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**University
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Business School

Professional Buying:

A Pre-Sales Interaction Study of Buyer Behaviour and Value Perception

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Ph.D.

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Abstract

This thesis examines, from the perspective of the professional buyer, value perceptions and approaches to relationship management. Research relating to the professional buying process is often hampered by issues relating to commercial confidentiality which impacts upon access to both the pre-sales interaction and also to details of the final terms of trade. Nevertheless, both researchers and practitioners continue to call for a better understanding of the purchaser/supplier interface. This thesis endeavours to penetrate the commercial sensitivity by adopting a qualitative research stance focusing on perceptions of transactional value and buyer behaviour. Support for such an approach is to be found across a range of literature and through this methodology the research aims to provide a more holistic understanding of the professional buying process and the related social interactions and relationships.

The study centres on transactions in which the prevailing power balance dictates that there is significant interdependence between the parties. These transactions are characterised by buyers having the incentive to be proactive in their choice of sourcing behaviours, but also by their recognition that they do not possess the power advantage that would allow them to simply dictate the terms of trade. The transactions examined involve rebuys which are seen to include either an upgrade or are otherwise perceived as important by the buyer. In such situations not only are buyers most likely to be focussed on the presales interaction, but literature also shows that they have more flexibility in their choice of relationship management approach.

Conducting an initial literature review suggested that buyer behaviour is likely to conform to broad perspectives whose objective is either to appropriate value through building cooperative relationships or to capture value by maximising transactional power. However, in order to better inform the research effort, an exploratory study was undertaken which showed that while the initially expected underpinning principles and practices are evident; they do not fully explain buyer behaviour throughout the transactional process. Through a further review of literature, including that from the emergent school of Service-Dominant Logic (S-DL), consideration of the professional buyer's value perception appeared to offer a theoretical platform

from which those wider aspects of buyer behaviour may be better understood. While S-DL is premised on the notion of value-in-use, and recognises Exchange Value, the exploratory study suggested that a further value perception may be present. Buyer Specific Perception of Value (BSPV), which is phenomenologically determined by the buyer's wider psychological needs, may be a significant driver of buyer behaviour.

In order to pursue the research objectives, the adopted method of data collection involved engaging professional buyers in a contemporary interpretation of the 'Diary - Diary Interview Method' (after Zimmerman and Wieder, 1977). A web based diary was initially used to collect the thoughts of buyers as they progressed through the pre-sales and immediate post-sale interaction associated with an appropriate transaction. On completion of the diary, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the buyers to develop the themes raised. The interviews were transcribed and the resulting texts examined using Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA), which involved detailed examination of the textual data in an attempt to identify recurrent themes. These themes were then systematically grouped with the intention of developing a deeper and more complete understanding of the text.

In order to present the QCA results in a manner that minimises the effects of decomposition and decontextualisation, a graphical format was developed to represent both the buyer's adopted relationship management approach and also the buyer's value perceptions. The term 'Transaction X-Ray' is used to describe the resulting graphic.

The results are initially presented in the form of individual 'Transaction X-Rays' then, through the aggregation of individual results that share specific common characteristics, composite 'X-Rays' are formed. Analysis of these composite 'X-Rays' gives rise to the emergent themes from which the research contribution is derived.

The dominant behaviour pattern to appear from the X-Ray analysis is that of the 'T-Shaped' Buyer, who characteristically adopts an Adversarial commercial approach to relationship management while simultaneously seeking, to a somewhat limited extent, the means for operational collaboration. Secondary behaviour patterns are also identified. 'Transaction X-Rays' also demonstrate that the dominant value perception held by buyers

is that of Exchange Value, while also confirming the significance of Buyer Specific Perception of Value (BSPV).

Recognising the limitations that are implicit in findings based on empirical evidence derived from a relatively small sample, it is nevertheless suggested that the dominance of the 'T-shaped' Buyer profile has a significance that resonates far beyond the confines study. For example, the findings appear counter to the philosophy advanced by those who suggest that by building a relationship, and openly sharing information, the buyer-seller dyad will develop in a manner that would not be possible via Arm's Length approaches. A further significant contribution made by the thesis relates to the application of Service-Dominant Logic in respect of the Buyer Specific Perception of Value (BSPV) which is created for the buyer, during the pre-sales interaction. This point occurs much earlier in the value co-creation process than has previously been considered within the S-DL School, and identifies a source of value that has been largely ignored within S-DL. The thesis concludes with a discussion as to the significance of the wider findings of the study and suggests where further research may extend the contribution.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signed: 

Name: Alan Aitken

Chapter 1: The Research Need

Chapter 1 develops, through reference to extant literature, an overview of professional purchasing practice. The increased recognition given to the role of the professional buyer as a potential source of competitive advantage is noted, as is the resulting growth in related academic interest. The Chapter develops the need for further research and also acknowledges the difficulties associated with the investigation of professional procurement practice. The expected research contribution is outlined before Chapter 1 concludes by summarising the outline and structure of the thesis.

1.1 Origin of Business to Business Trade

The buyer and seller relationship has existed since goods were first traded and such relationships have developed, often organically, shaped by the requirements of the trades being undertaken (Wilson, 1995:365). Although Cohen (2003:87) contends that the negotiations conducted between buyers and sellers have differed little, in process or tactics, since biblical times the interaction is generally regarded as a fundamental element of economic activity. Smith (1776) suggested that a principal contributor to the Wealth of Nations was the degree to which productive output was increased through industrial specialisation arising from the Division of Labour and from humans' propensity to barter. Porter (1985:41) recognises that purchasing activities frequently have a large impact on a firm's overall cost position and also on its ability to differentiate itself.

Lipsey (1963:61) outlines that one consequence of this specialisation is that it must be accompanied by inter-business trade. Organisations that have a narrow product range must satisfy their remaining requirements by purchase, while the revenue streams required to fund these purchases are generated by sales. Individual trading dyads are thus formed and these dyads in turn link to build supply chains. Similarly Sashi and Kudpi (2001:194) note that industrial specialisation by organisations gives rise to value-adding chains in which organisations exchange products and services with one another in market transactions. The output of one organisation becomes the input for another organisation, whose output in turn becomes the input for another and so on. The value adding chain ends with final transactions in consumer markets and

all transactions prior to the final transaction are intermediate transactions in Business to Business markets. The management of the demand side of these intermediate transactions are the key responsibility of the professional buyer. Frazier and Howell (1983:60) suggest that the definition of a business should be based on who is being satisfied, what needs are being satisfied, and how these needs are being satisfied rather than any considerations of profit. Similarly, Drucker (1989:72) observes that social tasks are increasingly performed within and through organised institutions. Each of these organisations is based on function, not profit, but each requires the power to hire and to buy in order to function, an idea that is also supported by Handy (1989:190). Hence the role of the professional buyer can be defined as spanning both the Private and Public sectors.

It is important to note that not all trading relationships lie within the influence of professional buyers. Ring and van de Ven (1992:485) note that there are two characteristic forms of governance that apply to the transfer of goods or services between organisations. The first are managed hierarchically between organisations, which although legally autonomous, nevertheless operate in a relationship in which there are recognised 'superiors' and 'subordinates'. In such situations the resolution of any disputes, or differences of opinion regarding the allocation of available resources, will most likely rely on internal mechanisms of governance designed to preserve the relationship between the parties (Cox, 2004c:35). The second relationship type identified by Ring and van de Ven (1992:485) are market-based transactions which are completed between highly autonomous buyers and sellers and who rely on contract law to safeguard their positions (Cox, 2004c:35). It is within these market tested sourcing relationships that professional buyers are most active.

1.2 Body of Extant Knowledge

Considering the history of the topic, it is to be expected that there is a considerable body of related extant literature. As a relatively early contributor to the field, Sheth (1973:50) identifies three areas of previous research focus. Firstly he believes there to be a considerable amount of empirical research relating to the buying policies and practices of professional buyers. Secondly, he acknowledges the body of work contained within

organisational and sector specific industry reports and thirdly, a range of books, monographs and articles which attempt to construct theoretical models related to industrial buying activities. Subsequently Crow, Olshavsky and Summers (1980:34) also identify three distinct areas covered by prior researchers. They also cite the development of theoretical models and empirically based reviews of individual purchase processes, additionally, they offer an alternative third category which is the review of the vendor selection criteria adopted by professional buyers. The role played by the professional buyer in the vendor selection process is also noted by Patton (1996:135) as a recurrent theme within the relevant literature.

Literature reviews by Leonidou, Palihawadana and Theodosiou (2006), Wynstra (2010) and Spina *et al.* (2013) offer chronological overviews of the broad theoretical perspectives from which buyer-supplier interactions have been viewed. The 1970's saw the emergence of the Resource-Dependence paradigm (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978) which viewed inter-firm relationships through a lens fashioned from a desire to reduce uncertainty and manage dependence through the establishment of semiformal or formal associations between organisations. This paradigm emphasised the effectiveness of close collaboration between buyers and sellers, however, it has been criticised as failing to recognise the risk of opportunistic exploitation by one or other of the parties. In response, the transaction-cost paradigm (Williamson, 1981) emerged which emphasised the efficiency implications of organising relationships in a manner that recognises, and accounts for, the potential for the occurrence of *ex-post* opportunistic behaviour. A further paradigm to emerge, around the same period, is based on political economy and views business relationships as forming within social systems of interacting economic and socio-political forces which drive the collective behaviour and performance of the parties involved (Stern and Reve, 1980).

A major contribution to the study of buyer-seller interaction was made by the IMP Group (Cunningham, 1980; Håkansson, 1982 and Johanson and Mattson, 1987) who developed a model that attempts to explain the associated inherent complexity. The IMP Interaction Model recognises environmental attributes such as market structure, atmospheric attributes such as the historical cooperation between the parties, individual attributes (including the aims and experiences of the social actors performing the buying and

selling roles) and finally, the attributes associated with the capabilities of both the buying and selling organisations.

Much of the literature of the 1990's examined the opportunities associated with developing closer relationships between buyers and sellers. MacBeth (1994) explored the nature of partnership sourcing and considers the implications of the resulting closer relationships on the organisational role of the purchasing function, while Lamming (1995) considered the implication of lean supply on the future of purchasing and van Weele and Rozemeijer (1996) investigated the effects of supply chain management concepts.

The dawn of a new millennium heralded a range of varying perspectives. Ramsay (2001) considered how the Resource Based Perspective (RBP), within the field of business strategy, informs the organisational role of procurement, while Cox (2004b) considered the influence of the buyer-seller power regime in relation to sourcing and relationship management. More recently, the conceptual influence of Service Science was considered by Paton and McLaughlin (2008), Vargo, Maglio and Akaka (2008) and Lusch (2011).

1.3 Procurement as a Source of Competitive Advantage

Of necessity, there is a considerable degree of parsimony associated with the initial review of the body of extant literature conducted within Section 1.2. Nevertheless, the review indicates that within the associated wider body of knowledge, the procurement of purchased inputs is viewed as an important source of an organisations competitive advantage (Jap, 1999:461; Svahn and Westerlund, 2009:173 and Dampérat and Jolibert (2009:207). Barney (2012:3) recognises the argument that, since procurement relates to obtaining resources outside the organisation which are potentially available to all competitors, the procurement function cannot be a source of competitive advantage. Barney nevertheless concludes that the ability to generate accurate expectations and predictions regarding the benefits likely to accrue from trading with particular suppliers, and the skills involved in realising the expected benefits, can result in procurement becoming a strategic organisational resource.

Porter (1985:41) recognises that purchased inputs frequently have a large impact on a firm's overall cost position and consequently its ability to differentiate itself against competitors. De Boer, Labro and Morlacchi

(2001:75) offer a view that purchased inputs account for between 50%-90% of final product costs for most organisations. This recognition has created a focus on procurement, both as a discipline and also as a strategic function within the wider corporate organisation.

Macbeth (1994:25) notes the repositioning of the purchasing function much closer to the strategic epicentre of the organisation, while Carr and Pearson (2002:1032) and Castaldi, ten Kate and den Braber (2011:985) recognise the developing contribution made by procurement in the areas of both strategic planning and also the role it plays in the facilitation of innovation *via* its boundary spanning role. Similarly, Hunter, Bunn and Perreault (2006:155) and Lawson, Cousins, Handfield and Petersen (2009:2649) express the view that professional buying is growing both in sophistication and professionalism and, significantly, Dampérat and Jolibert (2009:207) consider that this recognition of greater importance is accompanied by increased efforts on the part of both academics and practitioners to identify ways in which to improve the procurement processes adopted.

1.4 Need to Conduct Further Investigation

The need for greater academic focus on professional procurement was noted as early as the 1970's by Kelly (1974:421) who recognised that the topic deserved empirical investigation. More specifically Pullins *et al* (2000:473) note that realistic business-to-business negotiation is a subject area that has not been well studied and one which requires immediate attention. Meanwhile, Cox (2004c:7) is critical of much of the academic work that has been undertaken in this area, considering it to be misguided, because it simply accepts the premise that operational outcomes will be improved by adopting trusting and collaborative relationships. Conversely although Hunter, Bunn and Perreault (2006:155) are less critical of the substantial body of scholarly work that has been undertaken, they still believe there to be some basic unanswered questions, particularly relating to how procurement processes are applied in practice. Squire, Cousins and Brown (2009:472), Terpend, Krause and Dooley (2011:86) and Spina *et al.* (2013:1211) are amongst those who have, more recently, reiterated calls for further research into professional buying activity.

1.5 Difficulties Associated with Business to Business Procurement Research

Despite the articulated need for further research there are also recognised difficulties in conducting such work. Generally, as observed by Cronin (1994:69) the interaction between professional buyers and sellers is not easy to investigate, a theme echoed by Möller (1985a:1) who discusses the complex multidisciplinary nature of industrial buying. Literature reflects that these general concerns may be regarded as having their origin in a range of more specific research difficulties.

1.5.1 Investigating a Mixture of Organisational and Individual Influences

Several authors note the difficulties associated with establishing reality within a socially constructed mix of organisational and individual factors. Jap (1999:462) notes that the process of professional procurement often involves a complex web of social actors which not only span organisational boundaries but which are, additionally, not easy to identify in advance. A similar position is taken by Webster and Wind (1972:12) who recognise that industrial and institutional buying can often involve complex interactions between the social actors and the goals of the organisations in which they operate. Webster (1965:370) states that any research conducted in the area of industrial buying must adequately recognise the complex interaction that occurs between a wide range of significant individuals and also of the organisations they represent.

Ford and McDowell (1999:433) observe the specific difficulties in attempting to rationalise the behaviour of professional buyers. They reflect that buyer behaviour will frequently be driven by habit and, when questioned, individuals may well resort to obfuscation in an attempt to justify a particular course of action. Cannon and Perreault (1999:457) note both the difficulty and importance of establishing contact with suitable respondents who can provide the appropriate perspective on the buyer-seller interaction. The difficulties and complexity that present at the organisational level are noted by Leonidou, Palihawadana and Theodosiou (2006:166) who recognise that these include management style, organisational structure, industry concentration and micro-economic conditions. Factors which, according to the authors, can significantly moderate the behaviours of individual buyers and also the relationship they have with their suppliers.

1.5.2 Investigating a Dynamic Situation

A further theme to emerge from extant literature is the difficulty faced by researchers when attempting to deal with the dynamic complexity of professional procurement. Bunn (1993:38) recognises that overcoming this form of complexity is a key success factor in any research involving professional buying, while Möller (1985b:8) sees it as an essential problem to be overcome. Wilson (1995:343) considers as daunting the task of conducting research into professional buying which by its very nature is episodic, with the needs of the parties evolving not only between episodes but also within individual purchasing events. The change over time in organisational goals, and consequentially the criteria around which decisions are made is also recognised by Webster and Wind (1972:14).

1.5.3 Investigating a Process which is Not Necessarily Systematic

A further topic of concern voiced by academics is their recognition that the procurement processes, which they seek to investigate, are not necessarily systematic. Sheth (1973:56) notes that some industrial buying decisions are based on situational factors to which end theorising or model building will serve little purpose. Such factors according to Turnbull, Ford and Cunningham (1996:45) include the application of 'learned rules and behavioural norms' which are specific to a particular relationship but which can dominate individual purchasing decisions. Leonidou, Palihawadana and Theodosiou (2006:146) note that not only are the drivers of buying behaviours difficult for scholars to conceptualise but these drivers may vary, even in relation to a single supplier at a single point in time, depending on the segmentation of the business in which they operate. Hunter, Bunn and Perreault (2006:156) summarise the difficulty by observing that procurement decisions do not necessarily follow the processes that are frequently conceptualised in literature and that the actual procurement processes are often 'non-linear' and therefore difficult to model.

1.5.4 Gaining Cross Dyad Perspective

A recurring theme within the extant literature is the difficulty faced by researchers in their attempts to gain access to both buyers and sellers (Turnbull, Ford and Cunningham, 1996:44). Håkansson and Wootz (1979:29) cite various reasons as to why obtaining the perspective of both buyer and

seller is important, but chief amongst these is that there are likely to be differing perceptions between the trading partners as to the effectiveness and importance of their relationship. A variation on this theme is offered by Lamming, Cousins and Notman (1996:178) who observe that there is frequently a difference between the desired relationship and the actual relationship, which is best explored by considering inputs from both buyer and seller within the research process. Cox (2004b:347) recognises that from a theoretical perspective buyers are not always free to act in isolation because they are inevitably involved in a complex and only partially visible game with suppliers who have their own goals and motives. It is, however, Cannon and Perreault (1999:457) who recognise that, as in any research project, those who are engaged in the research of professional buying will, of necessity, make choices which will limit their findings. Cannon and Perreault emphasise that the important aspect of making these choices is to recognise the resulting implication on potentially limiting the nature and extent of any conclusions reached.

1.6 Developing the Appropriate Research Methods

In recognising the extent of the difficulties associated with researching professional buying; authors such as Gummesson and Polese (2009:347) are clear that it is increasingly necessary to develop research methods that both embrace the associated complexity and also the context in which it occurs. They argue that an over reliance on statistical techniques and questionnaires can lead to fragmentation which fails to adequately address the research difficulties that have been recognised. In this respect Gummesson and Polese reflect the themes developed by previous authors, such as Howard and Sheth (1969:486) and Michaels, Day and Joachimsthaler (1987:28), who call for research techniques that both acknowledge the specific difficulties encountered in researching professional buying behaviour and also the need to deal with the complexity inherent in the topic. Wind and Thomas (1980:239) note that in order to advance knowledge of professional buying behaviour a resolution is required of the major conceptual and methodological issues that are present, while Johnston and Bonoma (1981:144) observe that the absence of suitable methods has been a long standing stumbling block for researchers. Hunter, Bunn and Perreault (2006:167) call for pragmatism in the

development of research methods for application in the area of professional buying, noting that researchers will face difficult decisions and that trade-offs will inevitably be necessary. Specifically, Jap (1999:469) notes the difficulties in attempting to develop methods that will adequately capture information from both sides of a trading dyad, however, Dampérat and Jolibert (2009:214) suggest that while reliance on information gathered from only one side of the dyad will inevitably introduce a certain bias, it may however be possible to overcome this concern by developing research methods that utilise multiple informants.

1.7 Future Research Direction

Not only does extant literature call for the development of more appropriate research methods it also highlights alternative research directions in which these methods may lead. Prior to considering the implications of these calls it is also appropriate to review the range of views as to what activities constitute the process of professional procurement. Wind and Thomas (1980:243) review the activities that occur between the point at which organisations identify the need to procure a product or service through to the subsequent evaluation of the completed purchase. They conclude that these activities may vary depending on the product, the industry or the buying situation and note that they may represent a complex myriad. The view, that the individual stages involved in reaching a professional buying decision are hard to distinguish, is shared by Campbell (1985:35).

Lilien and Wong (1984:1), however, list certain common activities which result in the commitment being made by one organisation to purchase goods or services from another. These include information acquisition and search, developing selection criteria and agreeing terms with the selected vendor. Similarly, Möller (1985b:8) lists information search, scope definition, development and subsequent evaluation of quotations and order placement as amongst the common activities undertaken by professional buyers. It is also useful to recognise that despite divergent views as to the precise nature of the professional buying process, one common thread is that the implementation of this process will frequently require pre-sales interaction between buyer and seller in order to reach agreement on the terms of trade. Based on this agreement both parties are then expected to commit their

respective resources. Cox (2004c:31) notes that while there is reasonable expectation that both parties will recognise the benefit of achieving their agreed common goals, there is also a possibility of conflict and tension arising from each entity's natural desire to prioritise their own commercial interest above that of the other party. This inevitability of conflict is also recognised by Stern, Sternthal and Craig (1973:169) and Gaski (1984:11). Dealing with these conflict areas suggests further activities that therefore naturally form part of the pre-sales interaction such as agreeing price, establishing areas of responsibility and interpreting issues resulting from differences of opinion as to what is believed to have been previously agreed.

Given the apparent diversity of opinion as to the nature of the professional buying process, it is to be expected that a similar divergence of views will exist as to the direction in which research should take if the resulting knowledge contribution is to be maximised. Crow, Olshavsky and Summers (1980:34) believe that the greatest need is to conduct detailed exploration of the decision-making strategies adopted by industrial buyers, such as how quotations are requested and selection decisions taken. Bunn (1994:160) suggests that research is required into the policies and procedures that are used within organisations to govern procurement practice, the manner in which information is obtained and how the resulting supplier selections are made. Significantly however, Perdue and Summers (1991:175) consider, in support of the previously recognised common thread relating to the importance of the pre-sales interaction process, that it is detailed research in this area that will potentially deliver the most significant benefit. This view is shared by Alderson (1957:133), Bonoma and Johnston (1978:218), Dobler Lee and Burt (1984:212), Squire, Cousins and Brown (2009:473) and van der Valk and Wynstra (2012:146).

1.8 Need to Understand 'What Real Buyers Do in Real Situations'

Throughout the literature dedicated to the study of professional procurement a commonly occurring theme is the need to increase the understanding of what real buyers do in real situations (Markin, 1977:48; Perdue and Summers, 1991:175; Bunn, 1994:160; de Dreu, 1995:647; Kurtzberg and Medvec, 1999:359; Harwood, 2002:345; Narayandas and Rangan, 2004:75). Cox (2004a:418) highlights that while many theoretical models of buyer behaviour

are built on economising the total cost of ownership over the lifetime of the goods or services being purchased, this represents a fundamental misunderstanding as to what actually drives buyer behaviour in the real world. Ashcroft (2004:233) is similarly critical of theoretical approaches that view professional buying as a process of commercial negotiation and observes that, in the view of many experienced practitioners, such an approach falls well short of their real world experiences. Significantly, Hunter, Bunn and Perreault (2006:168) observe that while a considerable proportion of recent research has focussed on understanding the relational aspects of the buyer-seller interaction, much of the real world persists in seeking multiple competitive bids. They consider that this anomaly alone highlights the need for more work to improve the understanding of what drives the behaviour of professional buyers.

1.9 Thesis Outline and Structure

Chapter 1 - develops, through reference to extant literature, an overview of professional purchasing practice. The increased recognition given to the role of the professional buyer as a potential source of competitive advantage is noted, as is the resulting growth in related academic interest. The Chapter develops the need for further research and also acknowledges the difficulties associated with the investigation of professional procurement practice. The expected research contribution is outlined before Chapter 1 concludes by summarising the outline and structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2 - presents an overview of the broad schools of thought that describe the major influences on the actions of professional buyers. The ontological roots of the literature considered include Negotiation Theory, Business Strategy and Supply Chain disciplines. The Chapter begins with an examination of both research traditions from the Negotiation School, namely descriptive and prescriptive research. Consideration is then given to the contribution to the body of knowledge made by those authors whose aim is to provide guidance to practitioners engaged in negotiation. Collectively this literature combines to form a broad view of the forces that drive the behaviours of those engaged in the negotiations that take place between professional buyers and sellers as they seek to agree the terms of their trading arrangements.

Supply chain and business strategy literature is then used as the basis for an appraisal of the operational mechanisms that connect professional buyers and sellers. Initially through consideration of unidirectional approaches which reflect only the perspective of the buyer, the contributions of lean and agile thinking, Transaction Cost Economising and Purchasing Portfolio Management are reviewed. The Chapter then considers the theoretical paradigms that reflect the views of both buyer and seller including the interactions perspective and the power perspective. Attention is then given to the theoretical models that have been constructed to describe the professional buyer-seller interaction, followed by a review of the empirical studies conducted. The Chapter concludes by examining the emergent gaps in extant literature, before summarising the Chapter findings.

Chapter 3 - reviews the exploratory study conducted into the behaviour of professional buyers. The Chapter develops the argument as to how best to position the exploratory study with the intention of closing the gaps identified in the preceding chapter. Research questions are developed which enquire as to what extent the behaviour of professional buyers is driven by the desire to identify and develop co-operative strategies, or alternatively to enhance and maximise gain from their power position relative to the sellers. The research questions also focus on the extent to which these behaviours are operationally focussed and to what extent the buyer's objectives are commercially driven. The Chapter continues by developing the arguments that support the use of a qualitative methodology and by explaining how conducting an exploratory investigation benefits the overall objectives of the research endeavour. The adoption of a case study research design is explained, as is the basis for selecting the cases within the exploratory study. The method of recruiting participants into the exploratory study by the snowballing of buyers through contact made *via* sellers is then explained. The Chapter discusses the methods used to collect data using semi-structured interviews, and outlines the arrangements for recording, subsequently transcribing and analysing the interview dialogue. The results of the analysis of the interview transcripts are presented, in tabular form, and the emergent themes are summarised. Finally, the conclusions of the exploratory study, together with the implication in respect of informing the overall research effort are discussed.

Chapter 4 - begins by a review of buyer behaviour evidenced through the exploratory study and establishes the need to further review extant literature, in an attempt to explain those behaviours that appeared not to be overtly focussed on achieving either operational or commercial benefits. The Chapter continues by establishing that value creation lies at the core of the buyer-supplier interaction and that the role of the professional buyer is to maximise the value that accrues from this interaction. The case is therefore established to focus on literature that explores buyer value perception.

The nature of value is discussed and its socially constructed aspects are explored. The concepts of value-in-exchange and value-in-use are presented, as is the role of Buyer Specific Perception of Value (BSPV), in embedding human factors such as feelings, emotions and buyer ego. The Chapter then extends the discussion of customer perceived BSPV, which is considered to exist in parallel with value-in-use and value-in-exchange.

The Chapter develops the emergence of Service-Dominant Logic (S-DL) which has, a founding premise, the concept that value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary and that value-in-use is super-ordinate to value in exchange. It is recognised that the application of S-DL has the potential to provide a useful insight into the buyer-supplier presales interaction. The Chapter concludes by expanding the initial research questions, as developed in Chapter 3, to consider the extent to which the buyer's value perceptions focus variously on Utility Value, Exchange Value or BSPV.

Chapter 5 - develops the research design with a review of the research aims and continues by explaining the choice of the transaction as the unit of analysis. The research paradigm for the exploratory study is then extended so as to address the wider aspects of the main element of the investigation, which remains firmly qualitative and is conducted within a case study setting. The Chapter continues with an explanation as to the basis of case selection. The Rebuy Case is constructed from transactions that occur within vertical trading arrangements, in conditions of power based interdependence and whose subject is the rebuy of either a good or service which is the subject of upgrade or is perceived to be important by the buyer.

The research design is developed by describing the steps taken to select and recruit participants into the Rebuy Case, including those largely unsuccessful

attempts to select participants using purchasing community sites on the World-Wide Web. The basis of data collection is then described which follows a contemporary interpretation of the Diary-Diary Interview Method (Zimmerman and Wieder, 1977) in which respondents are invited to record their thoughts contemporaneously, as they progress through the pre-sales interaction associated with their chosen transaction. The arrangements for the follow-up interview, which explores and develops the themes raised in the diary, are then described together with the process for recording and transcribing the interview for subsequent analysis.

The Chapter describes the chosen Method of Analysis which is Qualitative Content Analysis, including the use of the NVivo9 software package to facilitate data handling and the moderation of the data to account for respondent repetition and intensity. The approach to presenting the results is explained before addressing the method taken to triangulate the results obtained through Qualitative Content Analysis in order to better inform the investigation through the benefits of differing perspectives.

Chapter 6 - presents the results of the Rebuy Case. The Chapter begins by presenting the results for each of the twenty-one individual transactions that collectively comprise the Case. The results are presented in the form of individual 'Transaction X-Rays'. The dominant behaviour pattern to be identified is that of the 'T-Shaped' Buyer, who characteristically adopts a commercial approach to relationship management which is Adversarial while simultaneously seeking, to a somewhat limited extent, the means for operational collaboration. Secondary behaviour patterns are also identified. 'Transaction X-Rays' are also used to demonstrate the value perceptions held by the respective buyers.

The Chapter continues with a review of the outcomes of the triangulation process, the results of which prove to be well aligned with those derived through the analysis of the 'Transaction X-Rays'.

Through the aggregation of individual 'Transaction X-Rays', that share specific common characteristics, composite 'X-Rays' are developed whose further analysis gives rise to emergent themes, including the dominance of the 'T-Shaped' Buyer, the prominence of Exchange Value among the buyer's value perceptions and the frequent occurrence of BSPV. The Chapter concludes by recognising how these results effectively address the research questions.

Chapter 7 - begins with a discussion of the significance of BSPV and the dominance of the behavioural profile of the 'T-Shaped' buyer within the Rebuy Case. It is noted that the 'T-Shape' has previously been adopted by a range of authors to explain behavioural concepts not directly related to procurement activity. An examination is then conducted of the composite 'X-Rays' which allow comparison between various sub-groups within the Rebuy Case, and which raises noteworthy discussion points and potentially signposts the direction for future investigation. A further discussion point arises by making a simple comparison of the emergent primary and secondary behaviour patterns for each transaction against the corresponding dominant value perception.

The Chapter continues by considering the implications of the findings of the Rebuy Case on extant thinking and reaches a potentially surprising conclusion. Despite the apparent weight of opinion suggesting the benefits of 'Non-Adversarial and Collaborative Relationships', the Rebuy Case demonstrates the dominance of the 'T-Shaped' buyer who favours an Adversarial approach to value capture and only allows a limited degree of Collaborative value development with the supplier. The secondary 'Γ-shaped buyer' profile demonstrates buyer behaviours that are strongly Adversarial and are firmly conducted at Arm's Length. Recognising the limitations that are implicit in case study findings based on empirical evidence derived from a relatively small sample, it is nevertheless suggested that given the dominance of the 'T-shaped' buyer profile, potential explanations should be considered for this apparent gap.

The Rebuy Case findings are then discussed in respect of their implication for the application of Service-Dominant Logic. S-DL considers that value is created through the interaction between actors. The frequency with which BSPV occurs within the Rebuy Case, and the influence it has on buyer behaviour, suggests that tangible Value is being created (at least for the buyer) during the pre-sales interaction before there is an agreement between the parties to work together. This point is much earlier in the interaction than has previously been considered within the S-DL School.

The Contribution to Research Method Development is then discussed which lies in the possibility, presented in the thesis, to aggregate the input from multiple respondents in a manner that minimises the effects of

decontextualisation and decomposition. The Chapter concludes by highlighting possible directions for future research along three distinct strands; *intra* Case refinement, *extra* Case expansion and replication.

1.10 Chapter Summary

Chapter 1 has presented an overview of the significant body of extant thinking on professional buying, in which it was not only increasingly recognised as a potential source of competitive advantage but also as a subject area in need of further investigation. This recognition was, however, coupled with an appreciation of the difficulties associated with conducting research in an area which was characterised both by inherent complexity and also by access constraints, as the key social actors seek to protect commercial confidentiality. In response, the chapter noted the calls that have been made for improved research methods which have the potential to overcome these barriers. The chapter recognised that there was some debate as to the most appropriate direction to be adopted by future researchers, but acknowledged the need for an increased understanding as to what drives the behaviour of real buyers in empirically driven settings. The chapter concluded by providing the outline and structure of the thesis whose aim is to address, at least in part, the identified need. The following chapter, in an effort to meet this aim, conducts a structured review of literature relevant to the topic.

Chapter 2: The Traditional Perspectives on Professional Buying Behaviour

In Chapter 1 it was established that, despite a long history of academic investigation and the acknowledged importance of the topic, professional buying is a subject area that demands further research. From the overview presented it becomes apparent that in order to maximise the expected research contribution from such scholarly endeavour:

- The research methods utilised should be capable of penetrating the commercially inspired, organisational cultures that are based on confidentiality (Wind and Thomas, 1980:239; Rozemeijer, 2008:206 and Tassabehji and Moorhouse, 2008:66).
- The research should focus on, and embrace, the complexity of the empirical world (Campbell, 1985:35; Terpend, Kause and Dooley (2011:75 and Makkonen, Olkkonen and Halinen, 2012:773)

In order to more fully explore professional buying behaviour this chapter reviews the broad schools of thought that describe the major influences on the actions of professional buyers. The ontological roots of the literature considered include Negotiation Theory, Business Strategy and Supply Chain disciplines. The Chapter begins with an examination of both research traditions from the Negotiation School, namely descriptive and prescriptive research. Consideration is then given to the contribution to the body of knowledge made by those authors whose aim is to provide guidance to practitioners engaged in negotiation. Collectively this literature combines to form a broad view of the forces that drive the behaviours of those engaged in the negotiations that take place between professional buyers and sellers during their pre-sales interaction.

Supply chain and business strategy literature is then used as the basis for an appraisal of the operational mechanisms that connect professional buyers and sellers. Initially through consideration of unidirectional approaches which reflect only the perspective of the buyer, the contributions of lean and agile thinking, Transaction Cost Economising and Purchasing Portfolio Management are reviewed. The Chapter then considers the theoretical paradigms that reflect the views of both buyer and seller including The interactions perspective and the power perspective. Attention is then given to the

theoretical models that have been constructed to explain the interaction between professional buyers and sellers. The Chapter concludes by summarising the emergent gaps in extant literature, before summarising the Chapter findings.

2.1 The Negotiation School

Personal interaction remains an important element of customer supplier relationships and much of this interaction comprises the preamble to, the evaluation of, or the conducting of negotiation between the parties (Harwood, 2002:336). It is also noted by Spiro, Perreault and Reynolds (1976:353) that when a particular set of negotiations are terminated, regardless of the outcome, the experience becomes input for any future supply chain interaction. For this reason Leigh and Rethans (1984:30) are among those who recognise that negotiation forms a major component of professional buying and selling and therefore is deserving of continued research attention.

While it is recognised that there are many mechanisms that can be utilised by those who seek to establish trading terms, negotiation is intrinsic to the process by which the commercial arrangements between trading parties are determined (Ashcroft, 2004:233). Several authors including Kennedy, Benson and McMillan (1980:117), Whitaker and Austin (2001:15) and Ashcroft (2004:230) recognise that a key element of negotiation is the meeting of parties with conflicting interests to engage in a joint 'problem solving' discussion. However, it is also widely recognised that for meaningful negotiation to occur, it is a pre-requisite that both parties must have shared interests that are potentially of greater value to them than are the issues in dispute (Fowler, 1990:123; Mumpower, 1991:1305; Muthoo, 2000:146 and Harwood, 2002:336). A further aspect of negotiation is that it frequently requires compromise to take place if stalemate is to be avoided (Fisher and Ury, 1981:13; Kennedy, 1997:160 and Harwood, 2002:336). Additionally the bargaining process is seen as a means by which agreements between buyer and seller are ratified and legitimised within a structure of 'professional norms and rules' (Bonoma and Johnston, 1978:221).

Given the foregoing, it is useful to consider how academics have approached the study of Negotiation and to review the findings of their work as a means of understanding the buyer-seller interaction.

2.1.1 Academic Approaches to the Study of Negotiation

Young (1975:5), Raiffa (1982:21), Kersten and Cray (1996:441), Lim and Benbasat (1992:28) and Weigand and de Moor (2003:7) are typical of authors who share a common belief that negotiation research can be considered to focus either on the description of what happens during the process, or to focus on the resultant outcomes. Raiffa has termed these approaches respectively as descriptive and prescriptive.

2.1.2 The Descriptive Approach

Descriptive models are based on either sociological or psychological theory (Weigand and de Moor, 2003:8) and consider how information is passed between the parties and the phases through which the negotiation process progresses. Walton and McKersie (1965:4), Angelmar and Stern (1978:94), Mumpower (1991:1313), Fells (1996:50) and Harwood (2002:342) are among those who propose categories to describe bargaining behaviour, however, the suggestions made by these authors are very similar and broadly align to establish two distinct negotiation styles. The first is competitive (adversarial or distributive), in which negotiators seek to maximise their self-gain by the use of power and coercion and the other is collaborative (problem solving or integrative), in which bargainers display a bias towards the search for a solution that maximises mutual gain.

Harwood (2002:341) notes the inherent difficulty in gaining access to observe commercial negotiation. This difficulty undoubtedly contributes to the tendency for descriptive research into buyer-seller interaction to focus on the observation of negotiations conducted in a controlled laboratory setting. A range of such studies have been undertaken to examine the factors that trigger the use of power and coercion during negotiation. These include the work of researchers such as Mathews, Wilson, and Monoky (1972), Cook and Emerson (1978), Dwyer and Walker (1981), Clopton (1984), Lytle, Brett, and Shapiro (1999) and Kray *et al.* (2004). Cook and Emerson (1978:735) found that, in experimental situations in which power asymmetry is generated, males are more likely than females to attempt coercion; however, in an

unrelated experiment Kray *et al.* (2004:408) demonstrated that both sexes could be prompted to use aggression in an attempt to claim resources. Kolb (2009:516) summarises the complexity in stating her belief that studies into the role of gender in relation to the use of negotiation tactics and strategies have continually shifted and become more nuanced over time.

In separate laboratory trials in which bargainers were conditioned to believe that they held broadly similar values¹, their use of distributive bargaining techniques was found to diminish (Mathews, Wilson and Monoky, 1972:104 and Alexander, Schul and McCorkle, 1994:35). Clopton (1984:49) noted that the buyers' use of adversarial negotiating behaviour was not significantly affected by the sellers' concession behaviour; however, as joint commitments were made, Cook and Emerson (1978:734) found that the attempted use of coercion decreased. Lytle, Brett, and Shapiro (1999:43) used a laboratory setting to observe negotiating behaviours. In summary, they found that:

- distributive bargaining behaviours were frequently utilised without adequate consideration for the potential to generate a conflict spiral with the potential to ultimately end in deadlock
- attempts to generate mutually acceptable solutions increased with the maturity and educational level of attainment of the negotiators
- the attempts to find a consensus driven solutions increased with the complexity of the subject under negotiation

Criticism is, however, levelled at descriptive research which is contained within a laboratory setting because it is thought to frequently focus on artificial constructs, both in terms of the negotiators and also the subject under negotiation (Herbst and Schwarz, 2011:148). Certain empirical researchers including Perdue and Summers (1994) and Harwood (2002) have attempted studies examining the use of negotiating behaviours in naturalistic settings. Perdue and Summers (1994:179), surveyed a selection of industrial buyers by mail, and invited comments on the validity of certain bargaining behaviours. They found that (1994:186) buyers under heavy pressure appear to employ both problem solving and aggressive bargaining strategies within the same set of negotiations, but observe that the buyer's own negative perception of the use of tough tactics may have distorted their responses.

¹ A discussion of buyer values takes place in Section 4.1

Harwood (2002:340) also focussed on a combination of observation and interview to determine the professional buyer's use of collaborative versus competitive approaches to negotiation. Similar to Perdue and Summers, Harwood (2002:345) witnessed the use of both behavioural types during negotiations that she observed, however, she notes that there were discernible differences in the level of adversarial techniques deployed during the early stages of relational development, compared to those observed in the later stages.

Although many descriptive studies detect and examine attempts being made to coerce the other party or to develop 'mutuality' several of the researchers, including Clopton (1984:51), Perdue and Summers (1994:186) and Harwood (2002:345), record that the behaviours observed followed a more complex pattern than had been predicted. Despite the best efforts of those undertaking descriptive studies it appears that there is limited commonality in the findings as to the precise nature of the motivational forces influencing negotiators, neither does substantive evidence emerge that would provide guidance to those conducting negotiation as to which course of action is most likely to deliver their best outcome.

2.1.3 The Prescriptive Approach

The alternative approach suggested by Weigand and de Moor (2003:7) is one of undertaking prescriptive research. The most common expressions of prescriptive research are either through Economic Modelling or by the use of Game Theory. The objective of researchers who work in this area is to build a negotiation model which will predict how a totally rational negotiator should behave. A review of related literature shows that there are divided views as to the effectiveness of the approach.

Those who express reservations regarding the prescriptive approach include Raiffa (1982:21) who argues that prescriptive research has a tendency to focus on what ultra-smart people should do in competitive, interactive situations and not necessarily on a typical bargaining interaction. Raiffa further cautions that the approach is not easy to use and that it assumes levels of coherency that are seldom found in individuals and almost never in groups. Weigand and de Moor (2003:7) consider that the approach is, of necessity, over simplified and takes account of too few variables.

Kennedy, Benson, and McMillan (1980:20) consider that Game Theory takes probability based approaches to their most extreme form, a factor which they believe makes them operationally limiting. An alternative view is expressed by Muthoo (1999:6), who states:

'it (game theory) is currently the best available tool with which one can formalise the phenomena under consideration, and conduct a deep, insightful, and rigorous investigation of the role of various forces on bargaining outcome.'

However, even with such an apparently fundamental belief in the approach, Muthoo (1996:334) subsequently appears to qualify his earlier statement:

'in many contexts applied theorists have not yet developed models of bargaining that adequately and persuasively capture the essentials of the bargaining situations that interest them.'

Typical of those authors who argue in favour of Game Theory approaches are Harsanyi (1965:81), Young (1975:36), Gibbons (1992), McMillan (1992:45), Nagarajan and Sošić (2008:720) and Sheu and Gao (2014:314). They consider that in addition to mathematical rigor, the approach also provides its own nomenclature and constructs which are suitable for use in a bargaining context. The approach gives researchers the ability to calculate the damage that can be caused by a particular action, and also the cost of causing this damage, which allows the prediction of likely actions and consequent reactions. However, even those who support this approach acknowledge that the strongly mathematical basis at its core can cause certain important factors to be abstracted away in the interest of achieving the desired mathematical rigor (Young, 1975:36).

Despite expressing certain reservations as to the effectiveness of prescriptive methods, Raiffa (1982:66) uses the technique to mathematically model empirical cases and demonstrates that the method can be successfully applied. Romp (1997) and Dixit and Skeath (1999) outline the basis of Game Theory and from such work it can be concluded that dynamic, cooperative games most closely resemble the negotiation process. Dynamic games differ from static games in that the players decide on their next move with the knowledge of the moves already made by the other players. Cooperative games differ from non-cooperative games in that the players are allowed to agree in advance the strategies that they will deploy. The essence of Game

Theory is that a player's move (in the negotiation) will be determined by the pay-off that will accrue and, further, that the player will always attempt to maximise that pay-off. For this premise to be true the pay-off function must be clear to the player (negotiator) and the player must be faultless in the calculation of their expected gains. There are obvious practical difficulties in defining the pay-off function because not all benefits, or costs, are tangible and game theoretic models rely on the function to comprehensively express the player's value perception (Dixit and Skeath, 1999:26). It is also noted that the calculation of pay-off will frequently be subject to the varying perception of the negotiator (Romp, 1997:43 and Dixit and Skeath, 1999:213). Further potential difficulties result in attempting to utilise game theory to understand negotiation from the perspective of the composite benefits that accrue to all players in a game rather than the pay-off function applying to individual players. Clyman (1995:40) specifically rejects dyadic performance as a measure of pay-off and concludes (1995:48) that any measure of joint performance must recognise both the complexity and the richness of the specific negotiating setting and be viewed from the perspective of the individual player.

Within the field of Game Theoretical Research, models have been developed that have sought to examine the role played by certain of a player's less objective, value related parameters in determining the outcome of specific games. Andreoni and Miller (1993:582) and Kreps and Wilson (1982:275) are among those researchers who have examined how a player's desire to build a reputation for altruism or toughness can have a significant impact on the outcome of a game. Importantly, they recognise that the desire to build a reputation may have no obvious relationship with the game itself. It has also been established by Selten and Stoecker (1986:47) that repeated games can have different outcomes to one-off games, an observation which they attribute to the players desire to cooperate growing as their relationship develops. This cooperation can apparently be to the detriment of an individual player's pay off, especially if they fall victim to a betrayal of trust. While for some authors (McMillan, 1992:9; Nagarajan and Sošić, 2008:720 and Sheu and Gao, 2014:314) the application of game theory, as a tool to be used in negotiation research, represents an attractive proposition and one which has resulted in distinct contributions to related knowledge, the associated

practical difficulties highly restrict game theory's ability to contribute to the conceptual understanding of the negotiation process and it is also noted that the conclusions reached are sometimes questionable, when compared against real life situations (Young, 1975:36).

2.1.4 Theoretic Models and the Broad Negotiation School

Notwithstanding the acknowledged limitations of both descriptive and prescriptive approaches in the study of negotiation there has developed, over many decades, a broad school of thought that encompasses the work of both descriptive and prescriptive researchers, conceptual authors and also those who have targeted their writing at practitioners. The resulting body of knowledge has formed a broad negotiation school in which several theoretical models have been advanced, that offer a deeper understanding of the factors that influence those who negotiate commercial terms of exchange.

Zeuthen (1930:153) postulates that bargaining is best considered as a fundamentally adversarial process in which each side evaluates the ratio of their probable gains to their probable fighting costs. The side who perceives their ratio as being lower is likely to concede and, thereby, reduce the remaining gains available to the other side. Such a reduction will simultaneously reduce the remaining available gain and give the side who has received the concession less incentive to continue the fight. Zeuthen suggests that this economic warfare will continue until both sides perceive their ratio to be zero. The resulting Theory of Economic Warfare seeks to provide a framework by which the negotiation process can be better understood. The essence of this framework is that there is little to be gained through cooperation, other than to the extent that it presents an opportunity to convince the opponent that the threats which have been made are more robust, more irrevocable and better founded than his own.

Pen (1952:24), in his General Theory of Bargaining, also supports the position of economic theorists by stating that:

'the [psychological] attitude is sometimes defended by pointing out that the [bargaining] problem is not economic, but one that belongs in the realm of psychology. However, this argument cannot be accepted because the task of economics is to elucidate the relation between price and the psychological factors.'

In an attempt to supply the required elucidation, Pen derives ophelimity functions as an expression of buyer and seller economic satisfaction in terms of price paid and their respective desire to avoid conflict. Using these equations Pen (1952:42) analyses negotiation methods and concludes that:

'the theory covers the whole field of the bargaining process'

From Pen's perspective the significance of his theory is that it provides a mechanism to express the opposing wills of the bargainers in terms of a mathematical expression of bargaining power. However, he also cautions that the determination of the variables on which these ophelimity functions depend may be very complicated and indeed may significantly limit the theory's ability to determine the outcome of any negotiation.

Bishop (1962:104) advances the use of Arbitration Theories which also rely on the interpersonal comparisons of utility in an attempt to understand the prevailing power balance between negotiators. It is argued that through an understanding of utility it is theoretically possible to determine the most likely outcome of the bargaining process. Bishop, however, concedes that:

'available observational and experimental evidence shows them to have, at best, dubious predictive value.'

Karras (1992:141) seeks, through his discussion of Expected Satisfaction Theory, to develop a psychological perspective to the understanding of negotiation. He suggests that:

'The element of expected satisfaction is an integral part of every transaction. People evaluate future events in a personal way and attach different dollar and psychological values to them.'

Fundamental to this theory is the need for negotiators to test any assumptions as to their counterpart's satisfaction, expectations and goals. Implicit is the recognition that benefits are likely to accrue from the use of cooperative behaviour in the search for solutions that maximise the expected satisfaction of one party, without compromising the expected satisfaction of the other.

Common to these theoretical perspectives is the bargainers' ability to formulate equations, at least at a conceptual level, which allow them to evaluate their position against their opponent and therefore to determine the solution point at which their negotiated gains are maximised, or losses minimised. The issue, however, as noted by the scholars who advance

Theoretic Models is the difficulty of embracing the inherent complexity of the situation and converting this to an equation fit for practitioner use.

2.1.5 Practitioner Focussed Models and the Broad Negotiation School

Within the broad negotiation school there is also a significant body of literature which, although focussed mainly on providing guidance to practitioners, also provides useful conceptual insight. Raiffa (1982:46) offers a model of distributive bargaining between buyer and seller in which he outlines the Zone of Agreement within which the players operate (Figure 2.1). Although this model is presented as being simplified it clearly demonstrates the interaction between the objectives of both parties and also the zero-sum nature of this particular perspective. Zero-sum is a term, borrowed from Game Theory², which suggests that the negotiating parties cannot through mutual cooperation increase the overall value of the collective benefits which will accrue.

