, 2012; Borg & Johnston, 2013; Dixon & Tanner, 2012; Haas et al., 2012; Salomonson et al., 2012). This study will concentrate on the buyer's expectations of buyer-seller interactions by considering their point of view and personality type, with the prediction that these factors will influence the buyer's expectations of interaction.

Theoretical Background

Managing Buyer-Seller Interactions

The sales profession can be defined as a human-driven interaction in a value creation context. This definition transforms the traditional interpretation of sales by describing it as a human-driven phenomenon (Dixon & Tanner, 2012). Additionally, recent sales research focuses on value creation and interaction in buyer-seller encounters (Echeverri & Skalen, 2011; Haas et al., 2012; Salomonson et al., 2012). However, existing sales literature neglects to fully consider the interaction-based understanding of what salespeople should do to fulfil a buyer's needs, or how to better understand human perspectives and draw out a buyer's latent needs and motives (see Haas et al., 2012).

In their need-satisfaction theory, Cash and Crissy (1964) conclude that customers buy because they have needs to be satisfied. From this perspective, the sales profession must provide solutions by identifying needs; however, the role of sales is more demanding now and needs identification is not enough. Buyers look for long-term relationships, and their demands come from a more comprehensive perspective and skill set than ever before (Haas et al., 2012; Hohenschwert & Geiger, 2015). This may be due to a buyer's complex business and solution needs, to which it may be challenging to find answers without consultation and help from other companies in a similar position. However, buyers differ in how they prefer to be approached, how much information they need and how they make decisions (Dion et al., 1995). As a result, salespeople must have a deep understanding of different business buyers in order to help them see their business possibilities and to meet their expectations (Blocker et al., 2012; Dixon & Tanner, 2012; Tuli et al., 2007).

Considering these changes in buying and selling, the sales department is no longer only a tactical group executing the strategy of the company (Cron, Baldauf, Leigh, & Grossenbacher, 2014; Piercy, 2010). Sales organizations play a crucial role in today's business world. Grönroos and Voima (2013) have studied interaction-based value and claim that face-to-face buyer-seller interactions are how customers perceive value. While sales literature provides varying definitions of value, this paper will define value formation as interactional and dependent on both the buyer and the seller (Woodruff & Flint, 2006).

PERSONALITY TYPES IN BUYER-SELLER INTERACTIONS

In b-to-b sales, buyers often have the power to choose where to buy, and by extension select who will best satisfy their needs and go ahead to sales interaction. Sales literature has frequently discussed adapting to the buyer by using influencing tactics and communication (Spiro et al., 1977; McFarland, Challagalla, & Shervani, 2006; Weitz, 1981; Weitz, Sujan & Sujan, 1986; Williams & Spiro, 1985). Evidence suggests that salespeople, rather than buyers, adapt their approach according to the situation (Edvardsson, Holmlund, & Strandvik, 2008), but there is no research to assist them with determining a buyer's expectations or personality type. Without knowing the personal needs behind the expectations, adapting to a customer's needs can be challenging. Regardless, salespeople need to adapt to different situations and customers by providing tailored solutions (Román & Iacobucci, 2010; Weitz et al., 1986). Recent studies show that adaptive selling behaviour has resulted in increased sales performance and better relationships with the buyer (Giacobbe, Jackson, Crosby, & Bridges, 2006).

Personality Types

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) can assist sales organizations in identifying the expectations of a buyer. While there are several ways to conceptualize and assess personality, this study will focus on the MBTI. This personality assessment is based on Carl Jung's theory of psychological types and it reports personality types on four scales: Extraversion – Introversion, Sensing – iNtuition, Thinking – Feeling, and Judging – Perceiving (Myers, 1990). According to Myers (1990), the MBTI is primarily concerned with the differences in how people focus their attention, absorb information, make decisions, and adapt to situations. The eight preferences are combined into sixteen types, each representing a certain set of characteristics (Myers & McCaulley, 1985). These preferences are (Myers, 1990):

- Extraversion   (E)   Interested in people and things in the world around them;

- Introversion   (I)   Interested in the ideas in their minds that explain the world;

- Sensing   (S)   Interested in what is real and can be seen, heard and touched;

- Intuition   (N)   Interested in what can be imagined and seen with 'the mind's eye';

- Thinking   (T)   Interested in what is logical and works by cause and effect;

- Feeling   (F)   Interested in knowing what is important and valuable;

- Judging   (J)   Interested in acting by organizing, planning, deciding;

- Perceiving   (P)   Interested in acting by watching, trying out, adapting.

PERSONALITY TYPES IN BUYER-SELLER INTERACTIONS

As Myers and McCaulley state (1985): […] according to theory, each of the 16 types results from a preference for one pole of each of the four preferences over the opposite pole. A preference of any dimension is designed to be psychometrically independent of the preferences of the other three dichotomies, so that the preferences on the four dichotomies yield sixteen possible combinations called types, denoted by the four letters identifying the poles preferred (e.g., ESTJ, INFP). The theory postulates specific dynamic relationships between the preferences. For each type, one process is the leading or dominant process and a second process serves as an auxiliary (functions S/N, T/F). Each type has its own pattern of dominant and auxiliary processes and the attitudes (E or I) in which these are habitually used. Determining these dynamic relationships is enabled by the J-P dichotomy of the MBTI. The characteristics of each type follow from the dynamic interplay of these processes and attitudes. (p. 2-3)

The four functions, including the opposite dichotomies, are briefly defined according to Myers (1992):

• Extraversion – Introversion: extraverts direct their energy toward people and objects in their environment. They like to communicate and interact with the outer world and are often very social and action-oriented. Introverts are more concentrated on their own experiences and ideas. They need privacy and time to think about new concepts and ideas before discussing them.

• Sensing – Intuition: sensing types concentrate by gathering information in the moment and on what they can perceive with their five senses. They are often realistic and observe facts and events that happen at the present time or in the past. Intuitive types are more focused on the future and imagined possibilities. They seek patterns and interrelationships which cannot be seen but of which they have a vision, and are often theoretical, abstract and creative in nature.

• Thinking – Feeling: thinking types base their decisions on logical analysis and on objective cause and effect relationships. They are often analytical and impersonal when attempting to find explanations. Feeling types focus on their own values when they make decisions. They also want to understand other people, and try to consider how a decision may affect others.

• Judging – Perceiving: judging types prefer an organized lifestyle and to make final decisions. They make schedules and plan their future with purpose and decisiveness. Perceiving types prefer a spontaneous and flexible lifestyle and the freedom to make decisions on their own time. They are interested in new possibilities and are open to frequent changes in direction.

The communication style of each type differs; for example, Extraverts prefer face-to-face interactions and the opportunity to discuss decisions, while Introverts are likely to prefer written communication and time to work on their own to think through a decision before it is made. Sensing types desire specific and concrete information to make decisions or solve conflicts, whereas iNtuitives prefer more general communication and decision-making in which other potential connections are also considered. Thinkers prefer communication that handles tasks and decision-making that is based on logic where all cause and effect

PERSONALITY TYPES IN BUYER-SELLER INTERACTIONS

relationships are discussed; Feelers want more personal communication where they are recognized as individuals, and in their value-based decision-making strive to ensure everyone is included. Judging types want clear and decisive communication, quick and firmly made decisions, and resolved conflicts to be forgotten, while Perceiving types prefer wide-ranging communication and to gather sufficient information before making a decision; any conflicts should be discussed before a final resolution is made.

TABLE 1. PERSONALITY TYPES BRIEFLY ILLUSTRATED AS ADAPTED FROM MYERS & MCCAULLEY, 1985

ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
"They follow the rules and guard the process."	"They care and do the work."	"They are the ones to put it in writing."	"They analyse the alternatives."
ISTP	**ISFP**	**INFP**	**INTP**
"They do their own thing."	"They are loyal and value driven."	"They act as peacekeepers."	"They work alone for the group."
ESTP	**ESFP**	**ENFP**	**ENTP**
"They fight fires or start them."	"They keep them laughing."	"They can be great integrators."	"They offer solutions and identify opportunities."
ESTJ	**ESFJ**	**ENFJ**	**ENTJ**
"They take responsibility and get things done."	"They bring human comforts to light."	"They are enthusiastic communicators."	"They are leaders. They want not to be led."

The study by Dion et al. (1995) of successful buyer-seller relationships found that purchasers and sellers often possessed the same few MBTI types: the most common personality types in sellers were also the most common buyer types. ESTJ and ISTJ personality types totalled 52.5 percent of the individuals surveyed, and ST was the most common functional pair (Dion et al., 1995). Multiple studies in Finland have also been able to classify managers into these same personality types (Järlström, 2000; Routamaa, 2011; Routamaa and Ou, 2012; Routamaa, Yang, & Ou, 2012).

The functional pair ST reveals sensing and thinking preferences, which means that the salesperson should focus on facts when interacting with an ST buyer. In an interaction, the ST customer focuses on details and the logical implication of the specifics. On the contrary, the NT customer tends to focus on the big picture and how this generalization can create logical options (cf. Myers & McCaulley, 1990). Although ST is the most common managerial type in many countries such as Finland and China, NT is more frequently found in the USA and Sweden (Routamaa et al., 2010; Routamaa & Ou, 2012). Interestingly, SF and NF are common types in the retail sector (Routamaa & Hautala, 2009; Schaubhut & Thompson, 2008).

Many scholars have studied adaptive selling and the need for salespeople to adjust their conduct to the customer's demeanour (cf. Spiro & Weitz, 1990). Buyer-seller meetings are built on interaction, but the differing cognitive processes, personalities and needs of each party may affect the outcome (cf. Myers & McCaulley, 1990). While the study by Dion et al. (1995) reveals that a salesperson's personality type does not have a significant unilateral influence on sales performance or on

PERSONALITY TYPES IN BUYER-SELLER INTERACTIONS

trust in a salesperson, they did find that if the buyer perceives a connection with the salesperson, sales performance increases and the buyer feels that it is a positive sales relationship. Today's salespeople build specific interactional value when communicating with the business buyer (Blocker et al., 2012; Echeverri & Skalen, 2011; Hohenschwert & Geiger, 2015; Weitz et al., 1986).

Method

The data consist of 20 professional business buyers in b-to-b buying and selling settings in Finland. The data were collected from a larger ongoing study concerning the work of professional business buyers in twelve different companies. All 20 buyers had at least three years of experience in purchasing and worked as procurement directors or managers, sourcing managers or professional buyers. The buyers worked in industrial, logistical, chemical, food or professional services. Of the 20 buyers, nine worked in industrial services, three in logistics, three in food services, three in professional services and two in chemicals. In order to compare the personalities of professional buyers and salespeople, 51 sales professionals from the b-to-b companies were also analysed. This study uses a mixed method approach, which combines qualitative interviews with the personality type results of professional buyers compared to sales professionals (see Hurmerinta-Peltomäki & Nummela, 2006).

The data were collected during the year 2015. All of the buyers were interviewed twice; the first round focused on buying on an individual level, including important considerations in buying, their expectations for buyer-seller interactions, and how they would develop salespeople's interactional activities. Following completion, all of the participants, including the 51 sales professionals, were emailed a link to complete the MBTI. The second round of buyer interviews took place two to five months after the initial interview and focused on the internal purchasing processes of buyer organizations, their buying policies, and on expected landmarks during buyer-seller interactions.

After all interviews were complete, the participants discussed whether their self-evaluated MBTI matched their real personality type. Informants who received low scores (7 points or less) on one dimension of the MBTI, confirming was made with a time. It was determined that all of the participants had been assigned the correct MBTI. A Finnish version of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator was translated and validated by Routamaa's research team at the University of Vaasa, Finland; according to Järlström's (2000) study, the construct validity and reliability of this version was confirmed during a validation process of several years.

Qualitative, transcribed data were first analysed by the ATLAS.ti program and divided into 22 codes by a research group. Next, codes concerning buyer expectations for sales interactions and expectations for salespeople's activities in sales

PERSONALITY TYPES IN BUYER-SELLER INTERACTIONS

encounters were identified using the qualitative interpretive analysis (Rubin & Rubin, 2011) in order to interpret data towards the personality theory. Both researchers have a deep knowledge of the MBTI personality theory, and the interviews were analysed without systematically searching for the participants' personality type. These selected findings, which revealed the expectations of certain personality types, were discussed and confirmed by both of the researchers. After analysing transcribed text by every participant, one researcher compared the MBTI types to the findings while the second researcher confirmed the findings; therefore, the validity of the qualitative analysis is high.

Findings

Personality Type Data

The personality type distribution of the buyers is presented in Table 2. The sample is small but is considered an accurate representation of the occupation. It is evident that the common personality types in the general and in business (cf. Routamaa & Hautala, 2009) are also the most common among professional buyers. Sixty percent of the identified personalities represent the ST type, which corresponds well with Dion et al.'s (1995) results. STs are practical, fact and detail oriented, and logical decision makers who prefer a structured and planned environment.

Sixty percent of the buyers identify as Extraverts, ready to discuss challenges openly and make firm decisions. Forty percent of the buyers are Introverts who require detailed information and, after additional deeper interactions, need private time to absorb the details and conditions prior to proceeding with a purchase. A minority of buyers (25%) are iNtuitives who want to consider the big picture before the next interactional encounter. A total of 75% of the professional buyers are Sensing types to whom it is important to explain all information very clearly; if the seller is not able to accurately portray the facts, the buyer may not proceed with the interaction.

As demonstrated in Table 3, buyers are significantly more introverted than sellers. When an extraverted seller meets an introverted buyer, the buyer may feel uncomfortable listening to the seller's wordy presentation. Buyers are slightly more likely to be sensing than sellers; if an intuitive seller meets a sensing buyer, they may find that they are not on the same page. As well, sellers are somewhat more often thinking types, preferring to keep the discussion focused on logical facts. Thinking sellers will want to keep this in mind when working with a feeling type buyer, who may want to engage in small talk to break the ice before discussing business. Finally, buyers are slightly more often judging types who prefer a well prepared and organized meeting, whereas a perceiving seller may review the situation and adjust accordingly.

PERSONALITY TYPES IN BUYER-SELLER INTERACTIONS

TABLE 2. PROFESSIONAL BUYERS' PERSONALITY TYPE DISTRIBUTION

N = 20

ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
N = 3	N = 1	N = 0	N = 0
% = 15.00	% = 5.00	% = 0.00	% = 0.00
¢¢¢	¢		
ISTP	**ISFP**	**INFP**	**INTP**
N = 2	N = 1	N = 0	N = 1
% = 10.00	% = 5.00	% = 0.00	% = 5.00
¢¢	¢		¢
ESTP	**ESFP**	**ENFP**	**ENTP**
N = 2	N = 0	N = 2	N = 0
% = 10.00	% = 0.00	% = 10.00	% = 0.00
¢¢		¢¢	
ESTJ	**ESFJ**	**ENFJ**	**ENTJ**
N = 5	N = 1	N = 0	N = 2
% = 25.00	% = 5.00	% = 0.00	% = 10.00
¢¢¢¢¢	¢		¢¢

	N	%
E	12	60.00
I	8	40.00
S	15	75.00
N	5	25.00
T	15	75.00
F	5	25.00
J	12	60.00
P	8	40.00
IJ	4	20.00
IP	4	20.00
EP	4	20.00
EJ	8	40.00
ST	12	60.00
SF	3	15.00
NF	2	10.00
NT	3	15.00
SJ	10	50.00
SP	5	25.00
NP	3	15.00
NJ	2	10.00
TJ	10	50.00
TP	5	25.00
FP	3	15.00
FJ	2	10.00
IN	1	5.00
EN	4	20.00
IS	7	35.00
ES	8	40.00
Sdom	6	30.00
Ndom	2	10.00
Tdom	10	50.00
Fdom	2	10.00

Note: ¢ = 1 person.   Print date:

The statistics indicate that buyers are significantly more often introvert-sensing (IS); these buyers must be approached carefully by presenting clear and concise written details, then left to process the information. In other words, the buyer-seller personality fit should be carefully taken into account during selling interactions. Personality similarity is considered a positive feature in buyer-seller encounters, as opposed to most other situations where different personalities are considered an asset in creative and innovative teams (Routamaa, 2014).