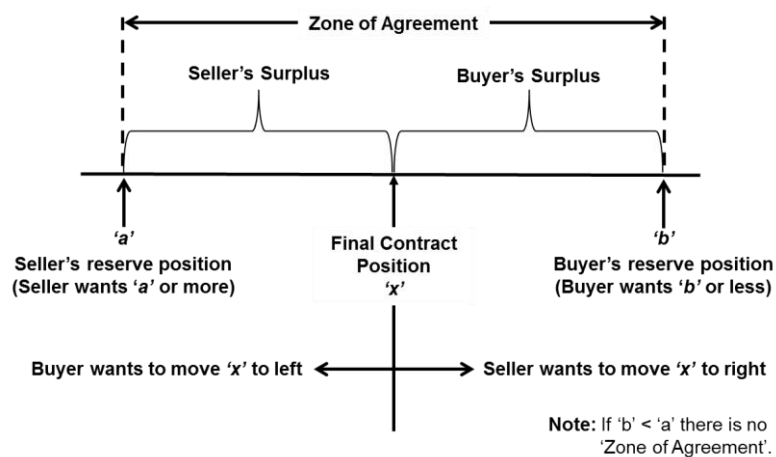


Figure 2.1: The Geometry of Distributive Bargaining

Source: Adapted from Raiffa (1982:46)

Within the Raiffa model it is clear that both buyer and seller want to move in opposite directions and several authors express opinions as to how practitioners can best be achieve the movement they desire. Karras (1992:36) recognises that the outcome of any negotiation is a function of the relative power between the parties and argues that the enhancement of negotiation skill is the one of most effective ways to increase the power held. Karras supports the negotiators simultaneous use of both power based adversarial techniques and also of collaborative problem solving approaches. Rojot

² Game Theoretic approaches to negotiation are discussed in Section 2.1.3

(1991:47) proffers a similar perspective in which the negotiated outcome is perceived to be a function of the relative power held by the parties but also recognises that it is legitimate, on occasion, to adopt a more supportive, collaborative and understanding approach. Noticeably, however, Rojot does little to define any criteria by which to determine the appropriateness of either style. Fisher and Ury (1981:11) describe a process that they classify as 'principled negotiation' in which relationships are ideally protected by the adoption of a rational of identifying solutions that maximise the joint gains shared between the parties. This they see as the essence of the collaborative approach. Alternatively, Kennedy, Benson, and McMillan (1980:143), Fleming (1997:25) and Kennedy (1997:183) believe that maximising power is fundamental to the negotiation process and discuss the tactics and strategies aimed at enhancing the power held. While acknowledging that good working relations should be preserved, their basic approach is firmly rooted in the effective utilisation of asymmetric power.

Lytle, Brett and Shapiro (1999:32) offer a view that practitioners have three strategic alternatives that can be adopted during negotiation; these are to focus on Interests, Rights, and Power. They summarise these options diagrammatically in their model of 'Three Basic Approaches to the Resolution of Disputes' (Figure 2.2)

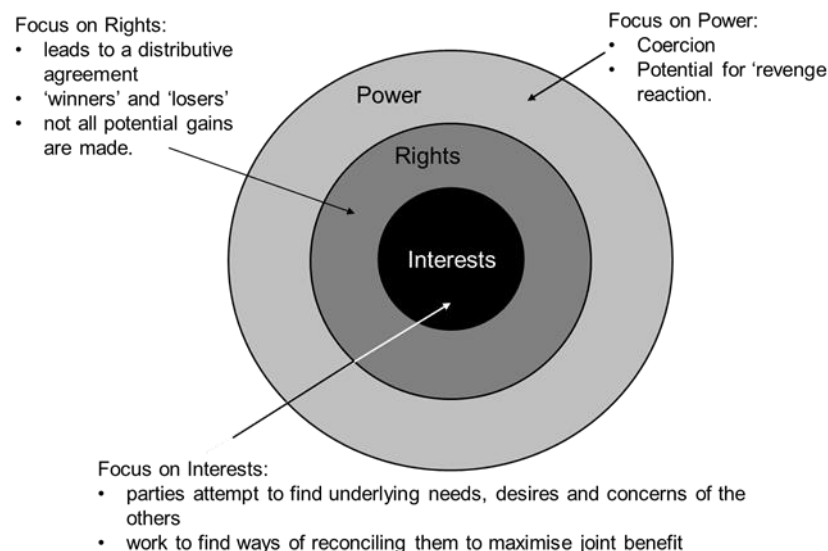


Figure 2.2: Three Basic Approaches to the Resolution of Disputes
Source: Adapted from Lytle, Brett and Shapiro (1999:32)

Lytle, Brett and Shapiro recognise that all three approaches may well be utilised within a single negotiation, arguing that the ability to make tactical

use of these different approaches, particularly when confronting ‘rights’ and ‘power’ lines of attack, are key managerial skills.

Lax and Sebenius (1986:33) offer an insightful observation that gives context to the combined use of both adversarial and collaborative approaches, within the context of a specific commercial negotiation:

‘No matter how much creative problem solving enlarges the pie, it must still be divided; value that has been created must be claimed. And, if the pie is not enlarged, there will be less to divide; there is more value to be claimed if one has helped create it first.’

Walton and McKersie (1965:165) detail a series of complex strategies arising from the amalgamation of adversarial and collaborative bargaining. They argue that by playing the ‘Mixed Game’ it is possible to benefit from the combination of integrative bargaining to establish the maximum total sum available, accompanied by relatively hard distributive bargaining to claim the maximum share. They note, however, that despite its attractiveness there are several practical difficulties associated with the implementation of such a strategy, not least because of the difficulty in transitioning between soft and hard bargaining in the course of a single negotiation. The outline of the Walton and McKersie (1965:164) complex strategy model is replicated in Figure 2.3.

Share Distribution	‘Hard’	‘Pure’ Distributive Bargaining.	‘The Mixed Game.’
	‘Soft’	‘The Default Outcome’	‘Pure’ Integrative Bargaining.
		Distributive	Integrative
Negotiating Stance			

Figure 2.3: The Four Complex Bargaining Strategies
Source: Adapted from Walton and McKersie (1965:164)

Having reviewed the broad negotiation school, both in terms of the theoretic models advanced and also through practitioner focussed literature, it becomes apparent that although insightful there are limits as to the perception of buyer-seller interactions that are provided. These limitations are discussed in the following section, together with potential options whereby wider perspectives can be gained.

2.1.6 The Limitations of the Broad Negotiation School

The broad negotiation school presents a view of buyer-seller interaction in which the social actors adopt a limited range of tactical positions. These tactics include combinations of working collaboratively in an effort to develop potential joint advantage, or attempting identify and take advantage of any power asymmetries in order to maximise unilateral gain. There are, however, limitations as to the understanding that can be gained from this standpoint. Firstly, as acknowledged by Ralf (1995:31) from the perspective of negotiators:

'What is needed, however, is a balance between both approaches and a sophisticated understanding of which tactic to use'

While Ralf's observation has a clear practitioner focus, there is generally insufficient insight to be gained from within the broad negotiation school as to the nature of the relationships operating within buyer-seller interactions. As Spekman and Gronhaug (1986:57) observe, while bargaining describes the decision making process that takes place within a goal system in which conflict exists, there has been little empirical evidence produced that would support the placing of the bargaining perspective at the core of any professional buying model.

In order, therefore, to develop the understanding of the behaviours of professional buyers and sellers it is necessary to broaden the ontological perspective. Plank, Reid, and Newell (2007:42) observe that the tradition of considering both the wider organisational network and also the longer term aspects of the relationships, have positively contributed to the understanding of how buyers and sellers relate. It is, therefore, the wider operational mechanisms in which commercial transactions occur to which focus is now turned.

2.2 The Operational School

Unlike the broad negotiation school, the operational school expands the study of buyer behaviour to include the environment within which the transactions occur. Svahn and Westerlund (2009:176) argue that the relationship between professional buyers and sellers can only be properly understood within the context of both the purchasing situation and the purchasing goals. They identify three purchasing situations, namely 'transactional exchange', 'relational partnerships' and 'collaborative networks', and consider that within each situation the buyer may legitimately focus on either 'efficiency' or 'effectiveness' as a goal. The authors argue that within each combination of 'purchasing situation' and 'purchasing goal' there will exist a distinct set of behavioural drivers, which will be heavily influenced by the prevailing operational environment.

Cox *et al.* (2004c:4) also recognise the importance of the structure and purpose of the operational relationships between professional buyers and sellers, they provide a broad conceptual framework for the review of extant thinking on the topic. They distinguish between those unidirectional approaches, which view the relationship only from the perspective of either the buyer or the seller, from those bidirectional models that attempt to capture the views of both buyer and seller. These groupings form a useful framework within which to review extant literature relating to the operational school.

2.2.1 Unidirectional Approaches

The unidirectional approaches within the operational school include relational thinking, Transaction Cost Economising and Purchasing Portfolio Management, each of which will be examined within this section of the thesis before summarising the insight they collectively provide.

2.2.1.1 Relational Thinking

Relational thinking is closely allied to the lean and agile models of supply chain management, initially developed as the lean supply model in an effort to manage the complex and highly layered networks of suppliers in the automotive industry (Womack and Jones, 1996:140; Lamming *et al.*, 2001:5; Stratton and Warburton, 2003:183; Cagliano, Caniato and Spina, 2004:153 and CIPS, 2007:4). The approach is built on the premise of long-term relationships

between customers and suppliers, in which there is a close integration of both physical and information flows with, for example, the adoption of Electronic Data Interfaces (EDI) and the accompanying visibility of costs and stock levels. Tringham (2005:16) notes that, in order to build lean supply chains, improved communications are a key success factor. Cox (2004b:348) observes that not only do lean practitioners emphasise the continuous reduction of waste and inefficiency, but they also suggest that longer term equity based approaches are the most effective way to achieve competitive advantage. In short, the lean model is founded on the premise that by building a relationship and openly sharing information between buyer and seller, value will develop across the dyad in a manner that would not be possible via simple, market based transactions. Christopher and Towill (2002:2) note that lean supply models work best in cost driven, commodity markets in which demand is relatively predictable.

An alternative model, which also relies on relational thinking, is agile supply as developed in industries such as apparel and personal electronics, which are characterised by high volatility and uncertainty of demand (Cagliano, Caniato and Spina, 2004:154). The main goals are speed of delivery, flexibility and quality, which can be achieved through dynamic partnerships, information sharing and the coordination of physical flows without the need for rigid investments, in order to allow rapid reconfiguration (Fisher, Hammond, Obermeyer and Raman 1994:84; Christopher, 2000:37; Christopher and Towill, 2002:1 and CIPS, 2007:4).

Relational thinking also exists outside the lean and agile paradigms, indeed the idea of buyers working together with their suppliers was advocated by writers within the quality movement such as Crosby (1980:62). Sheth (1996:10) observes that the emergence of Total Quality Management (TQM) has caused external customers to become more involved in the procurement processes and practices of their suppliers. Donaldson (1996:26) views TQM as a process that includes developing an increased understanding of suppliers, which requires the buyer to be proactive in marshalling the joint efforts of all parties within the supply chain. Donaldson (1996:31), however, also observes that despite TQM and supply-chain management practices being widely used, relationships are frequently undermined by buyer led, tender bidding

processes which he believes weakens the required level of trust, openness and commitment.

Although relational thinking, with the building of cooperative relationships between buyer and seller as its foundation, enjoys significant support there are those who consider the level of trust required is seldom justified. A view summarised by Cox (2004b:348) who criticises the relational approach as frequently being:

'commercially and analytically myopic'

The difficulties associated with implementing buyer-seller interactions based on relational thinking are highlighted by Lamming *et al.* (2001:6), who note that open book arrangements are a frequent component of such relationships. Lamming *et al.* observe that while buyers frequently attempt to use the information they obtain to stage interventions into the supplier's practices, aimed at obtaining unilateral price reductions, the sellers are also inclined to provide distorted information in order to protect their commercial positions. Lamming *et al.* quote extreme, but commonplace examples of the creation of entirely false data produced solely for customer inspections and observe the rationality, if not the ethics, of such opportunism.

2.2.1.2 Transaction Cost Economising

The second of the unilateral approaches is Transaction Cost Economics which according to Williamson (1985:47, 1996:47) effectively considers opportunism within buyer-seller relationships and is built on the earlier work of Coase (1937, 1960) and Hoffman and Spitzer (1982). Transaction Cost Economics views the buyer-seller interaction from the perspective the transaction. Williamson (1991:75) argues that it is the economising of both the *ex ante* and the *ex post* costs and risks associated with the transaction, which should dominate the drive for business efficiency. The *ex post* costs include the cost of adapting the agreement once established and the costs of agreement governance in an attempt to prevent opportunism. Williamson argues that these costs must be considered simultaneously with the *ex ante* costs such as search costs and the purchase price.

Williamson also recognises two basic aspects of human behaviour in which context he believes that the drive to economise transaction costs must be viewed. Firstly, that both parties will act in their own self-interest, often

using guile to disguise their intentions (Williamson, 1991:79) and secondly that they will be compelled to act in a state of bounded rationality (Williamson, 1996:36), because of limits on knowledge, foresight, skill and time.

In Figure 2.4, Williamson (1985:67) presents a view of the alternative contracting schemas available to buyers. This is based on the buyer's recognition as to the extent of bounded rationality and the perceived likelihood of opportunism being exercised during the operation of contractual the agreement. Williamson considers that the situation represented by Quadrant 4 accords with reality, in that it is the circumstance in which self-interest seeking with guile will manifest. Behaviourally, buyers who contract within Quadrant 3 are entering a state of intended cooperation with their suppliers, in recognition that in the event of turbulence both parties agree to act in good faith to achieve a resolution. Williamson dismisses Quadrant 1 as being a condition of contractual utopia. Given the likely extent of bounded rationality Williamson (1981:553) considers that it is impossible to deal with the resulting complexity, meaning that consequently incomplete contracting is the best that can be achieved and that therefore it will seldom be possible to operate successfully in Quadrant 2.

Condition of Opportunism By Supplier	Absent	(1) Bliss	(3) 'General Clause' Contracting
	Present	(2) Comprehensive Contracting	(4) Serious Contractual Difficulties
		Absent	Admitted

Condition of Bounded Rationality for the Buyer

Figure 2.4: Contracting Schema
Source: Adapted from Williamson (1985:67)

Williamson (1981:554) observes that the problems of contracting are greatly complicated by economic agents who make false or empty, that is, self-disbelieved threats or promises, or who cut corners for undisclosed personal advantage. Williamson (1993:101) further observes that opportunism is not an arcane economic condition but is a familiar and pervasive behaviour. He

notes that opportunism includes the failure to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, the possibility that economic agents will lie, cheat and steal, or will conform to the letter but violate the spirit of an agreement. Hill (1990:501) observes, however, that Williamson did not claim that all actors will behave opportunistically and acknowledges that there will be actors who, perhaps for reasons of principle, will never be the first to act opportunistically. Hill, however, also recognises Williamson's argument that due to bounded rationality and uncertainty, it is difficult to distinguish actors who will cooperate and trust each other, from those who will behave opportunistically. Hill (1990:501) reflects on the work of Smith (1776), in observing that because the value inherent in a transaction will be maximised whenever actors are prepared to cooperate, it follows, as a long term consequence, that the invisible hand will select those actors whose behaviours are biased toward cooperation.

David and Han (2004:41) also note that one of the principal attributes of a transaction, as considered within Transaction Cost Economics, is the frequency with which it occurs. Ring and Van de Ven (1992:489) note that as organisations transact more frequently it increases the likelihood that they will observe norms of equity and reciprocity regarding the management of their contractual relationships, and that they may loosen the constraints on operating autonomy that are deployed to guard against opportunistic behaviour.

2.2.1.3 Purchasing Portfolio Management

The third of the unilateral approaches to be considered is Purchasing Portfolio Management. The basis of the approach is an assessment by the buyer of the organisation's purchases according to their importance (measured in terms of cost, value added and profitability) and the complexity of their supply market (measured in terms of monopoly or oligopoly potential, pace of technological advance, entry barriers, logistics cost and complexity). This assessment is used as the basis on which to segment the purchase portfolio and hence to determine the appropriate supplier relationship by segment. Figure 2.5 shows The Purchasing Portfolio Management Model (Kraljic, 1983:111) which considers the relationship unilaterally from the purchaser's perspective.

Importance of the Purchase.	High	Leverage Items •Few suppliers •Low Value <i>Focus: Contingency Planning</i>	Strategic Items •Few suppliers •High Value <i>Focus: Relationship Management</i>
	Low	Non-critical Items •Many suppliers •Low Value <i>Focus: Transaction Cost Reduction</i>	Bottleneck Items •Many suppliers •High Value <i>Focus: Cost/Short-term Reliability</i>
		Low	High

Supply Market Complexity.

Figure 2.5: Purchasing Portfolio Management

Source: Adapted from Kraljic (1983:111)

Whilst Olsen and Ellram, (1997:110) observe that this model has gained some prominence because of its adoption by practitioners, experience has shown that the complexity of the dimensions used in constructing portfolio models has limited their effectiveness.

2.2.1.4 The Limitations of Unidirectional Approaches

More broadly, the limitations of considering only the viewpoint of the buyer or the seller is recognised by Cox *et al.* (2004:18), who observe that a holistic understanding of the relationship can only be reached by fully exploring the relationship from the perspective of both parties. They further observe a specific limitation related to Purchasing Portfolio Management, in that it does not recognise that buyer-seller relationships are not formed in a unilateral manner (Cox *et al.*, 2004:7) Similarly Zajac and Olsen (1993:132) observe that because standard transaction cost analysis is essentially a single-party analysis of cost minimization, it neglects to adequately consider any potential interdependence between exchange partners.

2.2.2 Bidirectional Approaches

In answer to criticisms associated with the adoption of unidirectional approaches to the study of buyer-seller interactions a series of bidirectional approaches have emerged. Within this thesis these are grouped as firstly, the interactions perspective and secondly, the power perspective.

2.2.2.1 The Interactions Perspective

The basis of the interactions perspective is that buying and selling companies interact within the context of business markets. These interactions occur in a manner that is beyond the complete control of any individual actor, and each element of the interaction is perceived and reacted to by the counterparts. These incremental episodes then build to form a continuing relationship between supplier and customer. Each transaction is simply a further episode that can only be understood within the context of the relationship in which it takes place (Metcalf, L.E., Frear, C.R. and Krishnan, R., 1992:28; Turnbull, Ford and Cunningham, 1996:45 and Ford and Håkansson, 2006:250).

The IMP Group (2002:29) have expended considerable research effort in developing the interactions approach, the basis of which assumes the existence of a long-term relationship, which has either been formed over repeat purchases or, in the case of one-off transactions there has been a significant evaluation of the prospective trade. While concerned principally with the development of relationships between organisations, the IMP Group recognises that the trading parties have a legitimate obligation to put their own commercial interests above those with which they trade. Gadde, Håkansson and Persson (2010:116) recognise, therefore, that interaction in business relationships will always be characterised by both conflict and co-operation, because the parties simultaneously hold both contradictory and shared interests.

Håkansson and Snehota (2002:38) express the view that the cornerstone of the interactions approach is that the relationships between buyers and sellers exists on a combination of technical, social and economic levels. Håkansson and Snehota (2002:38) also recognise the complexity of these relationships and consider the effect of environmental factors that are generally outside the control of both the buyer and the seller, and also of atmospheric factors that, while non-transactional, are within the influence of the parties. Ford, Håkansson and Johanson (2002:81) believe that the relationship between buyer and seller is a function of:

- Capability ~ the extent to which the seller can satisfy the requirements of the buyer.
- Mutuality ~ the degree to which one or other party will compromise for the common good.

- Particularity ~ the extent to which the seller is willing to offer the buyer special treatment.
- Inconsistency ~ the degree to which the interaction can vary between trading episodes.

Developing and strengthening the relationships between buyers and sellers is frequently cited as a potential source of competitive advantage, albeit one that also has acknowledged limitations (Carlisle and Parker, 1989:5; Sako, 1992:222; Nelson, Moody and Stegner, 2001:21; Carr and Pearson, 2002:1049; Turnbull, Ford, and Cunningham, 2002:5 and Sánchez-Rodríguez, 2009:169). Håkansson and Snehota (2002:89) observe that close relationships do not, in themselves, guarantee a balance of positive outcomes. Gadde, Håkansson and Persson (2010:136) recognise that relationship costs such as procurement costs, transaction costs and relationship handling costs need to be offset against the relationship benefits. Blois (2002:104) considers that the attractiveness of strengthening relationships is directly proportional to the value added by the relationship and inversely proportional to the risk of doing business.

Support for an interactions perspective extends beyond the IMP Group. Sako (1992:223) makes a comparison of 'Obligational Contractual Relations', against 'Arm's-Length Contracting Relationships' based on empirical studies made in the Japanese electronic component sector. Her conclusion is that if buyers can reconcile the risk of trusting their suppliers, then it is reasonable to conclude that 'Obligational Contracting' will achieve better outcomes. Carlisle and Parker (1989:5) echo the view that building relationships represents a more powerful strategy for achieving long-term profitability than does the adoption of adversarial approaches.

2.2.2.2 The Power Perspective

The second of the bidirectional approaches to be considered is the power perspective. The importance of power is acknowledged within many of the paradigms that are used to examine the interaction between professional buyers and sellers. Indeed Krapfel, Salmond and Spekman (1991:27) believe that power forms one of the core constructs in the assessment of inter organisational relationships.

A range of authors, including Pen (1952:29), Gulliver (1979:188), Rojot (1991:47) and Kennedy (1997:183), whose writing on the process of agreeing commercial terms between buyers and sellers falls within the broad negotiation school, acknowledge that power is the very essence of negotiating success. In his discussion of Transaction Cost Economics, Williamson (1996:39) also recognises the importance of the role played by power, in the form of resource dependency, which is potentially created when important and scarce resources are acquired from third parties. Williamson (1985:125), however, considers that power is of secondary importance and that the economising of *ex post* and *ex ante* transaction costs plays a more significant role (Williamson, 1996:258). Observations based on Purchasing Portfolio Management recognise, both conceptually (Kraljic, 1983:110) and empirically (Kraljic, 1983:112), that exploiting purchasing power is a key element of an organisations supply strategy. Commenting on relational thinking, Cox (1999:170) observes that the implementation of Toyota's lean manufacturing approach was only possible because it had a dominant power relationship with its suppliers, which allowed it to force through the innovations it desired from supply chain supplicants. Finally, from within the Industrial Marketing and Purchasing (IMP) Group, Lamming, Cousins and Notman (1996:179) recognise power as intrinsic to the relationship between purchaser and supplier, while Gadde, Håkansson and Persson (2010:115) observe that power and dependence are important issues for purchasing.

Aware that the various paradigmatic views discussed above recognise the importance of power, Cox *et al.* (2004:21) consider that the power perspective differentiates itself by firstly, focussing explicitly on the exchange relationship between buyer and supplier and secondly, in asserting that the relative power of the buyer and supplier is the determining factor in both the operational and commercial outcomes of any transaction. Cox, Sanderson and Watson (2000:23) consider that the resources that shape the power positions of each party are likely to be a combination of utility and scarcity. The scarcity of a resource is considered to be primarily determined by its imitability or its substitutability (Cox, Sanderson and Watson, 2000:28), while its relative utility is based on a combination of the commercial importance and the operational importance of the goods or services being traded, as summarised by Figure 2.6 (Cox, Sanderson and Watson, 2000:27).

Degree of Commercial Importance.	High (Primary Activity)	Complementary Resource (Low / Medium Utility)	Critical Resource (High Utility)
	Low (Support Activity)	Residual Resource (Low Utility)	Key Resource (Medium / High Utility)
		Low (Readily Substituted)	High (Not Readily Substituted)
Degree of Operational Importance.			

Figure 2.6: The Relative Utility of Firm Resources
Source: Cox, Sanderson and Watson (2000:27)

The resulting combination of utility and scarcity for each party gives rise to the likely exchange relationship between buyer and seller (Cox, Sanderson and Watson, 2000:28), which is graphically summarised in Figure 2.7.

Relative Utility and Scarcity of Buyer's Resources for the Supplier.	High	Buyer Dominance	Interdependence
	Low	Independence	Supplier Dominance
		Low	High
Relative Utility and Scarcity of Supplier's Resources for the Buyer.			

Figure 2.7: Potential Buyer and Supplier Exchange Relationships
Source: Cox, Sanderson and Watson (2000:28)

Cox (2004b:352) further believes that by using the business exchange relationship as a building block, it is possible to develop a comprehensive understanding of the power and leverage situation along the entire supply chain. According to Cox, Sanderson and Watson (2000:34) it is necessary to focus beyond the dyadic relationship into the wider supply chain because many problems with suppliers originate not from the immediate supplier but from upstream, while changes in the commercial climate downstream are nearly always fed back along the supply chain.

Having determined the most likely business exchange relationship Cox *et al.* (2004:79) consider that the next step, within the power perspective, is to establish the relationships management style which should be adopted. Cox, Sanderson and Watson (2000:57) note that considerable judgement is required on behalf of both the buyer and supplier in order to develop and to optimise

this aspect of the interaction. The four basic relationship management styles are summarised in Figure 2.8.

Relative Share of Value Appropriation.	Inequality	Adversarial Arm's Length Relationship	Adversarial Collaborative Relationship
	Equality	Non-Adversarial Arm's Length Relationship	Non-Adversarial Collaborative Relationship
		Arm's length	Collaborative

Way of Working.

Figure 2.8: The Four Basic Relationship Management Styles

Source: Cox et al. (2004:79)

Cox *et al.* (2004:79) discuss these relationship management styles in some detail. Adversarial Arm's Length relationships are characterised as being relatively short-term exchange relationships, in which both buyer and supplier will seek to use their power position to maximise their unilateral gain. Typically one of the parties will be successful in appropriating the greatest proportion of the value, while the other bears the risk. On this basis co-operation between the parties is likely to be at a minimum, contingent with satisficing the basic demands of their exchange partner.

When the relationship between buyer and seller is Non-Adversarial and Arm's Length, there will be little cooperation between the parties in terms of either technical bonds or operational collaboration. Probably because of a lack of power with which to exert leverage, there is little resort to adversarial behaviour. It is likely that terms offered will, at least in the interim, be accepted by the exchange partner.

The third relationship management style discussed is a state of Adversarial Collaboration between buyer and seller. Characteristically, there is a clear commercial need for both parties to work together to achieve a mutually desirable outcome and therefore, to develop their operational interfaces, often over significant time periods. Notwithstanding the need for the collaborative behaviours required to achieve this ambition, the potential also exists for opportunism to occur when the power circumstances allow. It is recognised that both supplier and buyer may take advantage of their relative power position in an attempt to increase their share of the available value.

The final buyer-seller relationship identified is one of Non-Adversarial Collaboration, in which both buyer and seller only act collaboratively, accepting that the use of opportunism is likely to destroy trust and believing that collaboration will result in mutually beneficial, superior joint performance. In such a relationship there is usually clarity both as to the joint goals of the dyad and also the advantages for each party of achieving them.

An alternative power based model is suggested by Krapfel, Salmond and Spekman (1991:27), who identify six potential modes of relationship management, as diagrammatically portrayed in Figure 2.9.

			High
	Accommodation	Collaboration	Administration
	Submission	Negotiation	Domination
			Low
	Weakness	Balanced	Strength
	Perceived Power Position		
	Interest Commonality		

Figure 2.9: Relationship Management Mode Matrix
Source: Krapfel, Salmond and Spekman (1991:27)

In this model, parties who enjoy a position of high relative power are likely to manage the interaction by either ‘Administration’ or ‘Domination’ depending on the degree to which the actors share common interests. The principal difference between these relationship management modes is the tone of the communication which, when commonality is low will tend to be directive and be supported by threats. Similarly those who are in a position of low relative power, in situations where there is little commonality of interest, are likely to adopt a submissive approach. When the party has low power, but where a degree of shared interest prevails, they are likely to attempt to accommodate the other party through the provision of non-sensitive information. Where the relative power between the parties is balanced two potential relationship management approaches are suggested. With the presence of shared interests the parties are most likely to collaborate, however, if there is low commonality the parties may well attempt to negotiate. While there is a

certain similarity between the basic relationship management styles of Cox *et al.* (2004:79) and the relationship management modes of Krapfel, Salmond and Spekman (1991:27), importantly the latter do not differentiate between operational and commercial outcomes. This is a significant variation between their perspectives on the buyer-seller interaction³.

A further aspect of the power perspective is that it predicts that both buyer and seller will attempt, through their interaction, to improve their relative power position in the hope of achieving a more congenial leverage position from which to pursue their objectives. Cox *et al.* (2004:46) show diagrammatically in Figure 2.10 how buyers would ideally seek to reposition their power position.

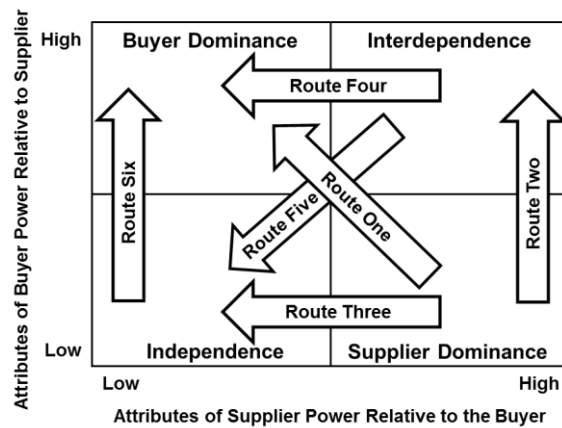


Figure 2.10: Repositioning Buyer Leverage in the Power Matrix
Source: Adapted from Cox et al. (2004:46)

For example, a buyer in a situation of Supplier Dominance would ideally wish to adopt a relationship management style (Arm’s Length or Collaborative) to assist repositioning. The buyer’s likely preferred routes, in reducing order of expected gain, would be Route One, Route Two and then Route Three. Similarly if the prevailing power circumstance was one of Interdependence the buyer would ideally wish to follow Route Four, however, may realistically adopt Route Five in an effort to benefit from the market forces that may well reduce costs without the need to develop long-term, value sharing strategies. There are, however, acknowledged difficulties in operationalising the power perspective including the lack of a generally accepted definition as to what constitutes power (Gulliver, 1979:188 and Williamson, 1985:258). There is a

³ The variation between the operational and commercial perspectives on buyer-seller interaction is discussed further in Section 2.5.2

broad acceptance that power is largely subjective in its nature and that it must be recognised by both parties otherwise it will have no effect (Rojot, 1991:49; Kennedy, 1997:184 and Karras, 1992:65). Conceptually, power is viewed as the capacity to influence or the authority to command action, especially if that action is perceived as being non-trivial and detrimental to the wishes of the opposing party (Emerson, 1962:32; Cook and Emerson, 1978:723; Gulliver, 1979:188; Cox, Furlong and Page, 1985:31 and Manning and Robertson, 2003a:12). However, it is also recognised that the use of power has the potential to evoke unintended and potentially adverse consequences (Gulliver, 1979:201; Kasulis and Spekman, 1980:189 and Frazier and Anita, 1995:324).

The origins of power are also seen as diverse. Primary power can originate from a variety of sources including fungibility or the ease with which a suitable alternative good or service can be substituted (Emerson, 1962:32; Cook and Emerson, 1978:723; Kennedy Benson and McMillan, 1980:144; Fisher and Ury, 1981:106; Kennedy, 1997:198; Muthoo, 2000:155 and Larson (2003:142). Cox (2004c:229) recognises both Cognitive Power Resources, such as Information Asymmetry, and also Structural (market-based) Power Resources. Support for information imbalance as a primary source of power is also given by Sako (1992:226), Macbeth and Ferguson (1994:67), Kennedy (1997:183), Burton-Jones (1999:30), Muthoo (2000:165), Welbourne (2001:124) and Whitaker and Austin (2001:105). Market structure is also recognised as a power resource by Cook, Emerson and Gilmore (1983:281), Yamagishi, Gilmore and Cook (1988:835) and Bowles and Gintis (1993:90).

Williamson (1996:59) details a series of structural factors that give rise to conditions of asset specificity, which can lead to a power eroding dependency across trading dyads. These include Site Specificity (arising from geographical factors such as proximity), Physical Specificity (relating to high levels of product customisation), Dedicated Asset Specificity (arising from sunk investments) and Brand Name Capital possessed by one party but whose use is valued by the other. It is also recognised that in certain circumstance a source of Structural Power can be imbedded within a hierarchical culture (Emmerson, 1962:31 and Adair *et al.*, 2004:90).

2.2.3 Conclusions from the Review of the Operational School

Consideration of the broad operational school of buyer-seller interaction, which includes relational thinking, Transaction Cost Economising, Purchasing Portfolio Management, the interactions perspective and the power perspective, gives rise to a landscape of complexity and diversity of opinion. There are, however, common emergent themes such as the presence of both adversarial and cooperative behaviours, which are aligned with the findings resulting from the review of the broad negotiation school. While relational thinking is generally supportive of cooperative behaviours under the appropriate conditions, Transaction Cost Economising is heavily influenced by the possibility of self-interest seeking with guile. Advocates of Purchasing Portfolio Management express the view that relationships should be a function of market complexity market and the importance of the trade, while supporters of the power perspective emphasise the need to consider both commercial and operational outcomes in determining the appropriate trading relationship. Within the interactions perspective it is believed that buyer-seller relationships will develop through multiple interactions and that there is potential to increase competitive advantage through long-term cooperation. Within the broad operational school there is, however, little predictive clarity as to where adversarial or cooperative behaviours are likely to occur, neither is there a suitable measure of appropriateness by which buyer-seller relationship choices can be evaluated.

The wider consideration of both the broad negotiation and the operational schools of thought give rise to a need to further reflect on the detailed interaction that takes place between professional buyers and sellers. Scholars have developed a range of models to describe this interaction and these will be examined in the next section of the thesis.

2.3 Buyer-Seller Relationship Models

Crow, Olshavsky and Summers (1980:34) recognise that much of the research conducted on professional buying has had as its primary focus either the development of comprehensive models, to better explain the interaction between buyer and seller, the identification and modelling of the relevant stages in the purchase process or the determination of the various vendor attributes and bid characteristics that form the facets of the relationship

between buyer and seller. In reviewing the models produced it is necessary to maintain a balance between parsimony and completeness. The objective, therefore, is to examine a sufficient number of the key models to gain an overview of their salient features.

2.3.1 Business Process Models

The advancement of models focussing on the basic decision making processes used by buying firms was popular amongst early researchers, especially those whose interest lay primarily in marketing. Such a model was advanced by Ozanne and Churchill (1971:323) which is replicated in Figure 2.11.

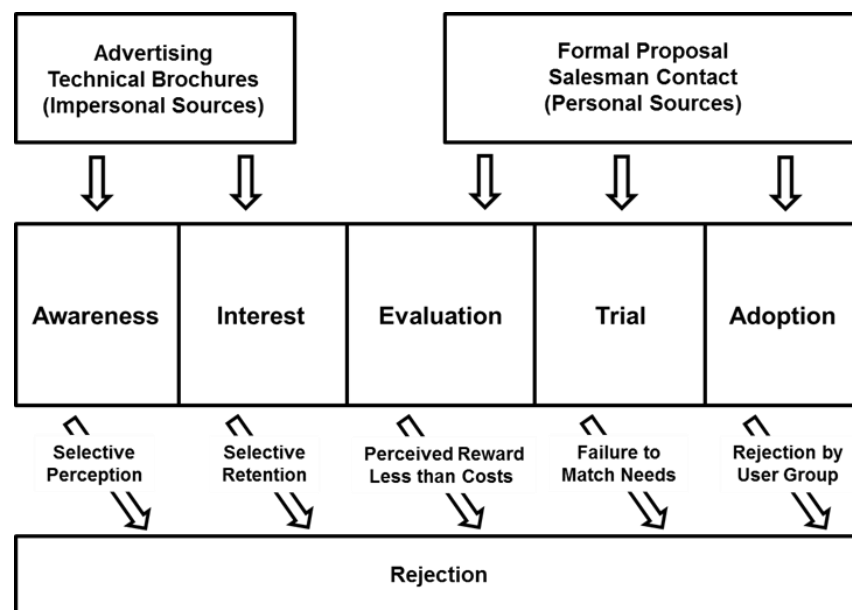


Figure 2.11: The Industrial Adoption Process
Source: Adapted from Ozanne and Churchill (1971:323)

The basic process flow offered by the Industrial Adoption Process, while broadly similar to several other models, is significant in that it particularly recognises the personal interaction between the salesman and buyer during the Evaluation, Trial and Adoption Phases of the model. Choffray and Lilien (1978:22) also map the process that governs Major Elements of Organisational Buying Behaviour (Figure 2.12). In this model the responsibilities of the Buying Centre include acquiring information and interacting, both internally and externally, to facilitate the purchase decision.

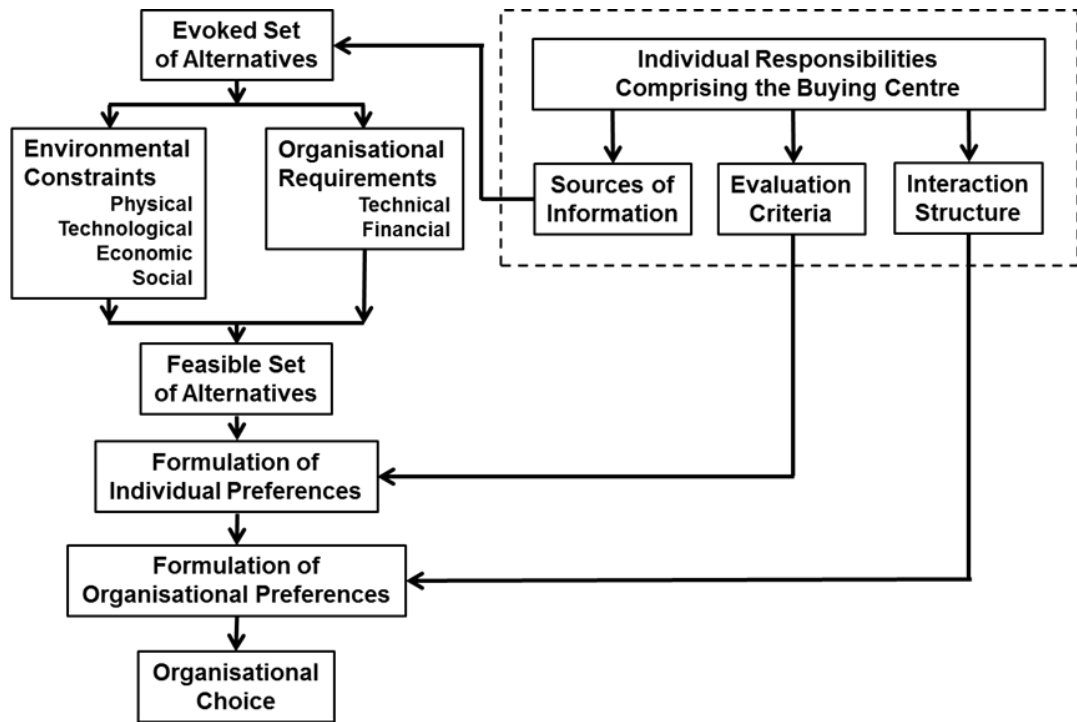


Figure 2.12: Major Elements of Organisational Buying Behaviour
 Source: Adapted from Choffray and Lilien (1978:22)

The development of business process models relating to professional procurement, resulted from empirical reviews conducted within organisations actively involved in the purchase of goods or services. One such example is that of Verville and Halington (2003:589), who examined the acquisition of Enterprise Requirement Planning (ERP) software and developed a mapping of the business process involved, which is reproduced in Figure 2.13.

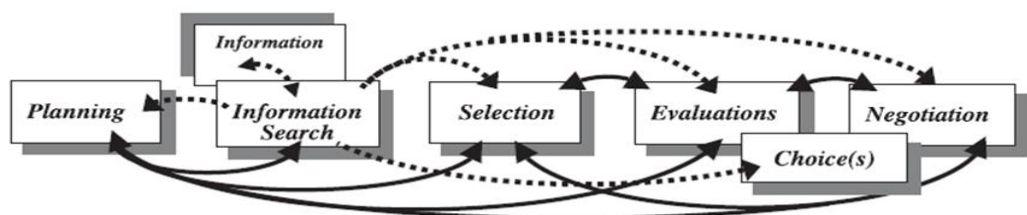


Figure 2.13: Model of the ERP Acquisition Process
 Source: Verville and Halington (2003:589)

While there is an obvious similarity between the basic process steps contained within the Verville and Halington model and those mapped by both Choffray and Lilien and also by Ozanne and Churchill, it is significant that Verville and Halington include a final process step that is the negotiation between buyer and seller leading to the closing of the transaction.

2.3.2 Relationship Attribute Models

Håkansson and Wootz (1979:32) outline the basic interaction that takes place between two firms leading to the physical exchange of traded goods or services, however the simplicity of their model (Figure 2.14) appears in retrospect, based on later contributions from both they and other authors, to understate the complexity inherent in the buyer-seller relationship.

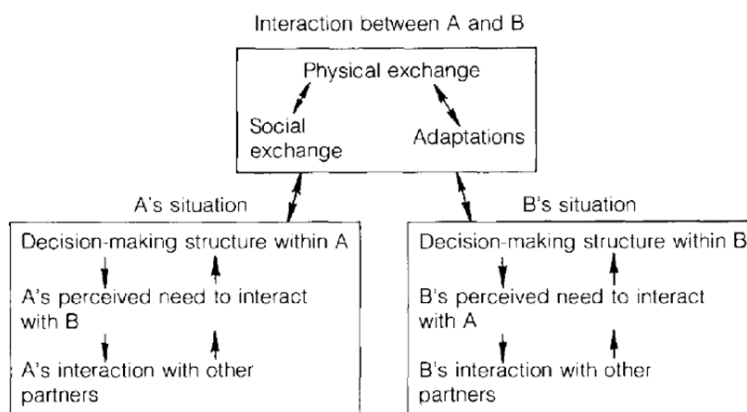


Figure 2.14: The Interaction Between Two Firms A and B

Source: Håkansson and Wootz (1979:32)

Derived through the interactions perspective, as discussed in Section 2.2.2.1, the IMP Interaction Model (Figure 2.15) (Cunningham, 1980:326) is perhaps more representative of the underlying complexity. The model recognises environmental attributes, such as market structure and also atmospheric attributes such as the historical cooperation or closeness between the parties. Also included in the model are both individual attributes, such as the aims and experience of the social actors performing the buying and selling roles, and the attributes associated with the capabilities of both the buying and selling organisations. Cunningham (1980:322), who presented the model on behalf of the wider IMP Group of researchers, notes that over eight hundred buyer-seller relationships were examined prior to the development of the IMP Model. Cunningham (1980:337) also recognises that testing such a model could well be problematic.

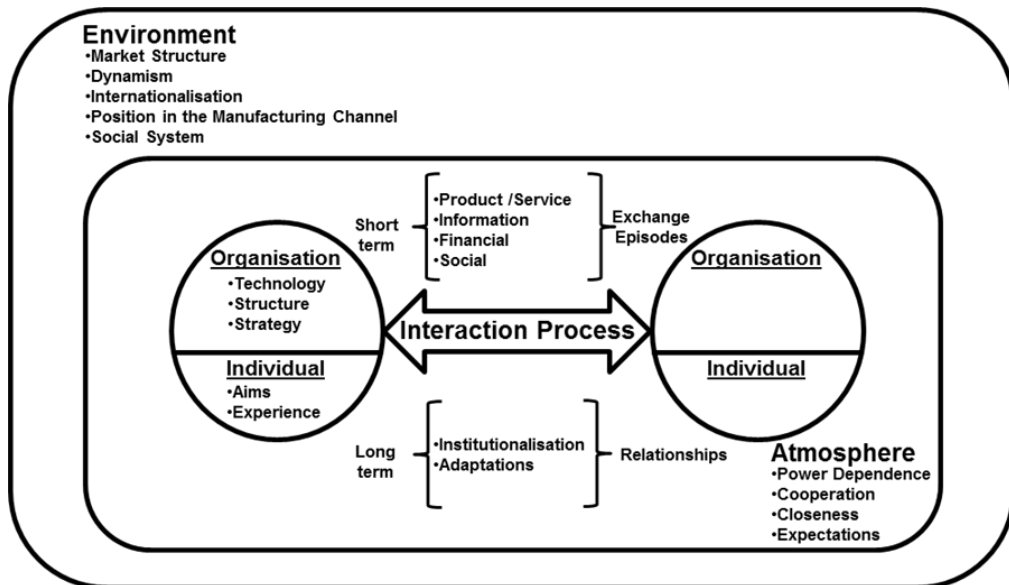


Figure 2.15: An Illustration of the IMP Interaction Model

Source: Adapted from Cunningham (1980:322)

Lamming, Cousins and Notman (1996:177) developed a model, with very similar attributes to that of the IMP Interaction Model, whose purpose is to assess the relationship between buyer and seller. The Relationship Assessment Programme Model (Figure 2.16) recognises a similar level of complexity to that of the IMP Interaction Model.

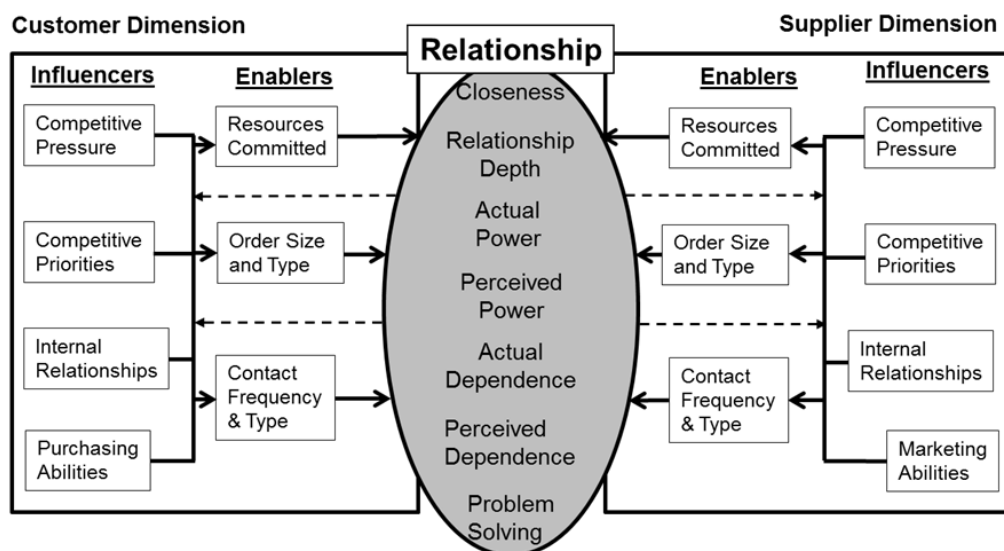


Figure 2.16: Relationship Assessment Programme Model

Source: Adapted from Lamming, Cousins and Notman (1996:177)

Cannon and Perreault (1999:442) offer an apparently simpler model that contains only six key underlying dimensions to characterise the manner in

which professional buyers and sellers conduct relationships. The dimensions are ‘Information Exchange’, ‘Operational Linkages’, ‘Legal Bonds’, ‘Co-operative Norms’, ‘Adaptation by Buyers’ and ‘Adaption by Sellers’. Their model, reproduced in Figure 2.17, was developed after profiling over four hundred professional buyer-seller relationships (Cannon and Perreault, 1999:439). Cannon and Perreault (1999:457), however, also note that the scale of their research forced the limitation of the number of construct attributes considered (Cannon and Perreault, 1999:457) and that potentially important elements were, of necessity, excluded.

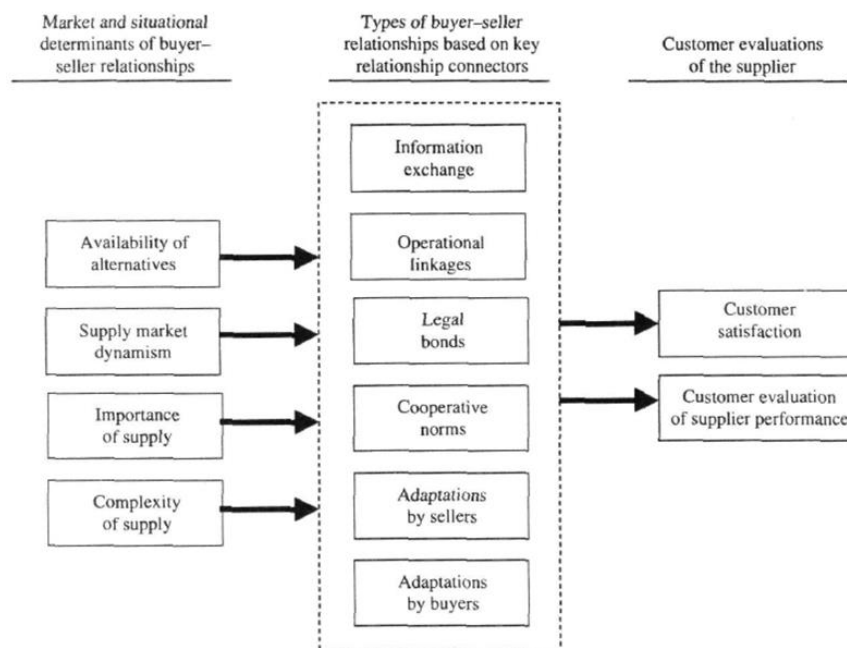


Figure 2.17: Schematic Overview of Key Constructs Relevant to the Practice of Buyer-Seller Relationships
Source: Cannon and Perreault (1999:442)

Jap (1999:463) adds an additional important attribute in his model of ‘The Collaboration Process’ in which he includes a temporal dimension in recognition that relationships may alter over time. A further conceptual model (Figure 2.18) on industrial buyer-seller relationships is advanced by Leonidou, Palihawadana and Theodosiou (2006:151) which again demonstrates the complexity of the interaction.