PERSONALITY TYPES IN BUYER-SELLER INTERACTIONS

TABLE 3. PROFESSIONAL BUYERS COMPARED WITH SALES PROFESSIONALS

Professional Buyers

Comparison between Professional Buyers and Sellers

compared with

Sales Professionals
N = 20

ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
N = 3	N = 1	N = 0	N = 0
% = 15.00	% = 5.00	% = 0.00	% = 0.00
I = 1.91	I = 0.00	I = 0.00	I = 0.00
¢¢¢	¢		
ISTP	**ISFP**	**INFP**	**INTP**
N = 2	N = 1	N = 0	N = 1
% = 10.00	% = 5.00	% = 0.00	% = 5.00
I = 5.10	I = 0.00	I = 0.00	I = 0.85
¢¢	¢		¢
ESTP	**ESFP**	**ENFP**	**ENTP**
N = 2	N = 0	N = 2	N = 0
% = 10.00	% = 0.00	% = 10.00	% = 0.00
I = 0.64	I = 0.00	I = 5.10	I = 0.00
¢¢		¢¢	
ESTJ	**ESFJ**	**ENFJ**	**ENTJ**
N = 5	N = 1	N = 0	N = 2
% = 25.00	% = 5.00	% = 0.00	% = 10.00
I = 0.85	I = 0.64	I = 0.00	I = 1.27
¢¢¢¢¢	¢		¢¢

	N	%	I
E	12	60.00	0.71*
I	8	40.00	2.55*
S	15	75.00	1.09
N	5	25.00	0.80
T	15	75.00	0.93
F	5	25.00	1.27
J	12	60.00	1.06
P	8	40.00	0.93
IJ	4	20.00	2.55
IP	4	20.00	2.55
EP	4	20.00	0.57
EJ	8	40.00	0.82
ST	12	60.00	1.09
SF	3	15.00	1.09
NF	2	10.00	1.70
NT	3	15.00	0.59
SJ	10	50.00	1.11
SP	5	25.00	1.06
NP	3	15.00	0.77
NJ	2	10.00	0.85
TJ	10	50.00	1.11
TP	5	25.00	0.71
FP	3	15.00	1.91
FJ	2	10.00	0.85
IN	1	5.00	0.85
EN	4	20.00	0.78
IS	7	35.00	3.57*
ES	8	40.00	0.68
Sdom	6	30.00	1.02
Ndom	2	10.00	0.73
Tdom	10	50.00	1.11
Fdom	2	10.00	0.85

Note: ¢ = 1 person.
Base total N = 51. Groups are independent.

Print date:

* < .05, ** < .01, *** < .001

Interview data

The analysed interview data show several examples of how the assessed personality types of the professional business buyers frame the answers that they give, and confirms the MBTI theory and the findings of this personality type study. The buyer citations that follow are collected from the buyer interviews. In this section, the main findings will be illustrated with citations from the participants.

When sales professionals are extraverts (E) and professional buyers are introverts (I). This study's personality type data illustrate that sellers are more often extraverts. In situations where an extravert seller met with an introvert buyer in buyer-seller interactions, it was often felt to be an interaction where the seller does not listen. Introvert (I) buyers often expressed that the seller was too aggressive; one buyer stopped answering a seller's phone calls because the frequency of the calls was affecting his work. Below are some examples of an introverted buyer's interpretation of an extraverted seller's approach:

- "I think it surprised me many times…that in [certain] situations…sellers [want to] sell their own things…but they do not listen to the customer" (Buyer ISTJ).

PERSONALITY TYPES IN BUYER-SELLER INTERACTIONS

- "I think it is a plus if you are able to listen once in a while…when you are a seller…I know there are also sellers…that do not give you any time to talk" (Buyer ISTJ).

- "It drives me away…too enthusiastic and still aggressive somehow…and [the seller] contacts me too often…sometimes he was calling twice a week and distracting me from my own tasks" (Buyer INTP).

One introvert buyer shared that he once had to turn his mobile phone to silent because the seller was calling too many times per week, which he found frustrating. When the interviewer asked the buyer why the seller would be so demanding, the buyer (INTP) answered, "I think [the seller] wanted to close the sale quickly…but I was still wondering what to do. He wanted to arrange a meeting and come on over…I was not ready [to make a decision]". In this case, it is likely that the aggressive seller will lose the sale; this citation accurately reveals why it is important to give time and space to an introverted person.

When sales professionals are intuitive (N) and professional buyers are sensing (S). As personality type data show, buyers in this case are slightly more likely to be sensing compared to sellers, who tend to be intuitive. Interviews show that in situations where the buyer is sensing (S) and the seller is intuitive (N), the participants in an initial interaction might not understand each other – although they speak the same language, they interpret it differently. Sensing buyers desire precise details about the purchase; otherwise, they are not able to proceed in their buying process. The buyers often claimed that, despite repeated attempts to obtain this information, the seller did not respond with the required details; the likely outcome is that the buying process will not continue with this intuitive salesperson. Citations illustrating these scenarios follow:

- "I have been in situations where the other side is not so patient.…Because of my role…I need to get a lot of really detailed information…and then I need to get all of the information exactly right…[the seller] may get nervous about my demands" (Buyer ISFJ).

- "We need detailed information…If the seller is able to [provide the required information]…it is clear that he knows what he is doing" (Buyer ISFJ).

The latter quotation suggests that this buyer would think highly of this seller because he provides the buyer with the requested information. It also demonstrates the importance of understanding different personality types. This understanding is equally important for buyers in order to look beyond personality types and make a decision regardless.

When sales professionals are thinking (T) and professional buyers are feeling (F). In this study, it was determined that sellers are more likely to be thinking (T) types. A T-type seller does not often engage in small talk, because they prefer to address the facts; an F-type buyer would get to know the seller first and understand the seller's perspective of the ongoing business case:

PERSONALITY TYPES IN BUYER-SELLER INTERACTIONS

- "I seek…to be on the same page as soon as possible…that [the seller] is socially intelligent and knows how to read different people.…It is really important…that you get to know each other before you get down to business" (Buyer ESFJ).

- "… that we have clear cooperation…where the seller listens to what we want…and he gets things done internally [in his own organization].…It is like a cooperative partnership…which is a win-win situation…I think these are the best cases" (Buyer ENFP).

- "I think that the interactional situation is really important…and that in a constructive interaction…you try to proceed in your tasks…and take them further.…And I also hope that the sellers would be able to perceive…what kind of things are important to different buyers" (Buyer ENFP).

This human aspect suggests that feeling buyers look for more customer centred interaction where the seller focuses on buyer needs and potential problems. The professional buyers hoped that sellers would concentrate more on how to solve the customer's problems or business needs. Buyers often claimed that too many sellers only talk about their own products.

When sales professionals are perceiving (P) and professional buyers are judging (J). This pairing generated the most complaints from buyers. The difference between the two types was seen in follow up calls after the sales interaction. If the seller promised to complete a task after the meeting, it is crucial to the buyers that it be completed. Buyers in new business situations felt it was even more important that the seller follow up; an inability to do so may reveal the salesperson's expected behaviour in the future and incapacity to honour their word.

- "If we decided that the task will be finished tomorrow…and at a certain time … I think that it must be done by that time…so that I do not need to ask for it later.…[If the follow up is done as promised]…it makes me feel like I can trust [the seller]" (Buyer ISTJ).

- "I say that the best seller who visits here is the one who…when I have a real need…makes a great effort to [get it done]…and take the case to the end" (Buyer ENTJ).

- "You cannot just forget things…if you promise that [you] will clarify a few things by a deadline…I take it seriously.…If we decide something I truly look forward to having the answers…and if not…without a good explanation…that always decreases the trustworthiness" (Buyer ISFP).

These Judging and Perceiving preferences came into discussion when the buyers were meeting new salespeople. It seems that, in cases where the seller is meeting the buyer, the buyer expects the initial meeting to be led by the seller and for the meeting to start on time. In these citations below, the buyers were not satisfied with the sellers' behaviour:

PERSONALITY TYPES IN BUYER-SELLER INTERACTIONS

- "I have had a case where…he just came without preparing at all…and a bit late.…Our chemistry did not fit…because I like to do things on time" (Buyer, ISTJ).

- "You must be prepared. If we do not know you and you are coming to meet us for the first time…you need to know who you are meeting, in which company, what we do and what you could sell.…If the seller just comes without preparations to the meeting…[to say] that I am from this company and we have these kind of solutions…I think this seller does not appreciate our time" (Buyer, ESTJ).