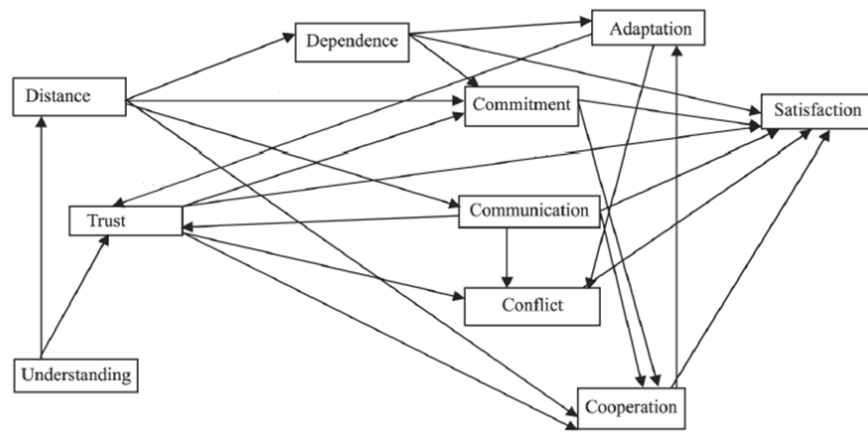


Figure 2.18: The Conceptual Model of Industrial Buyer-Seller Relationships
 Source: Leonidou, Palihawadana and Theodosiou (2006:151)

In recognition of, and in order to summarise, the complexities of managing buyer-seller relationships, the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS) include a diagrammatic representation (Figure 2.19) in their report on relationship management (CIPS, 2007:9).

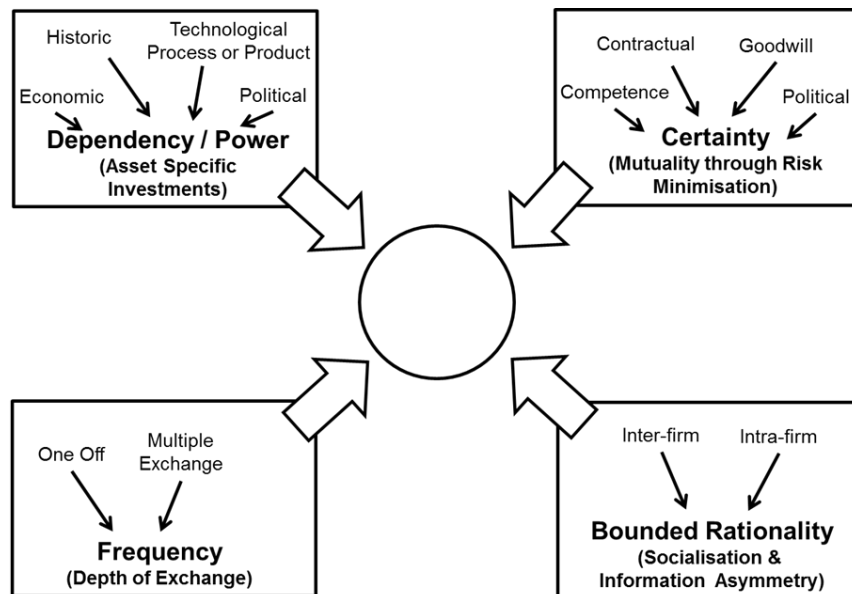


Figure 2.19: The Complexities of Relationship Management
 Source: Adapted from CIPS (2007:9)

Johnston, Lewin and Sparkman (1999:261) note that those whose organisational roles involve buying and selling become the *de facto* boundary spanning players; who not only interact with individuals but also with the functions and systems of the organisation with whom they seek to trade. The authors developed ‘The Interactive Exchange Model of the Industrial

Transaction' (Figure 2.20) which indicates the effect of not only competitive, political, environmental and sociological Influences; but also shows the context of the 'Vector of Interaction' along which the relationship is facilitated.

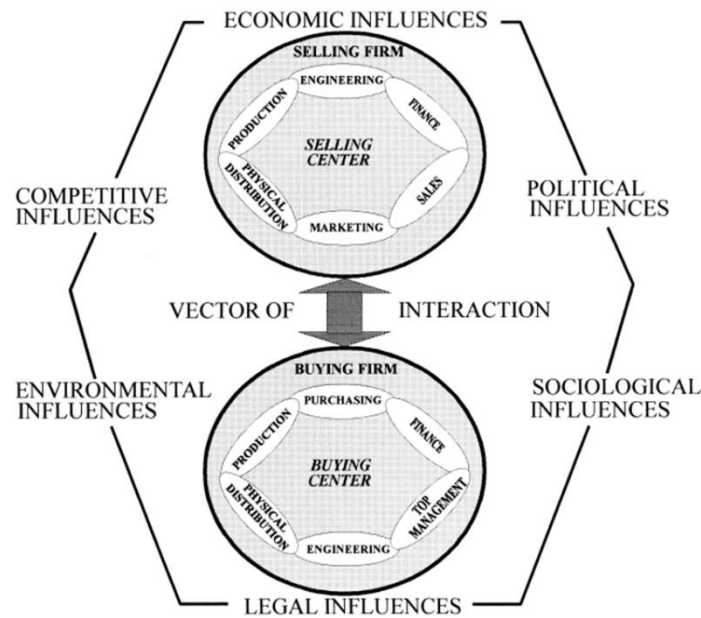


Figure 2.20: The Interactive Exchange Model of the Industrial Transaction
Source: Johnston, Lewin and Sparkman (1999:261)

While the 'Vector of Interaction' suggests that the principal, functional interaction takes place between marketing and purchasing the 'Supplier-Customer Personal Contact Model', developed by Cunningham and Homse (2002:262) (Figure 2.21), recognises that while the principal interaction may be between procurement and sales, alternative functional interactions may well also occur. This is a finding which offers a degree of support to the notional interaction process suggested by IMP.⁴

⁴ The IMP Interaction Model forms Figure 2.15

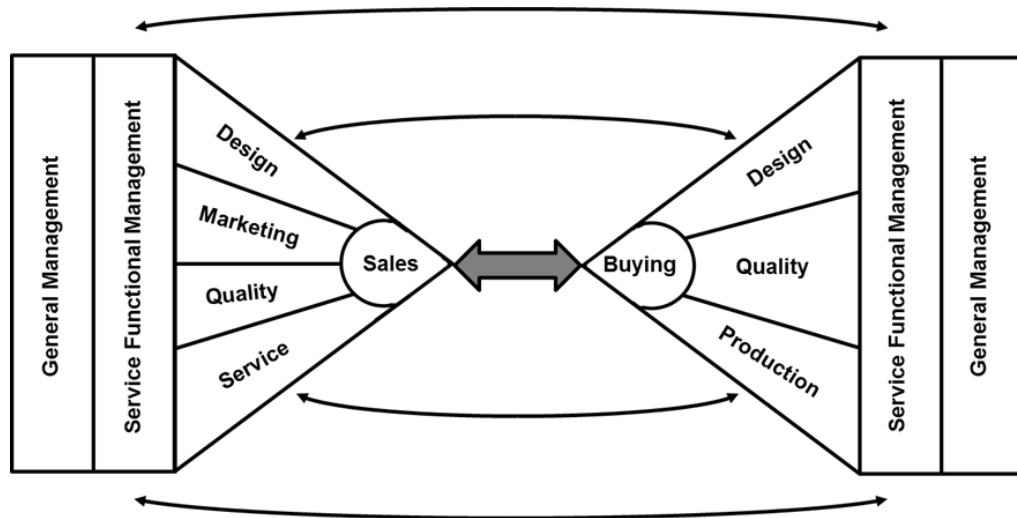


Figure 2.21: Supplier-Customer Personal Contact Model
Source: Adapted from Cunningham and Homse (2002:262)

2.3.3 The Review of Buyer-Seller Relationship Models

In reviewing both the conceptual and empirically derived models of buyer-seller relationships several common themes emerge. Firstly, both procurement process models and relationship attribute models emphasise the significant effort that has been expended in developing the understanding of the interface between professional buyers and sellers. Secondly, both model types highlight the importance of the human interface between buyer and seller in the interaction. The third point to emerge is the intrinsic complexity of the relationship with very many attributes impacting on the interaction. Finally, the role of negotiation is recognised as an integral element of the interaction process.

Before establishing the most effective direction for further research effort, the thesis next reflects on previous empirical investigations involving the interaction between professional buyers and their suppliers.

2.4 Empirical Studies of Buyer-Seller Interactions

Sheth (1973:50), Crow, Olshavsky and Summers (1980:34) and Leonidou, Paliawadana and Theodosiou (2006:147) recognise the considerable amount of extant empirical research on the policies and practices of professional buyers. It is also acknowledged that several different approaches have been taken in conducting business related research projects (Jankowicz, 1995:172; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 1991:33), that these approaches have been diverse (Bryman and Bell, 2003:4) and also occupy the entire continuum of

available research methods (Gill and Johnson, 1997:172). Therefore, a review of a selection of published empirical research papers, whose focus is the interaction between professional buyers and sellers, is likely to inform any proposed work within the subject area.

2.4.1 Recurring Areas of Research Focus

While the research questions posed by those investigating professional buying have been both diverse and multi-faceted, there are a number of recurring themes. These include the strategic role played by procurement in delivering a competitive advantage to their organisations (Carr and Pearson, 1999:498; Jap, 1999:462 and Sánchez-Rodríguez, 2009:163) and the exploration of the nature of the relationship between buyers and sellers (Ganesan, 1994:1; Cannon and Perreault, 1999:445; Walter, Ritter and Gemünden, 2001:366 and Leonidou, Palihawadana and Theodosiou, 2006:155). Several researchers have focussed on the temporal aspects of these relationships (Narayandas and Ranagan, 2004:64 and Ryu, Park and Min, 2007:1228). A further topic of investigation has been the nature of the business processes that are utilised by organisations in order to procure the goods and services they require (Verville and Halington, 2003:593 and Howard and Doyle, 2006:266). Alternatively certain researchers have focussed on the nature of conflict and the associated conflict resolution techniques that are applicable in the relationship between buyers and sellers (Mohr and Spekman, 1994:140; Kumar, Scheer and Steenkamp, 1995:348 and Reid *et al.* 2004:236.)

2.4.2 The Research Designs Utilised

There are two basic strategy clusters pursued by those researching in a business context; Qualitative Strategies and Quantitative Strategies, although developing strategies that bridge the clusters is also possible (Bryman and Bell, 2003:25). Qualitative research is characterised by data which is sensitive to the social context in which it has been generated (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 1991:22; Mason, 2002:3 and Bryman and Bell, 2003:14), by seeking to discover how people understand a situation and how that understanding guides their actions, through the linking of the accounts they give (Jankowicz, 1995:173) and by broadly rejecting the norms of natural science (Bryman and Bell, 2003:14). Quantitative Strategies assume that reality exists in a manner that can be measured by objective methods

(Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 1991:22; Jankowicz, 1995:174 and Bryman and Bell, 2003:14). The significance of data generated through the use of Quantitative Strategies lies in the aggregation, range or comparison (Jankowicz,1995:174) and the collection of this data embraces the practices and norms of natural science (Bryman and Bell, 2003:14).

Interestingly, a review of the strategies adopted by researchers active in the area of professional procurement shows that while qualitative investigations appear to have recently gained in popularity (Verville and Halington, 2003; Narayandas and Ranagan, 2004 and Howard and Doyle, 2006), there is a strong research emphasis on more quantitative approaches as demonstrated by the work of:

Metcalf, Frear and Krishnan (1992)

Mohr and Spekman (1994)

Kumar, Scheer and Steenkamp (1995)

Carr and Pearson (1999)

Cannon and Perreault (1999)

Jap (1999)

Mudambi and Schründer (1996)

Walter, Ritter and Gemünden (2001)

Reid *et al.* (2004)

Leonidou, Palihawadana and Theododiou (2006)

Plank Reid and Newell (2007)

Ryu, Park and Min (2007)

Sánchez-Rodríguez (2009)

Srinivasan, Mukherjee and Gaur (2011).

Despite being used more frequently, certain of those who have chosen to adopt quantitative methods observe that the use of qualitative methods may have, in fact, increased the wider understanding of the phenomenon being observed (Carr and Pearson, 1999:515 and Sánchez-Rodríguez, 2009:170).

Reviewing the adopted research designs gives an insight into the methodological decisions encompassed. Most of the researchers whose papers were reviewed limited their data collection to only one half of the trading dyad;

Mohr and Spekman (1994:140

Kumar, Scheer and Steenkamp (1995:351)
Mudambi and Schrúnder (1996:123)
Carr and Pearson (1999:498)
Cannon and Perreault (1999:445)
Walter, Ritter and Gemúnden (2001:369)
Reid *et al.* (2004:240)
Leonidou, Palihawadana and Theododiou (2006:156)
Plank, Reid and Newell (2007:56)
Ryu, Park and Min (2007:1228)
Sánchez-Rodríguez (2009:165).

Other researchers collected data from both buyer and seller (Metcalf, Frear and Krishnan, 1992:32; Ganesan, 1994:6; Jap, 1999:462 and Narayandas and Ranagan, 2004:65). However, it should be noted that several of those researchers who limit their data collection to one side of the dyad, consider that this may result in an incomplete understanding of the context and, therefore, recommend that further work should include enhancing the research designs to broaden the perspective to include both buyers and sellers (Kumar, Scheer and Steenkamp, 1995:353; Cannon and Perreault, 1999:457 and Leonidou, Palihawadana and Theododiou, 2006:166).

cross-sectional research designs involve collecting data at a single point in time with the objective of comparing two or more variables across different contexts (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 1991:34 and Bryman and Bell, 2003:48). Several of the research reports examined utilised cross-sectional approaches including;

Metcalf, Frear and Krishnan (1992:32)
Ganesan (1994:6)
Mohr and Spekman (1994:140)
Kumar, Scheer and Steenkamp (1995:351)
Mudambi and Schrúnder (1996:123)
Carr and Pearson (1999:498)
Cannon and Perreault (1999:445)
Walter, Ritter and Gemúnden (2001:369)
Reid *et al.* (2004:240)
Howard and Doyle (2006:269)

Leonidou, Palihawadana and Theododiou (2006:156)
Plank, Reid and Newell (2007:56)
Ryu, Park and Min (2007:1228)
Sánchez-Rodríguez (2009:163)
Srinivasan, Mukherjee and Gaur (2011:268).

An alternative approach described by Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (1991:35), Ackroyd and Hughes (1992:85), Bryman and Bell (2003:52) and Mason (2001:31) is longitudinal design, in which sampling is done on at least two separate occasions allowing a passage of time between the sampling events. Although it is acknowledged that longitudinal research designs are more complicated to undertake, they have the advantage that they allow any changes that occur over time to be better understood. Those using longitudinal designs in their examination of buyer-seller interactions include Jap (1999:466) and Narayandas and Ranagan (2004:63).

Jankowicz (1995:169), Mason (2002:46) and Bryman and Bell (2003:170) explain the general advantages of conducting pilots or pre-tests in advance of a subsequent main data collection research phase. These benefits include informing the research question and insuring that the overall research instrument works well. Those research papers that report the use of a pilot phase within their design are Ganesan (1994:6), Mohr and Spekman (1994:141) and Walter, Ritter and Gemünden (2001:369).

A final aspect of research design that emerges from certain of the empirical studies is the use of snowball sampling, which is described by both Jankowicz (1995:157) and Bryman and Bell (2003:105): as using one informant to suggest other significant actors who are relevant to the research topic and who will themselves become informants. Ganeson (1994:6) and Jap (1999:467) both describe using the buyers, from whom they collect data, as a vehicle to select relevant sellers as potential informants to aid the research effort.

2.4.3 The Research Issues Emerging from Empirical Studies

In reporting on the investigations they have conducted, several common themes are indicated by researchers to be suitable topics for further research, potentially because they have not been wholly addressed by their own efforts. In the empirical studies reviewed the most frequently cited concern, especially by those who have adopted a positivist perspective, was that

because of the complexity of the buyer-seller interaction there may be significant influence from factors that do not affect the variables and constants under evaluation. Such potential is recognised by Ganeson (1994:14), Mohr and Spekman (1994:147), Kumar, Scheer and Steenkamp (1995:353), Carr and Pearson (1999:515), Cannon and Perreault (1999:447), Jap (1999:467), Leonidou, Palihawadana and Theododiou (2006:166), Plank, Reid and Newell (2007:62) and Ryu, Park and Min (2007:1231).

Researchers also recognise, that where they seek to develop generalizable findings, these may be compromised by having too few informants (Ganeson, 1994:14; Reid *et al.*, 2004:240; Narayandas and Ranagan, 2004:75; Howard and Doyle, 2006:278), because the informants are limited to a single industry or sector (Metcalf, Frear and Krishnan, 1992:42; Mohr and Sparkman, 1994:147; Walter, Ritter and Gemünden, 2001:373 and Verville and Halington, 2003:593) or because the informants may not have interacted at the appropriate organisational level to gather appropriate information on the topic concerned (Plank, Reid and Newell, 2007:62). One final common issue on which researchers report concern is that informants don't report on actual events, but rather on what they either perceived to have happened, or alternatively, what they would have desired to have occurred (Leigh and Rethans, 1984:25; Reid *et al.*, 2004:243 and Ryu, Park and Min, 2007:1231).

In Chapter 1 it was established that, despite the acknowledged difficulties associated with undertaking professional procurement research, there is a clear need to conduct further investigation into this important area of business practice. While there are divergent views as to the most appropriate direction for such future research, there is a recognised need to better understand what real buyers do in real situations. However, having completed a more detailed literature review in this Chapter three specific and significant gaps in extant knowledge have been identified which are discussed in the next section of the thesis.

2.5 The Emergent Gaps Arising from the Review of Extant Literature

The gaps established through literature review relate to understanding the relationship building and power enhancing interaction that occurs between professional buyers and sellers as they engage in pre-sales interactions. Through these interactions it has been established that buyers exhibit a

combination of behaviours which are either operationally focussed or have a focus which is commercially driven. However, the literature reviewed suggests that there is limited empirical understanding as to how buyers combine these behaviours. Finally, the need is recognised to develop research designs which are able to embrace the complexity inherent in these buyer-seller interactions. The nature of these gaps is now discussed in detail. Day (2000:24) recognises that central to every market relationship is an exchange process and considers that these exchanges can be placed on a continuum. At one extreme the focus is on timely exchange of standard products at an acceptable price and any negotiation is likely to centre on establishing commercial terms and conditions. At the other end of the spectrum are collaborative exchanges, which feature close informational, social and process linkages. In these exchanges Day considers that there is no need for negotiation to take place, as all aspects of the exchange will be determined by maintaining a focus on the long-term benefits that are expected to accrue. Day (2000:25) presents his Relationship Spectrum (Figure 2.22) in a linear manner that contains an intermediate position in which he considers value adding exchange takes place, which is broadly analogous with the relational approach described in Section 2.2.2.

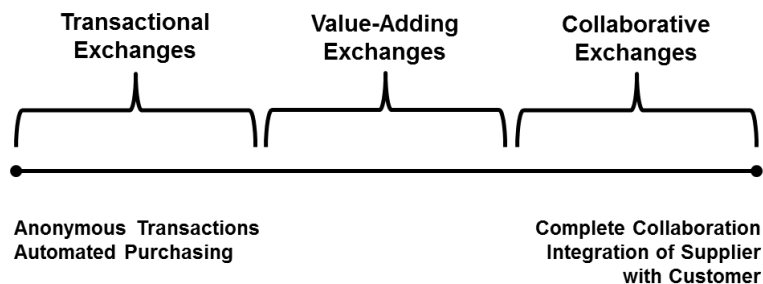


Figure 2.22: The Relationship Spectrum

Source: Adapted from Day (2000:25)

A slightly different perspective is, however, taken by Narayandas and Rangan (2004:75) who consider that buyer-seller relationships in industrial markets do not neatly bifurcate into relationship and transactional dyads, and suggest that most buyer-seller relationships are characterised by the inclusion of elements of both approaches. Taking an example from the construction sector, Richardson (1972:885) illustrates this more complex interaction, by noting that while individual contracts may be awarded on the basis of

competitive tender, the relationship between the parties acquires a degree of stability, both to mitigate the risk associated with the application of specific specialist knowledge and also to permit the development of specifications and designs for mutual advantage. Richardson (1972:887) concludes that:

'the presence of co-operation is a matter of degree'

A conceptual model of the interaction between collaborative and competitive behaviour is offered by Harwood (2002:339) (Figure 2.23) which is based on organisations, within a customer-supplier dyad, who are engaged in attempts to develop a strategic relationship and who are at the point of attempting to agree terms of trade. Harwood acknowledges that even when the negotiation style is expected to be predominantly collaborative there may still be contentious issues which result in competitiveness and overt bargaining behaviour.

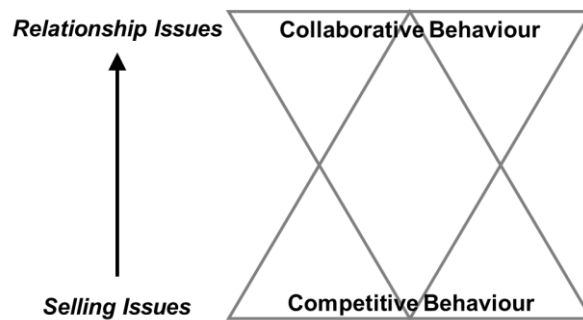


Figure 2.23: Conceptual Model of Business Negotiations
Source: Adapted from Harwood (2002:339)

While recognising that the combination of both collaborative and competitive behaviours are simultaneously relevant and applicable to the understanding of buyer-seller interactions, in reviewing both the literature originating from within the broad negotiation school and also the broad operational school it is clear that a considerable gap exists in the knowledge available as to how these approaches are combined in practice.

This gap is illustrated by comparing the contrasting views to be found in literature. Emiliana (2003:108) considers that academics generally accept that power-based bargaining represents an immature and antiquated approach, while Bonoma and Johnston (1978:223), Gundlach and Cadotte (1994:516) and Cox (2004a:419) consider that the use of prevailing power

asymmetry across a trading dyad is key to shaping the relationship between buyer and seller. Cox (2004a:417) believes that further research in this area will be fruitful if it explains, in detail, what drive the parties involved in specific exchange transactions.

As noted in the discussion of the broad negotiation school in Section 2.1.5, Lax and Sebenius (1986:33) recognise that engaging in problem solving to enlarge the pie (or to achieve operational improvements), does not preclude the use of a more adversarial approach when the pie is divided (to claim commercial benefit). It is similarly recognised by Walton and McKersie (1965:165), as discussed in Section 2.1.5, that by playing the ‘Mixed Game’ it is possible to benefit from the combination of integrative bargaining to establish the maximum total sum available, while relatively hard, distributive bargaining may be used to claim the maximum share. The outline of the Walton and McKersie (1965:164) complex strategy model is replicated in Figure 2.24.

Share Distribution	‘Hard’	‘Pure’ Distributive Bargaining.	‘The Mixed Game.’
	‘Soft’	‘The Default Outcome’	‘Pure’ Integrative Bargaining.
		Distributive	Integrative

Negotiating Stance

Figure 2.24: The Four Complex Bargaining Strategies
Source: Adapted from Walton and McKersie (1965:164)

As previously discussed in Section 2.2.2.2 a similar approach is considered by Cox *et al.* (2004:79) in their development of the Four Basic Relationship Management Styles, as summarised in Figure 2.25.

Relative Share of Value Appropriation.	Inequality	Adversarial Arm's Length Relationship	Adversarial Collaborative Relationship
	Equality	Non-Adversarial Arm's Length Relationship	Non-Adversarial Collaborative Relationship
		Arm's Length	Collaborative

Way of Working.

Figure 2.25: The Four Basic Relationship Management Styles
Source: Cox et al. (2004:79)

Through the literature review conducted, it has been established that insufficient empirical research has been conducted which has taken as a premise the identified separation of operational and commercial outcomes in the manner identified by Walton and McKersie (1965:164), Lax and Sebenius (1986:33), Cox *et al.* (2004:79) and Meehan and Wright (2013:1250).

To summarise, the above discussion identifies two distinct gaps. The first of these gaps relates to the lack of empirical understanding as to the extent of buyers' endeavour to identify co-operative, operationally focussed, strategies that will deliver outcomes, from which both parties will potentially benefit. The second gap relates to the lack of empirical understanding as to the degree to which buyers seek to gain unilateral, commercial, advantage through enhancing their relative power position.

Throughout the literature reviewed there are many references to the inherent complexity of the buyer-seller interaction. For example, it was noted in the introduction to the literature review that Campbell (1985:35) considers the interpersonal interactions between buyer and seller to be 'hard to unravel' because of their inherent complexity. From within the broad negotiation school, Clyman (1995:48) specifically concludes that both the complexity and the richness of the specific negotiating setting must be understood. The Purchasing Portfolio Management Model derived by Kraljic (1983:111) has acknowledged limitations deriving from the complexity of the dimensions used. In reviewing both the conceptual and empirically derived models of the buyer-seller relationships (Section 2.3.3), it is recognised that there is

inherent complexity in buyer-seller interactions because they involve very many attributes which can impact the relationships. It was also noted in the Review of Previous Empirical Studies (Section 2.4.3), that the most frequently cited concern, especially by those who have adopted a positivist perspective, was that because of the complexity of the buyer-seller interaction, there may be significant influence from factors that do not affect the variables and constants under evaluation. Such potential is recognised by Ganeson (1994:14), Mohr and Spekman (1994:147), Kumar, Scheer and Steenkamp (1995:353), Carr and Pearson (1999:515), Cannon and Perreault (1999:447), Jap (1999:467), Leonidou, Palihawadana and Theododiou (2006:166), Plank, Reid and Newell (2007:62) and Ryu, Park and Min (2007:1231). The literature review has recognised that much of the research conducted has attempted to abstract away complexity, rather than adopting research protocols that are able to embrace the intricacy that is present. The third gap, therefore, is that of the need to develop research methods capable of dealing with the inherent complexity associated with the buyer-seller interaction.

2.6 Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 presented a comprehensive review of extant literature through which three distinct gaps in the understanding of professional buying behaviour were identified. The first of these gaps related to the lack of empirical evidence to explain the extent to which buyers identified and adopted co-operative, operationally focussed strategies from which both buyer and seller may potentially benefit. The second gap related to the lack of empirical understanding as to the degree to which buyers sought to gain unilateral, commercial, advantage through enhancing their relative power position. The third gap related to the need to develop research methods capable of dealing with the inherent complexity associated with the buyer-seller interaction. The key literature in which each of these gaps was established is summarised in Table 2.1.

Gap	Associated Key Literature
Gap #1: the lack of empirical evidence to explain the extent to which buyers identify and adopt co-operative, operationally focussed strategies from which both buyer and seller will potentially benefit.	Walton and McKersie (1965:164) Lax and Sebenius (1986:33) Jap (1999:461) Cox <i>et al.</i> (2004:79) Meehan and Wright (2013:1250)
Gap #2: the lack of empirical understanding as to the degree to which buyers seek to gain unilateral, commercial, advantage through enhancing their relative power position.	Harwood (2002:339) Cox <i>et al.</i> (2004:79) Meehan and Wright (2013:1250)
Gap #3: the need to develop research designs capable of dealing with the inherent complexity of the buyer-supplier interaction	Wind and Thomas (1980:239) Campbell (1985:35) Leonidou, Palihawadana and Theododiou (2006:166) Makkonen, Olkkonen and Halinen (2012:773)

Table 2.1: Key Literature Associated with the Identified Gaps

The following chapter considers how, within the thesis, these gaps are to be addressed.

Chapter 3: Framing the Investigation and Conducting the Exploratory Study

In Chapter 2, through a review of literature three distinct, but related, gaps are identified in the extant knowledge pertaining to the behaviour of professional buyers. The desire to close these gaps, prompted by both academic and practitioner need, gives rise to a requirement for further research effort.

As a first step in this effort, Chapter 3 develops research questions and outlines the focus for the study. A research design is outlined which encompasses an exploratory study utilising a case study approach. The basis of case selection, the method of recruiting informants and the approach to data collection are then explained. This is followed by a justification of the research strategy and the development of the adopted methodological approach. The Chapter continues by discussing the method of analysis before presenting the findings of the exploratory study and discussing the conclusions reached.

3.1 Positioning of the Investigation to Close the Gaps

Through a comprehensive review of extant literature three gaps have been identified in the understanding of professional buying behaviour. The first of these gaps relates to the lack of empirical evidence to explain the extent to which buyers identify and adopt co-operative, operationally focussed strategies from which both buyer and seller will potentially benefit. The second gap relates to the lack of empirical understanding as to the degree to which buyers seek to gain unilateral, commercial, advantage through enhancing their relative power position. Finally, there is an acknowledged need to develop research methods which will embrace the inherent complexity of the buyer-seller interaction.

Gereffi, Humphrey, and Sturgeon (2005:89) recognise that trading relationships have evolved within a range of governance mechanisms, which at the extremes of integration involve explicit co-ordination of the trading partners' activities within hierarchical structures which preclude traditional buyer-seller interaction. Cox (2004c:35) classifies such business relationships as being horizontally aligned as in, for example, the creation of formal joint venture companies. Cox also recognises a second broad category of sourcing mechanisms which he terms vertically aligned, and which include both

collaborative sourcing and market tested sourcing. It is within vertically aligned relationships that the governance structure permits buyers to make decisions regarding the behavioural direction on which they wish to embark. It is also noted by Ralf (1995:31) that in many situations there is no reason why organisations need ever go beyond market tested supplier relationships. The decision was, therefore, taken to embed the investigation within vertical trading arrangements in order to gain the required insight into the behavioural choices open to professional buyers.

As developed within the discussion of the power perspective⁵ the combination of resource utility and resource scarcity gives rise to a suggested ideal exchange relationship between buyer and seller (Cox, Sanderson and Watson, 2000:28) which is graphically summarised in Figure 3.1.

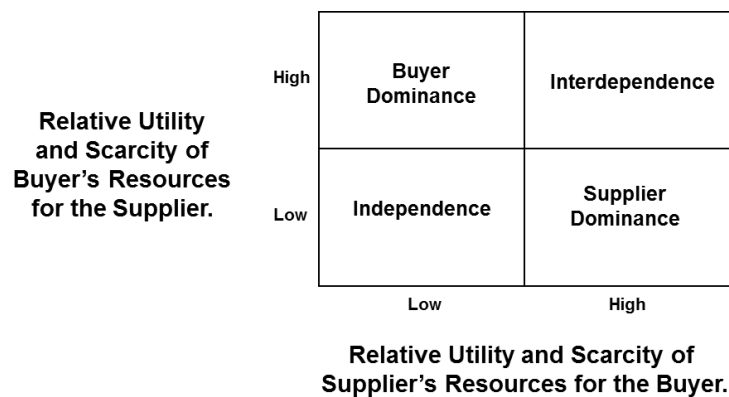


Figure 3.1: Potential Buyer and Supplier Exchange Relationships
Source: Cox, Sanderson and Watson (2000:28)

Positions of interdependence between buyer and seller are characterised by situations in which buyers have an incentive to be proactive in their choice of sourcing behaviours, but where they do not possess the power advantage that would allow a position of dominance to be achieved. Bonoma and Johnston (1978:220) further consider that by far the most commonly occurring interaction between professional buyers and sellers is one in which they share something close to an equality of resource control and are, therefore, functionally equivalent in terms of power. Despite this Gundlach and Cadotte (1994:526), Squire, Cousins and Brown (2009:472) and Kähkönen and Virolainen (2011:118) recognise that there has been limited research into exchange interaction in conditions of interdependence. Situations in which there is a condition of power based interdependence between buyers and

⁵ The power perspective is discussed in Section 2.2.2.2

sellers, therefore, give rise to the potentially most fertile areas in which to explore the behaviours of professional buyers.

3.1.1 The Research Questions

In formulating the research questions it is the intent to obtain answers which will effectively lead to a closure of the identified gaps. The research questions also seeks to position the research effort within the power dependency and trading conditions that have been established as most likely to develop data from which insightful conclusions may be drawn. Consideration of the identified gaps gives rise to two research questions which are articulated as follows:

In situations where there is the potential to form a vertical relationship between two mutually dependent organisations:

- 1) *To what extent is the operational focus of the buyer Collaborative as opposed to Arm's-Length?*
- 2) *To what extent is the commercial focus of the buyer Adversarial as opposed to Non-Adversarial?*

The terminology adopted in the research questions is aligned to that used by Cox *et al.* (2004:79) in their development of the four basic relationship management styles⁶. It should also be noted that although the literature review identified three gaps, the third gap which relates to the need to develop research methods capable of penetrating the inherent complexity of the buyer-seller interaction, is seen as enabling the answer to the research questions rather than informing the research questions themselves.

3.1.2 The Purpose of Conducting an Exploratory Investigation

Mason (2002:45) suggests linking the development of the research design process to an exploratory study conducted early in the research process. Exploratory or pilot studies are, as noted by Yin (2003:79), not intended as a dress rehearsal whose purpose is to pre-test the full blown study. The role of the pilot is formative and intended to assist the development of relevant lines of questioning or to provide a degree of conceptual clarification for the research design. Acknowledging, as a prompt for further research, the need

⁶ In Section 2.6 Cox *et al.* (2004) was identified as an element of key literature is respect of the identified gaps.

to increase understanding of the behaviour patterns of professional buyers, a first step was taken to undertake an exploratory study to better inform the research effort.

The specific objectives of the exploratory study were, therefore, not directly intended to address the research questions but rather to:

- to build a *prima facie* case for power based interdependence between buyer and seller.
- to ascertain the presence of the expected buying behaviours and establish that these are, to some degree, both operationally and commercially driven.
- to consider the suitability, and willingness, of participants for inclusion in a second and more detailed research phase.

The exploratory study was also expected to inform the main investigation in respect of developing the research method⁷ to enable delivery of a more thorough subsequent examination of the issues under examination.

3.1.3 The Research Paradigm

Having formulated a research question it is, thereafter, incumbent on the researcher to adopt a research paradigm that is closely aligned with the ontological and epistemological positions encapsulated (Mason, 2002:18). Qualitative research embodies a view of social reality that is based on the constantly shifting creation of individuals and emphasises the importance of what is said and written rather than what is physically measured (Bryman and Bell, 2003:25). It involves understanding real-life situations through a search for context, logic and rules in order to build an appreciation of social reality (Miles and Huberman, 1994:6). Qualitative methods predominantly emphasise the use of inductive logic (Bryman and Bell, 2003:25) which involves the researcher in making inferences as to the implications of their findings on the domain of their enquiry (Gill and Johnson, 1997:33 and Bryman and Bell, 2003:10).

The complementary approach to qualitative research is the use of quantitative methods that proceed from the positivist assumption that if

⁷ Including determination of the most suitable unit of analysis.

something exists it can be numerically measured (Jankowicz, 1995:174). Quantitative methodologies incorporate the practices and norms of the natural sciences including the adoption of deductive logic (Bryman and Bell, 2003:25). Deductive reasoning involves the development of a conceptual and theoretical structure, followed by a review of these concepts in an empirical setting to ascertain if the building process is supported (Gill and Johnson, 1997:28).

Having different roots, both approaches are the subject of criticism and a degree of debate about their appropriateness (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 1991:22). The criticisms of qualitative approaches frequently relate to a perceived lack of reliability and over emphasis on the researchers, often unsystematic, views as to what is significant and important within the data collected (Bryman and Bell, 2003:299). Similarly, those who criticise quantitative approaches argue that methodologies whose epistemological roots lie within the physical sciences are thought to have limited applicability in the social world (Bryman and Bell, 2003:13).

The criticisms of qualitative methods are, however, countered by those who emphasise the need to design studies in a manner so as to ensure Internal Validity, External Validity and Reliability. (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 1991:41; Yin, 2003:19 and Bryman and Bell, 2003:33) Internal Validity is the issue of ensuring that any conclusion that incorporates a causal relationship between two or more variables is robust. External Validity relates to the ability to generalise the conclusions beyond the specific research context. Reliability is concerned with whether the results of the study are repeatable. Ontological and epistemological considerations of the research questions posed, lead to the conclusion that the adoption of a research methodology which is fundamentally qualitative in nature is most likely, with the issues of validity and reliability suitably addressed, to yield an informative outcome.⁸

3.2 Design of the Exploratory Study

Yin (2003:13) advises that case study methods are particularly suited when the real life context is highly pertinent to the study phenomenon. He observes that surveys, by comparison, are extremely limited in their ability to explore context because the survey designer constantly struggles to limit the

⁸ A fuller justification and description of the research design forms the basis of Chapter 5

number of variables under consideration. Bryman and Bell (2003:56) further observe that a case study approach allows the possibility for the researcher to engage in a degree of theoretical analysis that is not easily facilitated by alternative approaches. During the course of undertaking a case study Eisenhardt (1989:546) recognises that the researcher is subject to a continual juxtaposition of conflicting realities which tends to force reflection on the implications of the data being observed. She considers that this process of reflection has the potential to generate theory with less researcher bias. The use of case study methods in purchasing and supply chain research is specifically advocated by Dubois and Araujo (2007:179) who note that not only can case studies be used to advance exploratory investigations but that their utility also extends into later research phases.

The data within case studies are most commonly obtained through interview and the review of written records (Jankowicz, 1995:181; Bryman and Bell, 2003:413 and Yin, 2003:85)⁹. However, the nature of the data collection process used in case research carries the inherent risk that the conclusions may be unduly influenced by day-to-day events (Jankowicz, 1995:181) or that the researcher is swamped by the large amount of data generated and may be unable to distinguish the most significant variables (Gill and Johnson, 1997:124). Despite these concerns the adoption of a case study approach appears ideally suited to addressing the research intent.

3.2.1 Basis of Case Selection

Selecting the cases to be researched is, according to Dubois and Araujo (2007:179), one of the most important methodological decisions to be made by the researcher, while Yin (2003:79) notes that pilot cases may be chosen for reasons unrelated to the criteria that will be adopted in the selection of the final cases.

Porter (1985:41) observes that while purchased inputs are commonly associated with primary (direct) activities, procurement processes also require to be deployed in order to secure support (indirect) inputs. These purchases can be primarily goods based or alternatively mainly related to services. Porter also notes that there is a complex interplay of context

⁹ Discussion of the issues concerning confidentiality and anonymity during data collection are discussed in Section 3.2.2

related demand and supply variables that will be specific to that nature of the transaction taking place. The resulting diagrammatic summary of the contexts in which a case study relating to professional buying can, therefore, be situated is shown on Figure 3.2.

Goods	Direct Goods.	Indirect Goods.
Services	Direct Services.	Indirect Services.
	Direct Expenditure	Indirect Expenditure

Figure 3.2: Case Study Options

Management research literature is rarely explicit in defining the number of cases required to ensure that appropriately robust findings result (Romano, 1989:36). However, Yin (2003:19) notes that multiple case designs are likely to be stronger than single case designs but cautions against failing to recognise that the objective of a second case should focus on replication and not a misplaced application of sampling logic, which assumes by simply increasing the number of cases examined either the validity or the reliability of the study will increase (Yin, 2003:47). Consideration of the potential importance of context would, therefore, suggest that an initial selection of two cases taken from opposing quadrants will afford a useful opportunity for comparison. Consequently the first case selected was centred on the purchase of chlor-alkali chemicals (direct goods) and the second was a case based on the procurement of industrial scaffolding (indirect services).

It is recognised by Yin (2003:61) that in case study research the investigator must have a good knowledge of the issues under examination in order to interpret the data as it is being presented. Yin (2003:79) further notes that ease of access, based on prior personal contact, may well be a key influencing factor in case selection. For these reasons the exploratory studies were centred on subject areas well known to the researcher through previous

practitioner involvement. Such an approach can, however, leave the investigator open to the potential of bias, which according to Becker (1967:247) requires the use of appropriate theoretical and technical resources to avoid potential distortions and also underlines the need to carefully limit any conclusions reached.

Whilst a stated purpose of conducting the exploratory interviews is to establish that there is a degree of interdependence between buyer and seller, the basis of case selection included high-level industry reviews of the prevailing power structures in order to ascertain the potential for the existence of interdependence between the parties.

The basis of chlor-alkali production involves the high energy, electrolysis of an aqueous solution of common salt (sodium chloride) to form chlorine, caustic soda (sodium hydroxide) and hydrogen (www.eurochlor.org:2013). There is a fixed link between the volumes of chlorine and caustic soda produced. For each tonne of chlorine manufacture there is an equivalent production of 1.1 tonnes of caustic soda. The European Commission (1997:5) has reported that a price ceiling is applicable to the caustic soda market which is determined by the point at which alternative sources of supply become economically viable, however it is the chlorine supply / demand balance that drives the profitability of the industry (European Commission, 1997:8). Simply stated, chlor-alkali manufacturers depend on caustic soda consumers to absorb volumes that are determined by chlorine demand which is notoriously volatile.

Chlor-alkali manufacture is also a political issue, not only because of the environmental impact of the very large electricity consumption involved but also because of the level of U.K. Government support required to sustain the sole UK based manufacturer (www.parliament.uk:2009). While buyer power is thought to be unlikely to yield sufficient commercial leverage (www.competition-commission.org:2008) the political sensitivity within the industry, given the level of government support, provides purchasers with additional leverage over the seller. Relatively few users within water treatment, paper manufacture and chemical manufacture account for over one third of caustic soda sales by volume (www.eurochlor.org:2008) which not only concentrates political power but also contributes to a degree of market leverage which significantly neutralises the manufacturers' monopoly position

within the UK and produces a degree of interdependence between buyers and sellers.

The provision of industrial scaffolding is a service widely, but not exclusively, used by various organisations within the process manufacturing and power generation sectors. There are potentially in excess of two hundred organisational members of the National Access and Scaffolding Confederation (www.nasc.org.uk) and the sellers of these services are dependent on the revenues generated from large scale industrial operations. Buyers of industrial services are, however, aware that the provision of scaffolding access represents a significant safety risk (Jannadi and Bu-Khamsin, 2002:546) and that safety performance is a focal issue both corporately and within the wider stakeholder community (Wartick and Cochran, 1985:760 and Clarkson, 1995:114). The potential for workplace injury to increase when operatives have limited experience of a new situation is recognised by McKnight, Elias and Wilson (2001:17) which has a consequential potential to deter client organisations from changing service providers, thus inducing a form of lock-in (Yanamandram and White, 2006:176). There are other recognised potential switching costs associated with the change of service provider. These include the transaction and learning costs resulting from procuring and embedding a replacement, together with any contractual costs associated with the departure of the incumbent (Klemperer, 1987:375). It is also acknowledged that the cost of replacing or modifying physical assets can be substantial (Nielson, 1996:40 and Whitten and Wakefield, 2006:232) as would be the case should large volumes of standing scaffold require to be dismantled by the outgoing contractor only to be re-erected by the incoming service provider. There is, therefore, a level of operational dependency that is created between the contractor, who is keen to acquire revenue, and the purchaser. Buyers not only require the service to be delivered in a safe and efficient manner but are also aware of the potential switching costs and other issues associated with providing continuity of service.

3.2.2 Participant Recruitment

Having identified the cases on which the exploratory study is to be centred, the second key stage is the identification and interview of both active buyers and sellers who are organisationally empowered, who have sufficient relevant

subject knowledge to contribute meaningfully to the study and who are willing to participate. The use of such key informants is discussed by Campbell (1955:339) who recognises the relative rarity of individuals whose role gives them sufficient access to relevant information and who are able and willing to articulate their thoughts in a manner that is consistent with the researcher's frame of reference. This presents potential issues not only in identifying and accessing these rare individuals but also in recognising any asymmetries of social locus which may represent potential sources of bias.

In order to mitigate the potential difficulties of obtaining access, prospective interviewees were selected on a non-probability basis using a convenience sampling technique (Bryman and Bell, 2003:104). Specifically a snowball sampling approach was adopted (Frankwick *et al.*, 1994:99; Jankowicz, 1995:157; Bryman and Bell, 2003:105) in which an initial small group of sales and marketing executives representing the sellers were approached because they were known by the researcher to have relevance to the research topic. Through these individuals it was hoped that a wider circle of buyers who may be willing to act in the role of key informants could be identified. In the course of prescheduled meetings with the sellers, the broad objectives of the study were explained and the sellers were asked to approach their customers to facilitate a potential direct approach by the researcher. To enable subsequent review of the initial dialogue between the researcher and the sellers, the conversations were recorded and transcribed with the prior permission of the sellers.

It is recognised (Bryman and Bell, 2003:105) that this approach has no statistical foundation and is based on the accessibility of the participants to the researcher. Consequently such an approach cannot be claimed as a basis for validating any claim that the sample is representative of a wider population. Jankowicz (1995:157) recognises a further potential short coming with this approach which relates to the researcher's evolving perception of typical as the data collection process progresses. Jankowicz suggests affording informants the opportunity to comment on their input as a means of gauging if they consider themselves to be typical.

Issues of confidentiality and anonymity can raise both legal and ethical concerns, particularly within qualitative research owing to the difficulties associated with presenting interview transcripts and associated notes in a

manner that prevents identification (Bryman and Bell, 2003:541). In order to address informants' undoubted concerns regarding the sharing of commercially sensitive information a range of measures were taken by the researcher. Firstly, prior to the administration of any data collection exercise, assurances were given that no attempt would be made to ascertain details of prices paid, volumes traded or other overtly commercial details. Secondly, confidentiality was maintained by restricting both personal and organisational details solely to the researcher. To achieve this objective all respondents were allocated a unique and consecutively applied coding identifier which was used on all documentation and electronic storage media. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, to preserve confidentiality across trading dyads the collection of detailed data was limited only to the buyers. Spekman, Stewart and Johnston (1995:43) and Aarikka-Sterroos and Jaakkola (2012:15) recognise that data collection only from the purchasing agent may not provide the necessary depth of information to adequately evaluate the process by which the purchasing decisions are made. Whilst acknowledging the potential limitation highlighted by these authors, conducting detailed data collection from only the buyers was established, through early discussion with the sellers, as a necessity in order to gain the required level of access to explore the underlying behavioural drivers that form the basis of this research. All respondents accepted the verbal assurances given by the researcher, based on the three principles outlined above, prior to proceeding with data collection.

3.2.3 Data Collection

Having identified potential respondents several options were considered regarding the most appropriate means by which relevant data might best be collected. Yin (2003:94) observes that participant observation affords the researcher significant opportunities for collecting case study data directly without the potential bias that is introduced through retrospective forms of data collection. Yin also notes that participant observation is not without significant problems, not least of which is the ability to gain appropriate access. Ackroyd and Hughes (1992:127) take the view that participant observation is most successful if the participant can credibly be accommodated into the organisation being studied. However, as Baszanger

and Dodier (2004:15) observe, to achieve the required creditability may require a process of socialisation in which the researcher attempts to immerse themselves in the subject organisation over a period of time in order to minimise any bias created simply through their presence. The use of participant observation was, therefore, considered impractical for the purposes of the current study given the potentially commercially sensitive subject content and also the envisaged number of target organisations.

Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (1991:72) note that where the research calls for the posing of a range of relatively simple questions, then the use of an appropriately designed questionnaire may represent the best research implement. Unfortunately as Bryman and Bell (2003:142) observe, informant-completed questionnaires do not allow the researcher to prompt or probe respondents in order to uncover and explore any emerging intricacies and further, may also risk informant disengagement by posing questions that are not felt relevant from the perspective of all informants. Again, given the anticipated complexity of the data to be collected, the use of questionnaires was rejected for the purposes of this investigation.

Mason (2002:63) notes that where the ontological position of the researcher suggests that people's knowledge, views, understandings, interpretation and experiences are meaningful properties, then qualitative interviewing may represent the most appropriate method of data collection. Qualitative interviews are classified according to the extent to which the interviewer is free to vary both the content and the order of the questions asked. Structured and non-standardised interviews lie at the extremes of the continuum (Ackroyd and Hughes, 1992:103), and semi-structured interviews adopt an intermediate position in an attempt to combine the advantages from both polar opposites. Yin (2003:89) believes that within case study research, interviews should take the form of guided conversations in which a constructionist approach can be adopted to elicit the interviewee's view of the social world (Rubin and Rubin, 2003:341). Bryman and Bell (2003:341) consider, therefore, that the appropriate interview for use within a largely qualitative setting will be either unstructured or semi-structured. While it is important to allow interviewees the opportunity to answer as they see fit (Ackroyd and Hughes, 1992:106 and Rubin and Rubin, 2005:157), researchers are advised to be cautious in assuming that a fully non-directive interview, in

which the interviewee talks freely without interviewer intervention, will result in a clear view of the interviewee's perspective (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 1991:72). As Yin (2003:89) observes, to interview successfully requires the interviewer to follow the desired line of inquiry, in an unbiased manner, without interrupting the interviewee's natural conversational flow. Such an approach is facilitated by the use of interview protocols that act both as prompt sheets to the interviewer and also provide a checklist that ensures that the intended topics have been covered (Voss, Tsiriktsis and Frohlich, 2002:205). Interview protocols can take the form of conversational guides which simply list the topics to be covered but allow both the researcher and the interviewee the flexibility inherent in the semi-structured interview (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 1991:72; Mason, 2002:70; Bryman and Bell, 2003:343 and Rubin and Rubin, 2003:31). The data collection technique adopted for the exploratory study involved conducting semi-structured interviews. During these guided conversations interviewees were invited to discuss the nature of the relevant purchases with which they had been involved, the approach they had used in effecting these purchases and also the nature of the success factors which they associated with the purchases. The interview process utilised the protocol template as reproduced in Appendix 1.

There are, however, noted concerns in using interviews for the collection of qualitative data. Hughes and Sharrock (1997:108) observe that respondents may report actions that do not accord with real life, while Ackroyd and Hughes (1992:112) note that both the passage of time and the desire to give socially acceptable responses may introduce bias in the interviewee's responses. Despite these reservations as to the adequacy of the surrogate data generated, Hughes and Sharrock (1997:108) acknowledge that even if the interviewees descriptions do not precisely align with the behaviours to which they relate, it is still possible to generate a valuable insight into the social world through interview.

Bryman and Bell (2003:353) consider that it is necessary to have a complete account of the interview exchange which can be successfully achieved through audio recording and subsequently transcribing the interviews conducted. Peräkylä (2004:286), however, acknowledges that there can be a loss in certain aspects of the social interaction when interviews are recorded.

Recognising the risks, completed interviews were nevertheless, recorded and transcribed for subsequent analysis. As suggested by Jankowicz (1995:157) copies of the individual transcripts were made available to interviewees to afford the opportunity to comment further on the responses given, particularly in respect of how representative they felt their initial input to have been. In reality, no significant further contribution was received as a direct result of the interviewee review of the completed transcripts.

During the exploratory investigation, a total of sixteen semi-structured interviews were conducted whose focus was either the purchase of chlor-alkali chemicals or the procurement of industrial scaffolding services. For reasons of convenience, the majority of the buyer discussions were conducted by telephone and these relatively brief exploratory discussions lasted a maximum of seventeen minutes, with the typical durations being between ten and fifteen minutes. The respondents were drawn from a range of organisations as can be seen from the United Kingdom Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities (SIC 2007) used to classify the type of economic activity in which the responding buyers and sellers were engaged. The Standard Industry Classifications of the organisations represented by those interviewed within the Chlor-Alkali Case are shown in Table 3.1.

The 'Chlor-Alkali' Case		
Interviewee	Interviewee's Organisational Details	
	SIC 2007	United Kingdom Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities
Seller #1 (CS1)	20590	Manufacture of other chemical products not elsewhere classified
Seller #2 (CS2)	20130	Manufacture of other inorganic basic chemicals
Seller #3 (CS3)	20130	Manufacture of other inorganic basic chemicals
Buyer #1 (CB1)	36000	Water collection, treatment and supply
Buyer #2 (CB2)	24410	Precious metals production
Buyer #3 (CB3)	10620	Manufacture of starches and starch products
Buyer #4 (CB4)	20130	Manufacture of other inorganic basic chemicals
Buyer #5 (CB5)	35110	Production of electricity
Buyer #6 (CB6)	36000	Water collection, treatment and supply
Buyer #7 (CB7)	20130	Manufacture of other inorganic basic chemicals
Buyer #8 (CB8)	20140	Manufacture of other organic basic chemicals
Buyer #9 (CB9)	17120	Manufacture of paper and paperboard

Table 3.1: Standard Industry Classifications within the Chlor-Alkali Case

The Standard Industry Classifications of the organisations represented by those interviewed within the Scaffolding Case are shown in Table 3.2.

The 'Scaffolding' Case		
Interviewee	Interviewee's Organisational Details	
	SIC 2007	United Kingdom Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities
Seller #1 (SS1)	43290	Other construction installation
Seller #2 (SS2)	82990	Other business support service activities not elsewhere classified
Buyer #1 (SB1)	30110	Building of ships and floating structures
Buyer #2 (SB2)	21200	Manufacture of pharmaceutical preparations

Table 3.2: Standard Industry Classifications within the Scaffolding Case

On-going review of the transcripts led to the conclusion that after the completion of sixteen interviews sufficient insight had been gained to allow progression to the detailed analysis of the exploratory interviews.

3.3 Analysis of Exploratory Interviews

Yin (1991:111) outlines the general strategies for the analysis of case study evidence. These include following the theoretical proposition that gave rise to the case being analysed, considering the potential existence of rival explanations, or simply developing a descriptive framework for what is being observed.

Graneheim and Lundman (2004:106) outline a method of analysing the textual data arising from narratives which not only allows the strategic requirements outlined by Yin to be met, but also recognises that there is the potential to have multiple interpretations arising from the same data source. The method of content analysis discussed by Graneheim and Lundman also acknowledges the need to address potential issues of trustworthiness through a process of dual review and consensus building in the course of analysing the textual data.

The method involves the transcripts being read by, and subsequently coded by, each of two analysts to obtain a sense of the whole. Working individually each analyst identifies meaning units by extracting elements of the transcript that convey a potentially significant concept. These meaning units are then condensed in order to consolidate, whilst endeavouring to avoid dilution of, the meaning. The condensed meaning units are abstracted into sub-themes and then finally to themes based on the similarities and differences they contain. A process of reflection and discussion between the analysts is then conducted, leading to an agreed formulation of the themes contained within

the text. Each stage of the content analysis¹⁰ is recorded in tabular form using a Microsoft Excel spread sheet, the proforma of which is replicated in Appendix 2. Graneheim and Lundman (2004:111) consider that a key aspect in achieving the required 'trustworthiness' through the application of their method, lies in the comprehensive documentation of each stage of analysis so as to allow alternative interpretations to be considered.

The importance of deriving a clearly documented and robust set of conclusions is also highlighted by Kirk and Miller (1986:72), who state:

'Qualitative researchers can no longer afford to beg the issue of reliability. While the forte of field research will always lie in its capability to sort out the validity of propositions, its results will go ignored minus attention to reliability. For reliability to be calculated, it is incumbent on the scientific researcher to document his or her procedure.'

The method described by Graneheim and Lundman was used by both the principal researcher, and also by an assistant, to analyse the interview transcripts. The method was selected because it not only afforded the opportunity to explore data that was content-sensitive but also because the method presented the significant advantage of allowing theoretical concepts to be developed and tested from the perspective of more than one analyst. In practice, both analysts initially worked independently only meeting to develop the combined themes after completing their individual analysis. Although working autonomously both were knowledgeable in the subject areas and also aware of the objectives of the study. However, in order to preserve confidentiality only the principal researcher was aware of the identities of the respondents.

3.4 Results of Exploratory Interview Analysis

Following the adopted method of transcript analysis yields a condensed summary of the interview themes for each of the cases considered. Table 3.3 records, for each of the buyers interviewed within the Chlor-Alkali Case¹¹, the individual themes derived by each analyst and also the combined themes as subsequently agreed between the analysts. Table 3.4 displays a similar level

¹⁰ The use of Qualitative Content Analysis is discussed more fully in Chapter 5 where the method forms the basis of analysis within the detailed study.

¹¹ The SIC codes of the organisations represented by chlor-alkali buyers is given in Table 3.1.

of information relating to the buyers interviewed within the Industrial Scaffolding Case¹².

Recruitment Interview Analysis: Chlor-Alkali Case Buyers			
Interview Ref.	Themes (1st Analyst)	Themes (2nd Analyst)	Combined Agreed Themes (1st and 2nd Analyst)
CB1	The buyer operates in a consistent manner which is arm's-length, focussed on price and demonstrating little desire to have the supplier offering customised.	Buyer has market focus and adopts an arm's-length /adversarial approach.	Price focussed, arm's-length and adversarial.
CB2	The buyer operates on an arm's-length, price focussed basis but is mainly driven by his perception of how best to satisfy public sector requirements.	Buyer aware of market, and perceives themselves to have 'low power'. Uses an arm's-length approach.	Fulfilment public sector procurement processes, via an 'arm's-length' market driven approach, dominates the buyer's behaviour.
CB3	The buyer operates in a price focussed manner driven by his perception of market conditions. He shows little desire to have any customisation by the supplier.	Buyer's approach is market driven with a need to mitigate supply risk. Approach also governed by buyer attempts to leverage power.	Price focussed, arm's-length and adversarial.
CB4	The buyer's behaviour is market / price focussed when the market is long and the buyer opportunistically attempts to operate in a collaborative manner when the market is short. Resistance to change and corporately led buyer specific requirements significantly drive behaviour.	Buyer aware of market and perceives there to be a supplier monopoly. He has buyer specific influences arising from of a 'centralised' procurement function. Service and reliability of supply important, more collaborative approach adopted to attempt to improve service but at whose cost is less clear.	Buyer behaviour appears to be driven by 'internal politics' and a reaction to the market conditions. Collaboration is coupled with price focussed, power based procurement.
CB5	Buyer behaviour is driven by the need to satisfy internally derived conventions and buyers personal reluctance to change an adopted position. Service level is given a high level of importance but an arm's-length approach is used to obtain service delivery.	Buyer spends time to analyse user requirements and the market and develops a value model. Local decisions are limited by a centralised procurement function. Buyer has service focus. Evidence of buyer changes leading to 'new' approaches.	Local buying decisions are strongly influenced by a desire to express independence from central control. Although service levels are deemed important, the procurement approach remains arm's-length. Historical evidence of individual buyer positions being defended.

¹² The SIC codes of the organisations represented by scaffolding service buyers is given in Table 3.2.

CB6	The buyer's focus is on price but believes that this is determined by a market over which he has little control. The buyer specific requirements and logistics service levels are therefore increased in importance.	Buyer aware of market and his limited 'power' to reduce product cost. Reliability of supply is important. While the buyer appears willing to consider collaboration to improve service levels the implication that these improvements must either reduce price or satisfy 'ill defined' criteria for buyer specific improvements.	The buyer's behaviour appears driven by a perception of 'business specific' concerns to avoid failures in logistics. The buyer appears to consider that prices will be determined by an efficient market.
CB7	This buyer has a very market driven strategy and seeks to minimise price against his perception of the market. Service levels are recognised as a factor to be considered. Internal 'corporately driven' demands and lack of 'local' trust in 'central' decision making play a significant role in the determination of buying behaviour.	Buyer aware of market conditions but is significantly influenced by internal factors such as concern of losing influence to central groups, or internally grown suspicions about supplier motives. Evidence of buyer 'lock-in' to a historic position.	The issue of local versus central control play a significant factor in driving buyer behaviour. Market derived pricing is dominant but service levels are also considered. Historical evidence of individual buyer positions being defended.
CB8	This buyer is price focussed and appears only to collaborate with the vendor in an effort to achieve unilateral benefit. The organisation appears to have specific requirements that are derived at a corporate level which are not necessarily driven by the specifics of this product group. At point of use there is a desire to adopt 'local' terms and evidence of buyer specific positions being taken and defended.	Buyer adopts an initial 'adversarial approach' but then tries to capture further value through collaboration. There are strong indications that internal issues concerning local versus central control play a significant part in the decision making process.	The buyer uses an adversarial approach to determine price and then collaborates in an attempt to further achieve cost reduction. There is evidence to suggest that buyer behaviour is also driven by an internal desire to avoid centralised control. Historical evidence of individual buyer positions being defended.
CB9	This buyer uses a market driven approach to negotiate a secure source of supply. This appears more important than price but a relatively arm's-length position is taken.	While the buyer is aware of the need for supply security the approach taken appears driven by a combination of a desire to leverage power in the market and an internal concern that local interests are not best served via central contracts.	Buyer behaviour is influenced by the concern that local interests are not best served via central contracts. An arm's-length power based approach dominates, with security of supply being deemed an important outcome.

Table 3.3: Emergent Themes: Chlor-Alkali Case

Recruitment Interview Analysis: Scaffolding Case Buyers			
Interview Ref.	Themes (1st Analyst).	Themes (2nd Analyst).	Combined Agreed Themes (1st and 2nd Analyst)
SB1	The buyer is cost focussed and sees the risk of cost escalation as a significant issue that must be avoided. The buyer appears willing to cooperate with the supplier to develop innovative solutions but it is not clear how the benefits of this cooperation would be shared.	The buyer has a focus on meeting the specific needs of the business and adopts a mixture of collaboration and power in an attempt to obtain the required service in a cost effective manner.	Mixture of collaboration and power focus used to achieve cost effective service delivery. The service is evaluated at point of delivery. Evaluation includes the degree of price certainty associated with service delivery.
SB2	The buyer is driven by a need to satisfy the specific requirements of a demanding user group. An Arm's Length tender is performed to initially select a contractor, although cost does not appear to be paramount.	Buyer perceives that there are several unique aspects of the required service. Initially an arms-length tender process is adopted but as the procurement progresses it becomes more collaborative in an attempt to ensure that the requirements will be met. Ultimately success is measured by the ability of the seller to adapt to buyer specific delivery.	The dominant criteria used for supplier selection is the degree to which the required safety and operational performance are perceived as likely to be met by the supplier. Although market forces are brought to bear in the selection process, cost effectiveness appears to be a secondary consideration.

Table 3.4: Emergent Themes: Industrial Scaffolding Case

Review of the resulting themes, identified through the process of interview analysis, confirms the observation of Dempsey (1978:258) in that that the actions of buyers are substantially rational being frequently driven by explicit-economically, oriented criteria (including delivery capability, quality, price, repair service, technical capability, and past performance). In all interviews the buyers confirmed the importance of either chlor-alkali chemicals or of industrial scaffolding services, as appropriate, from the perspective of the customer organisations, while through the early contact with the sellers it was also evident that the recognition of importance was reciprocated across the dyad. The potential for a condition of power based interdependence between buyer and seller was established through the buyers' accounts of the structure of the trading environment which they shared with their suppliers. *Prima facie* evidence of either the buyer or the supplier being in a position to

dominate the terms of trade was not found through the analysis of any of the interview scripts.

The analysis also revealed evidence of the occurrence of the expected buyer combination of Collaborative and Adversarial behaviours, as predicted by the literature review. In interviews CB1, CB2, CB3, CB5, CB7, CB8, CB9 and SB1 evidence was found of the buyer attempting to enhance their power position relative to the seller, while attempts to identify grounds of mutuality were identified in interviews CB4 and SB1.

Significantly, however, the analysis of the interview texts also revealed the presence of a series of potentially dominant behaviours that were not the subject of the research questions. The behaviour of buyers being heavily influenced by a desire to exert local control ahead of central control over supply contracts was noted in buyer interviews CB5, CB7 and CB9. Other issues of internal politics appeared dominant in interview CB4. Buyer interview CB8 appears to demonstrate behaviours driven by a desire to defend a historically held position. Buyer concern to avoid association with changes that have the potential to be viewed internally as service failures (in areas such as logistics, safety performance) appeared dominant in interviews CB6 and SB1, and are also present in interview SB2. In interview CB2, the buyer's behaviour appeared to be driven by the perception of how best to fulfil externally imposed rules.

In order to give context to these findings illustrative extracts of selected interview transcripts are included in Table 3.5.

Behaviour	Illustrative Buyer Interview Response
Buyer's desire to exert local control ahead of central control	<p>CB5: 'Purchasing has evolved We've had centralised, then decentralised and now we are going back to centralised purchasing. Centralisation in itself has caused changes which are problematic and that we need to manage carefully with the vendor to avoid having solutions forced upon us.'</p> <p>CB7: '50% is already handled centrally in Europe. In the UK there are two main sites believe that they should now begin take the lead because they are the bigger site.'</p> <p>CB9: 'Unfortunately we are now simply advised of the new price on a quarterly basis for this mill. That is how they believe it should work.'</p>

Behaviour	Illustrative Buyer Interview Response
Buyer's motivation to defend a historically held position	CB8: 'We nominated a lead buyer who would look at the market place. The lead buyer then went out and negotiated the best deals with suppliers These deals lasted several years and were easy to manage. I always have a bit of concern when suggestions are made that 'new' will automatically mean better!'
Buyer's desire to avoid being involved in changes that have the potential to be viewed internally as service failures	CB6: '... these are strategic commodities for us...we can't live without these products ... we need to focus on that when suggests changing' SB1: Basically we give ground rules and they come up with the scope that they (<i>the users</i>) require to supply the detail of what is needed to complete that activity. We need to manage the (<i>internal</i>) risk ...' SB2: 'coping with the sites peculiarities....the demands.....the flexibility that is required.....dealing with the number of different contacts around the site, and the various requirements around the site. Sometimes you need to be careful to involve the users so that if the vendor messes up everyone is seen to have been involved'
Buyer's attempt to influence the internal politics of the buying organisation	CB4: 'There is a bit of history in it I would normally just pick up the phone and call the people that I know.'
Buyer's perception as to how best to fulfil externally imposed rules	CB2: 'We need to comply with European rules and regulations. We draw a tender list together using 'Achilles'. Which is a data base of suppliers that means that means that we don't have to use the 'OJEC process'. We have become quite skilful at working the system, and ironically perhaps, being seen to be working the system.'

Table 3.5: Illustrative Excerpts from Interview Transcripts

3.5 Conclusions from the Exploratory Study

While, as discussed in Section 3.1.2, the objective of the exploratory study was to inform rather than to answer the research questions, the empirical evidence derived from the qualitative analysis of the resulting interview transcripts suggests the presence of buyer specific behavioural drivers. Although the investigation of such influences was not the direct focus suggested by the prior review of extant literature, the evidence suggests that these buyer specific effects may be significant in the interaction between professional buyers and their suppliers.

The incidence of buyer specific factors influencing purchasing behaviours has been identified in earlier studies, but these influences have been largely

dismissed as being of secondary importance or inappropriate for incorporation into the core of any resultant theory. Webster and Wind (1972:18) recognise that the individual buyer is motivated by a complex combination of personal and organisational objectives, however, they offer no empirical evidence that either quantifies or indeed supports the relative significance of this assertion. Johnston and Bonoma (1981:144) consider that politics and influence may be central social variables in determining the behaviour of buyers, but can only suggest (1981:155) that to investigate how such factors influence interaction patterns may be a subject for future research. Similarly Spekman, Stewart and Johnston (1995:38) note that industrial buying activity is affected by the buyer's own set of expectations and interpretations, however, they specifically exclude such individual factors from the scope of their empirical study (1995:40). Finally Cox (2004c:173) recognises the phenomenon of subjective myopia in the making of purchasing decisions, which he suggests may be driven by the buyer's considerations of career progression or organisational status. Cox, however, does not attempt to ascertain the relative significance of these myopic tendencies.

It must be concluded, therefore, that despite the exploratory nature of the investigation of the Chlor-Alkali and Industrial Scaffolding Cases, the topic of buyer specific behavioural drivers requires further and immediate research effort.

A specific objective of the exploratory study was to ascertain the willingness of individual buyers to participate in the subsequent and more detailed phase of the research. In this regard the objective of the exploratory investigation was met in that each of the buyers interviewed agreed to their continued participation. However, discussion with the buyers also revealed that as a consequence of the contract durations associated with the existing agreements, there was little prospect of conducting a contemporaneous review of the associated presales interactions. As previously recognised from the longitudinal studies of buyer-seller interaction conducted by Jap (1999:466), Narayandas and Ranagan (2004:64) and Ryu, Park and Min (2007:1228) there are potentially significant changes in buyer attitudes that may occur as the presales interaction develops. As a consequence of the contract durations associated with the Chlor-Alkali and the Industrial Scaffolding Cases, there was little prospect of gathering the required

contemporaneous accounts of the associated presales interactions. These cases offered only the prospect of conducting *ex post* buyer interviews, a method of data collection that was considered by the author unlikely to yield the necessary richness of data.

It must therefore be concluded that, while the exploratory study has successfully established *prima facie* evidence for power based interdependence between buyers and sellers and ascertained the presence of the expected buying behaviours, it has also highlighted a need to incorporate wider considerations of buyer-seller interaction into the study. Firstly however, it is necessary to return to extant literature to ascertain if alternative, perhaps emergent, schools of thought could better explain the behavioural drivers acting on professional buyers and which may more effectively address the apparently significant buyer specific influences identified in the course of conducting the exploratory investigation. Secondly, it is clear that an alternative approach to case selection and participant recruitment will be required if a longitudinal view of buyer presales interaction behaviour is to be included in the study.

3.6 Chapter Summary

Chapter 3 presented a review of the exploratory study whose aim was to inform rather than to answer the research questions developed. The exploratory study established *prima facie* evidence that supported the presence of the expected buyer relationship management behaviours (Adversarial, Non-Adversarial, Collaborative and Arm's-Length) and also establishes a degree of interdependence between buyers and sellers within the identified cases. However, the exploratory also revealed the presence of potentially dominant behavioural drivers that were not the subject of the research questions. The chapter considered that these buyer specific factors were significantly influencing buyer behaviours, and that the investigation should be extended to explore these effects. It also became apparent through the course of the exploratory study that, to enable data regarding buyer behaviour to be collected contemporaneously during any pre-sales interaction, an alternative approach to case selection and participant recruitment would be required. To address the issues to emerge from the

exploratory study a further review of literature is required to suitably inform the subsequent phases of the investigation.

Chapter 4: The Role of Value

The exploratory study described in Chapter 3 established *prima facie* evidence that supported the presence of the behaviours predicted by the review of extant literature conducted in Chapter 2. These behaviours were driven by the desire to identify and develop co-operative strategies or alternatively to maximise power based gains. The analysis of the exploratory study, however, also revealed the presence of potentially dominant behaviours that were not the initial focus of the exploratory study, and which included:

- Buyer's desire to exert local control ahead of central control.
- Buyer's motivation to defend a historically held position.
- Buyer's desire to avoid being involved in changes that have the potential to be viewed internally as service failures (logistics, safety performance).
- Buyer's attempt to influence the internal politics of the buying organisation.
- Buyer's perception as to how best to fulfil externally imposed rules.

Chapter 4, therefore, returns to the literature and in an attempt to explain the origin of those behaviours that appeared not to be overtly focussed on achieving either operational or commercial benefits. This Chapter establishes that value creation lies at the core of the buyer-supplier interaction, and argues that the role of the professional buyer is to maximise the value that accrues from this interaction. The case is therefore established to focus on literature that explores buyer value perception, including that from the emergent school of Service-Dominant Logic (S-DL). Through consideration of the professional buyer's value perception, a conceptual basis is developed by which means those wider aspects of buyer behaviour may be better understood.

4.1 The nature of Buyer Values and Value Perception

It is recognised that the role of the professional buyer is to maximise the added value of purchased inputs (Sashi and Kupdi, 2001:194 and Sánchez-Rodríguez, 2009:169) and that value creation is the core objective of customer-supplier relationships and of the economic exchange that lies at the heart of these relationships (Walter, Ritter and Gemünden, 2001:372 and

Vargo, Maglio and Akaka, 2008:145). It is relevant, therefore, to return to the literature that explores the related notions of values and of value perception in order to better understand how they might influence buying behaviour.

Firstly, it is necessary to distinguish between the concepts of value and of values. Rokeach (1968:159) and Woodruff (1997:141) contend that human values influence the conduct of individuals. They argue that across all human populations, these values are relatively few in number and are commonly shared by all individuals, all be it to different degrees. Individuals develop value systems that are hierarchically determined (Crosby, Bitner, and Gill, 1990:127 and Rokeach, 1973:3) because it is not possible to universally satisfy all human needs and desires. The antecedents of these hierarchies lie in the culture of society at large (Rokeach, 1973:3 and Woodruff, 1997:141). Therefore, the hierarchically derived system of values held by individual buyers may well, to some degree, influence the behaviours they exhibit. However, as Zajac and Olsen (1993:132) argue it is through the examination of the processes by which value is created and claimed that a richer perspective on buyer-supplier interaction can be developed.

As observed by Lindgreen and Wynstra (2005:732), it is a well-established perception that value is gained through the managed interaction between professional buyers and suppliers. It is, however, also recognised that there has been little research conducted to establish either the precise nature of value (Lapierre, 1997:377 and Lindgreen and Wynstra, 2005:733) or how this value is created (Lapierre, 1997:377 and Aarikka-Stenroos and Jaakkola, 2012:15). Despite, or perhaps because of, this lack of research there is recognition that value is conceptually complex. Firstly, the term value is seen as having many different meanings (Dumond, 1994:3 and Sánchez-Fernández and Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007:429) and as being 'multi-faceted' (Ravald and Grönroos, 1996:19; Lapierre, 1997:380 and Aarikka-Stenroos and Jaakkola, 2012:23). Value is also perceived to be socially constructed (Helkkula, Kelleher and Pihlström, 2012:559), by individuals under the influence of their own emotions, attitudes and perceptions (Hill and Hillier, 1977:69 and Lapierre, 1997:380), which can extend beyond the simple rationalisation of utility (Sánchez-Fernández and Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007:429). Notwithstanding this perception of complexity, considerations of value and its appropriation are seen to influence the behaviour of professional buyers (Dholakia *et al.*,

1993:289; Dumond, 1994:3; Cox, 2004a:413 and Liu, Leach and Bernhardt, 2005:566), even if all of the phenomenologically determined aspects of value may not be externally observable (Helkkula, Kelleher and Pihlström, 2012:557).

That value is based on customer perception, and not on the externally derived assessment of the vendor, is the view of Parasuraman (1997:154), Woodruff (1997:141), Anderson and Narus (1998:54), Lapierre (2000:123) and Khalifa (2004: 647). It is also noted that these buyer perceptions of value may alter with time (Lapierre, 1997:389 and Woodruff, 1997:141) and that pre-purchase notions of value may vary from the value that accrues from the eventual use of the purchased goods or services (Gardial *et al.*: 1994:555). Building on the idea of value perceptions changing over time, Lindgreen and Wynstra, (2005:740) differentiate between value in exchange and value in use. They associate the former with the transaction and the latter with the relationship between buyer and seller. This distinction is reinforced by Lapierre (1997:386) who, in an empirical study of the purchase and delivery of professional services, also records distinct perceptions relating to value in exchange and value in use.

A common presentation of customer value perception is based on buyer gain versus sacrifice models such as those of Monroe (1990:46), Anderson and Narus, (1998:54) and Lapierre (2000:123). Khalifa (2004:656) provides a diagrammatic representation of such a model in his conceptual summary of Customer Value in Exchange (Figure 4.1).

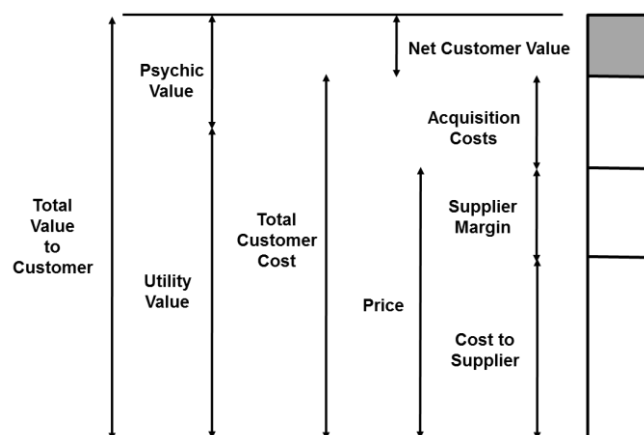


Figure 4.1: Customer Value in Exchange
 Source: Adapted from Khalifa (2004:656)

Khalifa (2004:645) considers that net customer value substantially informs the buying decision. He recognises that total customer costs comprise elements of supplier costs, supplier margins and the customer's search and acquisition costs. Total value to the customer against which total customer costs are to be offset, comprise an element of Utility Value and, perhaps most interestingly in the context of the findings of the exploratory study in relation to the emergence of buyer specific behavioural drivers, an element of Psychic Value associated with the exchange.

Psychic Value is discussed by Groth (1994:9) who considers that it differs from Utility Value in so far as it does not accrue directly from the use of the goods or services but is rather imbedded in human factors such as feelings, emotions and even buyer ego. Lapierre (1997:390), Anderson and Narus (1998:54) and Lindgreen and Wynstra (2005:740) recognise that the process of exchange itself can generate value in excess of the Utility Value associated with use, while Ravald and Grönroos (1996:22) extend this recognition to encompass a suggestion that the personal needs and preferences of professional buyers may be related to the creation of Buyer Specific Perception of Value (BSPV). Similarly, Wilson (2000:783) recognises that while organisational purchasing behaviour is typically perceived as having a basis that is rationally and logically driven, in contrast with the emotional and psychic elements of consumer behaviour, he strongly questions if this distinction between organisational and consumer purchasing is justified.

Within consumer research, the concept of brand is heavily associated with emotionally driven value attributes and researchers such as Sheth (1973:56) and Cretu and Brodie (2007:232) suggest that concepts such as Psychic Value and brand may also have significant resonance in a business to business context. This view is shared by Michell, King and Reast (2001:424) who note that the branding of industrial products generates an increased level of confidence in the related industrial purchasing decisions, while Saunders and Watt (1979:116) link the concept of brand to the satisfaction of a business buyer's psychological needs. Mudambi, Doyle and Wong (1997:444), in an exploration of branding in industrial markets, also recognise the importance played by intangible factors, even in the deployment of supposedly rational and systematic decision making processes.

Generally, however, the relevance of brand and the wider considerations of how industrial buyer's individual BSPV influence their behaviours are felt by many to be an under researched area. Zaltman and Bonoma (1977:54) recognise that the influence of individual buyers' differing personal value perceptions and the effect that these have on the purchasing process are in need of further observation and research, a view that is shared by Howard and Doyle (2006:277) and Sánchez-Fernández and Iniesta-Bonillo (2007:443). Similarly, Michaels, Day and Joachimsthaler (1987:29) perceive the complexity of the workplace from the perspective of the professional buyer's search for value and note the absence of related empirical studies. Extending this idea by suggesting a potential direction for future research, Wilson (2000:794) posits:

'Perhaps it is time to develop a research emphasis which asks what are the similarities between organisational and consumer buying behaviour the shift in focus may well necessitate a shift in research methodology from quantitative oriented surveys to the increasing use of ethnographically informed approaches.'

While there is a degree of consensus across relevant literature that value perceptions drive buying decisions, there is also emergent debate from the area of Service Science as to how perceptions of value are formed. This debate may well further inform the understanding of the buyer specific behavioural drivers to emerge from the exploratory study.

4.2 Service-Dominant Logic

The emergence of Service-Dominant Logic within marketing literature (Vargo and Lusch, 2004) increased the prominence of the concept of value within academic circles. While the classical view considers that the significant episode in the creation of value occurs with the transfer of ownership, the basis of Service-Dominant Logic (S-DL) is that value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary (Vargo and Lusch, 2004:11; Vargo 2005:43; Lusch, Vargo and Wessels, 2008:9; Vargo, Maglio and Akaka, 2008:149 and Vargo, 2009:375).

The S-DL School believes that Exchange Value, which it associates with the Goods-Dominant Logic (G-DL) of exchange, is based on an expectation of value rather than actual value-in-use which accrues only through the interaction between the exchange parties (Lusch, Vargo and Wessels,

2008:12). In this respect consumers are regarded as co-producers of value, and goods become simply a means of delivering service through their use. In S-DL firms do not deliver value, but instead offer propositions that have the potential to co-create value in partnership with customers (Kowalkowski, 2011:278).

Although S-DL focuses on value derived and determined through use or context, value determined by exchange remains an important component in the co-creation of value in that value-in-exchange provides a measurement of relative value within the context of surrounding systems (Vargo, Maglio and Akaka, 2008:150). Kowalkowski (2011:278) further recognises that even if value-in-use takes a super-ordinate position in relation to value-in-exchange within S-DL, there may be situations in which firms nevertheless choose to emphasise value-in-exchange. He cites the adoption of G-DL through buyer focus on low purchasing price, but notes that within S-DL it is for the seller to understand the reason why this focus has been adopted. Explanations may include poor demonstration of value potential, the customer's financial directives, or the customer's budgetary constraints (Kowalkowski, 2011:283). Despite the fact that, within S-DL, a focus on value-in-exchange is seen as subordinate to value-in-use, Anderson, Thomson and Wynstra (2000:325) found that purchasing managers consistently selected lower-valued, lower-priced products over higher-valued, higher-priced products. The authors suggest that a possible reason may lie in the reward and recognition systems under which purchasing managers operate. In essence, it is perceived that while purchasing managers recognise the difference between cost and value, it is easier to claim benefit in respect of cost savings achieved.

Frow and Payne (2011:234) contend that, unlike G-DL, which is competitive and potentially confrontational, S-DL is collaborative and potentially facilitates greater value alignment between stakeholders. These stakeholders include a potentially wide array of internal evaluators whose needs are more likely to be met through considerations of value-in-use than through the perspective of value-in-exchange (Kowalkowski, 2011:286). S-DL acknowledges that value-in-use can mean different things to different people and is thus inherently differentiated and heterogeneous (Vargo, Maglio and Akaka, 2008:146 and Lusch, 2011:17). Developing the theme of the heterogeneity of customer value perception, Michel, Brown and Gallan

(2008:55) recognise that within S-DL the customer can have the multiple roles, namely user, buyer, and payer. Kowalkowski (2011:281) observes that while the user's role primarily relates to value-in-use and the payer's primarily value-in-exchange, the buyer's role bridges the two. However, depending on the context, the same person might perform all three roles (Michel, Brown and Gallan, 2008:61).

It is recognised that the application of S-DL has the potential to provide insight as to the presence of enhanced value creating opportunities in the interaction between buyers and sellers (Michel, Brown and Gallan, 2008:64; Kowalkowski, 2011:278 and Frow and Payne, 2011:224). However, Carbonell, Rodríguez-Escudero and Pujari (2009:548) note that the nature of the additional value identified may well extend beyond simple commercial outcomes and may include the enhancement of development processes and quality improvements.

The emerging discipline of Service Science adopts the perspective of S-DL in order to study service systems, which are considered by Maglio and Spohrer (2008:18) to be dynamic, value co-creation configurations of resources (people, technology, organisations and shared information). Within these service systems connections are made through the proposition, acceptance, and evaluation of value (Vargo, Maglio and Akaka, 2008:149 and Lusch, 2011:15). S-DL encourages developing user driven designs in the innovation of service offerings (Alam, 2002:254; Lusch, 2011:16 and Ordanini and Parasuraman, 2011:5) underpinned by the belief that the nature of the value created must be determined uniquely and phenomenologically from the perspective of the user.

Within the S-DL school it is recognised that the time logic of the marketing exchange extends from pre-sale service interaction to the evaluation of post-sale value-in-use (Ballantyne and Varey, 2006:336) and that before any sales agreement is reached both the provider's and the customer's value propositions must converge (Kowalkowski, 2011:278). While Momme and Hvolby (2002:194) and Nordin (2006:301) recognise that buying decisions are frequently influenced by environmental aspects that impinge on the adoption of a purely rational and linear approach to procurement, S-DL continues to view co-created value from the customer's perspective in terms of value-in-exchange and value-in-use (Michel, Brown and Gallan, 2008:55). However,

the exploratory study discussed in Chapter 3 gives *prima facie* support to a view that unique and phenomenologically derived value is created for the buyer during the pre-sale interaction and that this BSPV is neither associated with use nor exchange, but is rather associated with the satisfaction of a business buyer's wider psychological needs. Lusch (2011:16) recognises the need for further research into the co-creation of value within the supply chain and suggests that, because S-DL does not assume away the heterogeneity of the actors, S-DL is an ideal perspective from which to conduct such investigation (Lusch, 2011:17). While S-DL enjoys significant academic support, it should be noted that there is also a body of opinion that, while accepting elements of S-DL, consider it a theory which is still developing. Macbeth and de Opacua, (2010:3) are amongst those who suggest that there may well be an intermediate position between Goods-Dominant and Service-Dominant Logics. Similarly Lindberg and Nordin (2008:292) acknowledge that, in practice, both logics occur in tandem.

4.3 The Role of Value in Developing the Understanding of Buyer Behaviour

In Chapter 3, research questions were developed which sought to determine:

In situations where there is the potential to form a vertical relationship between two mutually dependent organisations:

- 1) To what extent is the operational focus of the buyer Collaborative as opposed to Arm's-Length?*
- 2) To what extent is the commercial focus of the buyer Adversarial as opposed to Non-Adversarial?*

It was also recognised that, following completion of the exploratory study, these questions may need to be revisited prior to embarking on the principal phase of research. The need to revisit the research questions was highlighted when, during the course of the exploratory study, initial analysis revealed that buyer behaviour appeared to be driven by factors that were not obviously focused on either operational or commercial objectives but were rather associated with the satisfaction of the professional buyer's wider psychological needs.

Through a review of literature, including that from the emergent school of Service-Dominant Logic, consideration of the professional buyer's value perception appears to offer a conceptual basis through which those wider

aspects of buyer behaviour may be better understood. While S-DL is premised on the notion of value-in-use, and recognises value-in-exchange, the exploratory study suggests that a further value perception may be phenomenologically determined by the buyer and that BSPV may start to accrue during the presale interaction. Perhaps significantly this interaction takes place before the point when use would be generally considered to commence within the S-DL School of thought. Therefore, in order to assess the influence of differing value perceptions on the pre-sales interaction behaviour of professional buyers, it is necessary to pose an additional research question. This is articulated as:

- 3) *To what extent do the buyer's value perceptions focus on Utility Value, on Exchange Value or on elements of BSPV that are unique to individual buyer's wider psychological needs?*

The objective of Chapter 5 is, therefore, to develop a Research Design which is not only capable of addressing the research questions, but is also able to overcome the previously acknowledged complexity¹³ that is inherent in conducting pre-sales interaction research.

4.4 Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 established that value creation lies at the core of the buyer-supplier interaction and that the role of the professional buyer was to maximise the accrued value resulting from this interaction. The chapter established, through a review of related literature, that buyer value perceptions included Exchange Value, Utility Value and Buyer Specific Perceptions of Value (BSPV) which encompassed human factors such as feelings, emotions and even buyer ego. These considerations of value prompted the widening of the research focus, to include not only buyer behaviour but also buyer value perception, in seeking to address the established research need. The following chapter develops a research design that encompasses this expanded research focus.

¹³ The nature of these difficulties are developed in Section 1.5

Chapter 5: The Research Design

In Chapter 2 gaps were identified in the extant knowledge relating to the behaviour of professional buyers. The first of these gaps relates to the lack of empirical evidence to explain the extent to which buyers identify and adopt co-operative, operationally focussed strategies from which both buyer and seller may potentially benefit. The second gap relates to the lack of empirical understanding as to the degree to which buyers seek to gain unilateral, commercial, advantage through enhancing their relative power position. It also became apparent, through the review of extant literature, that there is a need to develop research methods in order to more properly embrace the complexity of the buyer-seller interaction. Wilson (2000:794) suggests that such understanding may accrue through the use of ethnographically informed research approaches.

Chapter 3 describes an exploratory study intended to begin the process of closing the above gaps, and while this study established *prima facie* evidence that supports the presence of the expected behaviours, it also revealed potentially dominant behaviours that were not the initial focus of the exploratory study. A further review of literature relating to the varying value perceptions of professional buyers was conducted in Chapter 4 in an effort to explain these 'unexpected' behaviours, which included:

- Buyer's desire to exert local control ahead of central control.
- Buyer's motivation to defend a historically held position.
- Buyer's desire to avoid being involved in changes that have the potential to be viewed internally as service failures (logistics, safety performance).
- Buyer's attempt to influence the internal politics of the buying organisation.
- Buyer's perception as to how best to fulfil externally imposed rules.

Consideration of buyer value perception results in a total of three research questions which are articulated as follows:

In situations where there is the potential to form a vertical relationship between two mutually dependent organisations:

- 1) *To what extent is the operational focus of the buyer Collaborative as opposed to Arm's-Length?*
- 2) *To what extent is the commercial focus of the buyer Adversarial as opposed to Non-Adversarial?*
- 3) *To what extent do the buyer's value perceptions focus on Utility Value, on Exchange Value or on elements of BSPV that are unique to individual buyer's wider psychological needs?*

Chapter 5 now develops the research design intended to address the research questions. The Chapter provides an outline of both the aims and strategic intent of the research method, before discussing the approach taken for the selection and recruitment of study participants. Recognising the importance of, where possible, maintaining contact with the respondents throughout the pre-sales interaction, the Chapter continues by detailing the adopted methods of contemporaneous data collection and subsequent analysis. The Chapter concludes by reviewing the approach taken for the presentation of results.

5.1 Research Aims

As discussed in Section 3.1¹⁴, the review of extant literature, as subsequently informed by the exploratory study, established gaps in the understanding of the pre-sales interaction that takes place between professional buyers and sellers, particularly where they operate in conditions of interdependency within vertically aligned trading relationships. Power based interdependency is characterised by situations in which buyers have an incentive to be proactive in their choice of sourcing behaviours, but do not possess the power advantage that would allow them to achieve a position of dominance. Vertical alignment (Cox, 2004c:35) includes both collaborative sourcing and market tested sourcing in which the governance structure permits buyers to make decisions regarding the behavioural directions in which they want to embark.

The first of the gaps identified¹⁵ relates to the lack of empirical evidence to explain the extent to which buyers identify and adopt co-operative, operationally focussed strategies from which both buyer and seller may

¹⁴ The Development of the Research Aims and Strategy are more fully discussed in Section 3.1, in relation to the Exploratory Study, but these are clearly applicable to the entire research design.

¹⁵ The emergent gaps arising from the review of extant literature are fully developed in Section 2.5

potentially benefit. The second gap relates to the lack of empirical understanding as to the degree to which buyers seek to gain unilateral, commercial, advantage through enhancing their relative power position. The identified gaps are expressed in terminology developed by Cox *et al.* (2004:79)¹⁶ who summarise four Basic Relationship Management Styles and present a diagrammatic representation as are summarised in Figure 5.1.

Relative Share of Value Appropriation.	Inequality	Adversarial Arm's Length Relationship	Adversarial Collaborative Relationship
	Equality	Non-Adversarial Arm's Length Relationship	Non-Adversarial Collaborative Relationship
		Arm's length	Collaborative
		Way of Working.	

Figure 5.1: The Four Basic Relationship Management Styles

Source: Cox *et al.* (2004:79)

While conducting the exploratory investigation, the significance was also established of increasing the understanding of the buyer's value perceptions, which appeared to significantly influence buyer behaviour within the pre-sales interaction. The review of relevant literature identified three distinct views of buyer value which are summarised as Utility Value (value in use), Exchange Value (price) and BSPV (relating to an individual buyer's unique, wider psychological needs).

The aim of this research is, therefore, to answer the calls from both academics and practitioners for an increase in the empirical understanding as to what drives the behaviour of professional buyers as they engage in the pre-sales interaction with those who seek to supply their products or services. A secondary contribution lies in the development of research methods which more effectively deals with the acknowledged complexity associated with conducting investigations of professional buying behaviour.

5.1.1 Unit of Analysis

In the study of buyer behaviour the choice of an appropriate unit of analysis is seen as critical not only in achieving the research objectives, but also in

¹⁶ In Section 2.6 Cox *et al.* (2004) was identified as an element of Key Literature in respect of the identified gaps.

influencing the subsequent research choices such as those involving analytical procedures and measurement variables (Nicosia and Wind, 1977:353 and Wind and Thomas 1980:252). Jap (1999:462) observes that previous research designs have adopted the industry, the firm and the trading dyad as the appropriate unit of analysis for the examination of buyer-seller interaction. Wind and Thomas (1980:252), however, caution that while the researcher may be tempted to focus at all levels, such an approach not only introduces a degree of complexity but also raises the prospect of making methodological choices for which there are few guidelines.

Zaltman and Bonoma (1977:59) acknowledge that while it is possible to focus within the trading dyad and to consider an individual actor, such as the purchasing agent, it is their belief that a more meaningful approach is to consider how that individual will interact with others. Indeed authors such as Wilson (1995:337) contend that it is critical to recognise that the organisational interaction between buyers and sellers is a product of the hybrid culture that develops between buying and selling firms which reflects elements of both firms' cultures but is different from either firm's culture.

Those who argue in favour of adopting the relationship as the unit of analysis include Håkansson and Wootz (1979:29), Mohr, Fisher and Nevin (1996:106), Cannon and Perreault (1999:444), and McCabe and Stern, (2009:106). However, Cox (2004a:410) contends that research has shown that it is rare for organisations to have sufficient resources to be able to operationalise the complexity of the extended networks on which organisational relationships are built. He argues, therefore, that in order to build an understanding of buyer-seller interaction researchers must focus within the trading dyad. Jap (1999:462) supports the use of the buyer-supplier dyad as the relevant unit of analysis for those who seek to examine the wider aspects of how competitive advantage evolves from the interaction process between buyers and their suppliers.

Zaltman and Bonoma (1977:59) recognise that while the option exists to consider the actions of individual buyers and sellers, it is more meaningful to acknowledge that multiple individuals may be involved in the purchase process. Consequently they consider that the buying centre, which comprises the wider population of those who influence the buying decision, would represent a more appropriate unit of analysis. Adopters of this approach

include Verville and Halington (2003:587) who argue that conducting a stakeholder analysis across the buying centre is an approach which is particularly well suited to unveiling the integral complexities. Stakeholder analysis is a technique designed to generate knowledge from multiple, relevant actors so as to better understand their behaviours, intentions, interactions, agendas and interests (Brugha and Varvasovszky, 2000:239). Freeman (1984:25) identifies that while stakeholder analysis could be applied to target groups such as members of the buying centre it requires access to access a broad range of potential actors, even if some of these are subsequently found to have little impact on the process under consideration (Freeman, 1984:52 and Brugha and Varvasovszky, 2000:241). The difficulty of gaining the required access to a wide range of potential respondents, within multiple buyer organisations is highlighted by Moriarty and Bateson (1982:190).

An alternative view is expressed by Williamson (1991:79) who summarises his earlier work and confirms his view that the transaction is the appropriate, unit of analysis. He argues that by focussing on the transaction as the unit of analysis, the key dimensions of the resulting micro analysis will encompass the behavioural assumptions of the key players, the governance structure under which the transaction occurs and the contracting strategy of the respective organisations. Hunter, Bunn, and Perreault (2006:161) further recognise that while each purchase focuses on one particular transaction this may be part of an on-going vendor relationship. They contend, therefore, that particular transactions are episodes that encompass past relationships and also anticipate future relationships. An alternative view should, however, be recognised as expressed by Ring and van de Ven (1992:484) who consider that to focus on a single transaction may limit the study of buying decisions by taking insufficient account of the dynamic context in which the relevant decisions are taken.

Considering all of the foregoing, the adopted unit of analysis throughout this research is the transaction. Not only does this approach capture the specific advantages listed by the advocates of Transaction Cost Economics but it also encompasses many of the benefits suggested by those who advocate a focus on the dyad or the wider buying organisation.

5.1.2 Research Paradigm

Morgan (1979:137) explains the importance of understanding the nature of social science research at a fundamental level and supports the use of the term paradigm to encompass the context in which research is undertaken. Bryman (1988:4) defines a research paradigm as:

'a cluster of beliefs and dictates which influence what should be studied, how research should be done, [and] how results should be interpreted,'

Deductive reasoning is the process of building theory from concepts and ideas, followed by a review of the concepts in an empirical setting to ascertain if the building process is supported, Gill and Johnson (1997:28) and Bryman and Bell (2003:9). Deduction has its epistemological roots in the physical sciences and is felt, within certain schools of thought, to have limited applicability in the social world, Bryman and Bell (2003:13).

In response a contrasting approach has developed involving the logical ordering of observed data from the empirical world and using what has been observed to infer the implications for extant theories or to test current hypothesis. This latter approach is termed induction by several authors including Gill and Johnson (1997:33) and Bryman and Bell (2003:10).

The methodological approach adopted within this work is a blend of induction and deduction. Previous studies, together with the findings of the exploratory investigation being used to inform the data collection process and more generally the research design. Perry and Jensen (2001:00) and Dubois and Gadde (2002:559) use the term abduction to describe the blend of induction and deduction in which pre-existing information is used to form initial categories before progressing with data collection during which process new dimensions should be added.

While views as to the degree which theory building and theory testing should be used within the same methodological approach vary, Glaser and Strauss (1967:3) offer a view that supports either paradigm or indeed the use of both. They argue that regardless of the methodology adopted considerations of appropriateness should be based on the provision of perspectives that offer clear explanations of the behaviours observed and that are useful in facilitating theoretical advances in sociology.

As discussed in relation to the exploratory study, the methodological approach adopted for the study of buyer behaviour was fundamentally qualitative¹⁷, and conducted within a case study¹⁸ setting.

Yin (2003:13) offers the opinion that case studies are appropriate when the researcher deliberately wants to consider the context in which the phenomena under consideration takes place, believing that this may have significance for the outcome of the study. In other words, the case study approach is seen as being particularly suited to the empirical exploration of real life situations where the context is seen as integral to the character of the social phenomena under consideration (Remenyi *et al.* 2003:2 and Dubois and Araujo, 2007:171). A case study also offers the researcher the opportunity to both build on extant theory (Eisenhardt, 1989:544; Yin, 2003:14; Dubois and Araujo, 2007:179 and della Porter and Keating, 2008:13) and to simultaneously engage in theory development by moving between the research findings and the relevant literature as the study progresses (Eisenhardt, 1989:536; Jankowicz, 1995:180; Dubois and Gadde, 2002:555 and Dubois and Araujo, 2007:171).

Literature also records several concerns associated with the use of case study approaches. A potential concern is that case studies can foster researcher based cognitive bias (Eisenhardt, 1989:540 and Vennesson, 2008:236). Recognising this potential, the development of an appropriate research design is required to mitigate any incidence of this form of bias. Several authors note that it is not possible to generalise from the case examined (Ackroyd and Hughes, 1992:153; Bryman and Bell, 2003:55; Yin, 2003:10 and Peräkylä, 2004:296). Whilst this is a recognised aspect of case study research it is not one which conflicts with the objectives of this thesis. On balance therefore, the concerns identified regarding the use of case study approaches do not adversely impact the ability to adequately address the research questions.