Additionally, the professional buyers complained if salespeople did not have a systematic approach or did not prepare for the meeting; in interactions between judging buyers and perceiving sellers where a positive relationship was not developed, the buyer would contact the sales organization to request a different seller. Although the buyers said that the relational aspect of that relationships would not be so fruitful with this salesperson than with a person with whom there would be chemistry. According to an ENTJ buyer, "Of course I could live with this situation… work with this salesperson…[but] I cannot think too much about our chemistry." The interviewer then asked, "How would the cooperation be with a salesperson with whom you have chemistry…will the tasks be done as promised and will he normally be on time?" The buyer replied, "Yes. It would be different…with this non-chemistry seller…it might be only ordering and buying but not more." One ESTJ buyer explains, "I was really thinking…that I should call his supervisor and ask for a different salesperson…because I think it is a basic requirement that we work with suitable salespeople.…If it does not work, you just need to call the sales organization."

Conclusion

This study shows that congruence in personality types matter, and is even more important in buyer-seller interactions as the customer companies look for long-term relationships (Biong & Selnes, 1995). If the buyer's and seller's approach to communication do not match, it may provide grounds to terminate the relationship. This study supports this claim, particularly in situations where the professional buyer was the judging type and interacting with a perceiving type salesperson.

The world of sales has transformed from transactional selling to relationship building (cf. Adamson, Dixon, & Toman, 2012; Biong & Selnes, 1995). Business buyers meet with salespeople when they need to develop their business and will begin analysing the potential sales partners. The role of sales organizations appears to be as the change architect, who first identifies the customer's business problem and their needs and wants, then offers a solution based on how the buyer interprets added value (cf. Dixon & Tanner, 2012). The value here could be seen as the intangible compatibility between the salesperson and the buyer. If this is the case, the buyer's preferred style of interaction must be considered in order to create this value. This

PERSONALITY TYPES IN BUYER-SELLER INTERACTIONS

study shows that professional buyers often favour interactions where salespeople listen carefully and answer questions in full. These findings confirm the Myers (1990) personality type theory that introverts require time to think before proceeding and that sensing types look for facts and detailed information.

While interviewing the professional business buyers about successful buyer-seller interactions, the buyers discussed the seller's attitude towards their needs. It may be interpreted that there are areas for improvement in the development of the salesperson's attitude; however, this may be a misunderstanding that can be attributed to the personality types of salespeople and buyers. For example, if a sensing buyer was looking for detailed information from the intuitive salesperson who did not provide it, it could be attributed as a misinterpretation of the request. Regardless, a misunderstanding of this scale may cause the salesperson to lose a buyer's trust.

Professional buyers seem to appreciate precision in a salesperson's behaviour. Based on the studies of the personality types, the most common types of managers in Finland are ISTJ, ESTJ and ENTJ; purchasing managers trend towards ESTJ and ENTJ (cf. Routamaa et al., 2009). This study confirms these findings but also contributes new knowledge to the type theory in this business context, where purchasing department managers are also Introvert and Introvert-Sensing types. In other words, the types with a preference for introversion focus their thoughts internally and need more time to make a decision than extraverts. In addition, these results confirm earlier studies which conclude that buyers tend to be a Judging type. The results may indicate that the preferences of professional business buyers relate to finding in earlier studies (Routamaa et al., 2009; 2010; 2012).

This study demonstrates the expectations that business buyers have for buyer-seller interactions in today's more complex business environment. As a result of this research, salespeople may develop a deeper understanding of b-to-b buyer-seller encounters as a mediator of interactional value. This study also shows the important role that personality factors play in the formation of value in buyer-seller interactions. It may be concluded that personality is a key matter when fulfilling buyers' expectations in buyer-seller interactions and when aiming to build up a long-term professional relationship.

Future research in this field could examine how the expectations of business buyers need to be developed in contemporary buyer-seller interactions and how the salesperson should proceed in a meeting at the point in which new buyer-seller meetings have decreased. Future research could also examine how salespeople can determine the MBTI type of a buyer when they encounter.

PERSONALITY TYPES IN BUYER-SELLER INTERACTIONS

References

Adamson, B., Dixon, M., & Toman, N. (2012). The end of solution sales. *Harvard Business Review,* July-August 2012.

Agndal, H. (2006). The purchasing market entry process-A study of 10 Swedish industrial small and medium-sized enterprises. *Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management*, *12*, 182–196. doi:10.1016/j.pursup.2006.10.004

Baumann, J., & Le Meunier-FitzHugh, K. (2014). Trust as a Facilitator of Co-Creation in Customer-Salesperson Interaction - An Imperative for the Realization of Episodic and Relational Value? *Academy of Marketing Science Review*, *4*(1/2), 5–20. doi:10.1007/s13162-013-0039-8

Biong, H., & Selnes, F. (1995). Relational selling behavior and skills in long-term industrial buyer-seller relationships. *International Business Review*, *4*(4), 483–498. doi:10.1016/0969-5931(95)00028-3

Blocker, C. P., Cannon, J. P., Panagopoulos, N. G., & Sager, J. K. (2012a). The Role of the Sales Force in Value Creation and Appropriation : New Directions for Research, *XXXII*(1), 15–27. doi:10.2753/PSS0885-3134320103

Blocker, C. P., Cannon, J. P., Panagopoulos, N. G., & Sager, J. K. (2012b). The Role of the Sales Force in Value Creation and Appropriation: New Directions for Research. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, *32*(1), 15–28. doi:10.2753/PSS0885-3134320103

Borg, S. W., & Johnston, W. J. (2013). The IPS-EQ Model : Interpersonal Skills and Emotional Intelligence in a Sales Process, *XXXIII*(1), 39–51. doi:10.2753/PSS0885-3134330104

Cash, H. C. & Crissy, W. J. (1964). "Ways of Looking at Selling" in *Marketing in Progress: Patterns and Potentials*, H. C. Barksdale, ed., New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

Cron, W. L., Baldauf, A., Leigh, T. W., & Grossenbacher, S. (2014). The strategic role of the sales force: perceptions of senior sales executives. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 471–489. doi:10.1007/s11747-014-0377-6

Dion, P., Easterling, D., & Miller, S. J. (1995). What is really necessary in successful buyer/seller relationships? *Industrial Marketing Management*, *24*(1), 1–9. doi:10.1016/0019-8501(94)00025-R

Dixon, A. L., & Tanner, J. J. F. (2012). Transforming Selling : Why It Is Time to Think Differently About Sales Research, *XXXII*(1), 9–13. doi:10.2753/PSS0885-3134320102

Doney, P. M., & Cannon, J. P. (1997). An Examination of the Nature of Trust in Buyer-Seller Relationships. *Journal of Marketing*, *61*(April), 35–51. doi:10.2307/1251829

Echeverri, P., & Skalen, P. (2011). Co-creation and co-destruction: A practice-theory based study of interactive value formation. *Marketing Theory*, *11*(3), 351–373. doi:10.1177/1470593111408181

PERSONALITY TYPES IN BUYER-SELLER INTERACTIONS

Edvardsson, B., Holmlund, M., & Strandvik, T. (2008). Initiation of business relationships in service-dominant settings. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *37*(3), 339–350. doi:10.1016/j.indmarman.2007.07.009

Giacobbe, R. W., Jackson Jr., D. W., Crosby, L. A., & Bridges, C. M. (2006). A contingency approach to adaptive selling behavior and sales performance: selling situations and salesperson characteristics. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, *26*(2), 115–142. doi:10.2753/PSS0885-3134260202

Grönroos, C., & Voima, P. (2013). Critical service logic: making sense of value creation and co-creation. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *41*(2), 133–150. doi:10.1007/s11747-012-0308-3

Haas, A., Snehota, I., & Corsaro, D. (2012). Industrial Marketing Management Creating value in business relationships : The role of sales. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *41*(1), 94–105. doi:10.1016/j.indmarman.2011.11.004

Hohenschwert, L., & Geiger, S. (2015). Interpersonal influence strategies in complex B2B sales and the socio-cognitive construction of relationship value. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *49*, 139–150. doi:10.1016/j.indmarman.2015.05.027

Hurmerinta-Peltomäki, L., & Nummela, N. (2006). Mixed Methods in International Business Research: A Value-added Perspective. *Management International Review (MIR)*, *46*(4), 439–459. doi:10.1007/s11575-006-0100-z

Järlström, M. (2000). Personality preferences and career expectations of Finnish business students. *Career Development International*, *5*(3), 144–154. doi:10.1108/13620430010371919

Kaski, Hautamäki, Pullins, & Kock (in press). B2B Buyer versus salesperson expectations for initial meetings.