One possible alternative to a case study approach, which was considered and rejected, was the development of a survey in order to generate data across a wider population. Survey approaches, while ideally suited to exploring large populations, are more appropriate where the objective is to generalise, rather

¹⁷ The justification of the use of a qualitative methodology to investigate the behaviour of organisational buyers is presented in Section 3.1.2.

¹⁸ Section 3.3 discusses the use of case studies in the context of purchasing and supply chain research.

than to develop the findings (Jankowicz, 1995:183) and as such not ideal for addressing the research needs at this stage.

Finally however, while advocating the use of case study approaches in purchasing and supply chain research, Dubois and Araujo (2007:173) acknowledge that there is limited, specific methodological guidance available in extant literature as to their use or design.

A further important dimension of the adopted research paradigm was the decision to engage, for the purposes of data collection, only with the buyer. During the exploratory study¹⁹ it was found that not collecting data across the trading dyad enhanced the confidence of the respondents in respect of sharing potentially commercially sensitive information. However, it is also noted by Wesley and Bonama (1981:143), Lilien and Wong (1981:1) and Moriarty and Bateson (1982:182) that significant input to the buying decision is made by range of individuals who form a wider 'Industrial Buying Group'. The decision to focus on the buyer in the role of key informant²⁰ (Campbell, 1955:339) necessarily limits the capture of the complexity of the inter-relationship between the members of the wider group.

It is, however, possible to partially mitigate the potential bias introduced by referring to only a key informant by careful consideration of the data requested and by careful selection of the transactions selected for inclusion in the case. These considerations are discussed in the following Sections.

5.2 Basis of Case Selection

The case selected as the basis of the study was a natural extension of, and was informed by, the exploratory investigation²¹ and shared many of the same attributes. The common aspects included, firstly, that in order to gain the required insight into buyer behaviour the case focused on vertical trading arrangements which, to recap, are those collaborative sourcing and market tested sourcing relationships whose governance structures offer the required level of buyer autonomy (Cox, 2004c:35). Secondly, the case was based in conditions where buyers and sellers operate under conditions of power based

¹⁹ Section 3.3.2 contains discussion and justification of the decision to enhance respondent confidence in respect of providing potentially confidential, commercial information by restricting data collection to only the buying side of the trading dyad.

²⁰ The use of key informants is discussed in Section 3.2.2.

²¹ The basis of case selection within the context of the exploratory study is discussed in Section 3.1

interdependence, and finally the case incorporated an element of longitudinal design so as to better understand any changes in buyer perception that may occur during the presales interaction. However, as informed by the exploratory study, it was also necessary for the case to consider input from a wider range of potential buyers than could be accessed by targeting the narrow range of specific market sectors considered within the exploratory study. This change was necessary because it proved to be problematic within the previously selected chlor-alkali industry and the industrial scaffolding market to access a sufficient number of buyers who had on-going presales interactions from which to collect contemporaneous data.

Yin (2003:13) defines the case study as being an investigation into a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries of the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident. Yin further defines that a case study copes with a research environment in which there are many more variables than there are data points. Case study research, according to Yin, represents a strategy in which the most important aspect is to afford the possibility to explain the presumed causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for either survey or experiment. Yin further notes that case study research encompasses many variations that successfully fulfil these defining features. Gerring (2004:341) defines a case study as an intensive investigation of a single unit while Caveye (1996:229) considers that a case study should examine the subject phenomenon at one site. It is, however, clear that Yin (2004:14) believes the imposition of such constraints to be non-critical. Variations from single site research models are demonstrated by Siggelkow (2007:20) who cites the example of case study research based on the experiences of individual patients with similar brain injuries and by van der Valk (2012:140) who constructs a case based research strategy whose focus was on twenty-four individual-buyer supplier interactions.

The Case selection was informed by the work of Anderson, Chu and Weitz (1987:80) who observe that the purchasing process is less heavily influenced by the precise nature of the goods or services being purchased than it is by the importance and newness of the purchase as generally perceived within the purchasing organisation. Webster and Wind (1972:250) also contend that the precise nature of the purchase does not directly influence the buying

process but consider there to be some significance in the organisational purpose that is to be served. Anderson, Chu and Weitz (1987:72) observe that for new tasks, which are seen as strategically important the buying centre is likely to be large with many social actors participating in the buying process. Conversely, where the task is seen as routine there may be little incentive for proactive purchasing behaviour. They note, however, that where the purchase involves a rebuy which is seen to involve an upgrade or has an associated perception of importance then buyers are most likely to be proactively engaged in the process. Bunn (1993:47) concurs that the buying decision is a function of perceived importance and newness. She identifies six standard descriptors for buying decisions. Two are defined as casual or routine low priority and are characterised by the buyer placing a low importance on the task and potentially expending little effort on these acquisitions. Purchase decisions which involve new purchases of high strategic importance are characterised by frequent input from top management (Bunn, 1993:50). Bunn (1993:47) recognises that rebuys (simple or complex) or judgemental new purchases are likely to present the buyer with a high degree of freedom to conduct the purchase on behalf of the organisation while simultaneously offering an incentive for buyer engagement and proactivity.

Therefore the Rebuy Case, constructed to examine the behaviours and value perceptions of professional buyers, was fashioned through the detailed review of discrete transactions that share the characteristics as summarised in Table 5.1. To ensure that transactions fulfilled the requirements for inclusion in the Rebuy Case a series of filters were applied during the early stages of the data collection process²².

²² The Data Collection Process is discussed in Section 5.5.1 and the analysis of the data to ensure the criteria for inclusion in the case study is discussed in Section 5.6

Criterion for Inclusion in the Rebuy Case	Criterion Purpose
Transaction occurs within a Vertical Trading Arrangement	Governance structure for the transaction allows sufficient buyer autonomy.
Transaction occurs within a situation of power based interdependence	To ensure that neither buyers nor sellers possess the power advantage that would allow them to achieve a position of dominance and therefore have an incentive to be proactive in their choice of sourcing behaviours.
Transaction provides the key respondent the opportunity to provide contemporaneous detail regarding the pre-sales interaction.	To allow changes in buyer perception that occurs over time to be better understood.
Transaction concerns a rebuy which is perceived by the buyer to be an upgrade or has an alternative, associated degree of importance.	To ensure that as key respondent the 'buyer' is at the centre of the buying group and, therefore, able to report accurately and meaningfully on the pre-sales interaction in which they have participated, including offering some insight on the seller's perspective.

Table 5.1: Characteristics of the Transactions Included in the Rebuy Case

5.3 The Research Instrument

Having determined the basis on which transactions were suitable for inclusion into the Rebuy Case, it was necessary to develop a research implement with which the Rebuy Case could be explored. The research instrument developed for this purpose is diagrammatically summarised in Figure 5.2. The flowchart shows the relationship between the elements of the research design including the steps taken to select and recruit participants, to collect the required data using a contemporary interpretation of the 'Diary - Diary Interview Method' of Zimmerman and Wieder (1977), the check performed to establish that a condition of data saturation had been achieved, the process of qualitative content analysis adopted and the triangulation process utilised to increase the validity of the findings. The flowchart ends by recognising the process by which the results are presented. Each of the elements shown on the flowchart is discussed in the remaining sections of this chapter.

The Research Instrument.

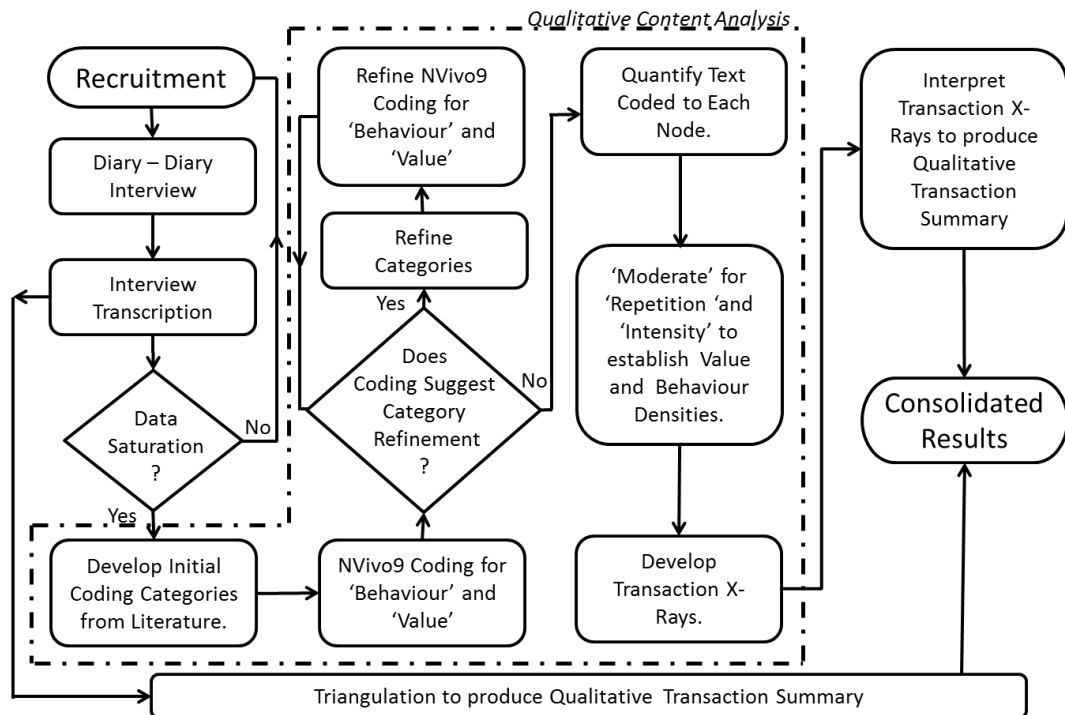


Figure 5.2: Diagrammatic Summary of the Research Instrument

5.4 Participant Recruitment

Satisfactory participant recruitment, being a key success factor of the research design, requires several distinct criteria to be met. Firstly, that the required participants were procurement professionals who represented either industrial or commercial organisations employing more than 250 people, and who had responsibility for negotiating the terms of trade associated with an important rebuy. Secondly, that those participants were willing to make potentially commercially sensitive information available to the researcher. Finally participating buyers, at the point of commencing their involvement in the study, required to be engaged in the early stages of determining their intended strategy regarding a purchase that fulfilled the requirements for inclusion in the study. In practice the recruitment process required several iterations before these criteria could be met.

Several researchers note the benefits of recruiting into research populations utilising the World-Wide Web. Rhodes, Bowie and Hergenrather (2003:68) note that not only does the internet provide nearly limitless numbers of potential study respondents, they also particularly comment on its unique opportunity to target specific internet communities. The advantage over traditional modes of recruitment in respect of targeting specific populations

are also noted by Cook, Heath and Thompson (2000:837) who specifically refer to the advantages accruing when the populations are internet savvy. In order to capitalise on these benefits Khan, Niazi and Rashid (2010:149) made the decision to use what they describe as new ways to locate and approach target populations via specialist communities hosted by the LinkedIn website. Khan, Niazi and Rashid posted notices within communities which reported 13,268 members and from these they received 106 expressions of interest, of which 43 individuals completed the required responses. While these results indicate low response levels they are comparable with other internet based recruitment research programmes. Koo and Skinner (2005:e6) report disappointment with their success in recruiting web community group members via the internet. They sent 3,801 e-mails, of which 2,109 were delivered, however these resulted in only five completed responses. They cite, as one possible cause of this poor rate of response, the difficulty of e-mail recipients differentiating between legitimate messages and spam. In contrast, Gordon *et al.* (2006:38) received 2,523 responses from a potential population of 23,500 forum members. However, they augmented the posting of electronic advertisements with direct contact to members of the target population. The successful augmenting of response rates in this manner was also reported by Cook Heath and Thompson (2000:833). Rhodes, Bowie and Hergenrather (2003:70) express a valid qualification on making any general assumptions as to the accuracy of Web based response rates based on the difficulty in estimating the true populations reached by any communication. They cite passive membership of web communities and the same individual holding multiple memberships as some of the challenges present in accurately assessing the size of target populations. However, a common theme reported by researchers who have pioneered the emerging technology offered by Internet Community Web Sites is the need for further research in this area (Cook Heath and Thompson, 2000:833; Rhodes, Bowie and Hergenrather, 2003:69, Koo and Skinner, 2005:e6 and Illum, Ivanov and Liang, 2010:339). Hoping to build on the apparent success of internet recruitment reported by Cook Heath and Thompson (2000) and Gordon *et al.* (2006), an initial attempt was made to recruit sufficient participants to meet the specific requirements of the study by following the recruitment approach outlined by Khan, Niazi and Rashid (2010:149). Group Notices were placed on ten separate,

procurement related, LinkedIn Groups with a combined membership of 136,119 at time of posting. Within LinkedIn there are certainly individuals who simultaneously hold membership of more than one of these groups and therefore a degree of multiple counting will have occurred in reaching the total number of members. It is also the case that not all of the members will be active. Rhodes, Bowie and Hergenrather (2003) note that, when collecting data on line, response rates are incalculable because of the unknown number of potential respondents who received recruitment materials or who examined a data collection web site but chose not to participate. Recognising the uncertainty surrounding the precise number of individuals who would have seen the notice, it is only possible to record the total membership of these groups. The largest Group had 83,465 members and the smallest 92. Several of the Groups clearly had an International focus while others catered for local, mainly Scottish, interests. In all Groups in which notices were posted the Researcher had been an active participant for several months prior to posting. This participation in the online communities follows the suggestion made by Koo and Skinner (2005:e6) that successful Internet recruitment should focus on conveying trust online to Internet users. The wording of the notices placed on the relevant Web Sites was also intended to convey a similar message of trust:

What Makes Buyers Tick?

As a seasoned industrial buyer, I am currently conducting research into what really drives the behaviour of Procurement Professionals as they struggle to capture value in these stringent economic times. To assist in this research I would be delighted to get input from fellow procurement professionals. Participation will not require disclosure of vendor details nor of commercially sensitive information. The required time commitment will be minimal. This research is conducted as part of a doctoral research project undertaken at The University of Glasgow, which assures confidentiality. Further details can be obtained by e-mail from a.aitken.1@research.gla.ac.uk.

Respondents were issued with details of the project and instructions as to how participation was to be facilitated (Appendix 3). The perceived advantage of this approach was that it allowed the researcher to gate keep those who offered to respond and would also allow targeted follow-up. By providing an introductory e-mail this approach also minimised the number of introductory screens required in the subsequent web based survey, therefore hopefully reducing the likelihood that respondents would be dissuaded from completing the survey.

The initial posting of these notices was left live for a two week period during which time the researcher received only two requests for further information. Neither of these respondents followed on to complete the initial survey. Follow up e-mails were sent to both respondents, one of whom subsequently replied that his employer's rules precluded participation in such a study. The other respondent did not reply to the follow-up e-mail.

After fourteen days the original postings were removed and replaced by amended notices. These second series of group notices, posted within the same groups as the first series, gave direct access to the survey web site. This change negated the need for potential respondents to enter into e-mail dialogue with the researcher. However, no additional responses were received as a result of the second postings.

While it is possible to speculate as to why the use of LinkedIn as a recruitment vehicle proved so unsuccessful, it was likely to be a composite of many issues such as the community members' reluctance to respond to an anonymous request. Koo and Skinner (2005:e6) experienced similar outcomes in their attempts to recruit from web based forums and thereafter offer several potential causes, such as reticence induced by the impersonal nature of the request and the inability of potential respondents to differentiate a legitimate request from one with malicious intent. Developing a deeper understanding of this effect is, however, considered beyond the scope of this study.

Harwood (2002:341) observes that not only is it inherently difficult to gain access to negotiating parties, but that this difficulty is exacerbated when the negotiating parties have sensitive issues to discuss. She suggests, therefore, that the adoption of purposeful sampling through the identification of research friendly participants is likely to be acceptable, while highlighting the inevitable trade-off that may be required. Recognising Harwood's observation the recruitment approach subsequently adopted relied on the selection of interviewees on a non-probability basis (Bryman and Bell, 2003:104), based on their being accessible to the principal researcher. Members of large commercial organisations who were known to the researcher, or to whom he was offered some access, were directly approached to elicit participation. Specifically, similar to the approach utilised in the exploratory study²³, a

²³ The use of snowball sampling techniques is discussed previously in Section 3.2.2

snowball sampling approach was adopted (Frankwick *et al.*, 1994:99; Jankowicz, 1995:157; Bryman and Bell, 2003:105) to identify buyers with relevant organisational responsibility, sufficient relevant subject knowledge and a willingness to participate. Additionally, in order to be able to adequately capture the required data, recruited buyers required to be involved in the pre-sales interaction associated with an appropriate purchase. In order to facilitate a longitudinal study, it was important to identify buyers who were at an early stage in the pre-sales interaction process. The use of such key informants is discussed by Campbell (1955:339) who recognises that obtaining access to such individuals may necessitate the acceptance of potential asymmetries of social locus which may be potential sources of bias. It is further recognised (Bryman and Bell, 2003:105) that recruitment based on accessibility has no statistical foundation and that consequently such an approach cannot be claimed as a basis for validating any claim that the sample is representative of a wider population.

The adopted snowball sampling technique was effective in recruiting participants into the study. A total of 54 buyers were identified and subsequently contacted to ascertain their willingness to participate. Ultimately 21 progressed through the initial research phases to complete the interview process. The reasons for non-participation or non-completion of the process included lack of a current suitable project, which accounted for 10 buyers. Attrition through the process accounted for a further 7, while 16 of those contacted felt unable to participate for either organisational or personal reasons. The number of respondents completing the process proved sufficient for a condition of data saturation to be achieved²⁴.

Finally, no inducement was offered to potential respondents to encourage participation; however, the offer was made to all participants to provide a high level summary of the findings. In the event, none of the responding buyers took up this offer.

5.5 Data Collection

Having recruited potential respondents into the study, it was obviously desirable to adopt a method of data collection that assisted in building a rapport between the researcher and the buyers, which facilitated openness

²⁴ Data Saturation is discussed in Section 5.5.3

and acted as a catalyst to encourage a flow of information relating to potentially sensitive areas for the buyers. The adopted method was a contemporary interpretation of the 'Diary - Diary Interview Method' of Zimmerman and Wieder (1977), in which a web based diary was initially used to collect the thoughts of buyers throughout the pre-sale and immediate post-sale interaction. On completion of the diary, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the buyers to develop the themes raised. This data collection process, therefore, involved two distinct phases; a Diary Phase followed by a subsequent Diary-Interview Phase. During both phases of data collection the objective was to obtain data in order to develop an understanding of the approach adopted by the buyer and also of the context in which the selected transaction occurred.

5.5.1 The Diary Phase

Having identified potential participants, the next stage of the research process involved beginning to record appropriate transaction specific input from the key respondent buyers. Bolger, Davis and Rafaeli (2003:581) recognise several broad goals that can be achieved using diary based research instruments. These include obtaining reliable personal information, particularly when this may change or develop over time, and also exploring causal factors that relate to personnel behaviours. Similar views are expressed by Bryman and Bell (2003:150). Reflecting on the views of these scholars, and also on the research objectives, prompted a comprehensive review of participant diary methods.

Several authors have offered opinions on the advantages of using diary methods within social research. These benefits include offering a means by which conceptual issues can be explored within the context in which they occur. They note that data can be collected within a natural setting and from the specific viewpoint of the participant. Those offering such opinions include Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (1991:102), Toms and Duff (2002:1232), Lewis and Massey (2004:5), and Furness and Garrud (2010:263). Diary based research methods are also considered particularly suitable for collecting data of a confidential or personal nature, provided that suitable guarantees can be given to ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 1991:103 and Bryman and Bell, 2003:152).

A further advantage of using diary based methods is that they allow data to be collected contemporaneously, an aspect to which authors ascribe various specific benefits. Lewis and Massey (2004:5) express the view that the relatively short time, between the event occurring and the record being made, allows a perspective that is almost ethnographic. This limited time delay avoids the bias of retrospection (Bolger, Davis and Rafaeli, 2003:585 and Lewis and Massey, 2004:6) and it allows access to the immediate emotional and cognitive responses of the participants (Furness and Garrud, 2010:269).

The use of participant diaries in research is recognised to have potential limitations, particularly in that the process of diary completion may itself result in behavioural change. Bolger, Davis and Rafaeli (2003:592) describe both the dangers of reactance and also of habituation in respect of diary completion. Diary methods are also recognised as being particularly prone to participant attrition (Toms and Duff, 2002:1233; Bryman and Bell, 2003:153 and Lewis and Massey, 2004:7). Furness and Garrud (2010:263) attribute the cause of this attrition to demotivation and fatigue while Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (1991:103) suggest that this effect can be mitigated by continual encouragement of the participants. Using diary methods as a research implement is also widely regarded as both time consuming and expensive because of the requirement to provide considerable participant training (Bolger, Davis and Rafaeli, 2003:598; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 1991:102 and Brymen and Bell, 2003:153).

Notwithstanding the above, several researchers advocate, and variously claim benefits for the use of, the participant diary as one element of a combined research design. Zimmerman and Wieder (1977) are amongst the early adopters of a dual approach, one element of which is the participant diary. Theirs is the 'Diary-Diary Interview Method' in which the target individuals are commissioned by the researcher to maintain a diary and are subsequently interviewed by the researcher. The diary is used principally as the basis for a subsequent interview, whose purpose is not only to expand on the reportage of the diary but also to probe on less directly observable features of the events recorded. This probing interview is also intended to challenge the diarist to ensure the accuracy of the diary record. To ensure consistency prior to completing the diary, participants are given specific instructions and

regular progress checks are made by the researcher during the diary phase of the research.

An alternative dual methods approach is utilised by Buchanan and Boddy (1992:44) to collect accounts of the personal experiences of change agents with respect to the projects that they have led. The first stage of their design involved a relatively small group of project managers recording their thoughts using audio diaries, while the second involved a paper based survey targeting a much larger group. Their objective was to use the audio diary phase to collect fine grained accounts, while the survey was intended to increase the 'generalisability' of their findings. As an introduction to the first phase of their study Buchanan and Body invited the diarists to a group briefing during which they were given both an overview of the study and also the details of the framework to utilise when completing their diaries. Although Buchanan and Boddy report satisfaction with their diary survey method, they note that the task of conducting group briefings may well be problematic in diverse target groups. They also recognise the possibility that targeting the survey at a much larger group than was involved in the diary phase may well be a source of distortion.

A further example of the use of a dual approach is provided by Lewis and Massey (2004) who utilise a case study based research design that comprises an initial interview, a diary completion phase of data collection and a final follow-up interview. The first interview is used to inform both the researchers as to the details of respondent's specific situation and simultaneously instruct the diarists as to the expectations of their role. The second interview, which occurred within a month of the first, is designed to probe the diarists on the details of their responses.

The use of diary based research designs continues to develop. Hufford and Shields (2002:46) report that:

'Electronic Diaries are beginning to replace paper diaries as the method of choice for collecting self-report data from subjects in the field.'

Two years later Kypri, Gallacher and Casell-Smith (2004:45) claim that earlier concerns, such as those expressed by Zhang (1999:58), that web based diary surveys suffer from the limitations associated with restricted access are no longer valid. McNeill (2003:44) observes that the output of electronic diarists surpasses those who use traditional diaries in terms of a there being a greater

awareness for the needs of potential readers. Baer, Saroiu and Koutsky (2002:640) note that the degree of anonymity and the convenience offered by web based diaries renders them more suitable for the collection of sensitive data than the paper based alternatives, while Denscombe (2006:253) encourages social researchers to use web-based questionnaires with confidence. Examples of previous sensitive topics researched using electronic diaries include the drinking habits of college students (Kypri, Gallacher and Casell-Smith, 2004) and the sexual habits of young adults (Baer, Saroiu and Koutsky, 2002).

Considering the forgoing, a research design was developed that was based on a contemporary interpretation of the 'Diary - Diary Interview Method', Zimmerman and Wieder (1977) which used a web based diary to collect the thoughts of the recruited buyers. The use of the diary was intended to build a rapport between the researcher and the buyers, and also encourage the supply of information relating to potentially sensitive areas for the diarist. By adopting a web based approach it was also possible for the researcher both to monitor and if necessary to expedite the diarists progress.

Perhaps not surprisingly, given the rate at which their development has occurred, the design of web based questionnaires has been the subject of academic focus. While it is recognised that respondent friendly design must take into account the logic of how people expect questionnaires to operate, which is largely in a similar manner to paper based surveys (Dillman, Tortora and Bowker, 1999:5 and Manfreda, Batagelj and Vehovar, 2002:00). It is also noted that Internet based questionnaire designs have their own characteristics. Manfreda, Batagelj and Vehovar (2002:00) note that Internet users tend to read more quickly and scan material with their fingers on the mouse ready to move to the next screen. As a potential counter to this Couper *et al.* (2001:250) contend that the visual design of web sites can be used as a means of maintaining respondent interest. Manfreda, Batagelj and Vehovar (2002:00) record three main aspects associated with the design of web based questionnaires. These are graphic layout, presentation of questions and the number of questions per page. They argue that the non-response error is strongly dependent on these three aspects of the design.

Couper (2000:473) considers that while the main sources of bias associated with web based surveys are likely due to participant non-response in respect

of specific questions, a further significant issue can arise because participants have a tendency to provide answers that, when probed, do not concur with their actual beliefs (Couper, 2000:475). Both of these error types can be mitigated by careful design (Manfreda, Batagelj and Vehovar, 2002:00).

Wright (2005:00) concludes that researchers who utilise online survey should conduct a careful assessment of their research goals, research timeline and financial situation before choosing a specific product or service provider to host the survey. Considering these aspects and in addition the importance of the required flexibility in questionnaire design, the decision was taken to host the Web Based Diary via Smartline International Ltd., Canterbury Business Centre, 18 Ashchurch Road, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, GL20 8BT. A further consideration in the selection of this vendor was the data security offered.

The questionnaire design was developed with logic as summarised by the flowchart as shown in Figure 5.3 which is annotated to show the screen numbers as viewed by the diarists. Detailed screenshots form Appendix 4.

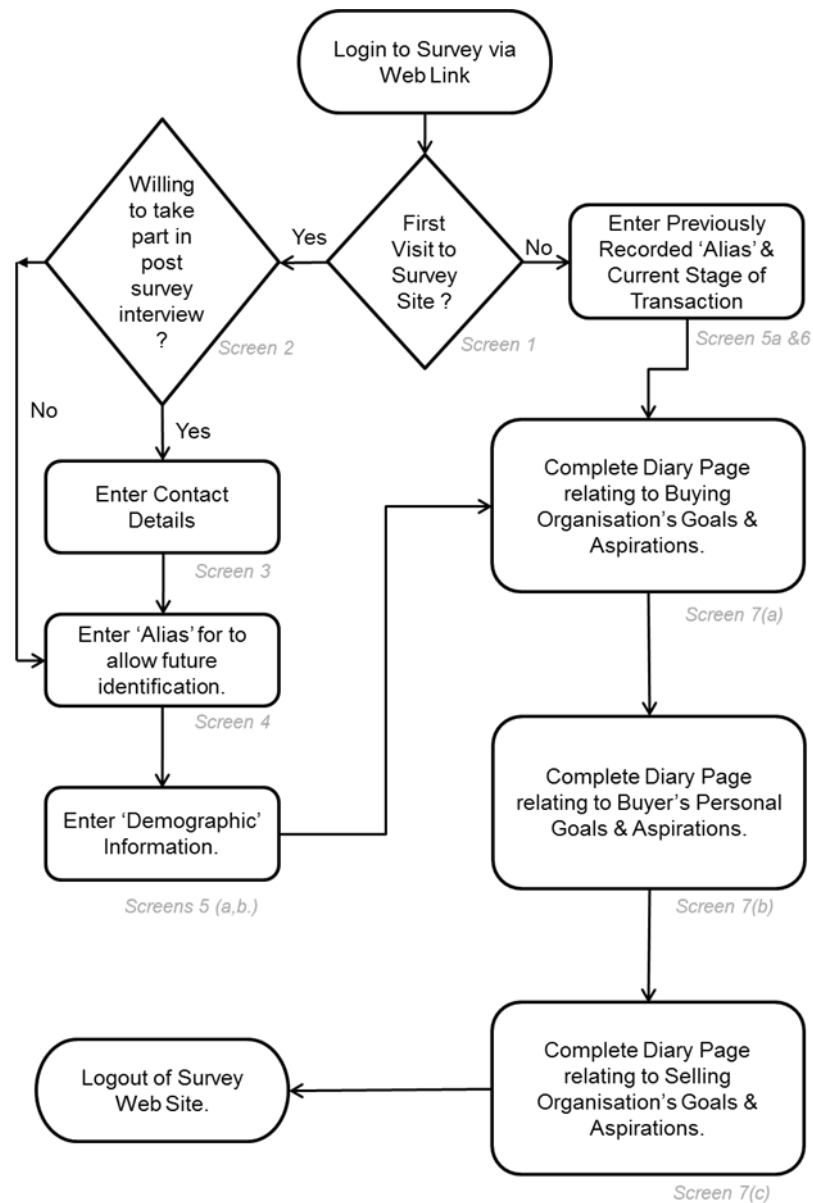


Figure 5.3: Flowchart showing the logic of the Web Based Diary

To minimise the effect of any ambiguity associated with the design of these screens a series of pilot responses were reviewed as completed by individuals who were familiar with the content of the study but who would not act as respondents in the main research effort. This process facilitated the development of the questionnaire based on the inputs from the pilot respondents and resulted in no expression of concern during the diary phase of data collection.

The participating buyers were provided with a URL hyperlink to the survey site which facilitated login to the Diary website, an approach which Kaplowitz *et al.* (2012:346) note is proven to increase response rates. To ensure confidentiality the diary pages were hosted on a commercially managed,

secure survey website. Access to the data storage area of the survey site was via a secure password ensuring that it could be accessed only by the principal researcher and limiting participant access to data entry screens. Diarists logged in using a unique identifier, an approach that Duffy (2002:84) and Cooper *et al.* (2006:00) recognise as a means to improve the monitoring of data collection and the expediting of responses by the researcher.

Upon first login participants were presented with initial briefing information screens in lieu of a briefing interview (Lewis and Massey, 2004:00). These screens provided details as to the purpose of the study, the level of protection provided to ensure confidentiality was maintained and the diary entry procedure they were asked to follow. The initial screens also provided a compliance statement that confirmed that the research was conducted in accordance with the ethical codes and regulations of The University of Glasgow²⁵ and also provided the opportunity to conduct a detailed examination of these documents. Participants were required to provide confirmation of their informed consent before continuing with the Web Based Diary. The initial screens also provided contact details should respondents require clarification on any aspect of the study. It is perhaps noteworthy that, throughout the entire period of engagement, participants expressed no concerns regarding the quality of initial briefing they received using information screens in lieu of a formal briefing interview and the quality of the data collected was sufficient to meet the research objectives.

On their initial visit to the diary website respondents who indicated a willingness to participate in a post diary interview were asked to provide contact details such as name, e-mail address and telephone number. Also included in the collection of demographic data was high level detail as to the perceived importance of the purchase to the buying organisation, the supply options available and the nature of the purchase involved in the selected transaction (principally goods or principally services). Data was then requested to give an overview of the organisation making the purchase (public / private sector, Small or Medium Enterprise (SME) / large organisation). The supply of this information allowed subsequent appraisal by the researcher to

²⁵ Details of the Application to the University of Glasgow Ethics Committee concerning this research forms Appendix 5

ensure that the transaction selected by the respondents fulfilled the requirements for inclusion in the Rebuy Case.

Diary Screens 7a, 7b and 7c²⁶ lie at the core of the web based diary and were designed to prompt respondents to express, in their own terms, what they felt was important regarding the transaction in respect of the organisation they represent, their personal objectives and the outcomes they felt were important to the seller. Barrios *et al.* (2011:215) address the issue of open ended questions within web based questionnaires. They note that web based questionnaires typically result in fewer cases of missing data, associated with non-response, than would be expected with paper based surveys. This aspect is of particular importance as Screens 7a, 7b, and 7c used open ended questions to encourage respondents to use free text to express, in their own terms, their thoughts as they progressed through the transaction. Respondents were asked to make multiple diary visits, each corresponding with significant points in the pre-sales interaction, using screens 7a, 7b and 7c to enter the salient data. In completing these proforma sections respondents were asked to concentrate more on the why aspects of their actions rather than to concentrate on simply what they did or the how they did it.

In order to expedite responses, participants were sent e-mail reminders to complete the diary. This approach has been found by past researchers to be an effective method whereby to increase response rates in internet based diary research projects (Kypri, Gallacher and Casell-Smith, 2004:46; Baer, Saroiu and Koutsky, 2002:641). However, Cook, Heath and Thompson (2000:831) note that the benefit of reminder notices reduced with multiple application, therefore expediting of diary responses was mainly limited to e-mail contact no more frequently than once within a two week period, undertaken within an overall timespan of eight weeks following recruitment into the study. The period over which expediting was undertaken was extended only if the circumstances of the transaction dictated that an extended data collection period was appropriate. It should be noted that as a consequence of the confidentiality measures in place the expediting of responses was possible only where respondents had chosen to make their contact details known.

²⁶ Details of screens 7a, 7b and 7c are included in Appendix 4 and how they relate to the other screens within the web based diary forms the basis of Figure 5.3.

To minimise participant attrition due to the frustration of being asked to resupply the same data on more than one occasion, on second and subsequent diary visits respondents were guided by the logic of the web based questionnaire to bypass those previously completed screens to which there would be no changes required.

5.5.2 The Diary-Interview Phase

Where respondents agreed, the completion of the Diary was coupled with a subsequent interview (Zimmerman and Wieder, 1977:485) during which the Diary responses were explored. Not only does review of the completed Diary entries allow the interviewer to focus on the specifics of the particular transaction, but a level of 'familiarity' develops between interviewer and interviewee during the Diary phase which facilitates the interview process. The resulting advantage of adopting a research design that utilises the Diary - Diary Interview approach is an improvement in the quality of data that can be collected within the limited time that can reasonably be expected to be given by interviewees.

The purpose of these interviews was both to probe and develop the Diary responses. As in the exploratory study²⁷, and following the recommendations of Yin (2003:89), Rubin and Rubin (2003:341) and Bryman and Bell (2003:341) the Diary-Interviews were conducted on a semi-structured basis using interview protocols, developed specifically with reference to the Diary responses specific to the interviewee. The interview protocols acted both as prompt sheets to the interviewer and also provided a checklist that ensured that the intended topics were covered (Voss, Tsikriktsis and Frohlich, 2002:205). The Diary-Interview process utilised the protocol template as reproduced in Appendix 6.

While the nature of the probes developed for inclusion on the appropriate interview protocol were customised to the transaction, based on the diary responses obtained, certain common themes were nevertheless pursued consistent with the research objectives. Illustrative extracts, taken from selected interview transcripts, demonstrate the manner in which issues of collaboration and interdependence were explored, while other probes used

²⁷ The use of semi-structured Interviews to collect qualitative data is discussed in respect of the exploratory study in Section 3.3.3

were of a more general nature designed to invite the interviewee to broaden the discussion should they be so inclined. The overall objective of the interview was to engage the respondent in a guided conversation (Yin, 2003:89) in which the interviewee was encouraged to speak freely about the wider aspects of the chosen transaction.

Illustrative Collaboration probes:

Researcher: *So, was the vendor involved in the definition phase? Did the technical people, who I presume are putting together the scope, consult with the vendor?*

Buyer #03: *no, we depend on our own people to give us this information.*

Researcher: *Okay, when you started out to develop the scope was the vendor asked to assist in developing the specification?*

Buyer #10: *We already had the scope of what we needed. It basically came down to a list of what was needed against which piece of legislation. Having carried out the service in-house we pretty well knew what was needed. With someone in place there is the potential to improve things as we go on.*

Researcher: *Okay, so in terms of the specification of what you're actually looking for does the vendor have an input to the development of the specification?*

Buyer #25: *historically not. However, we have a contract which is up for renewal a year from now, and we will probably start putting the tender together in Q1 of next year. We have just had a review meeting with the incumbent and obviously they are aware of the contract coming to an end. We have just heard discussion about them helping others in the preparation of the tender. Whether we choose to do this or not, we haven't decided on internally.*

Illustrative interdependence probes:

Researcher: *You said there are limited sources of supply, but I assume that these services are something that [you] have bought before?*

Buyer #30: *the reason I choose that was it's very technical. The job they do... They need to have some experience of it. We wouldn't let someone use our equipment as a guinea pig, to be honest! You probably end up dealing with people who have done that stuff before for us. We know them. We know their competence, and they have got experience of it. There wouldn't be many people qualified to do it. It's partly a financial thing as well. The people that go on our site need to have certain qualifications and approval....*

Researcher: so you mentioned again the two suppliers, and I guess that this raises the question "why are there only two out there?"

Buyer #41: that was what I alluded to when I said that there were specific requirements from the client that this facility needed to be within 25 miles from the existing data centre location..... There were only the two within the geographic location. That is why we were restricted to two.

Illustrative general probes:

Researcher: okay, final question from me. If you were to do the whole thing again, what would you do differently?

Buyer #35: What would I do differently? I'm trying to think. If anything was to change probably be to have a better and closer dialogue with the [Technical] team. To try to get more involved technically.... So that I get away from "when the contract is awarded, I throw it over a wall, and never hear about it again". If I was to do it again I would want to get much greater knowledge about the technical aspects.

Researcher: So how easy do you think it would be to bridge that gap?

Buyer #35: it would be easy insofar as the team would not have a problem if I sat in on meetings. Maybe the issue would be getting the technical knowledge.

Researcher: so taking the example that we talked about earlier, what would happen if it was an original equipment manufacturer who was offering a bespoke service. How would that work?

Buyer #28: it is difficult ground! Very difficult! I would always challenge if someone has engaged with one organisation to the potential detriment of others. Technically what you have is an end-user with a requirement, and that requirement should be articulated in terms of output. There will be many ways of achieving that output. If you narrow it down to a technical solution, too quickly, you are limiting the marketplace and in some ways you might, actually, be laying yourself open to challenge.

A total of twenty-one interviews were conducted with buyers who had completed the Diary Phase of the data collection process. Where possible interviews were conducted on a face to face basis or utilising Skype where distances precluded physical meetings. A few interviews were conducted by telephone, recognising that certain interviewees were uncomfortable with the use of Skype. The interview durations ranged from around two hours to approximately thirty minutes. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for subsequent coding and analysis. Typically an average of around one hour of interview recordings was transcribed per buyer.

5.5.3 Data Saturation

On completion of each Diary Interview the resulting transcript was subject to an initial review with the objective of determining if recruiting further diarists was likely to contribute, in a meaningful way, to the resolution of the research questions. While Marshall (1996:523) recognises that the appropriate sample size is that which adequately answers the research question posed, he suggests that the number of required responses will become apparent as the study progresses. However, Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006:60) offer the opinion that while data saturation has become the gold standard by which sample size is determined, there is insufficient guidance to enable the operationalisation of the concept. This is a view shared by Bowen (2008:138) who also recognises that the concept of data saturation remains somewhat nebulous, but suggests that the process by which it is achieved involves the introduction of new participants into the study until a process of diminishing returns results in the additional data they provide yielding nothing new.

Francis *et al.* (2010:1241) provide practical guidance as to the point at which data saturation is likely to occur. They suggest that after conducting a minimum of ten interviews, data saturation is likely if three consecutive interviews fail to yield any new themes, but caution that the particular type of research being conducted may well influence these criteria. Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006:74) posit that data saturation is likely after the analysis of twelve interviews, but recognise that there may be limits as to the generalisability of this suggestion. Bowen (2008:137) is however clear in his statement as to the importance of researchers providing clear descriptions of the process they adopt in the determination of data saturation within their research reports.

The approach adopted to determine the point at which data saturation was reached involved reviewing newly completed interview transcripts and recording, in memo form, the emergent concepts and relationships that appeared to be emerging. While this review was significantly less rigorous than the process of analysis that would subsequently be utilised, the memos were compared at intervals as the interviews progressed and the ideas they contained were refined and developed. As the number of transcribed interviews approached twenty the content of the memos revealed an increasingly limited return by way of new information yielded. Ultimately,

after conducting twenty-one interviews a condition of data saturation was considered to have been reached.

5.6 Data Analysis

The first step in the in the analysis of the data collected was the application of the filters designed to ensure that the transactions in the Rebuy Case met the criterion for inclusion as summarised in Table 5.1. In order to set the scene, the 'Invitation to Participate in the Research' (Appendix 3) contained the reminder:

'The purchase should be for either goods or services that are important for your organisation. Ideally it is for something that your organisation has bought before, although perhaps the precise requirements on this occasion may have slightly altered.'

The initial prompts contained within Diary Screen 5b (Appendix 4) were designed to establish the importance of the transaction from the perspective of the buyer. Respondents were also asked to indicate the significance of the related expenditure, its operational criticality and the availability of alternative sources of supply. These diary responses allowed screening questions to be developed for use during the Diary-Interview in order to probe the buyer's perspective and to establish the required conditions of interdependence between buyer and seller (Cox, Sanderson and Watson, 2000:28).

5.6.1 Qualitative Content Analysis

The principal outputs from the Diary-Diary Interview stage of data collection were the transcripts from the Diary Interviews conducted with the twenty-one buyers engaged in rebuy transactions. Collectively these transcripts formed a body of qualitative data, the analysis of which was intended to ensure that any findings met the requirements of Internal Validity, External Validity and Reliability as noted by such as Easterby-Smith (1991:41), Thorpe and Lowe (1991:41), Yin (2003:19) and Bryman and Bell (2003: 33)

While literature records that there are numerous possible approaches to the analysis of qualitative data, (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998:29; Atkinson and Delamont, 2005:821; Babbie, 2005:388 and Elo and Kyngäs, 2008:107), Content Analysis is cited by Downe-Wamboldt (1992:313); Jankowicz (1995:206) and Bryman and Bell (2003:417) as a commonly applied technique

which affords the opportunity to make both replicable and valid inferences. An alternative but significantly less commonly held opinion, as expressed by Neuendorf (2002:14) and Remenyi *et al.* (2002:5), is that content analysis is a technique that lies firmly within the positivist tradition. Recognising that not all share this view, Neuendorf bases his stance on the origins of content analysis which can be found in the quantification of journalistic content.

Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) involves detailed examination of textual data in an attempt to identify recurrent themes and then, when identified these themes are systematically grouped with the intention of developing a deeper and more complete understanding of the text. A key element of the process is attention to objectivity, reliability and replicability, (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992:314; Jankowicz, 1995:190; Bryman and Bell, 2003:417; Wilkinson, 2004:183 and Krippendorff, 2004:18). The advantage of QCA is seen to be an increased likelihood of successfully recognising main themes by the adoption of a structured, analytical approach (Kracauer, 1952:637; Morgan, 1993:113 and Bryman and Bell, 2003:418). While the process of QCA is not viewed as simply following a specific set of predetermined rules (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992:314; Hsieh and Shannon, 2005:1277 and Elo and Kyngäs, 2008:109) there are, however, several important concepts that form the basis of the method.

Firstly, while there is a general acceptance that the frequency with which an idea occurs is taken as an indication of the relative importance of the idea within the overall message, QCA is not simply an exercise in counting occurrences of words or phrases. Researchers must distinguish the contribution that accrues from these individual occurrences (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 1991:108; Downe-Wamboldt, 1992:314; Bryman and Bell, 2003:476; Krippendorff, 2004:60; Rubin and Rubin, 2005:228).

Secondly, QCA draws on established theories to form an initial basis for the constructs used to identify linkages. A recognised early step in the process is, therefore, to review previous relevant research literature as a source of categories on which initial coding might be based (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992:316; Jankowicz, 1995:206; Granheim and Lundman, 2004:105; Krippendorff, 2004:173; Hsieh and Shannon, 2005:1281).

Thirdly, it is accepted that moving back and forth between the text and the output of the Content Analysis allows for progressive refinement and re-categorisation of the initial themes in a manner that benefits the overall quality of the analysis (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992:317; Morgan, 1993:115; Hsieh and Shannon, 2005:1281 and Elo and Kyngäs, 2008:110).

Finally, having completed the analysis the researcher must find a way to present the outcome in a manner that is both easily understood and enables patterns and relationships to be established (Jankowicz, 1995:190 and Krippendorf, 2004:191).

While recognising the potential benefits of the approach, literature also notes several disadvantages that the researcher must overcome. These include the time required (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992:320), the potential loss of data richness and difficulty of successfully presenting the findings (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008:114) and avoiding potential bias (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005:1283). While accommodating the time requirement is largely a matter of realistic programming by the researcher, the adopted method of data analysis and presentation²⁸ are designed to mitigate the identified disadvantages in respect of loss of data richness. Importantly the research design seeks to mitigate analytical bias by the use of a second analyst²⁹.

An important aspect of QCA is the utilisation of established theories to form the initial basis for coding subject texts. Extant literature categorises, from a variety of perspectives, those behaviours and value perceptions that are associated with professional purchasing. Specifically, a range of buyer behaviours are discussed and exemplified by Sheth (1973:51), Zaltman and Bonoma (1977:55), Rojot (1991:153), Gundlach and Cadotte (1994:522), Mohr and Spekman (1994:138), Antonioni (1988:339), Cannon and Perreault (1999:442), Emiliana (2003:108) and Plank, Reid and Newell (2007:46). Similarly, a range of authors examine the various value perceptions found to be held by those who are engaged in the negotiation of Business to Business transactions. These include Groth (1994:10), Ravald and Grönroos (1996:25), Lapierre (1997:390), Lapierre (2000:125), Khalifa (2004:656), Liu, Leach, and

²⁸ The approach to presenting the results is discussed in Section 5.6.1.3

²⁹ The same second analyst provided assistance during the exploratory study, the initial coding of the content analysis nodes (Tables 5.2 and Table 5.3) and the triangulation exercise discussed in Section 5.6.2. The second analyst while independent from the research objectives is an experienced practitioner in the subject area.

Bernhardt (2005:560), Ballantyne and Varey (2006:343), Cretu and Brodie (2007:232), Lindberg and Nordin (2008:294), Vargo (2009:375) and Macbeth and de Opacua (2010:3).

Prior to commencing the coding of the interview transcripts an initial coding was conducted on the above standard behaviours and value perceptions as derived from literature. The initial coding process was undertaken firstly by the principal researcher and also by a second analyst who worked independently but with awareness both of the study aims and also of the subject area. Utilising the process of reflection and discussion, after Graneheim and Lundman (2004:106), a weighted initial coding was developed as summarised in Table 5.2. The basis on which this initial coding exercise was undertaken was the agreed strength of alignment, on a high, medium and low basis, with the operational and commercial relationship management styles as defined by Cox, *et al.* (2004:79).