Kim, H. (2014). The role of WOM and dynamic capability in B2B transactions. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, *8*(2), 84–101. doi:10.1108/JRIM-12-2013-0082

Liang, N., & Parkhe, A. (1997). Importer Behavior: the neglected Counterpart of International Exchange. *Journal of International Business Studies*, *28*(3), 495–530. doi:10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8490109

McFarland, R. G., Challagalla, G. N., & Shervani, T. A. (2006). Influence Tactics for Effective Adaptive Selling. *Journal of Marketing*, *70*(October), 103–117. doi:10.1509/jmkg.70.4.103

Myers, I. (1992). *Introduction to Type.* A Description of the Theory and Applications of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologist Press.

Myers, I. & McCaulley, M. (1985). *Manual: A Guide to the Development and Use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologist Press.

Overby, J. W., & Servais, P. (2005). Small and medium-sized firms' import behavior: The case of Danish industrial purchasers.

PERSONALITY TYPES IN BUYER-SELLER INTERACTIONS

    Industrial Marketing Management, *34*(1), 71–83. doi:10.1016/j.indmarman.2004.08.001

Piercy, N. F. (2010). Evolution of strategic sales organizations in business-to-business marketing, *5*(December 2008), 349–359. doi:10.1108/08858621011058115

Rackham, N., & DeVincentis, J. (1999). Rethinking the sales force. Redefining Selling to Create and Capture Customer Value. UK: McGraw-Hill.

Rodriguez, M., L. Dixon, A., & W. Peltier, J. (2014). A review of the interactive marketing literature in the context of personal selling and sales management. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, *8*(4), 294–308. doi:10.1108/JRIM-06-2014-0035

Román, S., & Iacobucci, D. (2010). Antecedents and consequences of adaptive selling confidence and behavior: A dyadic analysis of salespeople and their customers. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *38*(3), 363–382. doi:10.1007/s11747-009-0166-9

Routamaa, V. (2011). Personality Types and Entrepreneurial Orientation. In. *Enterprise Management in a Transitional Economy and Post Financial Crisis.* Ed. Joel Glassman, China: Nanjing University.

Routamaa, V. (2014). Building Innovative Teams on Diverse Creativity. In *Rethinking Innovation: Global Perspectives* (Eds. R. Subramanian, M. Rahe, V. Nagadevara and C. Jayachandran), Routledge, Francis & Taylor Group. ISBNA10: 0415748186

Routamaa, V. & Hautala, T.M. (2009). *Katse naamion taa – Itsetuntemuksesta voimaa* (A Look behind the Mask - Powered by Self-Knowledge). Vaasa: Leadec-Kustannus. 152 s.

Routamaa, V. & Ou, J. (2012). Cultures and Managers' Type Structures: A Comparison of China, Finland and South Africa. *Proceedings of the The 16th International Business Research Conference.* Dubai April 2012.

Routamaa, V., Yang, H. & Ou, J. (2010). Managers' Type Distributions in Three Continent - Do Cultures Matter, *Proceedings of the Seventh Psychological Type and Culture—East and West*: A Multicultural Research Symposium, Honolulu, Hawaii, January.

Salomonson, N., Åberg, A., & Allwood, J. (2012). Communicative skills that support value creation: A study of B2B interactions between customers and customer service representatives. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *41*(1), 145–155. doi:10.1016/j.indmarman.2011.11.021

Schaubhut, N. A. & Thompson, R. C. (2008). *MBTI® Type Tables for Occupations*, 2nd Edition. CPP.

Sheth, J. N., & Sharma, A. (2008). The impact of the product to service shift in industrial markets and the evolution of the sales

PERSONALITY TYPES IN BUYER-SELLER INTERACTIONS

organization. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *37*(3), 260–269. doi:10.1016/j.indmarman.2007.07.010

Tuli, K. R., Kohli, A. K., & Bharadwaj, S. G. (2007). Rethinking Customer Solutions : From Product Bundles to Relational, *71*(July), 1–17. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.71.3.1

Vargo, S., & Lusch, R. (2004). Evolving to a New Dominant Logic for Marketing. *Journal of Marketing*. doi:dx.doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.68.1.1.24036

Weitz, B. a. (1981). Effectiveness in Sales Interactions: a Contingency Framework. *Journal of Marketing*, *45*(1), 85–103. doi:10.2307/1251723

Williams, K. C., & Spiro, R. L. (1985). the Dyad. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *22*(4), 434–442. doi: 10.2307/3151588

Sales Leadership in Complex Business Environments

Pia Hautamäki

Business Programs, Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki, Finland

pia.hautamaki@gmail.com

Abstract: The work of salespeople has become increasingly complex. Companies attempt to build long-term relationships with fewer suppliers, and competitive advantages arise from co-creating value with selected suppliers. Business-to-business (b2b) customers have access to a great deal of information and can choose their suppliers from among many sales organisations. Salespeople need the skills to act professionally and relationships in buyer–seller encounters in order to proceed further in customers' purchasing process. Several people from different business units and from procurement on the buyers' side often attend to the meetings and the purchasing. This changing, complex working environment has created different demands for leadership and selling which affect how b2b sales managers do their job. Different personality types have distinct leadership styles and abilities to adjust to changing circumstances. Consequently, analysing the Myers-Briggs Type indicator personality types (MBTI®) of salespeople is crucial to understand their leadership expectations. Only a few studies on sales leadership have addressed this complex business environment and b2b service selling, and most leadership literature has focused on managers and their insights into leadership. Therefore, we studied 16 salespeople and their expectations for sales leadership in a mixed-methods research that combined interviews and MBTI's of salespeople. In the qualitative research, we found that sales leaders often use autocrat/directing style to give orders or simply give salespersons a budget and then let them attempt to survive. Consequently, salespeople desire more coaching, professional support and opportunities for team working and for creating competitive, valuable solutions in collaboration with customers. However, we found that the reward structures in sales organisations do not support team work. The MBTI's of the salespeople confirmed the needs raised up in the qualitative part of the study. This study reveals that research is needed to develop sales leadership to better fit today's complex business environment in which salespeople need to be able to add value to their customers and build long-term relationships.

Keywords: Sales leadership; complexity; business-to-business environments; selling; personality types; salespeople's expectations

1.   Introduction

Today's complex business environments challenge sales organisations in many ways. In buyer–seller encounters, customers want advice to improve, solve their business challenges and define the latent, emerging needs of customers (Blocker & Cannon 2012; Dixon & Tanner 2012; Haas, Snehota & Corsaro 2012; Hautamäki 2015; Homburg, Wieseke & Bornemann, 2009; Rapp, Bachrach & Panagopoulos 2014). Buyers expect to get the answers to their questions and value co-creation possibilities by collaborating with sales organisations (Tuli, Kohl & Bharadwai 2007.) Salespeople have adjusted their interactions with customers as the increasing availability of information allows customers to choose their suppliers (Jones 2005; Lassk & Shephard 2012.) In this uncertain, complex business environment (Ingram 2004), salespeople need to be able to communicate with customers and to add value by collaboratively solving customers' business challenges (Dixon et al 2012; Töytäri & Rajala 2015). Many companies seek long-term relationships with fewer suppliers to gain a competitive advantage, so buying organisations have re-organised their patterns to make purchasing as cost effective as possible (Grönroos 2008; Pierce, Cravens & Lane 2010; Rapp et al 2014). Sales organisations have also produced more complex solutions and higher productivity levels for customers to ensure added value in b2bmarkets (Jones 2005.) These changes often require the work of whole sales teams, and sales alone rarely add value for buyers who look for solutions and intangibles to improve their overall business acumen (Rapp et al 2014; Weitz & Bradford 1999). As service sales intangibles are a part of the solution, customers commonly buy solutions without understanding all the challenges in dissemination.