Table 5.2: Initial Coding of Standard Buyer Behaviours

Coding Ref.	Buyer Behaviour	Literature Source	Behaviour Characteristics	Initial Coding
B01	Information exchange (relationship connectors)	Cannon and Perreault (1999)	Open sharing of information that may be useful to both parties	Collaborative (High)
B02	(Commercial) Operational linkages (relationship connectors)	Cannon and Perreault (1999)	Use of linked systems, procedures, and routines (buying and selling organizations) to facilitate operations	Collaborative (Low)
B03	(Formal) Legal bonds (relationship connectors)	Cannon and Perreault (1999)	Use of detailed and binding contractual agreements that specify the obligations and roles of both parties	Collaborative (Medium)
B04	(Informal) Cooperative norms (relationship connectors)	Cannon and Perreault (1999)	Cooperative expectations the parties have about working together to achieve mutual and individual goals jointly	Collaborative (High)
B05	Adaptations (relationship connectors)	Cannon and Perreault (1999)	Expectation (only) of specific investments in adaptations to process, product, or procedures (by sellers or buyers)	Collaborative (Low)
B06	(Good) Communication quality (communication behaviour)	Mohr and Spekman (1994)	Accurate, timely, adequate and credible information exchange	Collaborative (Medium)
B07	Extent of info. sharing (communication behaviour)	Mohr and Spekman (1994)	Communication of critical, often proprietary, information	Collaborative (High)

Coding Ref.	Buyer Behaviour	Literature Source	Behaviour Characteristics	Initial Coding
B08	(Lack of) Planning / goal setting and communication behaviour)	Mohr and Spekman (1994)	(Lack of) Engagement in joint in planning and goal setting	Arm's-Length (High)
B09	Price (as source of conflict)	Emiliana (2003)	Evidence that price has become a source of conflict between buyer and seller	Adversarial (High or Medium)*
B10	Quality (as source of conflict)	Emiliana (2003)	Evidence that product quality has become a source of conflict between buyer and seller	Adversarial (High or Medium)*
B11	Delivery (as source of conflict)	Emiliana (2003)	Evidence that delivery issues have become a source of conflict between buyer and seller	Adversarial (High or Medium)*
B12	Payment Issues (as source of conflict)	Emiliana (2003)	Evidence that delayed payments / financial penalties / order cancellations as a source of conflict	Adversarial (High or Medium)*
B13	Intellectual property (as source of conflict)	Emiliana (2003)	Evidence that issues relating to Intellectual property have become a source of conflict	Adversarial (High or Medium)*
B14	Integrating (conflict handling)	Antonioni (1988)	Seeking 'win-win' by both parties speaking up for themselves	Non-Adversarial (Medium)
B15	Obliging (conflict handling)	Antonioni (1988)	Neglecting own needs to satisfy others	Non-Adversarial (High)
B16	Dominating (conflict handling)	Antonioni (1988)	One party dominating the other (win-lose)	Adversarial (High)
B17	Avoiding (conflict handling)	Antonioni (1988)	Withdrawal and side stepping the issue	Non-Adversarial (Low)
B18	Compromising (conflict handling)	Antonioni (1988)	No-win / no-lose, not all needs met	Non-Adversarial (Medium or High)*
B19	Time Pressure (Factors Affecting)	Sheth (1973)	Buyer behaviour influenced by lack of time available to build understanding	Arm's-Length (Low)
B20	Perceived Risk (Factors Affecting)	Sheth (1973)	Buyer fears adverse consequences if he makes a wrong choice	After discussion reclassified as a value proposition
B21	(High) Degree of Centralisation (Factors Affecting)	Sheth (1973)	Buyer behaviour influenced by centralisation of the decision making process	Arm's-Length (Low)
B22	(Rejection of) Affective (personality)-based social conflict	Plank, Reid & Newell (2007)	Evidence of buyer / seller purposefully avoiding interpersonal conflict	Collaborative (Low)
B23	(Rejection of) Cognitive (idea)-based social conflict	Plank, Reid & Newell (2007)	Evidence of buyer / seller purposefully avoiding interpersonal conflict	Collaborative (Low)

Coding Ref.	Buyer Behaviour	Literature Source	Behaviour Characteristics	Initial Coding
B24	Relationship/Source Loyalty	Plank, Reid & Newell (2007)	Evidence of buyer attempts to build buyer-seller interpersonal relationship / loyalty	Collaborative (Low)
B25	Reward (Non-Coercive)	Gundlach and Cadotte (1994)	Positive inducement granted by the buyer to gain compliance	Non-Adversarial (Low or Medium)*
B26	Promise (Non-Coercive)	Gundlach and Cadotte (1994)	Buyer promises seller future positive inducements for compliance	Non-Adversarial (Low)
B27	Information Persuasion (Non-Coercive)	Gundlach and Cadotte (1994)	Buyer supplies information a logical or persuasive manner in an effort to gain compliance	Collaborative (Low or Medium)*
B28	Recommendation (Non-Coercive)	Gundlach and Cadotte (1994)	Buyer communicates to seller that compliance on an issue would be very desirable.	Collaborative (Low)
B29	Request (Non-Coercive)	Gundlach and Cadotte (1994)	Buyer communicates to seller of his wish to gain seller's compliance.	Collaborative (Low)
B30	Positive normative (Non-Coercive)	Gundlach and Cadotte (1994)	Buyer communicates to seller that compliance on some issue would be in conformity with established norms.	Collaborative (Low)
B31	Punishment (Coercive Strategies)	Gundlach and Cadotte (1994)	A negative sanction applied by buyer against seller to gain compliance on some issue.	Adversarial (High or Medium)*
B32	Threat (Coercive Strategies)	Gundlach and Cadotte (1994)	Buyer communicates to seller that future negative sanctions would be applied if seller did not comply	Adversarial (High or Medium)*
B33	Demands (Coercive Strategies)	Gundlach and Cadotte (1994)	Buyer communicates to seller of requirement or insistence that seller complies on some issue	Adversarial (High or Medium)*
B34	Negative normative (Coercive Strategies)	Gundlach and Cadotte (1994)	Buyer communicates to seller that failure to comply on some issue would be in violation of established norms	Adversarial (High or Medium)*
B35	The 'tough' style	Rojot (1991)	Buyer behaviour is dominant, aggressive, power oriented	Adversarial (High or Medium)*
B36	The 'warm style'	Rojot (1991)	Buyer behaviour is supportive, understanding, collaborative, people oriented	Non-Adversarial (High or Medium)*
B37	The 'numbers style'	Rojot (1991)	Buyer behaviour is analytical, conservative, issue oriented	Collaborative (Medium)
B38	The 'dealer style'	Rojot (1991)	Buyer behaviour is flexible, compromising, integrative, outcome oriented	Non-Adversarial (Medium)

Coding Ref.	Buyer Behaviour	Literature Source	Behaviour Characteristics	Initial Coding
B39	Intradepartmental influence	Zaltman and Bonoma (1977)	Evidence that although a number of individuals or groups within the buying organisation influence the purchase decision they do not interact with seller	Arm's-Length (Low)
B40	Interdepartmental influence	Zaltman and Bonoma (1977)	Evidence that although a number of individuals or groups throughout the corporation influence the purchase decision they do interact with seller	Arm's-Length (Medium)

*Depending on Context

It is important to note that the initial coding exercise was not intended to deliver an exhaustive list of standard behaviours but rather to develop, through discussion and interaction between the principal researcher and the second analyst, a benchmarked set of behaviours which provided an initial basis from which to embark on the coding of the diary-interview transcripts. On a similar basis, an initial coding exercise was performed using the characteristic notions of buyer value found within extant literature, the output of which is summarised in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Initial Coding for Buyer Value Perceptions

Coding Ref.	Value	Literature Source	Value Characteristics	Initial Coding
V01	Brand Image	Cretu and Brodie (2007)	Brand Image impact on customer value	BSPV (Medium)
V02	Unique Customer Value	Vargo (2009)	Value uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary (not in the context of use or price)	BSPV (High)
V02a	Psychic Value	Khalifa (2004)	Feelings of pride, achievement, and superiority, etc. associated with the purchase	BSPV (High)
V02b	Exclusive Value	Groth (1994)	Premium above utilitarian value attributable to psychic needs (internal and external)	BSPV (High)
V03	Objectification of Services	Lindberg and Nordin (2008)	Buying complete solutions or outsourcing entire function by client	Utility Value (Medium)
V04	Taking Advantage of Market Competition	Lindberg and Nordin (2008)	Competitive tendering or evaluating several potential supplier (buyer value derived from the procurement process itself)	BSPV (Medium)
V05	Considering post-purchase implementation	Lindberg and Nordin (2008)	Post Purchase perception of Vendor flexibility or ability to cooperate	Utility Value (Medium)
V06	Preferred supplier	Lindberg and Nordin (2008)	Frame agreements used in order to simplify and reduce transaction effort	BSPV (Low)
V07	Customer satisfaction	Liu, Leach, and Bernhardt (2005)	Affective reaction to the appraisal of a supplier (c.f. the product) (<i>ex post</i>)	BSPV (Low)
V08	Perceived switching costs	Liu, Leach, and Bernhardt (2005)	Perceived difficulty of a buyer in replacing an existing supplier	BSPV (Medium)
V09	Better Products	Lapierre (2000)	Desire to take advantage of alternative product related solutions (<i>ex ante</i>)	Utility Value (Medium)
V10	Better Service	Lapierre (2000)	Desire to take advantage of alternative service related solutions (<i>ex ante</i>)	Utility Value (Medium)
V11	Better Relationship	Lapierre (2000)	Desire to take advantage of alternative relationship with vendor (<i>ex ante</i>)	Utility Value (Medium)
V12	Value in Exchange	Lapierre (1994)	Value the customer assesses during a transaction (<i>ex ante</i>)	Exchange Value (High)
V13	Value in Use	Lapierre (1994)	What the customer assesses will be the results or outcomes (<i>ex post</i>)	Utility Value (High)
V13a	Utility Value	Khalifa (2004)	Primary value from the performance and physical characteristics of the product	Utility Value (High)

Coding Ref.	Value	Literature Source	Value Characteristics	Initial Coding
V14	Value for Use	Macbeth and de Opacua (2010)	Customer is led by the supplier's value offering (limited exploration by buyer)	Exchange Value (Low)
V15	Net Customer Value	Khalifa (2004)	= Psychic + Utility Value - Total Customer Costs (recognising psychic element)	BSPV (Medium)
V16	Relationship Value	Ravald and Grönroos (1996)	Safety, credibility, security (<i>ex post</i>)	Utility Value (Low)
V16a	Service-Dominant Exchange	Ballantyne and Varey (2006)	Relating, Communicating and Knowing (<i>ex post</i>)	Utility Value (Low)

The benefits of using of propriety software to aid the qualitative analysis of textual data is well recognised (Welsh, 2002:00; Crowley, Harré; and Tagg, 2002:193 and Bringer, J.D., Johnston, L.H. and Brackenridge, C.H., 2004:250), principally because it enables efficient data organisation. To facilitate the analysis of the diary interview transcripts the NVivo9 software package was utilised. This software allows the researcher flexibility as to the precise nature of the analytical approach adopted (Crowley, Harré and Tagg, 2002:194) and enhances the researchers' ability to pursue a rigorous analytical approach (Bringer, Johnston and Brackenridge (2004:262). To enhance research designs Welsh (2002:00) advises that the best features of both manual and electronic methods of data handling should be utilised and Crowley and Harré and Tagg (2002:195) suggest that research ideas can be linked manually to elements of text within the documents being analysed. The research design adopted captures the benefits of both computer enhanced and manual methods.

The transcripts of the Diary Interviews become the source documents within NVivo9 and the appropriate elements of the text are assigned initial coding references for buyer behaviour (Table 5.2) and buyer value perceptions (Table 5.3). Through a process of multiple review, the initial categories are progressively refined and re-categorised to better develop the underlying themes. The benefits of progressive refinement and re-categorisation of the initial node selection is cited by a range of authors including Downe-Wamboldt (1992: 317), Morgan (1993:115), Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1281) and Elo and Kyngäs (2008:110). During the data analysis, a progressive review was

5.6.1.1 Data Moderation

Harwood (2002:341) recognises that there are limitations associated with analysing communication messages with an underlying assumption that frequency is allied to intensity. She observes that these limitations can be minimised by careful research design but also observes (Harwood, 2002:345) that developing the appropriate technique is, to a certain extent, left to the researcher. Moderation for the effects of repetition within individual transcripts and taking account of interviewee intensity of response is considered integral to the research design.

The process of moderation is well documented across a range of literature including those areas dealing with educational assessment (Shaw and Radnor, 1993; Good, 1988; and Bloxham, 2009), in focus group based research within social science (Byres and Wilcox, 1991; Kienle and Ritterskamp, 2007), in internet based knowledge management forums (Paulsen, 1995; and Gairín-Sallán, Rodríguez-Gómez and Armengol-Asparó, 2010), and more generally within the area of statistically based social science research (Cialdini, Herman, and Evenbeck, 1973 and Pierce *et al.*, 1993).

The purpose of moderation is variously described as providing a general overview or summary (Payne and Williams, 2005:296; Kienle and Ritterskamp, 2007:74; and Gairín-Sallán, Rodríguez-Gómez and Armengol-Asparó, 2010:311), while providing consistency and avoiding the erroneous effects of extremes (Wright, 1988:372; Good, 1988:319 and Shaw and Radnor, 2006:239). It is also recognised that to undertake the process of moderation successfully the moderator requires appropriate skills and experience (Byres and Wilcox, 1991:75 and Bloxham, 2009:211). Finally, while emphasising the need for pragmatism in the process of moderation, Payne and Williams (2005:297) highlight the importance of actively considering the role of moderation within the research design in order to ensure the validity of the findings.

In the context of this research the process of moderation was performed, as an integral element of the research design, by the principal researcher who also has considerable experience as a practitioner in the subject area. The moderation was performed by recognising, while conducting the review of the interview transcripts, those occasions in which buyers were simply reiterating a single theme without adding richness or adding any further dimension to the

theme. Similarly, while conducting the diary interviews, interviewer notes were used to record instances where interviewee's showed particular passion regarding a particular theme. Where repetition was noted, the process of moderation involved applying an appropriate reduction to the frequency as derived within NVivo9 while increased intensity was reflected by an increase. In practice the main consequence of the moderation process had the effect of peak loping extremes in frequencies. While these adjustments were based on the qualitative assessment of the moderator, it is important to note that the process of moderation did not attempt to abstract away individual themes but rather to allow adequate consideration of any deeper themes that may be contained within the transcripts. The output from the process is a Moderated Node Frequency Table which is produced for each of the Diary-Interview Transcripts. By way of an illustrative example, Table 5.5 and Table 5.6 depict such tables for a typical transaction.

Coding Reference	Buyer Behaviour	Moderated Frequency
B08	(Lack of) Planning / goal setting (communication behaviour)	1
B09	Price (as source of conflict)	2
B10	Quality (as source of conflict)	2
B11	Delivery (as source of conflict)	2
B12	Payment Issues (as source of conflict)	1
B13	Intellectual Property (as source of conflict)	1
B14	Integrating (conflict handling)	1
B17	Avoiding (conflict handling)	2
B18	Compromising (conflict handling)	2
B19	Time Pressure (Factors Affecting)	7
B21	(High) Degree of Centralisation (Factors Affecting)	7
B37	The 'numbers style'	1
B39	Intradepartmental Influence	2
B40	Interdepartmental Influence	1
Cumulative Moderated Frequency for Transaction		32

Table 5.5: Typical Moderated Node Frequency Table (Behaviour)

Coding Reference	Value	Moderated Frequency
V03	Objectification of Services	1
V04	Taking Advantage of Market Competition	1
V09	Better products	3
V12	Value in Exchange	4
V13	Value in Use	2
V14	Value for Use	1
V15	Net Customer Value	1
Cumulative Moderated Frequency for Transaction		13

Table 5.6: Typical Moderated Node Frequency Table (Value)

5.6.1.2 Relationship Management Behaviours and Value Perceptions

Welsh (2002:00) and Bringer, Johnston and Brackenridge (2004:249) observe that certain data manipulation activities are best undertaken outside NVivo9 and that research designs should incorporate manual methods or use alternative software packages as appropriate. The development of moderated node frequency tables for each transaction was an intermediate step in the process of coding the Diary-Interview transcripts to reflect the relationship management styles and value perceptions as developed previously³⁰.

As explained in Section 5.1.1, each node was coded according to the strength of its alignment, on a high, medium and low basis, with the four basic relationship management styles (Adversarial, Non-Adversarial, Collaborative and Arm's Length) or the three value perceptions (Utility Value, Exchange Value or BSPV). The analysis of the transaction therefore required a summation of the moderated frequencies by relationship management style, or value perception as appropriate, across each of the identified nodes. This relatively simple data transposition exercise was undertaken by exporting the data into MS-Excel. For illustrative purposes the typical transaction as used in Table 5.5 and Table 5.6 is extended to illustrate the development of the resulting behaviour frequency table (Table 5.7) or value frequency table (Table 5.8).

³⁰ The discussion of the research aims are outlined in Section 5.1

Relationship Management Style	Alignment Strength	Moderated Frequency
Adversarial	High	3
	Medium	5
	Low	
Non-Adversarial	High	2
	Medium	2
	Low	2
Arm's Length	High	1
	Medium	1
	Low	16
Collaborative	High	
	Medium	
	Low	
Cumulative Moderated Frequency for Transaction		32

Table 5.7: Typical Behaviour Frequency Table

Buyer Value Perception	Alignment Strength	Moderated Frequency
BSPV	High	
	Medium	2
	Low	
Utility Value	High	2
	Medium	4
	Low	
Exchange Value	High	4
	Medium	
	Low	1
Cumulative Moderated Frequency for Transaction		13

Table 5.8: Typical Value Frequency Table

5.6.1.3 Result Presentation Format

As noted by Jankowicz (1995:190) and Krippendorff (2004:191) the researcher must find a way to present research outcomes in a manner that is both easily understood and also enables patterns and relationships to be established. In the case of the QCA of the Diary-Interview Transcripts, the method of data presentation requires to facilitate the qualitative comparison of the buyer behaviours and also of buyer value perceptions. The core objective being to

present aggregated data in a manner that minimises the effect of decomposition and decontextualisation.

Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (1991:139) observe that the understanding of statistical information can be enhanced through its presentation in graphical form. With this in mind, a presentation format was developed whereby the moderated frequencies were plotted graphically, using the density of shading applied to represent the relative moderated frequency relevant to the occurrence of each individual behaviour or value perception. Comparing the relative density of shading, for both the relationship management approach and the buyer's value perceptions, allowed data interpretation in a manner that is broadly analogous to that of a medical X-Ray, hence the term 'Transaction X-Ray' is used to describe the resulting graphic. For reasons of parsimony, within each 'X-Ray' a range of five density bands were adopted with the limited data manipulation required to construct the 'X-Ray' being carried out using MS-Excel.

For illustrative purposes, using the data specific to the typical transaction, Figure 5.4 demonstrates how the moderated frequencies were plotted onto the relationship management grid (after Cox, *et al.* (2004:79) and the relative density of shading superimposed to build the behavioural element of the 'Transaction X-Ray'. The individual relative moderated frequencies, specific to this typical transaction, are shown in numerical form to aid the understanding of the 'X-Ray' development process.

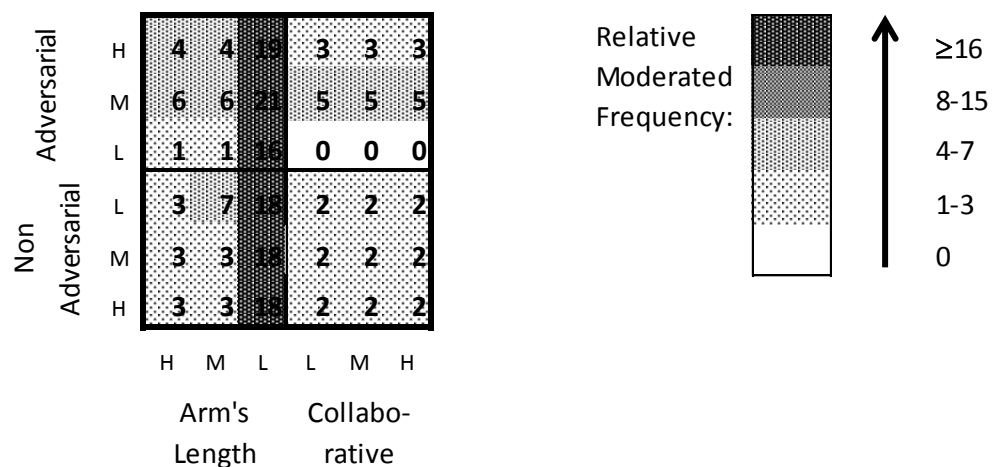


Figure 5.4: 'Transaction X-Ray' Development

Adopting a graphical presentation of results, based on relative shading density presented the opportunity not only to consider findings within individual transactions but also gave a basis for superimposing and comparing, results across multiple transactions. The layering of multiple 'X-Rays' based on individual transactions lead to the production of 'Composite X-Rays' which were used to explore emergent themes and also to examine issues of internal validity within the data set by comparing the resulting composite densities. The final step in the analysis of 'Transaction X-Rays' involved producing a qualitative, interpretative summary of the emerging main themes in the form of an 'X-Ray Diagnostic'. The presentation of the results obtained through the use of 'Transaction X-Rays' and the discussion of their implications are addressed subsequently within Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

5.6.2 Triangulation

It is recognised that the process of analysing and interpreting qualitative data faces threats to validity (Krefting, 1991:214; Kvale, 1995:19; Johnstone, 1997:282; Patton, 1999:1190; Seale, 1999:465; Cho and Trent, 2006:319; Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2006:235). While some question the ontological and epistemological applicability of the concept of validity within the qualitative paradigm (Smith, 1984:379 and Kvale, 1995:19) there is general acceptance that researchers should seek to address credibility issues through enhancing the quality of the analytical methods deployed, (Krefting, 1991:214; Patton, 1999:1189; Seale, 1999:465 and Barbour, 2001:1115).

One common approach to address these concerns and to generally enhance credibility is a range of techniques collectively termed triangulation, whose origins lie in the physical sciences of surveying and navigation (Breitmayer, Ayres and Knafl, 1993:237; Patton, 1999:1192 and Kohlbacher, 2006:00).

Scholars have, however, expressed diverse views as to the purpose of triangulation within a broadly qualitative research setting, as demonstrated in Table 5.9.

Objective of the Triangulation Process	Authors
A means to combine quantitative data within the interpretative process.	Denzin (1978:291) Field and Morse (1985:16) Richards (2005:21) Kohlbacher (2006:00)
A means of utilising multiple data sources	Patton (1999:1193) Decorp (1999:159) Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2006:239)
A mechanism by which the same data can be analysed by multiple researchers	Miles and Huberman (1984:235) Krefting (1991:219) Hoepfl (1997:59) Decorp (1999:159) Patton (1999:1193) Barbour, 2001:1116
A technique whereby several research methods, within the same research paradigm, can be deployed in an attempt to address a single research question	Patton (1999:1192) Morse (2001:209)

Table 5.9: Alternative Scholarly Views of Triangulation

Importantly it is recognised that while the objective of triangulation is to enhance research validity (Begley, 1996:668; Johnstone, 1997:282; Patton, 1999:1192) it cannot be assumed that the process of triangulation will automatically neutralise any underlying bias within either the data itself or in the process by which it is analysed (Jick, 1979:604; Mathison, 1988:14 and Richards, 2005:140). Indeed, some regard the process of triangulation as a source of enrichment through which any apparent discrepancies simply add to the understanding of the phenomena being observed (Ackroyd and Hughes, 1992:174; Mathison, 1998:17 and Barbour, 2001:1117). However, cautionary notes regarding the use of triangulation have been raised within the body of literature covering qualitative methods. Jick (1979:609) notes the difficulties associated with achieving replicability in triangulation and in designing a robust process. Barbour (2001:1117) also recognises the difficulty of conducting triangulation in a manner that contributes to the understanding of data. Sandelowski (1995:569) fears that inappropriate attempts may at best trivialise the research but even questions if, within the context of scientific enquiry, triangulation can ever achieve the sense completeness that would be claimed by its advocates. Kvale (1995:37) perhaps represents those who express the greatest level of concern in articulating a view that the very act

of seeking verification may ultimately stifle the process of knowledge development.

However, there is a growing acceptance of triangulation as a valuable research technique as noted by several authors including Barbour (2001:1117), Bryman and Bell (2003:51) and Kohlbacher (2006:00), whose views reflect a balance of informed opinion that favours the adoption of research designs that incorporate appropriate and well-crafted elements of triangulation (Jick, 1979:610; Breitmayer, Ayres and Knafel, 1993:238 and Seale, 1999:472; Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2006:239 and della Porter and Keating, 2008:4).

To widen the perspective of the examination process, and thereby provide an element of triangulation, the interview transcripts were the subject of a second content analysis conducted by an analyst³¹ whose initial review was largely independent of input from the principal researcher. Following the techniques adopted in the exploratory study³², the method of Graneheim and Lundman (2004:106) was again utilised. The basis for the reselection of this method was two-fold. Firstly, the approach provided insightful detail in the early part of the research project and as such informed the research questions. Secondly, from a practical standpoint, the method was familiar to the second analyst who acted in a similar role during the exploratory study.

The method involved the transcripts being read, and subsequently coded by, the second analyst to obtain a sense of the whole. The analyst identified meaning units by extracting elements of the transcript that conveyed a potentially significant concept. These meaning units were then condensed in order to consolidate, whilst endeavouring to avoid dilution of, the meaning. The condensed meaning units were abstracted into sub-themes and then finally to main themes based on the similarities and differences they contained. As in the exploratory study, a process of reflection and discussion took place between the principal researcher and the second analyst subsequent to the second analyst's completion of the review. The triangulation process compared the main themes with those developed from the corresponding 'Transaction X-Ray'. While this comparison served as a

³¹ The same second analyst provided assistance during the exploratory study, the initial coding of the content analysis nodes (Tables 5.2 and Table 5.3) and the triangulation exercise discussed in Section 5.6.2. The second analyst while independent from the research objectives is an experienced practitioner in the subject area.

³² The analysis of the interview transcripts, using approach outlined by Graneheim and Lundman (2004), is discussed in Section 3.4.

partial test of the research instrument, by offering a measure of correlation between the approaches, the principal reason for undertaking the triangulation exercise was, as argued above, to inform the analysis through the benefits of differing perspectives. Each stage of the analysis was recorded in tabular form using Microsoft Excel to facilitate the review discussion. Again, although working independently of the principal researcher the second analyst was both knowledgeable in the subject areas and also aware of the objectives of the study, however, in order to preserve confidentiality during the triangulation process only the principal researcher was aware of the identities of the respondents.

5.6 Chapter Summary

In Chapter 5 the research design with which to explore the Rebuy Case was developed. The research implement constructed was a web-based contemporary interpretation of the Diary-Diary Interview Method (Zimmerman and Wieder, 1977), the assessment of whose output utilised Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) and the NVivo9 software package to facilitate data handling. The chapter described the deployment of the research implement, within the Rebuy Case, and the development of the twenty-one buyer accounts of presales interactions relating to transactions that met the criteria for case inclusion. The following chapter presents the results obtained through the analysis of the transcripts of these buyer accounts.

Chapter 6: The Results

In Chapter 5 the research design was outlined. The Chapter described³³ the process by which twenty-one professional buyers, all representing organisations with in excess of 250 employees, were recruited as case study respondents. Chapter 5 also described the process of data analysis and the development of the 'Transaction X-Ray' as a technique for presenting qualitative analysis of the data collected.

The purpose of Chapter 6 is to present the results developed through the implementation of the research design. These results are expressed according to the strength of alignment between the buyer's presales interaction behaviours and the four basic relationship management styles identified by Cox *et al.* (2004:79) (i.e. Adversarial, Non-Adversarial, Collaborative and Arm's Length) and the buyer's strength of value perception according to the three identified value propositions, namely, Utility Value, Exchange Value or BSPV. The concept of Buyer Specific Perceptions of Value (BSPV) being used to capture factors such as feelings, emotions and buyer ego.

The method is outlined by which results were developed at three distinct levels. Firstly, individual 'Transaction X-Rays' were examined and emergent patterns identified. Secondly, the impact of the triangulation process was considered and thirdly, composite 'X-Rays' were developed by the aggregation of individual 'X-Ray' results across relevant sub-groups within the population. The Chapter concludes by reflecting on how the results obtained answer the research questions.

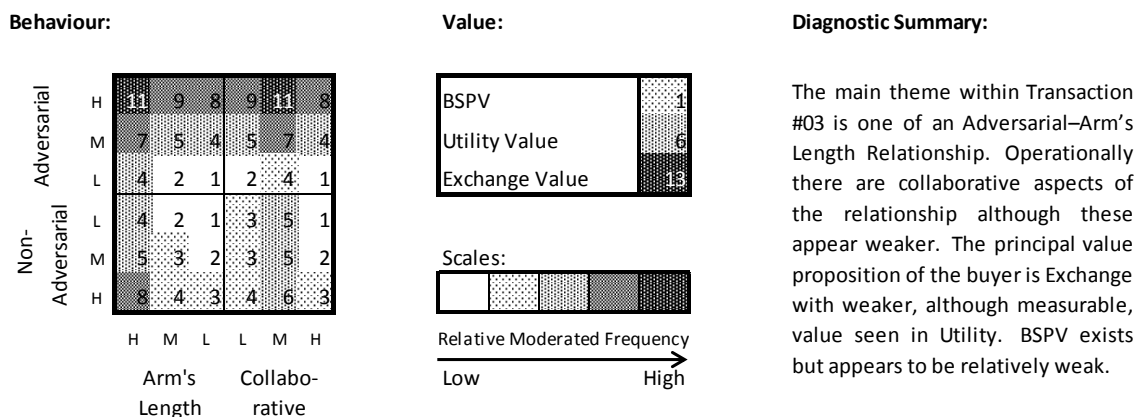
6.1 Individual 'Transaction X-Ray' Results

Within the Rebuy Case 'Transaction X-Rays' were developed for each of the twenty-one individual transactions. These 'X-Rays' are individually presented in the order in which the responding buyers were recruited into the study. On recruitment each buyer was given a unique identifying number (indicated by #) which was subsequently used to identify each element of the data relating to the transaction on which they reported. As a consequence of this approach the twenty-one transactions do not form a continuous numerical sequence and

³³ Section 5.4 describes how potential respondents were identified and recruited into the study. Details of the numbers approached, attrition rates and those who completed the process are also discussed in Section 5.4.

the apparent gaps reflect the participant attrition that occurred through the research process.

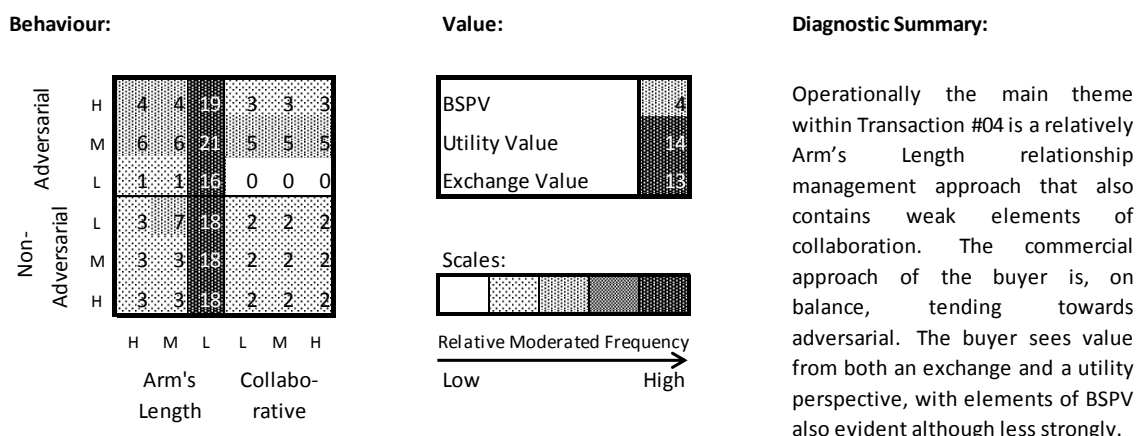
Transaction #03 concerned the procurement of goods in the private sector. The key respondent was male and believed that he had played a leading role during the pre-sales interaction. The results of the analysis of Transaction #3 are presented in Figure 6.1:



'X-Ray': Transaction #03

Figure 6.1: 'X-Ray' Results of Transaction #03

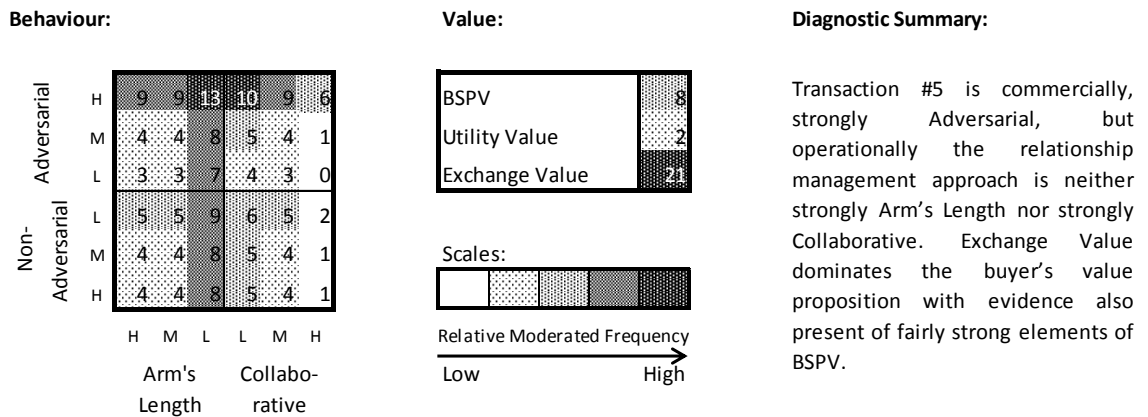
Transaction #04 concerned the procurement of goods in the private sector. The key respondent was female and believed that she had played a supporting role during the pre-sales interaction. The results of the analysis of Transaction #04 are presented in Figure 6.2:



'X-Ray': Transaction #04

Figure 6.2: 'X-Ray' Results of Transaction #04

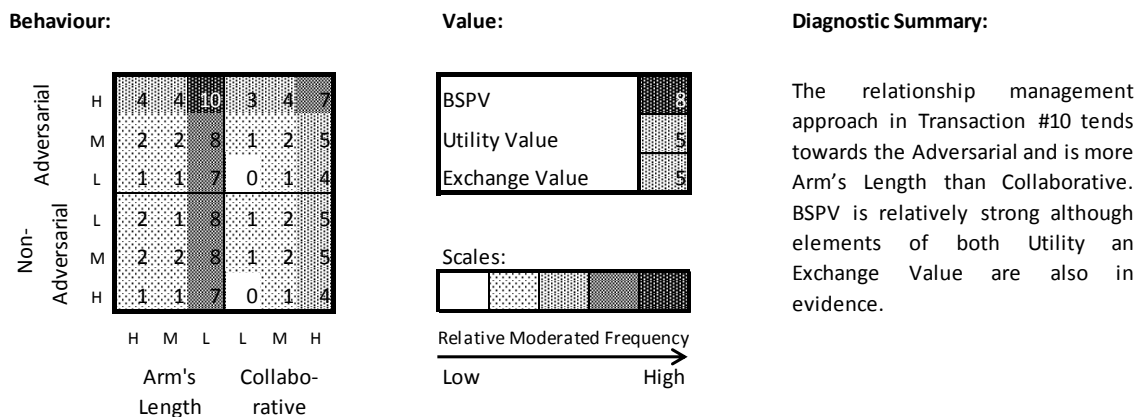
Transaction #05 concerned the procurement of services in the private sector. The key respondent was male and believed that he had played a supporting role during the pre-sales interaction. The results of the analysis of Transaction #05 are presented in Figure 6.3:



'X-Ray': Transaction #05

Figure 6.3: 'X-Ray' Results of Transaction #05

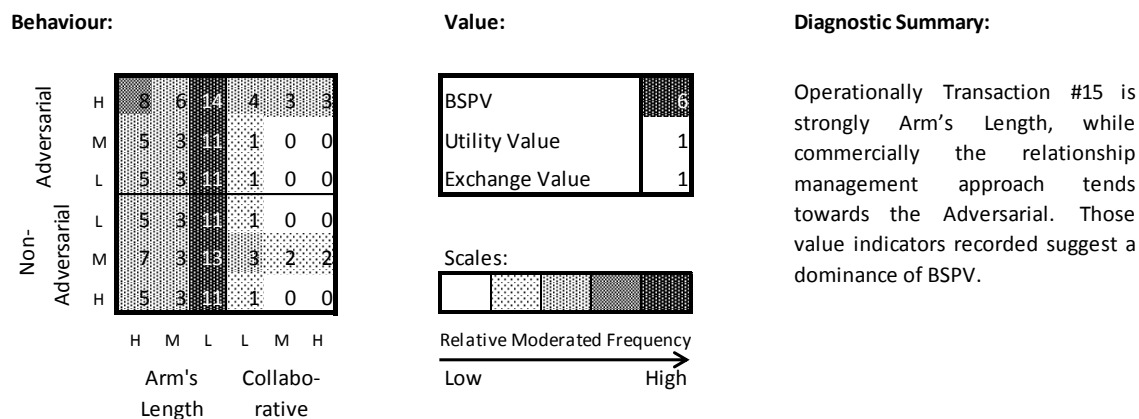
Transaction #10 concerned the procurement of services under public sector procurement frameworks. The key respondent was male and believed that he had played a leading role during the pre-sales interaction. The results of the analysis of Transaction #10 are presented in Figure 6.4:



'X-Ray': Transaction #10

Figure 6.4: 'X-Ray' Results of Transaction #10

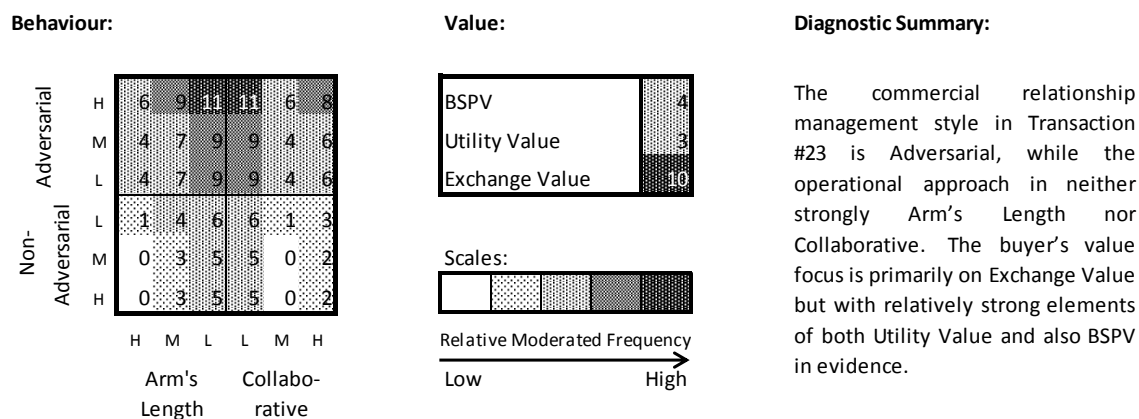
Transaction #15 concerned the procurement of services under public sector procurement frameworks. The key respondent was male and believed that he had played a leading role during the pre-sales interaction. The results of the analysis of Transaction #15 are presented in Figure 6.5:



'X-Ray': Transaction #15

Figure 6.5: 'X-Ray' Results of Transaction #15

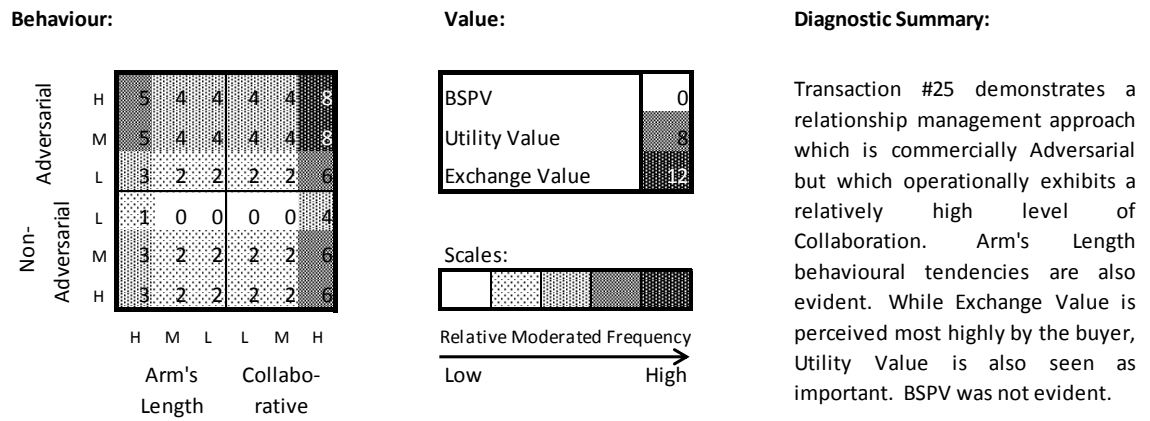
Transaction #23 concerned the procurement of goods in the private sector. The key respondent was male and believed that he had played a leading role during the pre-sales interaction. The results of the analysis of Transaction #23 are presented in Figure 6.6:



'X-Ray': Transaction #23

Figure 6.6: 'X-Ray' Results of Transaction #23

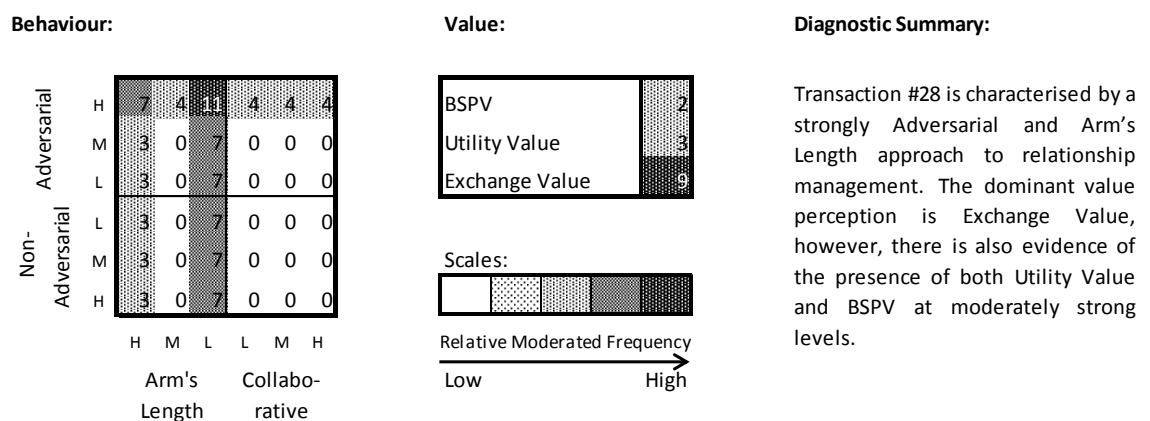
Transaction #25 concerned the procurement of services in the private sector. The key respondent was female and believed that she had played a leading role during the pre-sales interaction. The results of the analysis of Transaction #25 are presented in Figure 6.7:



'X-Ray': Transaction #25

Figure 6.7: 'X-Ray' Results of Transaction #25

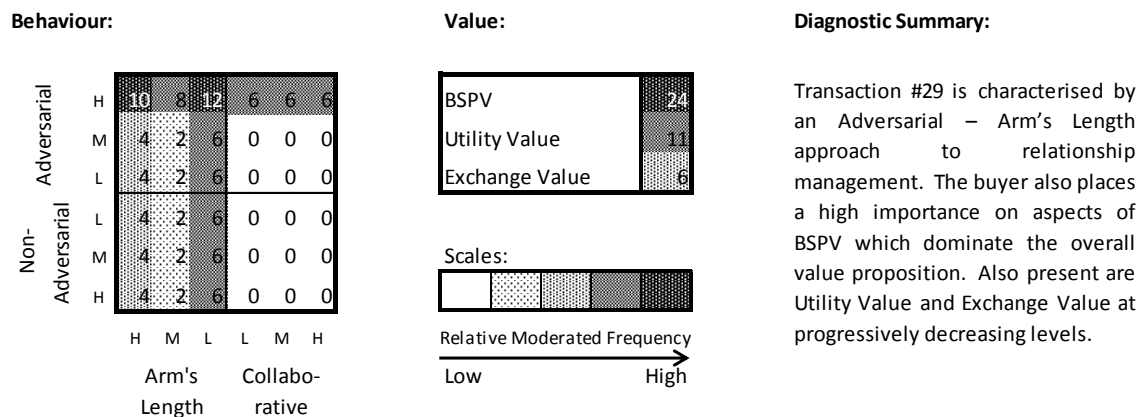
Transaction #28 concerned the procurement of services under public sector procurement frameworks. The key respondent was male and believed that he had played a leading role during the pre-sales interaction. The results of the analysis of Transaction #28 are presented in Figure 6.8:



'X-Ray': Transaction #28

Figure 6.8: 'X-Ray' Results of Transaction #28

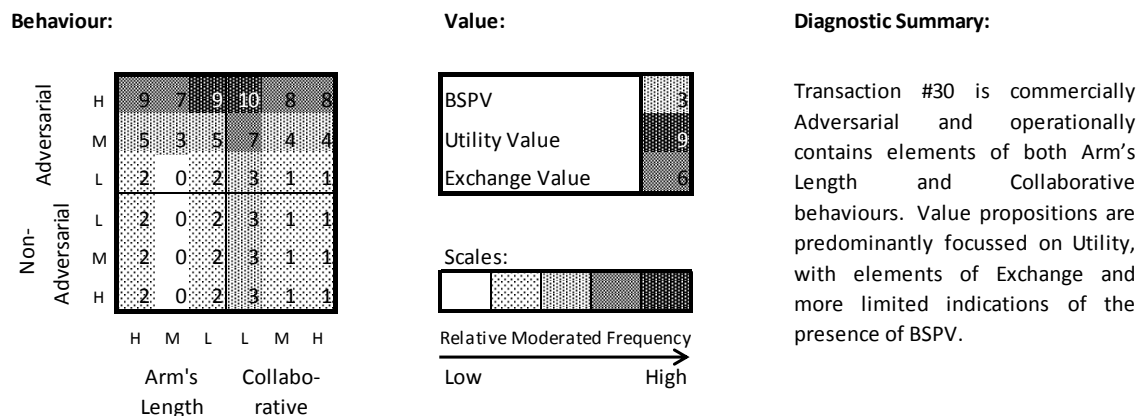
Transaction #29 concerned the procurement of services under public sector procurement frameworks. The key respondent was male and believed that he played a leading role during the pre-sales interaction. The results of the analysis of Transaction #29 are presented in Figure 6.9:



'X-Ray': Transaction #29

Figure 6.9: 'X-Ray' Results of Transaction #29

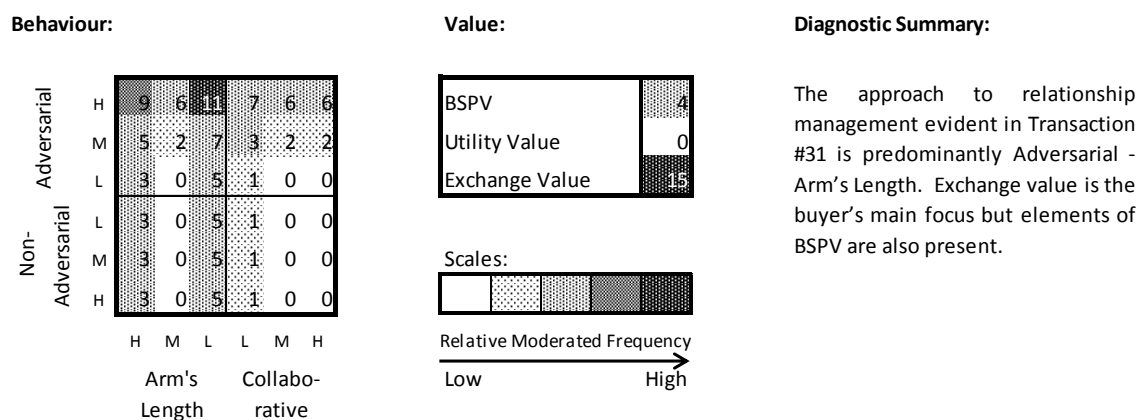
Transaction #30 concerned the procurement of services under public sector procurement frameworks. The key respondent was female and believed that she played a supporting role during the pre-sales interaction. The results of the analysis of Transaction #30 are presented in Figure 6.10:



'X-Ray': Transaction #30

Figure 6.10: 'X-Ray' Results of Transaction #30

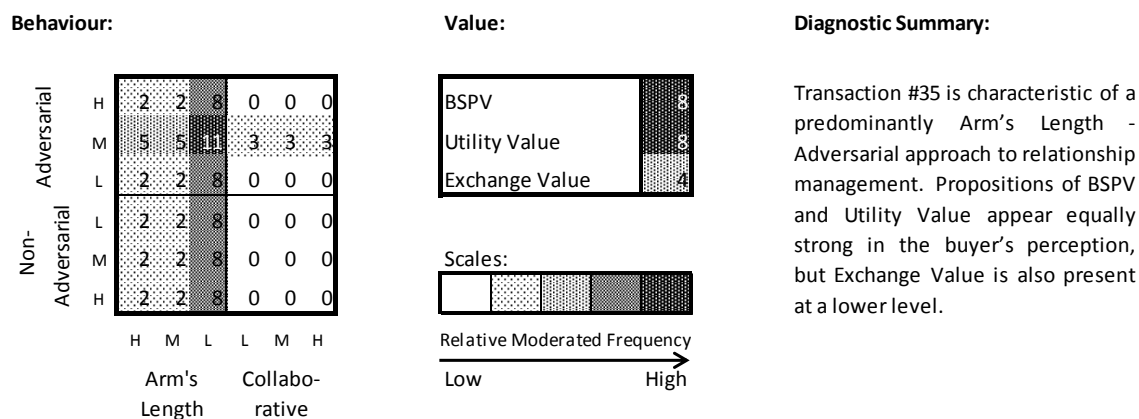
Transaction #31 concerned the procurement of goods under public sector procurement frameworks. The key respondent was female and believed that she had played a supporting role during the pre-sales interaction. The results of the analysis of Transaction #31 are presented in Figure 6.11:



'X-Ray': Transaction #31

Figure 6.11: 'X-Ray' Results of Transaction #31

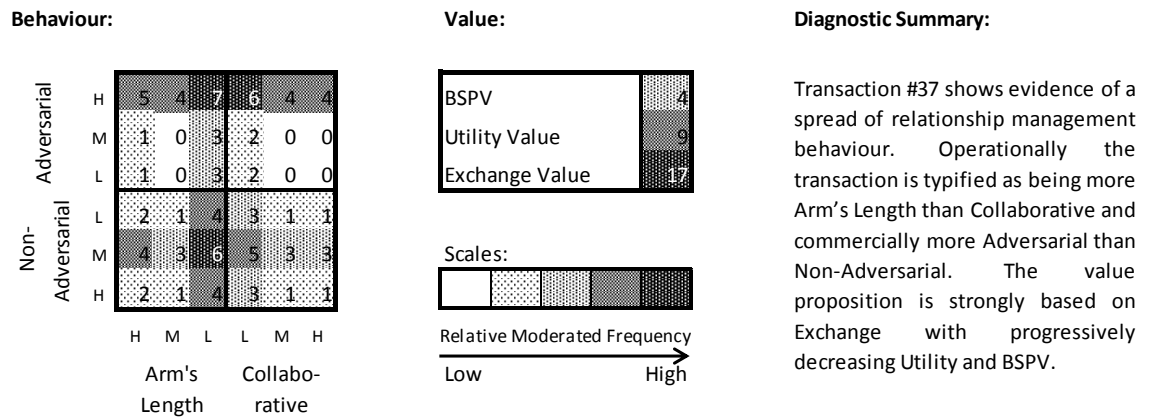
Transaction #35 concerned the procurement of goods under public sector procurement frameworks. The key respondent was male and believed that he had played a leading role during the pre-sales interaction. The results of the analysis of Transaction #35 are presented in Figure 6.12:



'X-Ray': Transaction #35

Figure 6.12: 'X-Ray' Results of Transaction #35

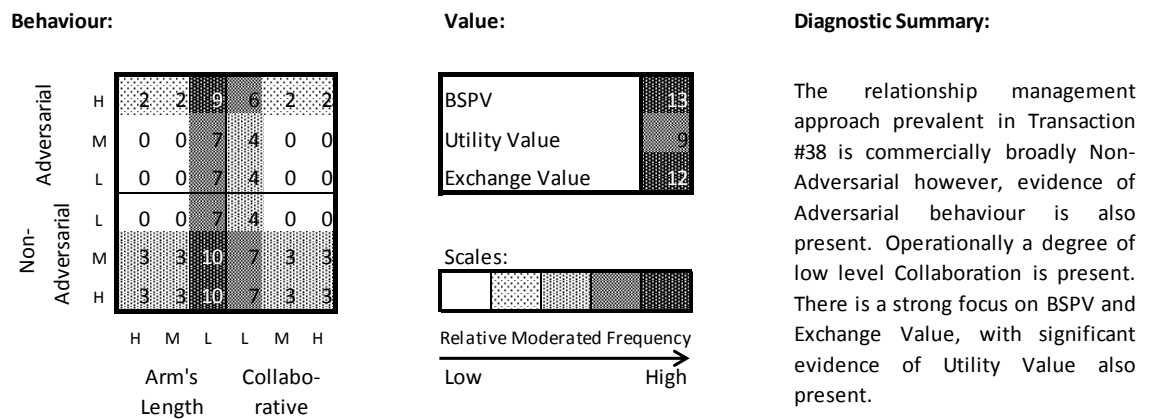
Transaction #37 concerned the procurement of services in the private sector. The key respondent was male and believed that he had played a supporting role during the pre-sales interaction. The results of the analysis of Transaction #37 are presented in Figure 6.13:



'X-Ray': Transaction #37

Figure 6.13: 'X-Ray' Results of Transaction #37

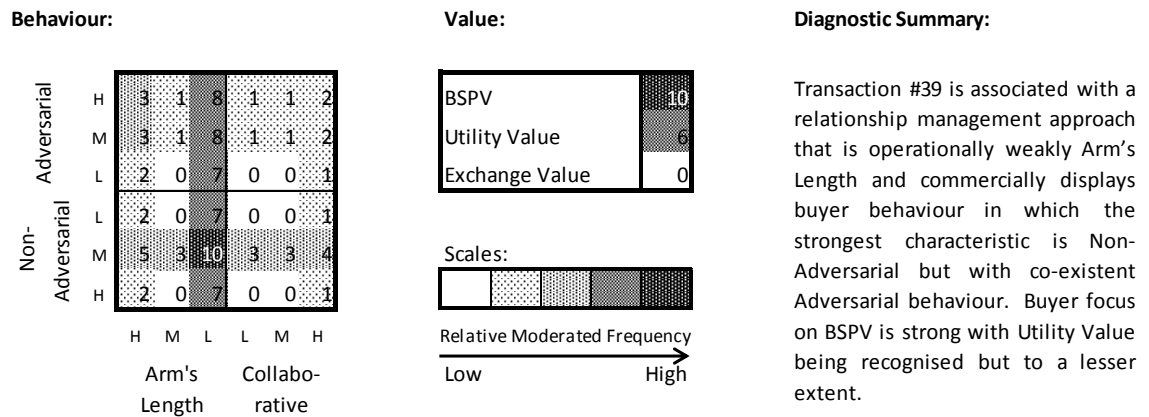
Transaction #38 concerned the procurement of services in the private sector. The key respondent was male and believed that he played a supporting role during the pre-sales interaction. The results of the analysis of Transaction #38 are presented in Figure 6.14:



'X-Ray': Transaction #38

Figure 6.14: 'X-Ray' Results of Transaction #38

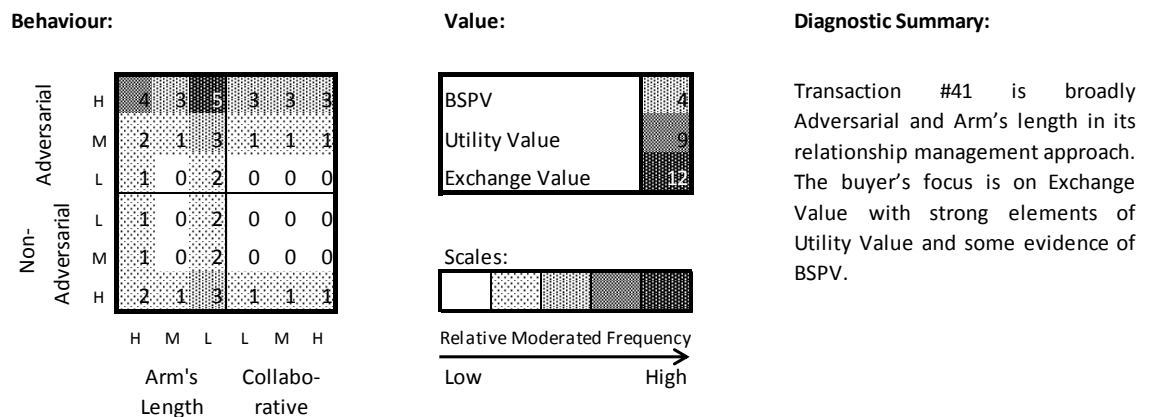
Transaction #39 concerned the procurement of services in the private sector. The key respondent was male and believed that he played a supporting role during the pre-sales interaction. The results of the analysis of Transaction #39 are presented in Figure 6.15:



'X-Ray': Transaction #39

Figure 6.15: 'X-Ray' Results of Transaction #39

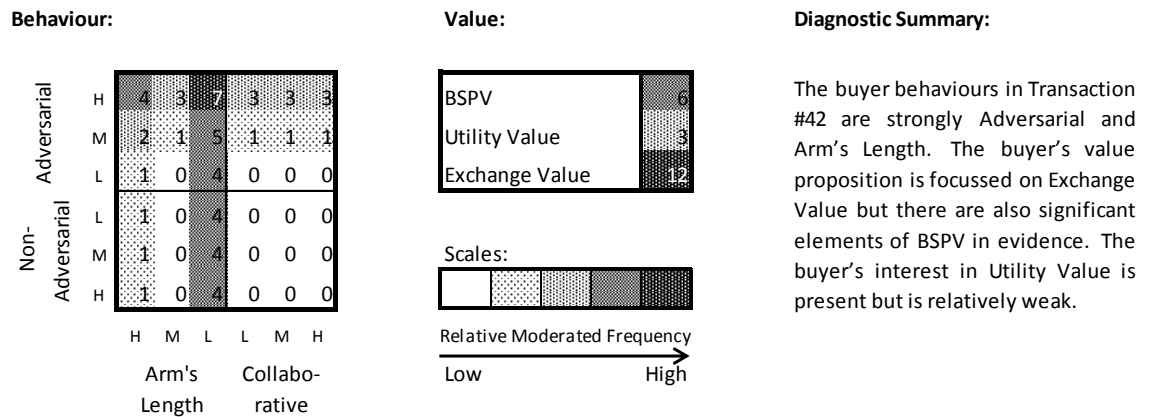
Transaction #41 concerned the procurement of services in the private sector. The key respondent was female and believed that she played a leading role during the pre-sales interaction. The results of the analysis of Transaction #41 are presented in Figure 6.16:



'X-Ray': Transaction #41

Figure 6.16: 'X-Ray' Results of Transaction #41

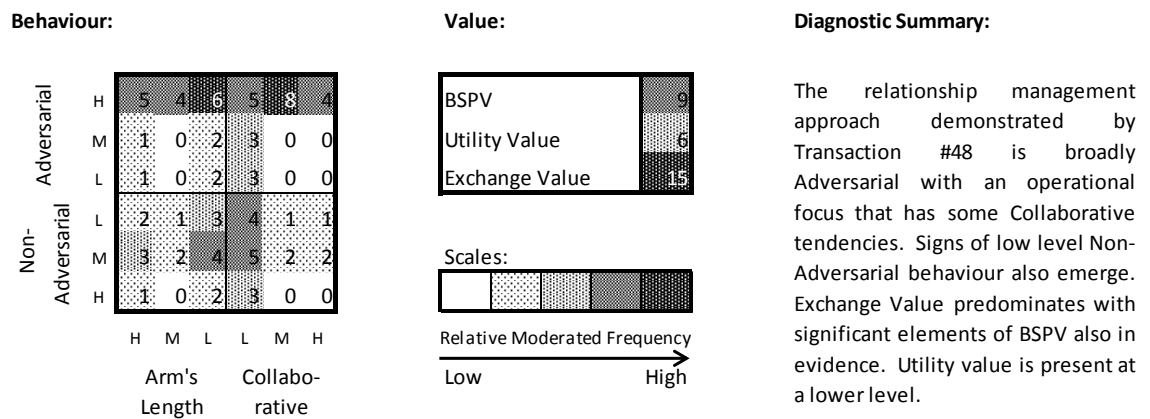
Transaction #42 concerned the procurement of services in the private sector. The key respondent was male and believed that he played a leading role during the pre-sales interaction. The results of the analysis of Transaction #42 are presented in Figure 6.17:



'X-Ray': Transaction #42

Figure 6.17: 'X-Ray' Results of Transaction #42

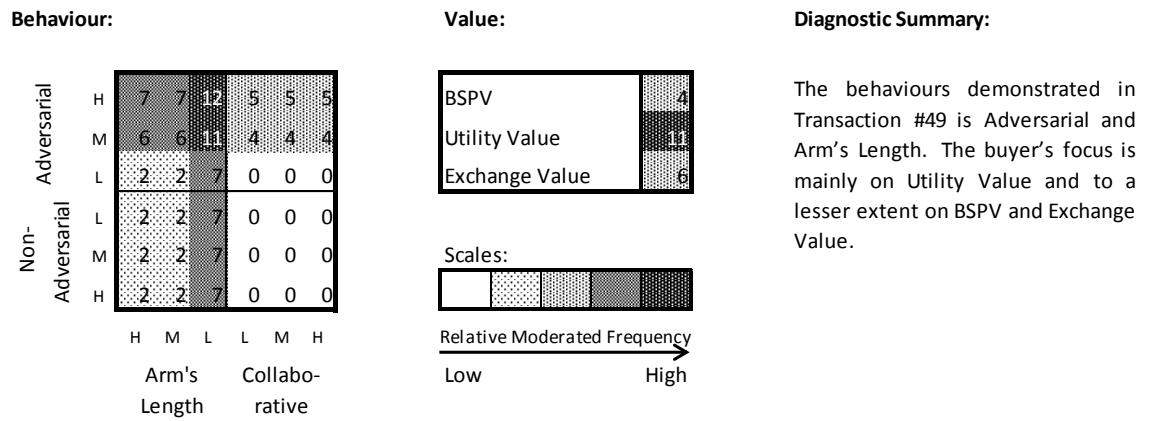
Transaction #48 concerned the procurement of services in the private sector. The key respondent was female and believed that she played a leading role during the pre-sales interaction. The results of the analysis of Transaction #48 are presented in Figure 6.18:



'X-Ray': Transaction #48

Figure 6.18: 'X-Ray' Results of Transaction #48

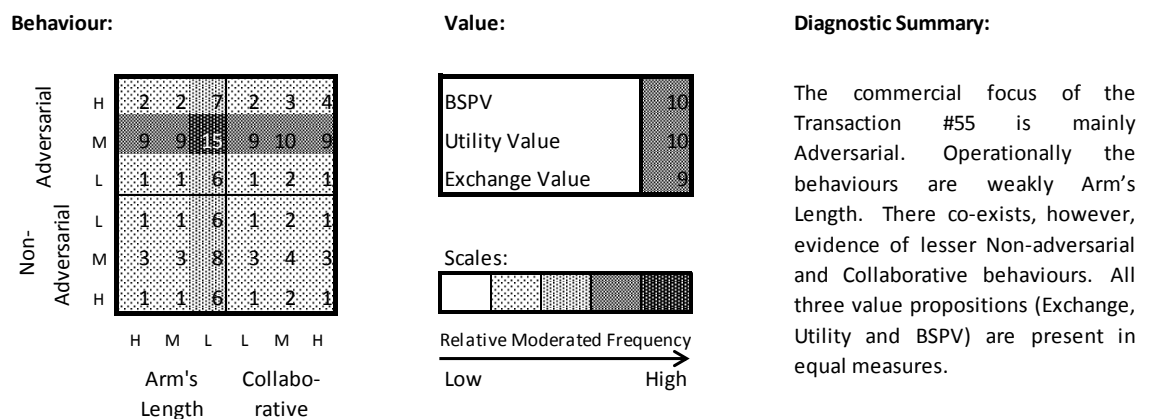
Transaction #49 concerned the procurement of services in the private sector. The key respondent was male and believed that he had played a leading role during the pre-sales interaction. The results of the analysis of Transaction #49 are presented in Figure 6.19:



'X-Ray': Transaction #49

Figure 6.19: 'X-Ray' Results of Transaction #49

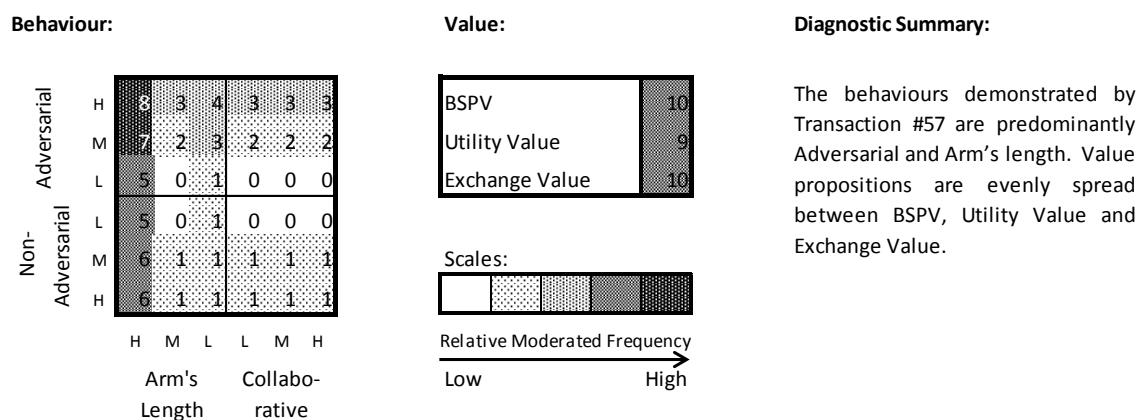
Transaction #55 concerned the procurement of goods in the private sector. The key respondent was male and believed that he had played a leading role during the pre-sales interaction. The results of the analysis of Transaction #55 are presented in Figure 6.20:



'X-Ray': Transaction #55

Figure 6.20: 'X-Ray' Results of Transaction #55

Transaction #57 concerned the procurement of services under public sector procurement frameworks. The key respondent was male and he believed that he played a leading role during the pre-sales interaction. The results of the analysis of Transaction #57 are presented in Figure 6.21:



'X-Ray': Transaction #57

Figure 6.21: 'X-Ray' Results of Transaction #57

6.1.1 Emergent 'X-Ray' Patterns

Review of the behaviours prevalent across the individual 'Transaction X-Rays', within the Rebuy Case, gave rise to recurrent density patterns of relative moderated frequency. The idealised forms of these recurrent 'X-Ray' patterns are reproduced in Figure 6.22, and while it is not the intention to discuss these in detail at this point, recognition of the patterns will facilitate the presentation of the results.

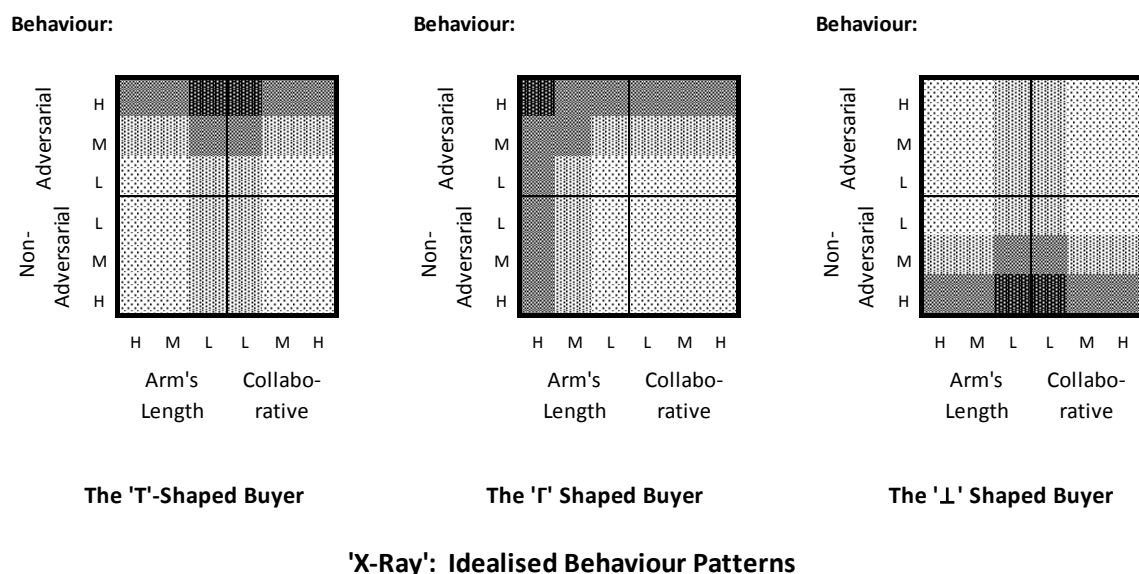


Figure 6.22: Idealised Forms of the Recurrent 'X-Ray' Patterns

The most commonly adopted supplier relationship management approach gave rise to an X-Ray pattern that reflects the letter 'T'. The 'T-shaped Buyer'³⁴ Pattern was dominant in Transactions #04, #05, #10, #15, #23, #28, #29, #30, #31, #35, #37, #39, #41, #42, #48, #49 and #55. The form also appeared, as a secondary pattern in Transactions #38, and #57. The characteristic 'T-shaped Buyer' is one who adopts a relatively Adversarial commercial approach while simultaneously seeking, to a significantly limited extent, the means for operational collaboration.

The second most commonly occurring supplier relationship management approach gave rise to an X-Ray pattern that is represented by an inverted 'L' shape or 'Г'. The 'Г shaped Buyer' is characterised by a supplier relationship management approach that is both commercially Adversarial and operationally Arm's Length. This behaviour pattern was dominant in Transactions #03 and #57 and appeared as a secondary pattern in Transactions #28, #29, #30, #31, #35, #37, #41, #42, #48, and #49.

In Transaction #38, and as a secondary pattern in Transaction #39, the adopted relationship management approach gave a behavioural 'X-Ray' pattern that reflected an inverted 'T' shape or '⊥'. The '⊥-shaped Buyer' is characteristic of a buyer who is acting in a commercially Non-Adversarial manner while seeking a limited degree of operational collaboration.

The value perceptions held by buyers varied widely when viewed at the level of the individual transactions and did not, therefore, yield 'density patterns' in a similar manner to those seen in the behavioural element of the 'Transaction X-Ray'. The most frequently recorded buyer value perception was Exchange Value which was dominant in Transactions #03, #05, #23, #25, #28, #31, #37, #41, #42, #48, and was significant in several other transactions. BSPV was most significant in Transactions #10, #15, #29, and #39 and was a significant driver in a similar number of Transactions. In only Transaction #25 was the buyer's value perception uninfluenced by BSPV. Utility Value was found to be dominant in Transaction #30 and #49 and very significant in Transactions #04 and #35.

³⁴ In Chapter 7 the concept of the 'T-shaped buyer' is further developed and comparison made with the 'T-shaped manager' (Hansen and von Oetinger, 2001)

6.2 The Triangulation Results

The triangulation process³⁵ produced main themes for each transaction that allowed comparison with those developed from the analysis of the corresponding 'Transaction X-Ray'. While this comparison served as a partial test of the research instrument, the principal reason for undertaking the triangulation exercise was to inform the overall process of analysis through the benefits of differing perspectives. In practice, given the substantial similarity between the outputs of the triangulation process and the 'X-Ray' analysis, it is appropriate to consider in detail only the variations encountered. For completeness Appendix 7 is used to cross-tabulate, for each transaction, the main themes to have arisen from the triangulation process, the 'X-Ray' analysis and, where appropriate, any emergent themes that developed through their comparison.

Across the transactions, within the Rebuy Case, there was substantial alignment in respect of the relationship management behaviours identified by both the triangulation process and the analysis of the 'Transaction X-Rays'. There were, however, several transactions in which there were slight variations in the value perceptions identified. Such variations are to be expected given that, as noted by Rubin and Rubin (2005:27), no two analysts are exactly alike as they are influenced by knowledge which is both situational and contextual.

In Transaction #25 while the presence of BSPV is not detected through 'X-Ray' analysis, it was detected, albeit at relatively low levels, through the triangulation process. This variation is noteworthy because the 'X-Ray' for Transaction #25 was unique in being the only 'X-Ray' in which the presence of BSPV was not detected.

In Transaction #29, although all three forms of value perception were identified in both sets of analysis, the effects of both BSPV and Exchange Value were identified as occurring more weakly through the triangulation process. A similar effect was found in Transactions #30 and #35 in which the triangulation process established a greater emphasis on the influence of Exchange Value, but again all three value perceptions were identified within both methods of analysis. In Transaction #38 an opposite effect was

³⁵ The development of the triangulation process is discussed in Section 5.6.2

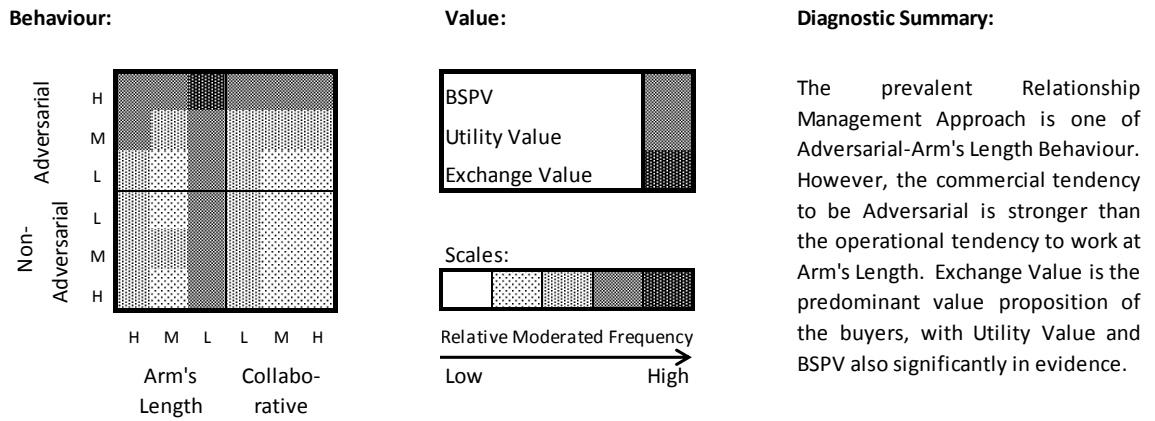
encountered as the triangulation process placed a lesser emphasis on the influence of Exchange Value than did the 'X-Ray' analysis. Transaction #55 was marked by the triangulation process placing a slightly greater emphasis on the influence of BSPV than was established through the 'X-Ray' analysis. In overall summary, and as demonstrated by the detailed correlation which forms the basis of Appendix 7, the magnitude of the variations encountered was considered relatively insignificant in relation to any wider considerations of the results obtained.

Although there was close agreement between the output of the triangulation process and the analysis results of the 'Transaction X-Rays', it is the core objective in the development of the 'Transaction X-Ray' to facilitate the presentation of aggregated data in a manner that minimises the effect of decomposition and decontextualisation. As the triangulation process was not designed to consider aggregated data its use is consequently limited to the analysis of individual interview transcripts.

6.3 Composite 'X-Ray' Results

Through the development of a Transaction X-Ray format, based on consistent density scales that reflect the individual relative moderated frequencies, the simultaneous analysis of multiple transactions was made possible. This investigation was accomplished by superimposing individual 'Transaction X-Rays' in an effort to discover emergent themes arising from the resultant combination³⁶. The first, 'X-Ray' combination considered was that formed by the superimposition of all twenty-one transactions comprising the Rebuy Case as shown in Figure 6.23.

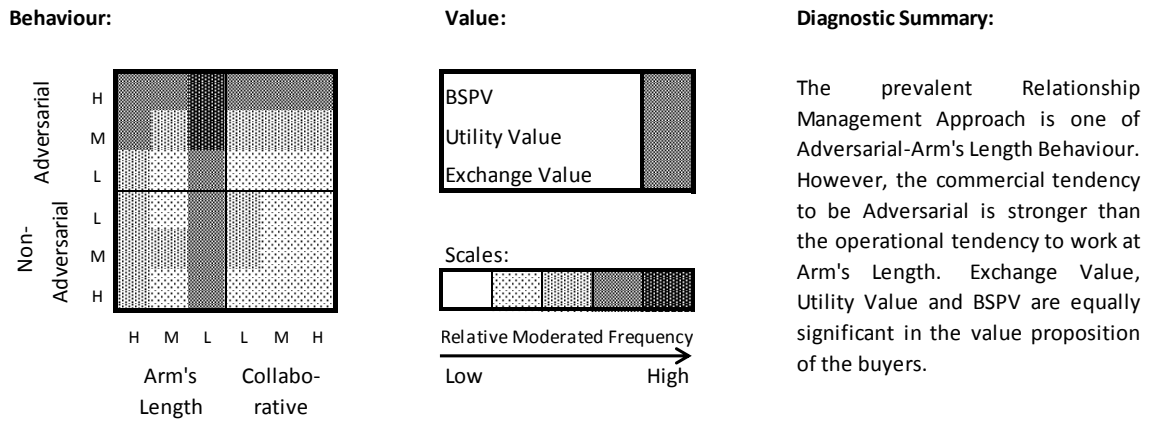
³⁶ The development of Composite Transaction 'X-Rays' is discussed in Section 5.6.1.3



'X-Ray': Composite ~ All Transactions

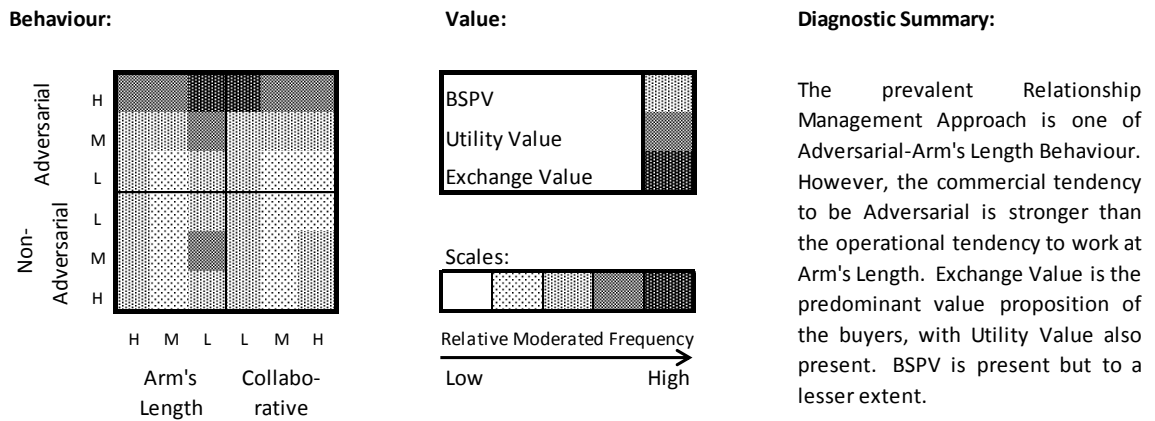
Figure 6.23: Composite 'X-Ray' of the Rebuy Case

The emergent pattern was that of the 'T-shaped buyer', whose relationship management approach is characterised as commercially Adversarial, in terms of attempts to capture value, while being willing to simultaneously participate in limited operational Collaborative engagement with the vendor. A secondary 'Γ-shaped buyer' profile was also present in the analysis of the Composite X-Ray for the entire case. The 'Γ-shaped buyer' is fundamentally more Arm's Length in approach than the 'T-shaped buyer'. The Value Profile of the composite Transaction was characterised by an emphasis on Exchange Value, accompanied by significant elements of both BSPV and Utility Value. While it is recognised that the research design favours the adoption of a relatively small sample size, and therefore no claim is made as to the generalizability of these comparisons, it is possible to examine sub-groups within the Rebuy Case in which the individual transactions observed have specific common characteristics. The first composite 'Transaction X-Rays' constructed were those which related to male respondents against the 'Transaction X-Rays' that related to female respondents. The resulting composite 'X-Rays' represented by these subgroups are shown on Figure 6.24 and Figure 6.25.



'X-Ray': Composite ~ Transactions Involving Male Buyers

Figure 6.24: Composite 'X-Ray' for Transactions involving Male Respondents



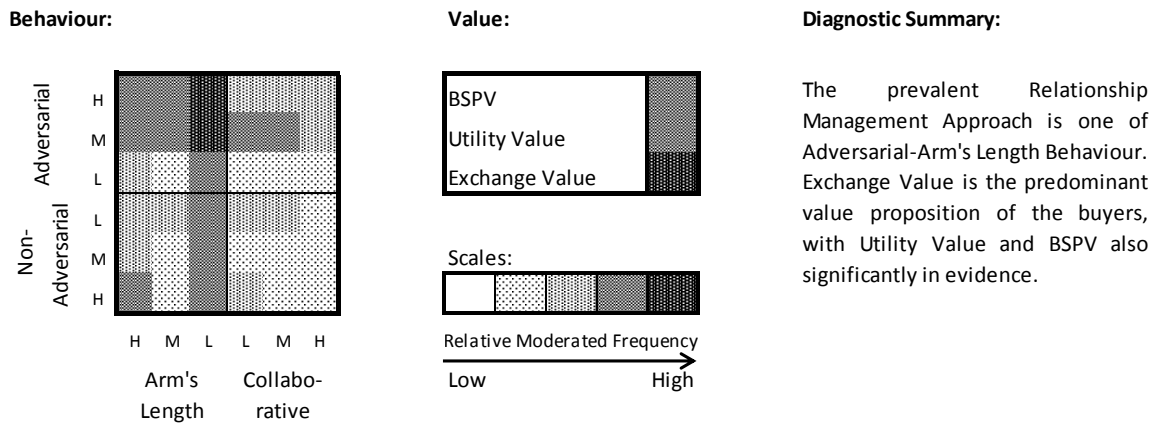
'X-Ray': Composite ~ Transactions Involving Female Buyers

Figure 6.25: Composite 'X-Ray' for Transactions involving Female Respondents

Similar to the results obtained for analysis of the transactions across the Rebuy Case, the dominant behaviour pattern within the 'X-Rays' for both the male and female sub-groups was that of the 'T-shaped buyer', and to a lesser extent the 'Γ-shaped buyer'. There were, however, apparent differences between the groups in relation to the value perceptions held, with females apparently placing a greater emphasis on Exchange Value and less on BSPV than did their male counterparts. In both groups perceptions of BSPV were, however, significant.

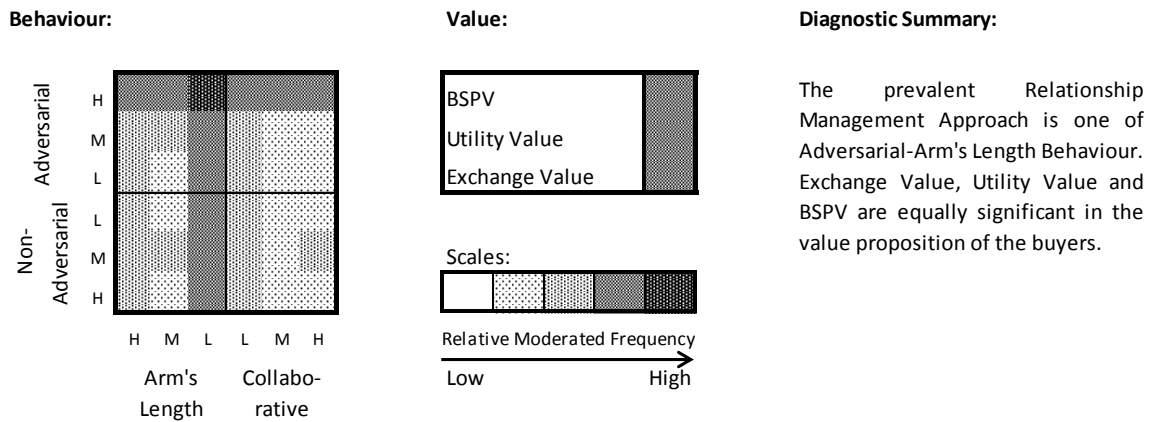
A further sub-group comparison was made by examining the composite 'Transaction X-Rays' for those transactions that involved goods against those

transactions that concerned mainly services. The resulting Composite 'X-Rays' are shown on Figure 6.26 and Figure 6.27.



'X-Ray': Composite ~ Transactions Involving Purchase of Goods

Figure 6.26: Composite 'X-Ray' for Transactions involving Goods

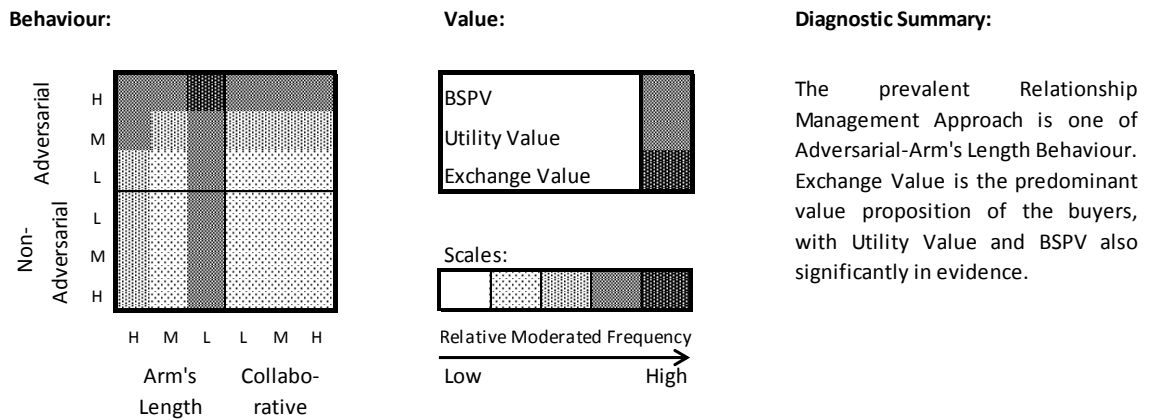


'X-Ray': Composite ~ Transactions Involving Purchase of Services

Figure 6.27: Composite 'X-Ray' for Transactions involving Services

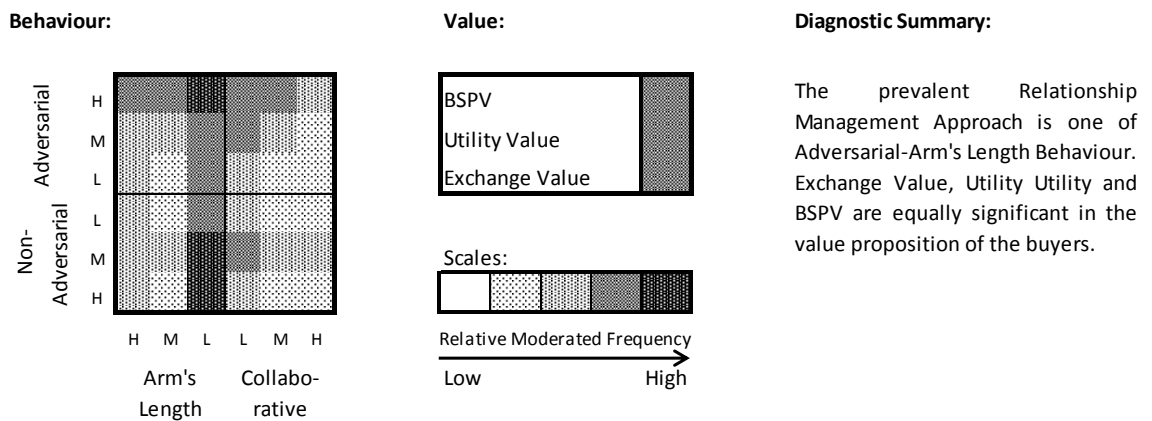
Again both behavioural 'X-Ray' portions exhibited the dominant pattern associated with the 'T-shaped buyer' and the value perceptions illustrated that both sets of buyers were relatively evenly influenced by BSPV, Exchange and Utility Value. It was, however, considered relevant to note a slightly increased emphasis on Exchange Value for those transactions involving goods compared to those involving services.

Figure 6.28 and Figure 6.29 compare the composite 'X-Rays' associated with those transactions in which the respondent buyers' self-perception was as leaders against those who saw themselves in a more supporting role.



'X-Ray': Composite ~ Transactions with Respondent Buyers in a Self-Perceived Leading Role

Figure 6.28: Composite 'X-Ray' for Transactions where Respondents are Self-Perceived Leaders



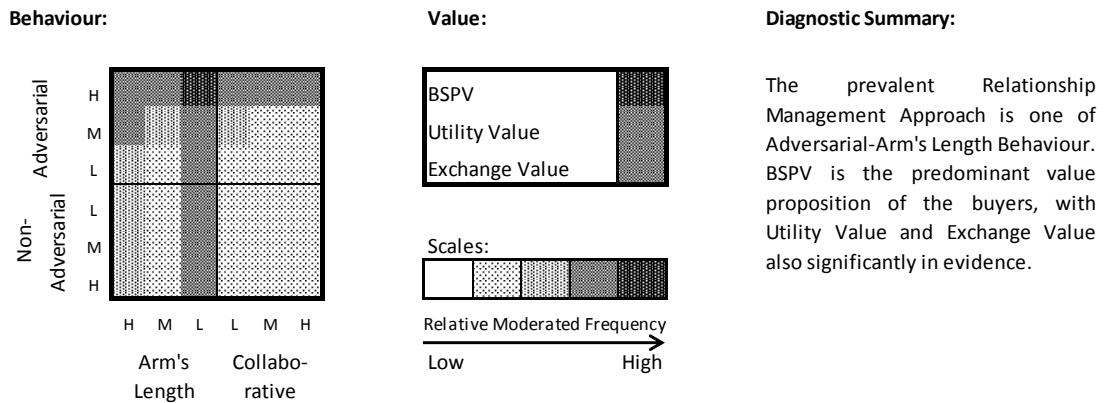
X-Ray': Composite ~ Transactions with Respondent Buyers in a Self-Perceived Supporting Role

Figure 6.29: Composite 'X-Ray' for Transactions where Respondents Self-Perception involves the Performance of a Supporting Role

In common with the other composite 'X-Rays' examined, the 'T-shaped buyer' profile was again dominant in both groups, with a secondary influence characteristic of the 'Γ-shaped buyer'. The 'X-Ray' values illustrated that the value perceptions of the buyers were relatively evenly distributed across BSPV, Exchange and Utility Value, with only a slight increase noted on the

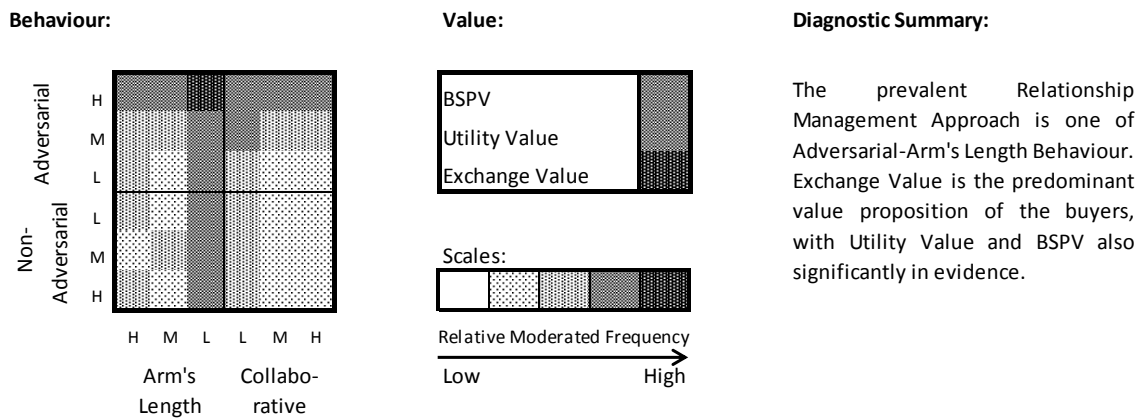
emphasis given to Exchange Value for those transactions involving self-perceived leaders.

The data collected facilitated one final comparison which was between transactions that were undertaken utilising the procurement frameworks applicable in the relevant area of the public sector and those transactions that took place within the private sector. The resulting Composite 'X-Rays' are reproduced in Figure 6.30 and Figure 6.31.



'X-Ray': Composite ~ Transactions Conducted Under Public Sector Procurement Frameworks

Figure 6.30: Composite 'X-Ray' for Transactions Utilising Public Sector Procurement Frameworks



'X-Ray': Composite ~ Transactions Conducted within Private Sector

Figure 6.31: Composite 'X-Ray' for Transactions Conducted within the Private Sector

The behaviours within each of the composite 'X-Rays' again indicated the dominance of the 'T-shaped buyer' profile, with a secondary profile of the 'Γ-shaped buyer' also apparent. The 'X-Rays' demonstrated that in both sub-

groups the buyer's value perceptions were influenced by each of BSPV, Exchange Value and Utility Value, but with an increase in the BSPV perception within the public sector and a corresponding increase in the importance of Exchange Value within the private sector transactions examined.

6.4 The Results and the Research Questions

The purpose of the research design, from which the 'X-Ray' results were derived, was to address the research questions. It is appropriate, therefore, to reflect on the results as they apply to each of the three research questions before considering any wider conclusions that may be drawn.

The research questions posed related, firstly, to the professional buyer's preferred approach to relationship management. Specifically, the focus of the research question 1) and 2) were on establishing the extent to which professional buyer behaviour, within the Rebuy Case, was driven by the desire to enhance the cross dyad relationships by identifying co-operative strategies that will deliver outcomes from which both parties will potentially benefit, or by behaviour intended to enhance their individual outcome through developing their relative power position. Given the dominance of the 'T-shaped buyer' profile it is clear that the commercial focus of the respondent buyers was fundamentally Adversarial and that operationally they give only partial attention to the search for Collaborative outcomes. In answer to research question 1) and 2), the results obtained demonstrate that the professional buyers, within the Rebuy Case, have a preferred relationship management styles which has been profiled.

The third the research question asks to what extent do the buyer's value perceptions focus on Utility Value, on Exchange Value or on elements of BSPV that are unique to individual buyer's wider psychological needs? The composite 'X-Rays' indicated that while all the identified buyer value perceptions were in evidence, the strongest influence was that of Exchange Value. Perhaps significantly, in only Transaction #25 was the buyer's value perception uninfluenced by BSPV. The exploration of buyer value was, therefore, also a successful aspect of the study.

The research design has, therefore, delivered an answer to research question 3) and the implication of this answer will be discussed more fully in Chapter 7.

6.5 Chapter Summary

Chapter 6 identified, through the analysis of the transactions forming the Rebuy Case, that the dominant behaviour pattern emerging for the twenty-one buyers was that of the 'T-shaped buyer'. The characteristics of this buyer profile were the adoption of a commercial approach to relationship management which was Adversarial and which simultaneously sought, to a significantly limited extent, the means for operational Collaboration. These results were derived through the use of 'Transaction X-Rays' which were also used to demonstrate the value perceptions held by the respondent buyers. Exchange Value was prominent among the buyer's value perceptions and there was also a frequent occurrence of BSPV. Further discussion of the Rebuy Case results, the subsequent development of related conclusions and associated suggestions for further research are presented within Chapter 7.

Chapter 7: Discussion of Results, Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Research

In Chapter 6 the results of the Rebuy Case were presented in the form of individual 'Transaction X-Rays' before consideration was given to the emergent patterns to which the composite 'X-Rays' gave rise. These patterns were reviewed in respect of their applicability to the aggregated data that formed composite 'X-Rays' based on 'sub-groups' composed by aggregating data from individual transactions that shared specific common characteristics. The Rebuy Case demonstrated that the dominant 'T-shaped buyer' favoured an adversarial approach to value capture, but also considered a limited level of collaborative value development with the supplier. However, the less dominant 'Γ-shaped buyer' demonstrated behaviours that were strongly Adversarial and were conducted at Arm's Length. The frequent recurrence of these 'X-Ray' patterns effectively demonstrated the preferred relationship management styles of the professional buyers within the Rebuy Case. Through the examination of the composite 'X-Rays' the prominence of Exchange Value and the frequent occurrence of BSPV were also noted. The Chapter concluded by recognising how these results effectively answered the research questions.

Chapter 7 recognises the significance of BSPV and the dominance of the behavioural profile of the 'T-shaped buyer' within the Rebuy Case. The chapter, therefore, considers the implication of these findings across a range of extant thinking that may well extend beyond the confines of the Rebuy Case. Chapter 7 discusses these findings in respect of their implication on the application of Service-Dominant Logic, on Value based thinking and on procurement practice. The chapter also reflects on the contribution made to procurement research methods recognising that, in the context of the Rebuy Case, a research method has been developed which allows the exploration of the aggregated buying behaviour and the value perceptions of multiple professional buyers. It is suggested that this method extends the capacity of scholars to simultaneously consider multiple transactions, which share specific common characteristics, and thereby to discover underlying themes without suffering the effects of decontextualisation and decomposition. The Chapter concludes by highlighting possible directions for future research along three distinct strands; *intra* Case refinement, *extra* Case expansion and replication.

7.1 Discussion of the Transaction 'X-Ray' Results

It is recognised that the research design favours that empirical evidence is drawn from a relatively small sample and therefore no attempt is made to claim generalisability, however, the research intent is to examine an existing phenomenon through a new lens with the view to shaping a new line of enquiry. It is also recognised that the Rebuy Case explores, by design, transactions that fulfil a relatively tightly defined set of criteria³⁷. As recognised by Gummesson and Polese (2009:347) research context is an important aspect to be considered when reflecting on the significance of any results obtained. Specifically, there is no explicit or implicit assumption that the results of the Rebuy Case would be replicated if the context of the case were to be varied. It is, therefore, with these aspects in mind that the results are discussed.

The significance of BSPV, established across all but one of the individual Transaction 'X-Rays', echoes the findings of the exploratory study in which buyer behaviour was significantly influenced by a complex combination of personal and organisational objectives. In the exploratory study these factors were found to include:

- Buyer's desire to exert local control ahead of central control.
- Buyer's motivation to defend a historically held position.
- Buyer's desire to avoid being involved in changes that have the potential to be viewed internally as service failures (logistics, safety performance).
- Buyer's attempt to influence the internal politics of the buying organisation.
- Buyer's perception as to how best to fulfil externally imposed rules.

While the incidence these of buyer specific factors has been identified in earlier studies (Webster and Wind, 1972:18; Johnston and Bonoma, 1981:144; Spekman, Stewart and Johnston, 1995:38 and Cox, 2004c:173) there has been little success in efforts to incorporate these effects into the core of any resultant theory. By utilising the lens of buyer value perception in the

³⁷ The characteristics for inclusion of transactions in the Rebuy Case are summarised in Table 5.1

research design it is possible to make a comparative evaluation of the wider, psychological needs of the buyer against the effects of the organisational goals of the businesses they represent.

The dominance of the behavioural profile of the 'T-shaped buyer' is clearly observed within the Rebuy Case. The 'T-shape' has previously been adopted by a range of authors to explain behavioural concepts not directly related to procurement activity. Hansen and von Oetinger (2001:108) developed the concept of 'T-shaped management'. The analogy on which they draw is that successful managers are those who both concentrate on business performance, the bar of the 'T', while simultaneously seeking to share knowledge in an attempt to discover and explore new opportunities, the leg of the 'T'. While the role content is not directly analogous to that of the 'T-shaped buyer', the 'T-shaped manager' shares the dual focus of value capture and value creation, and must manage the tension created by these twin responsibilities. The 'T-shape' has been similarly adopted to describe graduates who have both specific discipline skills and also have a fundamental understanding of the communication, teamwork and collaborative skills that are needed to meet the needs of complex organisations and networks (Bitner and Brown, 2008:44). Taking 'professionals' working in the water industry as their focus, Uhlenbrook and de Jong (2012:3478) consider the 'T-shaped professional' as not only having the skills and experience related to the disciplines specific to the water industry but also the competencies and interpersonal skills to enable them to successfully conduct ethical interactions.