Therefore, it is important that salespersons can build relationships, increase trust between sellers and buyers, and act professionally when meeting customers (Doney & Cannon 1997; Hautamäki 2015; Hohenschwert & Geiger 2015; Liu & 2001).

Sales management has focused mostly on salespeople's activities and performance (Geiger & Guenzi 2009.) Sales organisations, though, should be led in a new way because of changes in business environments, such as the increased diversity of customer organisations and of buying centres' complexity and the importance of teamwork to add value for customers (Ingram 2004; Jones et al 2013.) Ingram (2004) researched managers' accountability, leader–member exchanges and reciprocal trust and found that less authoritative approaches are needed in sales. In b2b encounters, decisions take place on a higher level, and often, several people from the buying organisation attend to the purchasing process. Supportive supervision is seen to encourage creativity (Bass 1985; Deci, Connell & Ryan 1989), and salespeople who manage to get a meeting with a business buyer need to have skills that differentiate them from other sales organisations. The increased information available has also affected salespeople's work, and sometimes, business buyers simply decide not to start cooperation if they do not perceive similarity with the seller or sales organisation (Dion, Easterling & Miller 1995; Hautamäki 2015.)

Especially as sales are undergoing transformation (Dixon et al 2012), research is important to understand the role of leadership in sales organisations' adaptation to environmental changes (Jones et al 2005.) Recently, a few studies have addressed sales leadership (Bass 1997; Dubinsky, Yammarino, Jolson & Spangler 1995; MacKenzie, Podsakoff & Rich 2001), but subordinate salespeople's expectations for leadership (Hautala 2005; Routamaa et al 1997) in this new, complex business environment are less studied. This paper makes an empirical contribution to this topic through interviews and Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator (MBTI®) profiling with 16 salespeople from four international service sales companies.

2.   Sales leadership, complexity and personalities

Sales and sales leadership are a new research area (Dixon et al 2012.) In studies, sales have been seen as a transactional process with customers, and managers have been regarded as concentrating on giving orders (Dubinsky et al 1995.) Today, salespersons do not need to serve as sharers of information as sales organisations present the relevant information online. Salespeople are needed in complex service selling, which involves consultation and value co-creation with customers to build suitable solutions for customers. Lately, research has addressed this transformation of the role of sales (Dixon et al 2012; Jones et al 2015). Dixon and Tanner (2012, 10) define sales as '*phenomenon of human-driven interaction between and within individuals/organizations in order to bring about economic exchange within a value creation context'*. This definition explains the role of the salespeople in today's complex business environment as a human-driven phenomenon. This view of the buyer–seller meeting calls into question the transactional way of leading sales.

In management literature, leadership theories on subordinates' perspective include McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y perspectives, Zaleznik's (1977) distinction between managers and leaders and Burns' (1978) transactional or transformational leadership. Stogdill's (1974) empirical findings describe leadership using binary categories, such as autocratic or democratic, directive or participative, task oriented or relations oriented and structure oriented or consideration oriented. Common to all these theories are the notions that leaders might fall into one category in one situation and another category in another situation and that these behaviours produce the most effective leadership. In the present study, the greater focus placed on environment complexity, like Maruyama (1976), reveals that '*effective leaders are those who have the cognitive and behavioral capacity to recognize and react to paradox, contradiction, and complexity in their environments'*.

2.1. Sales leadership and complexity

To be an effective leader, a person must be able to use knowledge and make things happen, what Boyatzis (1982) describes as '*the underlying characteristics of a person that lead to or cause effective and outstanding performance*'. These characteristics can be seen to consist of the set of competencies which predict outstanding leader performance. The aim of selling organisations is always to make sales deals, and service selling, which is more complex than transactional product selling, often focuses on long-term customer relationships. Competencies identified as contributing to leader performance include 1) cognitive intelligence competencies, such as systems thinking; 2) emotional intelligence competencies or intrapersonal abilities, such as adaptability; and 3) social intelligence competencies or interpersonal abilities, such as networking (Boyatzis 2007.) Based on the concept of competency, Boyatzis (2007) developed the theory of performance: maximum performance occurs when a person's capabilities are consistent with the needs and demands of a job. Here, the demands are the responsibilities of the role, such as tasks that needed to be performed. Thus, the organisational environment has important impacts on competencies and organisational perceptions of them. Such organisational elements include, for example, culture, climate and the economic structure and situation.

In this study, complexity refers to salespersons' work in a situation in which customers can choose among sales organisations, solutions are complex, and many decision makers from the buyers' side are involved in the purchasing process. Management literature presents many definitions of complexity, but in this study, the complexity of salespersons' role is considered to be behavioural, requiring leaders to be able to conceive of and perform multiple, contradictory roles (Denison, Hooijberg & Quinn 1995.) In management literature, leaders who perform multiple, competing roles are regarded as more effective than others (Blake and Mouton 1964; Mintzberg 1973). Recently, the behavioural complexity of leadership has been seen as an individual-level construct, which means leaders can take on multiple roles and perform leadership roles differently in various situations (Denison et al 1995; Hart & Quinn 1993; Hooijberg 1996; Hooijberg, Hunt & Dodge 1997).

A study of R&D managers and their competencies that predict effectiveness found that people skills made a difference. These highly effective R&D managers had high competencies in interpersonal skills and were developing their interpersonal relationships, which they saw as an important part of their role as managers (Dreyfus 2008.) This study also confirmed Boyatzis and McKee's (2005) finding that effective leaders have resonant relationships based on openness and the ability to harmonise with others. For instance, these leaders shared their life stories to open themselves to others' concerns which transcend their own personal needs (Dreyfus 2008.)

2.2. Sales leadership and transformational leadership

The sales leadership literature has explored the potential of transformational leadership in sales. Some studies have found that the transformational leadership style positively affects salespeople's' attitudes, role perceptions and performance (Humphrey 2002; MacKenzie et al 2001). For instance, Burns (1978), Bass and Avolio (1989) found that effective transformational leadership influences subordinates' values and aspirations and activates their higher-order needs and interest in the organisation (Bass 1985; Yukl 1989). These leaders have been seen to gain subordinates' trust and respect. Transformational leadership research has shown that transformational leadership has positive effects on employees' satisfaction and self-reported effort and performance.

The complex business environment investigated in this study favours elements of transformational leadership. Common definitions of transformational leadership (Bass 1985; Tichy & Devanna 1986) are to lead with vision, to enable, to challenge and to be an example. Burns (1978) distinguishes between transactional and transformational leadership, while Bass (1985) holds that leaders can be both transactional and

transformational. These types of leaders motivate their subordinates in distinct ways. Transformational leaders know how to increase subordinates' motivation and can get them to do more than expected. Transformational leaders help subordinates see the deeper meaning of their work and engage and motivate themselves on a deeper level. As customers look for long-term relationships, it might be crucial that sales leaders support sales team in achieving long-term goals.

Only a few studies have concentrated on subordinates' personalities and transformational leadership (Hautala 2005). More research on the relationship between transformational leadership and supervisors' personalities is needed. This study focuses on salespersons' point of view and expectations for sales leadership, which only few studies have investigated (Bass et al 1989; Hautala 2005; Routamaa et al 1997).

Most theories have concentrated on leaders, even though both leaders' and subordinates' behaviour and personalities affect their mutual communication and understanding (Hautala 2005). As well, few leadership studies have taken personality into account while analysing feedback from subordinates (Hautala 2005; Routamaa et al 1997). Understanding the effect of personality could make it easier to analyse and understand received feedback.

2.3. Sales leadership and personality theory

Personality has been conceptualised in several ways (Routamaa 1997; Routamaa & Varamäki 1998; Routamaa et al 2010). In this study, the MBTI was used to reveal subordinates' expectations for sales leadership. The MBTI is based on Jung's theory of psychological types and reports personality preferences on four scales: extraversion or introversion, sensing or intuition, thinking or feeling, and fudging or perceiving (Myers 1990). According to Myers's (1990) MBTI theory, the MBTI is primarily concerned with differences among people which can be seen in how they like to focus their attention, get information, make decisions and adopt. The eight preferences in the four scales can be arranged in 16 orders, each representing a certain order of preference (Myers et al 1998). In this study, expectations are based on the interview results and the MBTI personality theory.

MBTI theory holds that all individuals naturally adopt one alternative in the dimensions of S (sensing) or N (intuition) and T (thinking) or F (feeling). One who prefers sensing (S) and thinking (T) has an ST cognitive style, among the four cognitive styles of ST, SF, NT and NF (Myers et al 1998). According to MBTI theory (Myers et al 1998), the cognitive style ST focuses on facts, non-personal analysis and practical actions, often those which have been done before. One who prefers intuition (N) and thinking (T) has the cognitive style NT, which focuses on possibilities, theoretical and abstract analysis and non-personal, cause-to-effect perspectives when making decisions (Myers et al 1998). The cognitive style of NF concentrates on possibilities and prefers new projects over things that have happened before. In decision making, this style favours imagination and symbols (Myers et al 1998). The NF cognitive style is opposite to that of ST, which focuses attention on facts. The NF style, in contrast, uses feelings and emotions in decision making.

3.   Method

This mixed-method research investigated sales leadership. All 16 participating salespeople were interviewed and profiled using MBTI. This study is a part of a larger research project on eight different sales organisations. In this study, four full-time, b2b salesperson from each of the four internationally working sales organisations were selected to participated.

The data were collected in early 2015. All 16 informants were emailed a link to complete the MBTI and then interviewed individually for 1–1.5 hours. In the interviews, informants were asked about management, how

they are supervised, what kind of support they receive in sales work and what kind of management does not support their sales success in a complex business environment. The informants were also asked how managers should lead salespeople and could better support team work in sales.

After the interviews, whether the informants' self-evaluated MBTI matched their real personality type was assessed. Especially for informants who received low scores (7 points or less) on one dimension of the MBTI, ensuring was made with a time. All the informants had been assigned the correct MBTI. This study used the Finnish version Form F of the MBTI, which was translated and validated by Routamaa's research team at the University of Vaasa (Järlström 2000). According Järlström (2000), the construct validity and reliability of this form were confirmed during a several-year-long validation process.

Qualitative data were first analysed by the Atlas.ti program and divided into 22 codes by a research group. Next, codes concerning salespeople's expectations for leadership, appreciations and complaints were identified using the qualitative content analysis method. The results were compared to salespeople's personality types and expectations for sales leadership. The results of the complaints were also analysed. These selected codes were discussed and modified by research group members. Therefore, the validity of the study is high.

4. Results

The present study shows that, in a complex business environment, salespeople desire coaching from their supervisors, trust in their professionalism and teamwork possibilities when creating competitive service solutions for customers.

Coaching and support

The interviews demonstrate that salespeople feel lonely while doing sales work. For example, one informant states that, '*well, in the practice, it is really so … you just get a budget and after that you [are] kicked out to do sales. … I think sales would need to have daily-based leadership … [so] that we could have opportunities to go through sales cases and build up solutions together.*' The informant also states that '*often I just think that it would be nice to get some kind of support, but then I just decide that ok. … I try to survive [laughing], and then I just start to continue with the case'*. The interviews reveal that salespeople need leaders to listen and review sales cases and personal issues.

Trust in their professionalism

Sales leaders tend to lead by telling subordinates to do things. For example, one salesperson states that '*sales managers give orders [as to] what I should do next. … I cannot use any creativity because I just need to act how my manager tells [me to]*'. Salespeople view this leadership as harsh as selling today takes more than one meeting. Salespersons must meet with customers several times before they made decisions. This problem is revealed in the following comment: '*if the job is only about trying to get deal[s] from every meeting, it is too tight. … Today, the profit-or-out [mentality] doesn't work because in this case I could work…'*

Possibilities for team work

In the interviews, it was seen that the sales organisations do not have a team culture, nor do their rewards systems support such a culture. Often, the rewards reflect individuals' success in sales. For example, one participant states, '*Why would I take my colleague to share my bonuses if I am able to do it also by myself? This is, of course, harsh if money counts … but … of course, I don't mean that I wouldn't get any help, but there [are]*

many things to prepare [for] team work'. Salespeople appeared to be helpful to each other, but when given individual targets, they did not share relevant facts concerning the market with others and focused on their individual work to earn as much as possible. One informant even states that *'I would definitely recommend [a] team-focused reward system because that leads you to do team work with the others'.*

Comparing the qualitative and quantitative results identified ST as the most common cognitive style among salespeople. In MBTI theory, this cognitive style indicates that salespeople mostly rely on information for facts, trust on earlier experience (S) and make decisions based on logic and analysis (T) (Myers 1990.) Psychological types are considered universal (Myers et al 1998), so it was expected that most b2b salespersons' cognitive style would be ST or NT, based on a study by Schaubhut and Thompson (2012). This study confirmed earlier work on types of the salespeople because the most common cognitive styles in this research were ST (63%) and NT (25%) (Dion et al 1995).
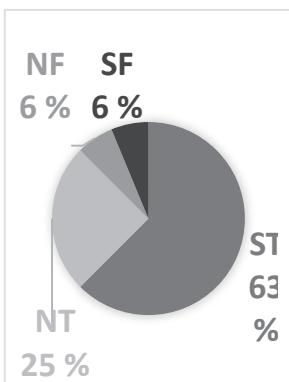

Figure 1. Cognitive styles of salespeople

5. Discussion

This study demonstrates the importance of applying personality theory when leading salespeople in complex business environments. This study shows that salespeople in studied companies are disappointed in their sales leadership. Today's selling needs call for the ability to understand the bigger picture and customers' different situations and decision-making processes. Salespeople need to be able to adapt appropriately to customers' situations, personal behaviour and behavioural complexity (Boyatzis 1982; Myers 1990.)

Earlier studies (Dion et al 1995; Hautamäki 2015) identified perceived similarity as important when customers choose new suppliers. This perception of personality can be seen in salespeople who work according to Boyatzis's (1982) theory and adapt their behaviour and communication on the cognitive, emotional and social intelligence levels. From this point of view, it is important to train team-work skills and adaptation in internal sales organisations. However, the rewards structures of the four companies studied do not support team work. Similarly, Lassk and Shepard (2013) found that organisations' control systems strictly limit salespeople's creativity and willingness to adapt to customers' complex, changing business needs.

Team work is one the most important elements in offering customers' the most valuable solutions. According to personality theory research (Myers 1990; Routamaa & Edinger 2011), teams are most creative when they consist of members with heterogeneous personalities. Unfortunately, sales leaders tend to clone themselves when recruiting new salespeople (Gallén 2010), which does not yield the most creative, valuable and desirable solutions for customers. In earlier studies of managers' personality types in Finland, the most common personality types are ISTJ, ESTJ and ENTJ (Routamaa & Ou 2012; Routamaa, Yang & Ou 2010). Compared to this study, cloning seems to occur often in these companies. When adapting to customers' needs in a complex business environment, it is crucial that sales leadership focus on and support salespeople's' intuition, see the

big picture, be ready for changes and be truly transformative. If judging is managers' most common preference, it will be difficult to see natural spontaneity as an advantage.

5.1. Practical implications

Based on participants' personal cognitive styles (mostly ST), salespersons' expectations for leadership emphasise intuitive coaching and the big picture. As confirmed by the interviews, the leadership efforts in these companies should be directed toward co-active orientation and increase the possibilities for team work.

In a complex business environment, rewards systems in sales organisations should support team work. Sales organisations should practice effective team work to make sales, facilitate discussions and close discussions to get the best deal. Today's customers want coaching and consultancy from sales organisations. To co-create added value with customers, salespeople need to be able to concentrate completely customers' situation. An autocrat or directing leadership style or simply giving orders is not the way to lead sales today. According to several studies on transformational leadership (Bass 1985; Schwepker & Good 2013; Yukl 1989), transformational leadership might be an effective way to lead sales in a turbulent business environment.

Business customers might seek from sellers the ability to see big picture and intuitive behavioural. Persons with a cognitive style focus on facts, and if led in an autocrat way by another person with an S cognitive style, on the facts and not future possibilities when working with customers. Therefore, sales managers should practice transformational leadership as part of their supervisory work.

5.2. Limitations

This study focuses on Finnish service sales organisations, and the results might be generalisable only to similar settings. If the environment is different, for example, business-to-customer markets, sellers might have F cognitive styles (Schaubhut and Thompson 2012), allowing emotions and values to play a major role in making decisions. In product sales, customers view facts as important. The most suitable leadership style differs by context and the results might be not generalisable for example to product sales or b2c sales settings.

6. Conclusions

This study demonstrates that salespeople are unsatisfied with their supervisors' leadership behaviour. Salespeople desire more individual coaching time from their supervisors in order to meet business customers' expectations in buyer–seller encounters. Salespeople also want trust in their professionalism and organisational support for team work in order to offer customers valuable, creative solutions.

Personality type theory and the MBTI's confirm the results of the qualitative research. This paper suggest new guidelines for how sales directors can lead sales organisations in a complex business environment, fulfil salespeople's leadership expectations and support salespeople in satisfying business buyers' needs in buyer– seller encounters. This study also fills a gap by shedding light on salespeople's perspective on how they would like to be lead in a complex business environment.

References

Bass, B. (1997) *Personal Selling and Transactional / Transformational Leadership. Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management,* Vol. 17, No. 3, pp. 37–41.

Blocker, C., Cannon, J, Panagopoulos, N. G. and Sager, J. K. (2012) *The Role of the Sales Force in Value Creation and Appropriation: New Directions for Research", Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management,* Vol. 32 No. 1, pp. 15–28.

Boyatzis, R. (2008) *Competencies in the 21st century. Journal of Management Development,* Vol. 27 No. 1, pp. 5–12.

Deci, E., Connell, J. and Ryan, R. (1989) *Self-Determination in a Work Organization. Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 74, No. 4, 580-590.

Denison, D., Hooijberg, R. and Quinn, R. (1995) *Paradox and Performance: Toward a Theory of Behavioral Complexity in Managerial Leadership. Organization Science,* Vol. 6 No. 5, pp. 524–540.

Dixon, A. and Tanner, J. (2012) *Transforming Selling: Why it is Time to Think Differently about Sales Research. Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management,* Vol. 32 No. 1, pp. 9–14.

Dreyfus, C. (2008) *Identifying competencies that predict effectiveness of R&D managers. Journal of Management Development,* Vol. 27 No. 1, pp. 76–91.

Dubinsky, A., Yammarino, F., Jolson, M. and Spangler, W. (1995) *Transformational Leadership: An initial Investigation in Sales Management. Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management,* Vol. 17, No. 3.

Gallén, T. (2010) *Personality and Strategy.* Acta Wasaensia, 110. (Dissertation).

Geiger, S. and Guenzi, P. (2009) *The sales function in the twenty-first century: Where are we and where do we go from here? European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 43, No. 7/8, pp. 873–889.

Haas, A., Snehota, I. and Corsaro, D. (2012) *Creating value in business relationships: The role of sales. Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 41, No. 1, pp. 94–105.

Hart, S. and Quinn, R. (1993) *Roles executives play: CEOs, behavioral complexity, and firm performance. Human Relations,* Vol. 46, No.5, pp. 543.

Hautala, T. (2005) *The Effects of Subordinates' Personality on Appraisals of Transformational Leadership. Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies,* Vol. 11, No. 4, pp. 84–92.

Hautala, T. (2006) *The relationship between personality and transformational leadership. Journal of Management Development,* Vol. 25, No. 8, pp. 777-794

Hautala, T. (2005) *Personality and transformational leadership. Perspectives of subordinates and leaders.* Acta Wasaensia, 145. (Dissertation).

Hautamäki, P. (2015) *Business Buyers' Expectations in Buyer-Seller Encounters – What really matters? Proceedings of 17th International Conference on Innovation and Marketing*, Venice, Italy.

Hohenschwert, L. and Geiger, S. (2015) *Interpersonal Influence Strategies in complex B2B Sales and the socio-cognitive construction of relationships value. Industrial Marketing Management, Vol.* 49, pp. 139–150.

Homburg, C., Wieseke, J. and Bornemann, T. (2009) *Implementing the Marketing Concept at the Employee–Customer Interface: The Role of Customer Need Knowledge, Journal of Marketing,* Vol. 73, No. 4, pp. 64–81.

Honkonen, M. and Routamaa, V. (1997) *Psychological types and team work effectiveness: A study of production teams in industry.* 1997. LEADEC-series.

Hooijberg, R. (1996) *A multidirectional approach toward leadership: An extension of the concept of behavioral complexity. Human Relations,* Vol. 49, No. 7, pp. 917.

Hooijberg, R. (1992) *Behavioral complexity and the development of effective managers.* Quorum Books/Greenwood Publishing Group, pp. 113.

Hooijberg, R., Hunt, J. and Dodge, G. (1997) *Leadership Complexity and Development of the leaderplex Model. Journal of Management,* Vol. 23, No. 3, pp. 375–408.

Humphrey, R. (2002) *The many faces of emotional leadership, Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 13 No. 5, pp. 493–504.

Ingram, T. (2004) *Future Themes in Sales and Sales Management: Complexity, Collaboration and Accountability, Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, Vol. 12, No. 4, pp. 18-28.

Jones, E., Brown, S., Zoltners, A. and Weitz, B. (2005) *The Changing Environment of Selling and Sales Management. Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management,* Vol. XXV No. 2, pp. 105–111.

Järlström, M. (2000) *Personality preferences and career expectations of Finnish business students. Career Development International,* Vol. 5 No. 3, pp. 144–154.

Lassk, F. and Shepherd, C. (2013) *Exploring the relationship between emotional intelligence and salesperson creativity. Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, Vol. 33 No. 1, pp. 25–37.

Liuʹ A. and Leach, M. (2001) *Developing Loyal Customers with a Value-adding Sales Force: Examining Customer Satisfaction and the Perceived Credibility of Consultative Salespeople. Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management,* Vol 21, No.2, 2001.

MacKenzie, S., Podsakoff, P. and Rich, G. (2001) *Transformational and Transactional Leadership and Salesperson Performance. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 29, No. 2, pp. 115.

Myers, I. and Myers, P. (1990) *Gifts Differing.* 13th ed., Consulting Psychologists Press, Palo Alto, CA.

Myers, I., McCaulley, M., Quenk, N. & Hammer, A. (1998) *Manual: A guide to the development and use of the Myers-Briggs type indicator.* 3 ed. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologist Press, Inc.

Piercy, N., Cravens, D. and Lane, N. (2010), "Marketing out of the recession: recovery is coming, but things will never be the same again", Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 3–23.

Rapp, A., Bachrach, D. and Panagopoulos, N. (2014). Salespeople as knowledge brokers: a review and critique of the challenger sales model. Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management. Vol. 34, issue 4, 2014.

Routamaa, V., Honkanen, M., Asikainen, V. and Pollari, A-M. (1997). Psychological Type and Leadership Styles. Subordinates' Point of View. *Proceedings of the Leadership and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Second International Conference,* Washington.

Routamaa, V. and Ou, J. (2012). Cultures and Managers' Type Structures: A Comparison of China, Finland and South Africa. Proceedings of the The 16th International Business Research Conference. Dubai April 2012

Routamaa, V., Yang, H. and Ou, J. (2010). Managers' Type Distributions in Three Continent - Do Cultures Matter, Proceedings of the Seventh Psychological Type and Culture—East and West: A Multicultural Research Symposium, Honolulu, Hawaii, January.

Routamaa, V. and Varamäki, E. (1998). *Entrepreneurs' personality and networking attitudes.* 1998. LEADEC-series.

Schaubhut, N. and Thompson, R. (2012). MBTI Type Table for Occupations. 2nd Edition. CPP, Mountain View, California.

Schwepker, C. and Good, D. (2013). Improving salespeople's trust in the organization, moral judgment and performance through transformational leadership. Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing, Vol. 28, No. 7, pp. 535–546.

Tichy, N. and Devanna, M. (1986). The transformational leader. Training & Development Journal, Vol 40, No. 7, pp. 27-32.

Töytäri, P. and Rajala, R. (2015). Value-based selling: An organizational capability perspective. Industrial Marketing Management 45 (2015) 101–112.

Vasconcelos, F. and Ramirez, R. (2011), "Complexity in business environments", *Journal of Business Research*, Elsevier Inc., Vol. 64 No. 3, pp. 236–241.

Yukl, G. (1989) *Managerial leadership: A review of theory and research. Journal of management,* Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 251.