An interesting development of the 'T-shape' concept is, however, advanced by Hansen and Nohria (2004:29) who acknowledge that in the case of the 'T-shaped manager' the bar of the 'T', which represents the manager's 'primary' role of delivering results, may well take precedence over the 'secondary' function, represented by the leg of the 'T', relating to knowledge sharing and development. Such an analogy raises the possibility that the 'T-shaped buyer' has the primary function of Adversarial capture of commercial value and a somewhat secondary role related to Collaborative, operationally focussed, value development.

The examination of the composite 'X-Rays' allows comparison between various sub-groups within the Rebuy Case, a review process which certainly

raises noteworthy discussion points and potentially signposts the direction for future investigation. Comparing firstly the Composite Transaction 'X-Rays' for male buyers against those of female buyers shows that while for both groups the dominant behaviour pattern is that of the 'T-shaped buyer', there are however slight differences between the two groups in respect of the value perceptions held. Female buyers apparently place a greater emphasis on Exchange Value and less on BSPV than did their male counterparts. Such an outcome suggests that female buyers have a focus on the more tangible and immediately measurable outcomes of the pre-sales interaction and are less influenced by the wider psychologically determined aspects of the transaction.

An alternative comparison is that of the Composite 'X-Rays' for those transactions involving goods against those transactions that concern mainly services. Again while both behavioural maps reflect the pattern of the 'T-shaped buyer' it is interesting to note a slightly increased emphasis on Exchange Value is associated with those transactions involving goods. Potentially the ability to define and specify goods to a greater extent than is possible with services, due to the intrinsically heterogeneous aspects of service delivery (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1988:5), has resulted in a relative decline in the Utility Value associated with goods compared to services.

A further comparison is made between by the 'Transaction X-Rays' of those transactions negotiated by buyers whose self-perception is as leaders against those who see themselves in a more supporting role. The 'T-shaped buyer' profile is again evident in both groups however, those buyers who perceive themselves as leaders appear to place a greater emphasis on Exchange Value than do their counterparts who perceive themselves in more supportive roles. This raises the question as to whether the self-perceived leaders are more significantly influenced by the easily demonstrated benefits associated with Exchange Value.

One final composite 'Transaction X-Ray' comparison is made between transactions that are undertaken utilising the procurement frameworks applicable in the relevant area of the public sector and those transactions taking place within the private sector. In common with the other comparisons, the dominant behaviour pattern is that of the 'T-shaped buyer'.

The 'X-Rays' demonstrate that in both sub-groups the buyer's value perceptions are influenced by each of BSPV, Exchange Value and Utility Value, but with an increase in the BSPV perception within the public sector and a corresponding increase in the importance of Exchange Value within the private sector transactions examined. This raises the question as to whether this reflects a more dominant profit motive within the private sector against a public sector in which buyer position and influence play a greater role.

A further discussion point arises by extending the analysis of the Transaction 'X-Rays' beyond the point of answering the research questions. A simple comparison of the emergent primary and secondary behaviour patterns for each transaction is made with the corresponding dominant value perception. This comparison forms the basis of Table 7.1: Individual Transaction Behaviours versus Value Perception.

Ref. No.	'Primary' Behaviour Pattern	'Secondary' Behaviour Pattern	Dominant Value Perception
#03	'Γ-shaped'	None Noted	Exchange Value
#04	'T-shaped'	None Noted	Exchange Value / Utility Value
#05	'T-shaped'	None Noted	Exchange Value
#10	'T-shaped'	None Noted	BSPV
#15	'T-shaped'	'Γ-shaped'	BSPV
#23	'T-shaped'	None Noted	Exchange Value
#25	'┐-shaped'	'Γ-shaped'	Exchange Value
#28	'T-shaped'	'Γ-shaped'	Exchange Value
#29	'T-shaped'	'Γ-shaped'	BSPV
#30	'T-shaped'	'Γ-shaped'	Utility Value
#31	'T-shaped'	'Γ-shaped'	Exchange Value
#35	'T-shaped'	'Γ-shaped'	BSPV / Utility Value
#37	'T-shaped'	'Γ-shaped'	Exchange Value
#38	'└ shaped'	'T-shaped'	Exchange Value / BSPV
#39	'T-shaped'	'└ shaped'	BSPV
#41	'T-shaped'	'Γ-shaped'	Exchange Value
#42	'T-shaped'	'Γ-shaped'	Exchange Value
#48	'T-shaped'	'Γ-shaped'	Exchange Value
#49	'T-shaped'	'Γ-shaped'	Utility Value
#55	'T-shaped'	None Noted	None Noted
#57	'Γ-shaped'	'T-shaped'	None Noted

Table 7.1: Individual Transaction Behaviours versus Value Perception

Kowalkowski (2011:281) recognises the existence of several distinct roles within the buying organisation. He suggests that those whose perspective is operationally focussed are likely to place a greater emphasis on Utility Value than those whose commercially focussed role as payer will lead them to hold a dominant value perception that emphasises Exchange Value. Extending the

concept leads to an expectation of a similar association between the buyers' adopted relationship management approach and the dominant value perception that they hold. Specifically the 'T-shaped, the 'Γ-shaped' and the 'l-shaped' buyer may be expected to favour Exchange Value. However, the review of the results summarised in Table 7.1 show that such a correlation is present in only half of the individual Transactions considered.

However, expanding the analysis to the aggregated data within the composite 'X-Rays' (as summarised in Table 7.2) provides an increase in the support given to the existence of the expected relationship between the dominant 'T-shaped buyer' profile and the prevalence of Exchange Value.

Ref. No.	'Primary' Behaviour Pattern	'Secondary' Behaviour Pattern	Dominant Value Perception
All	'T-shaped'	'Γ-shaped'	Exchange Value
Male	'T-shaped'	'Γ-shaped'	None Noted
Female	'T-shaped'	'Γ-shaped'	Exchange Value
Goods	'T-shaped'	'Γ-shaped'	Exchange Value
Services	'T-shaped'	'Γ-shaped'	None Noted
Leaders	'T-shaped'	'Γ-shaped'	Exchange Value
Supporters	'T-shaped'	'Γ-shaped'	None Noted
Public Sector	'T-shaped'	'Γ-shaped'	BSPV
Private Sector	'T-shaped'	'Γ-shaped'	Exchange Value

Table 7.2: Composite Transactions Behaviour versus Value Perception

The composite 'X-Ray' analysis shows that not only, as noted previously, does the dominant behaviour pattern of the 'T-shaped buyer' becomes evident but also where a dominant value perception is apparent, it is strongly likely to be based on Exchange. Equally striking is the absence of Utility Value as the dominant value perception in any of the composite 'X-Ray' profiles.

7.2 The Research Contribution

Much academic writing on supply chain and procurement advances the theme that developing and strengthening the relationships between buyers and sellers is a potential source of competitive advantage (Carlisle and Parker,

1989:5; Sako, 1992:222; Johnston, Lewin and Sparkman, 1999:259; Nelson, Moody and Stegner, 2001:21; Carr and Pearson, 2002:1049; Turnbull, Ford, and Cunningham, 2002:5; Lindgreen, Révész and Glynn, 2009:149; and Sánchez-Rodríguez, 2009:169). At the cornerstone of the interactions approach³⁸ is the belief that relationships between buyers and sellers exists on a combination of technical, social and economic levels and that benefit will likely accrue through the enhancement of these relationships (Håkansson and Snehota, 2002:38). Sako (1992:223) in her comparison of ‘Obligational Contractual Relations’ and ‘Arm’s-Length Contacting Relationships’ concludes that, if buyers can reconcile the risk of trusting their suppliers then, it is reasonable to conclude that ‘Obligational Contracting’ will achieve better outcomes. Carlisle and Parker (1989:5) echo the view that building relationships represents a more powerful strategy for achieving long-term profitability than does the adoption of adversarial approaches. Similarly, Cousins and Spekman (2003:27) join the call for collaborative procurement practices in order to allow organisations to accomplish goals that they could not otherwise have achieved. Most recently Porter and Kramer (2011:70) express the view some companies are beginning to understand that improving productivity will often trump lower prices.

Given the apparent weight of opinion suggesting the benefits of Non-Adversarial and Collaborative Relationships it is perhaps surprising that the Rebuy Case demonstrates the dominance of the ‘T-shaped buyer’ who favours an Adversarial approach to value capture and only allows a limited degree of Collaborative value development with the supplier, while the secondary ‘Γ-shaped buyer’ profile demonstrates behaviours that are strongly Adversarial and are firmly conducted at Arm’s Length.

Such findings also appear counter to the philosophy advanced by supporters of both lean and agile thinking within the relational school³⁹, who suggest that by building a relationship, and openly sharing information, the dyad will develop in a manner that would not be possible via Arm’s Length approaches. Such a view is expressed by Christopher (2000:39) who considers that competitive advantage will accrue to those organisations that can structure, coordinate,

³⁸ The interactions perspective is discussed in Section 2.2.1.2

³⁹ Relational thinking is discussed in Section 2.2.1.1

and manage the relationships with their partners in a closer and more agile manner.

The profile of the 'T-shaped buyer' may align more closely with the thoughts of those, such as Cagliano, Caniato and Spina, (2004:162), who recognise that leanness and agility are advanced strategies whose implementation may not be justified in all situations and suggest that even those who adopt less advanced strategies are likely to avoid a simple Arm's Length supply model which is based solely on price and market mechanisms. Despite this limited alignment, the results presented in the thesis provide an alternative perspective to that found within much of extant literature reporting on the behavioural trends of professional buyers.

Ordanini and Pasini (2008:289) suggest that although both theory and practice are influenced by the desire to enhance the exchange process, there remains a gap between theory and practice in this area. They suggest that the origins of this this gap may lie in the 'distance' between the academic's need to abstract an emergent theory and the practitioner's desire to drive forward a potentially rewarding business model into the marketplace. Recognising the limitations that are implicit in findings based on empirical evidence derived from a relatively small sample, it is nevertheless suggested that given the dominance of the 'T-shaped buyer' profile, a significant contribution is to be made through seeking potential explanations for the gap between the behaviours as presented and those predicted by supporters of both the interactions approach and the school of relational thinking.

Wilson (1995:344) and Cousins and Spekman (2003:26) suggest that while the pace at which adversarial buying is being replaced by a cooperative model is very slow, they nevertheless offer support to the premise that the direction of movement is clearly from a position in which cost improvements come from lower prices to a model where savings accrue through cost reductions in total operations. If the cause of the gap is simply due to the timing of the study, it is reasonable to infer that if the study were to be repeated at some future time, *ceteris paribus*, the gap would have reduced.

It is observed by Anderson, Thomson and Wynstra (2000:325) and Kowalkowski (2011:278) that professional buyers operate in a business environment which, under the effect of strong budgetary constraints, rewards the achievement of short-term price reductions without adequately considering the long-term

consequences. These scholars suggest that there may well be a misalignment between organisational procurement policies and the strategic objectives of the wider business. This thesis suggests that one resulting managerial implication may be a need to review the recognition and reward arrangements pertaining to professional buyers to ensure that they are aligned with the approach to supplier management that best meets the organisational objectives of those on whose behalf they negotiate.

A further possible explanation for the apparent reluctance of either the 'T-shaped buyer' or the 'Γ-shaped buyer' to engage in Collaborative endeavour may simply be that, as noted by Hansen (2009:234), they have insufficient time to invest because as Hansen observes:

'Indeed, "time" has become a major variable in the typical buyer's decision process of choosing a supplier. Time is the one variable that cannot be refunded or exchanged.'

This thesis suggests that practitioner organisations may potentially benefit from a review of the time allocated to professional buyers should there be an expectation that they will engage in building collaborative relationships while engaging in presales interactions with their perspective suppliers.

Several authors, however, offer observations on the strategic positioning of the procurement function that may also explain the difference between the behaviours as presented in the Rebuy Case and those predicted by supporters of both the interactions approach and the school of relational thinking. Cousins (2005:403) and Svahn and Westerlund (2009:174) observe that the strategic direction that a firm chooses in its effort to gain competitive advantage will dictate the organisational role that purchasing will play. They suggest that in organisations who perceive their source of competitive advantage to lie in market pricing (cost), purchasing is likely to be considered a tactical weapon and be used for price reduction. Whereas, if the firm sees its competitive advantage coming from a differentiated strategy then it will more than likely see purchasing as strategic. These authors submit that only then is the procurement focus likely to include collaborative behaviours in an effort to achieve its goals. Such considerations also inform the wider debate considering how purchasing effects the competitive position of the firm, a debate whose essence goes beyond the scope of this research.

Taking the power perspective⁴⁰ Cox *et al.* (2004:90) emphasise the importance of appropriateness in achieving alignment between the chosen relationship management approach and the relative power position of buyer and seller. In situations of power interdependence they argue that the appropriate relationship style is Non-Adversarial and Collaborative. It is clear that neither in the profile of the 'T-shaped buyer' nor of the 'Γ-shaped buyer' is a Non-Adversarial, Collaborative approach being followed. This suggests that, as Cox *et al.* submit, many of the relationship management approaches adopted by buyers are fundamentally misaligned.

Gadde, Håkansson and Persson (2010:116) reflect on the fact that interaction in business relationships is always characterised by both conflict and co-operation because the parties have both contradicting and shared interests. Jap (1999:461) observes that the business press has adopted the term 'pie expansion' to refer to the collaborative process of creating mutually beneficial strategic outcomes and 'pie splitting' to reflect the fact that, as Lax and Sebenius (1986:33) observe:

'No matter how much creative problem solving enlarges the pie, it must still be divided; value that has been created must be claimed.'

The misalignment identified in the Rebuy Case against the idealised relationship management approach, as advocated by proponents of the power perspective, suggests that the focus of professional buyers is wrongly weighted, at least from the power perspective, towards 'pie splitting' at the expense of their 'pie expansion' efforts.

While it is possible to hypothesise on the potential reasons for the behavioural gap identified it is clear that further empirical work⁴¹ would be required to enable the actual reasons for the gap to be explored and identified.

Perhaps the most significant contribution made by the thesis to academic thinking relates to the application of Service-Dominant Logic in respect of the value perceptions found to be held by the respondent buyers. S-DL considers that value is created through the interaction between actors. The frequency with which BSPV occurs within the Rebuy Case, and the influence it has on buyer behaviour suggests that tangible Value is being created (at least for the

⁴⁰ The power perspective is introduced in Section 2.2.1.2

⁴¹ Suggestions for further research are discussed in Section 7.4

buyer) during the pre-sales interaction before there is an agreement between the parties to work together. This point is much earlier in the interaction than has previously been considered within the S-DL School. It remains a founding premise of Service-Dominant Logic that value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary (Vargo and Lusch, 2004:11; Vargo 2005:43; Lusch, Vargo and Wessels, 2008:9; Vargo, Maglio and Akaka, 2008:149 and Vargo, 2009:375). However, Frow and Payne (2011:235) observe that while S-D logic identifies that value itself is only created during in-use experience, they acknowledge that there is a need to increase the understanding of the concept of in-use experience. The Rebuy Case highlights that BSPV is created for the buyer, as beneficiary, during the pre-sales interaction, which has a significant impact on the understanding of the term in-use within S-DL thinking.

Within the Rebuy Case differing buyer value perceptions are evident and Lusch (2011:16) poses the question as to how best to accommodate such apparent conflicts. Michel, Brown and Gallan (2008:55) note that there are three distinct customer roles as users, buyers or payers and acknowledge that, in S-D logic the customer does not simply receive value as created by its suppliers but is a co-creator of value. Michel, Brown and Gallan (2008:61) suggest that the value perceptions, whether it be 'value-in-use' or 'value-in-exchange', will vary dependent on which of the three different customer roles is enacted, but suggest that the buyer's role will span both value-in-use and value-in-exchange. The Rebuy Case suggests that while buyers are significantly more influenced by value-in-exchange the influence of BSPV, which is not considered within S-DL, is also considerable.

These findings signpost a potential direction for further research⁴² in determining the role of BSPV in defining the outcome of the presales interaction.

7.3 The Contribution to Research Method Development

It was recognised in Section 1.6 that there is a need to develop research methods that are applicable to the investigation of professional buying behaviour, with calls for methods that are able to embrace both complexity and content (Howard and Sheth, 1969:486 and Michaels, Day and

⁴² Suggestions for further research are discussed in Section 7.4

Joachimsthaler, 1987:28), yet remain pragmatic (Hunter, Bunn and Perreault, 2006:167) and additionally utilise the input from multiple informants in an effort to overcome potential bias (Dampérat and Jolibert, 2009:214).

The research method utilised in the Rebuy Case builds on extant methods which are well established. The method utilises a contemporary interpretation of the 'Diary - Diary Interview Method' of Zimmerman and Wieder (1977), triangulation using the method of content analysis developed by Graneheim and Lundman (2004:106) and QCA to examine interview transcripts, facilitated by the use of the NVivo9 software package. Furthermore when the results so obtained are represented as Transaction 'X-Rays' it is possible to aggregate the input from multiple respondents in a manner that minimises the effects of decontextualisation and decomposition. The contribution to research method development is thus established.

The ontological and epistemological considerations on which the method is based give rise to a qualitative paradigm which successfully delivers a unique insight as to the behavioural drivers and value perceptions which influence professional buyers during the presales interaction with their potential suppliers. The method allows the researcher to substantially overcome the issues associated with undertaking research in a subject area where the demands of maintaining commercial confidentiality present acknowledged difficulties. By engaging buyers through a longitudinal, diary phase of data collection the potential is created to gain deeper cross dyad perspectives during the subsequent interview phase. Although the interview is of necessity viewed through the lens of the buyer, the method nevertheless overcomes many of the barriers associated with obtaining input from only one side of the buyer-seller dyad by encouraging open dialogue between the buyer and researcher. During the interviews buyers are encouraged, in a conversational manner, to explain the transaction in their own terms and are not constrained by statistical techniques and questionnaires that can lead to fragmentation and consequently a failure to adequately penetrate the research topic (Gummesson and Polese, 2009:347).

Noting the benefits of the research method as adopted within the thesis leads naturally to a discussion as to the direction that is to be recommended for further research in order to maximise the potential contribution that can be expected to accrue.

7.4 Possible Directions for Future Research

The thesis prompts the need for future research along three distinct strands. Firstly, the Rebuy Case itself leaves several unaddressed aspects of enquiry for which potential actions to obtain answers are suggested. While the developed research method successfully addresses the research questions within the confines of the Rebuy Case, the second suggested strand of future research focusses on the expansion of the Rebuy Case to include much larger populations of buyers. The final research strand suggested addresses potential issues of replication.

7.4.1 *Intra* Case Refinement

Analysis of the results obtained through the Rebuy Case have identified relationship management behaviours and value perceptions that represent a divergence from those that would have been predicted by certain strands of extant thinking. The research design utilised in the study is not, however, intended to establish the underlying causes of these gaps⁴³. A clear potential direction for future research effort would be the establishment of causal effects.

The first potential area for *intra* case refinement arises from the view expressed by Wilson (1995:344) and Cousins and Spekman (2003:26) who suggest, as noted previously, that the general transition from adversarial buying to a more co-operative model is occurring slowly but perceptibly. Accepting this premise gives rise to an expectation that the related gap will continue to narrow. Replicating, as far as practicable, the investigation at some future time would therefore be expected to represent a vehicle whereby any reduction in the identified gap could be qualitatively examined. The identification of possible casual variables represents a further area for *intra* case refinement of the research method. For example Anderson, Thomson and Wynstra (2000:325) and Kowalkowski (2011:278) suggest that the effect of strong budgetary constraints or the deployment of specific reward and measurement systems can influence buyer behaviours. Similarly, Hansen (2009:234) suggests that time constraints acting on the buyer will significantly modify their behaviour, while Cousins (2005:403) and Svahn and Westerlund (2009:174) observe that the firm's choice of strategic direction will dictate

⁴³ Potential causal effects are discussed in Section 7.2

the role that played by the purchasing function. Through the addition of diary and diary-interview prompts these potential variables could, with relative ease, be investigated utilising a broadly similar research design.

7.4.2 Extra Case Expansion

In order to improve the validity of the findings from the Rebuy Case it would be desirable to enlarge the scale of the study because, as Firestone (1993:17) and Yin (2003:19) note, a single study generally provides only 'base level' support for any resultant findings. One possible alternative would be to develop a survey in order to generate data across a wider population. However, survey approaches, while ideally suited to exploring large populations, are extremely limited in their ability to explore 'context' because the survey designer constantly struggles to limit the number of variables under consideration (Yin, 2003:13) and are more appropriately used appropriate where the objective is to 'generalise', rather than to 'develop' the findings (Jankowicz, 1995:183). Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2006:245) advocate the use of confirmatory thematic analyses in which replication of qualitative studies are conducted to assess the replicability of previous emergent themes, considering that such confirmatory techniques help to legitimise previous qualitative findings, interpretations, and conclusions. Exploring qualitative context should, therefore, remain a key focus of any further research in order to develop the potential theoretical implications of either the role of buyer value perception or the incidence of buyer relationship management behaviours.

Yin (2003:19) further cautions against failing to recognise that the objective of subsequent cases should focus on replication and not a misplaced application of sampling logic that assumes by simply increasing the number of cases examined either the validity or the reliability of the study will increase (Yin, 2003:47). Against this background any further Cases identified should clearly be selected with care.

A further possibility to expand the scale of the investigation would be to access what Lusch (2011:17) recognises to be an almost unlimited data source:

'the most common data are words, as in the billions of conversations and communication that characterize Web 2.0. Thus tools are being developed to automatically analyse large textual databases'

Lusch, Liu and Chen (2010:72) concur not only as to the suitability of the characterisation of trading markets as conversations but also share the belief that computational linguistics, sentiment analysis, and network analysis will become increasingly important vehicles by which these conversations can be better understood and analysed (Lusch, Liu and Chen, 2010:75). An immediately attractive research proposition would be the expansion of the research method developed within this thesis to utilise the web based tools, as recognised by Lusch, Liu and Chen, to analyse the data contained within transactional ‘electronic conversations’. It is recognised that gaining access to web based sources of data may well be problematic, but the incentive to negotiate access would be the prospect of considerably expanding the number and nature of the transactions that are able to be researched.

An alternative means of *extra case* expansion is suggested by the observation of Moriarty and Bateson (1982:190), that:

‘Contacting potential decision participants is much more difficult than gaining their cooperation’

From this perspective conducting further research utilising respondents with membership of ongoing, large scale, related research programmes has obvious potential benefits. By way of illustrative examples, the Contract Management Benchmarking⁴⁴ research project benefits from the input from over ninety organisations across a wide range of sectors, while the Cambridge Service Alliance⁴⁵, whose research objectives include enhancing the value perceptions for service users, also enjoy the support of a wide range of businesses. The prospect of cross programme research collaboration is therefore a potential avenue worthy of exploration.

7.4.3 Replication

Bryman and Bell (2003:33) note that research protocols must be replicable by someone else, but acknowledge that it is difficult to ensure in business research that the conditions in a replication are precisely the same as in the original study (Bryman and Bell, 2003:85). Yin (2003:33) notes that the logic of replication (within case studies) should aim towards analytic generalisation and not necessarily aspire to reproduce the precise results of the initial study

⁴⁴ <http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Contract-Management-Benchmarking-wwwcmb2013-com-4381858>

⁴⁵ <http://www.cambridgeservicealliance.org/>

but rather to support an emerging theory or initiate the generation of a rival theory. While Firestone (1993:22) notes that qualitative methods should not be avoided for fear that replication may appear problematic.

The task of replication is facilitated through the use of content analysis in which coding schemes can be developed and made available (Bryman and Bell, 2003:206). The further development of standardised coding schemes applicable to the understanding of buyer behaviour and buyer value perceptions represents a potentially fruitful direction for further research especially if these coding schemes can be coordinated with the expected developments in computational linguistics, sentiment analysis, and network analysis Lusch, Liu and Chen (2010:72).

7.5 Chapter Summary

Chapter 7 presented the discussion of the results pertaining to the investigation of the Rebuy Case which included the conclusion that, despite the apparent weight of opinion suggesting the benefits of ‘Non-Adversarial and Collaborative Relationships’, the Rebuy Case did not identify these behaviours as dominant. Instead, the buyers within the Rebuy Case typically demonstrated an Adversarial approach to value capture and only sought a limited degree of Collaborative value development with their suppliers. Less commonly, buyers within the Rebuy Case adopted behaviours that were strongly Adversarial and were firmly conducted at Arm’s Length. Recognising the limitations that were implicit in the Rebuy Case, whose findings were based on empirical evidence derived from a relatively small sample, several potential explanations were nevertheless offered to explain this apparent gap.

These explanations included the prospect that Non-Adversarial Collaboration may represent an advanced strategy whose implementation may not be justified in all situations, or the prospect that there remains a gap between theory and practice perpetuated by the distance between the academic’s need to abstract an emergent theory and the practitioner’s desire to drive forward a potentially rewarding business model. It was also suggested that there may be a misalignment between procurement policies and the strategic objectives of the wider organisation. The chapter reflected that one potential managerial implication of the Rebuy Case may be a need to review

the recognition and reward arrangements pertaining to professional buyers. The chapter further suggested that practitioner organisations may potentially benefit from a review of the time allocated to professional buyers should there be an expectation that they will engage in building collaborative relationships while engaging in presales interactions with their perspective suppliers.

The chapter discussed the contribution made by the Rebuy Case in respect of academic thinking related to the application of Service-Dominant Logic. S-DL considers that value is created through the interaction between actors. The frequency with which BSPV occurred within the Rebuy Case, and the influence it had on buyer behaviour suggested that tangible value was being created (at least for the buyer) at point is much earlier in the interaction than had previously been considered within the S-DL School.

The Chapter concluded by highlighting possible directions for future research along three distinct strands; *intra* Case refinement, *extra* Case expansion and replication.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The Recruitment Interview Protocol

Recruitment Interview 'Protocol'		Interview Date: <input style="width: 100px;" type="text"/>
Preliminary Information		Interview Type: Face to Face: <input type="checkbox"/>
		Telephone: <input type="checkbox"/>
Nature of Lead:	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	
Introductory Letter Sent:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Interviewee Contact Details		
Name:	<input style="width: 150px;" type="text"/>	Organisation: <input style="width: 200px;" type="text"/>
Role:	<input style="width: 150px;" type="text"/>	Address: <input style="width: 200px; height: 50px;" type="text"/>
Tel:	<input style="width: 150px;" type="text"/>	
e-mail:	<input style="width: 200px;" type="text"/>	
Interview Type:	<input type="checkbox"/> Buyer / Seller <input type="checkbox"/>	
Recording Reference:	<input style="width: 150px;" type="text"/>	
Transcript Reference:	<input style="width: 150px;" type="text"/>	
Potential Case Description.		
Case 1: Scaffolding		<input type="checkbox"/>
Case 2: Chlor Alkali Chemicals		<input type="checkbox"/>
Case 3:		<input type="checkbox"/>
Case 4:		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nature of the Purchase		
Would you describe this purchase as 'important'?		<input type="checkbox"/>
If not why not?		<input type="checkbox"/>
What makes this a purchase important?		<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there anything that makes this supplier 'special'?		<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there credible alternative suppliers?		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nature of the Buyers Approach.		
How was the agreement reached between the seller and the buyer?		<input type="checkbox"/>
Initial Proposal / Quotation?		<input type="checkbox"/>
How was the Agreement reached?		<input type="checkbox"/>
Was the same approach always?		<input type="checkbox"/>
How has the approach differed?		<input type="checkbox"/>
Perception of Value for Money.		
How is success of the agreement measured?		<input type="checkbox"/>
Utility?		<input type="checkbox"/>
Total Cost of Ownership?		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nominations for Further Recruitment Interviews.		
Can you suggest anyone else with whom, at this stage, I should discuss this?		<input type="checkbox"/>
What is the best way for me to contact them?		<input type="checkbox"/>
Can this Interviewee be Recruited as part of a Case Study?		<input style="width: 100px;" type="text"/>
Comments:		
<input style="width: 100%; height: 80px;" type="text"/>		

Appendix 2: Content Analysis Proforma

Content Analysis		Interviewee Reference: <input type="text"/>	
Meaning Unit	Condensed Meaning Unit	Sub-theme	Theme

Analyst: <input type="text"/>	Analysis Date: <input type="text"/>	Revision: <input type="text"/>
-------------------------------	-------------------------------------	--------------------------------

Appendix 3: The Invitation to Participate in the Research

Professional Buying Behaviour: ‘*What makes buyers tick?*’

Thank you for considering participation in this study.

The purpose of this research is to improve understanding of what drives the behaviour of those professional purchasers who agree ‘terms’ with their suppliers.

Although as a respondent you are asked to concentrate on one specific transaction, participation will not require you to disclose the identity of the vendor(s), the precise nature of what is being traded, or the commercial terms that apply to the trade. As a respondent it is also possible to withhold your own details.

This research is conducted in accordance with the ethical codes and regulations of The University of Glasgow.

Background to the Research.

Studies have shown that buyers utilise different approaches in their attempt to derive value from the transactions they agree with suppliers. This project particularly considers those situations where neither the buyer nor the seller has the power to simply impose terms on the other party.

As a representative of a ‘buying organisation’, with responsibilities that include agreeing commercial terms, you are asked to consider a forthcoming situation in which you are about to engage in such a purchase. The purchase should be for either goods or services that are important for your organisation. Ideally it is for something that your organisation has bought before, although perhaps the precise requirements on this occasion may have slightly altered.

You will be asked to keep an ‘online’ diary as a means of recording your thoughts as you progress through the various stages leading to the conclusion of commercial terms.

At the end of the diary completion phase there is the possibility that participants, who have indicated willingness, may be asked to take part in a short interview session with the principal researcher. The purpose of these interviews is simply to clarify the ‘Diary Responses’ provided. Interviews (via telephone, ‘Skype’, or face to face as appropriate) will be arranged at a time that is convenient for you.

Respondents who prefer not to be interviewed are still invited to submit diary data. Transcripts based on the data collected from the diaries (and from and related interviews) will be analysed to establish patterns that may indicate prevalent behaviour and also to search for explanations as to what may drive this behaviour.

The Diary Study.

The diary pages, together with a few pages from which introductory information is gathered, are securely hosted by Smartline International Ltd., Canterbury Business Centre, 18 Ashchurch Road, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, GL20 8BT.

Diary completion should begin in advance of the initial approach to the vendor and separate entries should be made after each subsequent interaction until the transaction is completed. E-mail reminders to maintain the diary will be sent bi-weekly for a few weeks. As the diaries can be completed anonymously the sending of these reminders will not necessarily reflect the actual progress made in diary completion.

I hope that you will agree to participate in this survey, which can be accessed via the following hyperlink:

<http://www.smart-survey.co.uk/v.asp?i=30202ifmpb&m=&tiag=1&x=>

If you have any queries or issues that you would like to raise, in relation to either the data collection exercise or more generally to the research project, e-mail contact can be made via a.aitken.1@research.gla.ac.uk

In due course, a summary of the research findings can be made available to survey participants. Should you wish to receive a copy of this summary the please contact principal researcher.

Thank you for considering participation in this project.

Regards

Alan Aitken

Appendix 4: The Diary - Screenshots

*** Have you previously visited this survey and either supplied contact details or an 'Alias'?**

[Next Page](#)

Screen 1

*** Are you willing to make yourself available for a short telephone discussion on completion of the survey?**

Yes

No

Perhaps. (For now I will supply my name & e-mail address which will not be passed to 3rd parties)

[Previous Page](#) [Next Page](#)

Screen 2

Please supply your contact details so that it is possible to talk to you regarding the responses you have given.

*** Your Name.**

*** Your e-mail address.**

*** Your Contact Telephone Number.**

[Previous Page](#) [Next Page](#)

Screen 3

As you wish to remain anonymous please supply an 'alias' to allow your responses to be tracked.

*** The 'Alias' you wish to use.
(please be consistent in the use of your alias if you revisit the survey)**

[Previous Page](#) [Next Page](#)

Screen 4

*** What best describes the Current Stage of the Purchase Process? (Please check most appropriate phrase)**

I am just starting the purchase process. I have yet to provide an overview of the purchase.

I have provided initial survey information. I want to update the diary with early interaction data.

I am in the midst of the purchase process. I want to update the diary.

I have now completed this purchase and wish to provide my final diary update.

[Previous Page](#) [Next Page](#)

Screen 5 (a)

•

What best describes the nature of the Purchase? (Please check all that apply)

- This purchase represents a significant 'spend' for the organisation I represent.
- Without this good or service the organisation I represent would experience significant operational difficulties.
- This purchase (or similar) has been made by the organisation I represent on at least one previous occasion.
- The purchase is for goods.
- The purchase is for services.

•

What best describes your role in making the purchase? (Please check all that apply)

- I am mainly responsible for this purchase.
- I lead a cross functional group who have responsibility for this purchase.
- I am a member of a cross functional group with shared responsibility for this purchase.
- My main role is to provide support to the decision makers regarding this purchase.

•

What best describes this purchase? (Please check the most appropriate phrase)

- There are many sources of supply for this purchase.
- There are very limited sources of supply for this purchase.

•

What best describes the organisation that you represent? (Please check all that apply)

- Private Sector.
- Public Sector.
- S.M.E. (Less than 250 employees)
- Large Organisation. (250 or more employees)

Screen 5 (b.)

•

**Please re-enter the 'Alias' that you used on your last visit.
(If you have forgotten the original 'Alias' please supply some information to allow this response to be associated with your previous response.)**

Screen 6

***** Describe, at this stage of the purchase process, what you want for your organisation and the tactics you intend to follow in this respect: *(Please be candid and concentrate on the 'why' aspects in addition to the 'what' and the 'how')*

***** Describe, at this stage, what personal outcomes you would like to achieve from the purchase and the tactics you intend to follow in this respect: *(Please be candid and concentrate on the 'why' aspects in addition to the 'what' and the 'how')*

***** Describe, at this stage, what outcomes you would like the seller to achieve from the purchase and the approach you intend to follow in this respect: *(Please be candid and concentrate on the 'why' aspects in addition to the 'what' and the 'how')*

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Screen 7 (a,b,c.)

Appendix 5: Application for Ethical Approval

ETHICS COMMITTEE

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

NOTES:

THIS APPLICATION AND ANY ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS MUST BE SENT ELECTRONICALLY TO Leeann.Stevenson@glasgow.ac.uk

THIS APPLICATION FORM SHOULD BE TYPED NOT HAND WRITTEN.

ALL QUESTIONS MUST BE ANSWERED. "NOT APPLICABLE" IS A SATISFACTORY ANSWER WHERE APPROPRIATE.

NO EMPIRICAL RESEARCH SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO ETHICAL APPROVAL BEING GRANTED.

PLEASE NOTE - THAT COPIES OF PROPOSED QUESTIONNAIRES OR A LIST OF QUESTIONS THAT WILL BE INCLUDED IN ANY QUESTIONNAIRE SHOULD ACCOMPANY THIS APPLICATION FORM - **THIS IS COMPULSORY.**

PLEASE READ PAGE 2 OF THIS FORM CAREFULLY TO DETERMINE WHAT SECTION YOU SHOULD BE COMPLETING - **A OR B.**

UNIQUE INTERNAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER –
LBSS / 10 / 0070_

(Issued by the Ethics Committee Secretary)

Project Title:

Behavioural Drivers in an Industrial Buying Context. (Working Title)

Date of Ethics submission (i.e. the date you submit this form to the Committee Secretary):

20 February 2011

Name of all person(s) submitting research proposal:

Alan Aitken

Position:

Student or Staff? : **Student**

If Staff: Staff No: _____

If Student: Student No: **7607771** UG or PG: **PG**

Full Course Name: **N100 Management Studies. Qual: K93**

School/Group/Institute/Centre

Business School / Faculty of Law Business and Social Sciences /University of Glasgow.

Address for correspondence relating to this submission:

4 Cavendish Place, Troon, Ayrshire. KA10 6JG.

Name of Principal Researcher (if different from above e.g., Student's Supervisor)

N/A

Position held

Post Graduate Research Student (Part-time)

SECTION A

ALL QUESTIONS MUST BE ANSWERED.

“NOT APPLICABLE” IS A SATISFACTORY ANSWER WHERE APPROPRIATE.

1. Describe the purposes of the research proposed and the research participants. Please note that we need to know enough about your proposed research so that a judgment can be made on whether the ethical issues have (a) been identified and (b) that sufficient measures have been incorporated into the research design and proposed data collection techniques to address the ethical issues raised.

The purpose of this research is to improve understanding of what drives the behaviour of industrial buyers as they attempt to agree commercial terms with their suppliers. Research participants will be recruited from procurement professionals who have enrolled on the professional networking website, ‘LinkedIn’. Access to the appropriate groups is facilitated by the membership of the principal researcher. Research participants will be given sufficient advanced information to allow them to give informed consent as to their decision to participate in the project.

2. Please give a summary of the design and methodology of the project.

Please note: that copies of proposed questionnaires or a list of questions that will be included in any questionnaire or interview should accompany this application form (Compulsory not optional). Please also include in this section details of the proposed sample size, giving indications of the calculations used to determine the required sample size, including any assumptions you may have made. (If in doubt, please obtain statistical advice).

In addressing the research question a case study approach to data collection is adopted. At the core of this element of the data collection exercise respondents are asked to complete an online diary relating to the purchase of an important, ‘modified rebuy’ Where practical the completion of the diary is coupled with a semi- structured interview of the respondents to clarify the responses given. The qualitative nature of the data gathered using case study techniques implies an emphasis on the qualities of the entities and on processes and meanings that they contain. They are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount or intensity. Although sample sizes are not considered statistically relevant, it is hoped that in excess of 20 completed Diary-Interviews can be completed to give some level of richness to the data. Copies of the instructions given to respondents, together with the ‘data fields’ that are to be completed ‘online’ are appended.

3. Identify which of the following ethical issues apply to your project. Describe what the issue(s) is and what action you will take in respect of this/these.

	Issues	Actions
Anonymity of research subjects	Organisational confidentiality may be compromised if either the identity of the individual respondents, the organisations that they represent or the details of the commercial negotiations in which they are involved to enter either the public domain or to be acquired by competitors or suppliers.	Respondents who wish to remain anonymous can provide the data under an alias. Respondents are not required to disclose the identity of the vendor with whom they are negotiating, the precise nature of what is being traded, or the commercial terms that apply to the trade.

	Issues	Actions
Any other ethical issue raised by the proposed research	The potential exists to expose dubious commercial practice in the course of conducting the research.	It is considered improbable that the research instrument, which is based on self disclosure by experienced professionals, will uncover such infrequent practices. While any illegality would require to be referred to the appropriate authority this eventuality is considered unlikely in the extreme and therefore the residual risk is considered acceptable.
Confidentiality of research data	The greatest potential risk to would be the loss of commercially sensitive information.	The primary data will be collected online via a commercially provided, secure server hosted by Smartline International Ltd., Canterbury Business Centre, 18 Ashchurch Road, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, GL20 8BT, United Kingdom. Access to the site is password protected. Subsequent processing of the resulting data will be undertaken only by the principal researcher and will be conducted under password protection. Data will be destroyed on completion of the research project.
Informed consent	Respondents are commercially aware procurement professionals who participate with the full knowledge of the potential risks associated with the breach of commercial confidentiality.	Instructions provided to the research subjects explicitly explains both the nature of the data to be collected and also explains how the data will be utilised in the research process.
Recruitment Procedure	Research participants will be recruited from procurement professionals who have enrolled on the professional networking website, 'LinkedIn'. Access to the appropriate groups is facilitated by the membership of the principal researcher, and will be augmented by 'postings' on relevant web forums to 'canvas' support. Research participants will be given sufficient advanced information to allow them to give informed consent as to their decision to participate in the project.	Consistent with the case study approach adopted interviewees are to be selected on a 'non-probability' basis. It is acknowledged that this has no statistical foundation and is based largely on the accessibility of suitable participants to the researcher.
Risk to research subject	The greatest potential risk to research subjects would be the breach of commercial confidentiality.	This risk is mitigated by the previously explained measures to limit the amount of commercial data collected and the security measures associated with its storage.
Risk to researcher	There is little anticipated direct risk to the researcher. The potential exists for the researcher to be the subject of litigation should commercial loss result to respondents.	Residual risks to the researcher are regarded as both minimal and acceptable given the measures taken regarding the nature of the data collected and the measures taken to maintain its security.

4. Who are the investigators (including assistants) who will conduct the research and what are their qualifications and experience?

The research will be conducted solely by the principal researcher who is a part-time research student in the Business School. In addition to a Masters degree in Management the researcher has 30 years of commercial management experience. 'Double coding' of transcripts to facilitate analysis will utilise 'anonymised' data.

5. In cases where subjects will be identified from information held by another party (for example, a housing association) please identify who the gatekeepers or intermediaries are, what their relationship with the research subjects is, and what arrangements you intend to make to contact interviewees or respondents, e.g., will you provide an information sheet to the intermediaries etc.

Not applicable.

6. Will payment or any other incentive, such as a gift or free services, be made to any research subject?

If so, please specify and state the level of payment to be made and/or the source of the funds/gift/free service to be used. Please explain the justification for offering payment or other incentive.

No specific incentives will be offered to participants. Participants will be given the offer of a précis of the research findings which, as practitioners in the research field, may be of general interest.

7. Will the intended group of research subjects, to your knowledge, be involved in other research? If so, please justify..

No

8. Date on which the project will begin and end.
Example – Start Date: XX December 2003... and End Date: XX February 2004

Start Date: 01 March 2011 and End Date: 30 June 2011

9. Please state location(s) where the project will be carried out.

As much of the research is relies on completion of internet based diaries, it is independent of location. The location of any subsequent interviews will be arranged to suit the respondents. Many of these interviews may well be undertaken by telephone.

Name



(Proposer of research)

Date 20 Feb 2011

COMMENTS FROM SUPERVISOR

Applications from students **must be submitted via / by the student's supervisor.**

Confirmation or comment on the accuracy of the account given above:

The application is accurate and I agree with the content.

Comment on the research ethics risks involved in the project:

As stated on application.

Name: **Professor Robert A. Paton**
(Supervisor of student)

Date 7 January 2011

ANY COMMENTS FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL/GROUP/INSTITUTE/CENTRE
(if necessary):

Name _____ Date _____
(Head of School/Group/Institute/Centre)

Send completed form to **Leeann Stevenson**
Leeann.Stevenson@glasgow.ac.uk

Appendix 6: Diary-Interview Protocol

'Demographic' Data:

Respondent Name:	
Organisation:	
'Alias':	
'e-mail' address:	
Telephone No:	
Nature of Purchase:	
Role of Respondent:	
Sources of Supply:	
Type of Organisation:	

Diary Records:

Date of Entry:	
Procurement Stage:	
Entry re: Buying Organisation	
Entry re: Buyer as Individual	
Entry re: Selling Organisation	

Date of Entry:	
Procurement Stage:	
Entry re: Buying Organisation	
Entry re: Buyer as Individual	
Entry re: Selling Organisation	

Date of Entry:	
Procurement Stage:	
Entry re: Buying Organisation	
Entry re: Buyer as Individual	
Entry re: Selling Organisation	

Date of Entry:	
Procurement Stage:	
Entry re: Buying Organisation	
Entry re: Buyer as Individual	
Entry re: Selling Organisation	

Diary-Interview Data:

Interview Date:	
Interview Record Reference:	

Interview Topics:

Probe	Response Notes
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

Appendix 7: Detailed Triangulation Summaries

Ref. No.	'X-Ray' Analysis Main Themes	Triangulation Main Themes	Emergent Themes (ex-comparison)
#03	<p>The main theme within Transaction #03 is one of an Adversarial-Arm's Length Relationship. Operationally there are collaborative aspects of the relationship although these appear weaker. The principal value perception of the buyer is Exchange with weaker, although measurable, value seen in Utility. BSPV exists but appears to be relatively weak.</p>	<p>The transaction relationship is primarily Adversarial and Arm's Length; however the buyer also recognises the need to Collaborate on matters related to delivering Utility Value. The Buyer's main focus is on Exchange Value but also derives BSPV from achieving internal organisational victories.</p>	<p>Both analysis approaches determine consistent findings in respect of the dominant approach to relationship management (Adversarial-Arm's Length). There is also consistency in determining the buyer's main value focus to be on Exchange Value.</p>
#04	<p>Operationally the main theme within Transaction #04 is a relatively Arm's Length relationship management approach that also contains weak elements of Collaboration. The commercial approach of the buyer is, on balance, tending towards Adversarial. The buyer sees value from both an Exchange and a Utility perspective, with elements of BSPV also evident although less strongly.</p>	<p>The fundamental approach taken is Adversarial and Arm's Length. Value is derived from Utility, Exchange but also (to some extent) from BSPV.</p>	<p>The Behaviours determined through the triangulation process are similar to those obtained by 'X-Ray' analysis. Both analytic methods determine the significant value focus to be on Exchange and Utility with elements of BSPV also evident although less strongly.</p>

Ref. No.	'X-Ray' Analysis Main Themes	Triangulation Main Themes	Emergent Themes (ex-comparison)
#05	Transaction #5 is commercially, strongly 'adversarial', but operationally the relationship management approach is neither strongly Arm's Length nor strongly Collaborative. Exchange Value dominates the buyer's value perception with evidence also present of fairly strong elements of BSPV.	The buyer's approach is fundamentally Adversarial, which is reciprocated by the seller. There is, however, some evidence of the buyer's Collaborative desire to establish if the supplier can see any mutually beneficial solutions. Value is seen mainly in exchange but also from the utility of the service delivery. BSPV perceptions also appear to influence the buyer.	Both 'X-Ray' analysis and triangulation suggest similar patterns of behaviour, which is relatively strongly adversarial in parallel with a combination of Arm's Length and Collaborative behaviour. Exchange Value dominates in both cases and BSPV is also present in both. The triangulation process puts a slightly greater emphasis on Utility Value.
#10	The relationship management approach in Transaction #10 tends towards the Adversarial and is more Arm's Length than Collaborative. BSPV is relatively strong although elements of both Utility and Exchange Value are also in evidence.	The transaction is characterised by an operational Arm's Length approach and commercially by behaviour which tended towards Adversarial. Exchange Value was influential and so too were aspects of BSPV.	The triangulation process suggests a slightly more Arm's Length approach but both sets of analysis establish relatively Adversarial behaviour. While the prevalent value perceptions were broadly similar, the 'X-Ray' analysis suggests a greater emphasis on Utility Value.
#15	Operationally Transaction #15 is strongly Arm's Length, while commercially the relationship management approach tends towards the Adversarial. Those value indicators recorded suggest a dominance of BSPV.	The buyer's approach is essentially Arm's Length and Adversarial. Buyer derives BSPV from 'procedural compliance' and achieving rapid turn-around times within the procurement function.	Arm's Length and Adversarial behaviours are common findings of both 'X-Ray' Analysis and triangulation, but triangulation places a slightly stronger emphasis on Adversarial Behaviour. The importance of BSPV is common.

Ref. No.	'X-Ray' Analysis Main Themes	Triangulation Main Themes	Emergent Themes (ex-comparison)
#23	The commercial relationship management style in Transaction #23 is Adversarial, while the operational approach in neither strongly Arm's Length nor Collaborative. The buyer's value focus is primarily on Exchange Value but with relatively strong elements of both Utility Value and also BSPV in evidence.	The buyer adopts an approach which is both Adversarial and Arm's Length. The main focus of the buyer's value perception is on a combination of Utility Value and various aspects of BSPV.	'X-Ray' Analysis and triangulation both establish the prevalence of Adversarial and Arm's Length behaviours, with triangulation placing a slightly greater emphasis on the dominance of Arm's Length behaviour. triangulation places significantly less emphasis on the buyer's focus on Exchange Value.
#25	Transaction #25 demonstrates a relationship management approach which is commercially Adversarial but which operationally exhibits a relatively high level of Collaboration. Arm's Length behavioural tendencies are also evident. While Exchange Value is perceived most highly by the buyer, Utility Value is also seen as important. BSPV perceptions were not evident.	The buyer describes an Adversarial and mainly Arm's Length approach to the pre-sales interaction. The transaction appears to continue through a 'call-off' phase in which operational Collaboration increases. Utility Value appears more important than exchange value. There are limited elements of BSPV that appear in the buyer's account of the transaction.	Both forms of analysis establish a commercially Adversarial approach, with operational elements which are both Collaborative and Arm's Length. There is a greater variation on the relative importance of the varying Buyer Value perceptions between 'X-Ray' Analysis and triangulation.
#28	Transaction #28 is characterised by a strongly Adversarial and Arm's Length approach to relationship management. The dominant value perception is Exchange Value, however, there is also evidence of the presence of both Utility Value and BSPV at moderately strong levels.	The transaction is Adversarial and Arm's Length. Exchange Value seems more important to the buyer than Utility Value although both are present. A high degree of BSPV is also present which has its origins in the buyer's desire to influence internally within the organisation.	Both 'X-Ray' Analysis and triangulation reveal very similar findings in respect of both buyer behaviours and value perceptions.

Ref. No.	'X-Ray' Analysis Main Themes	Triangulation Main Themes	Emergent Themes (ex-comparison)
#29	Transaction #29 is characterised by an Adversarial - Arm's Length approach to relationship management. The buyer also places a high importance on aspects of BSPV which dominate the overall value perception. Also present are Utility Value and Exchange Value at progressively decreasing levels.	The buyer's approach is certainly Arm's Length and basically an Adversarial one. There is little evidence of the buyer being driven by Exchange Value but there are strong elements of both BSPV and also of Utility Value.	Consistent behaviour patterns emerge from both the 'X-Ray' analysis and also through the triangulation process. Although all three forms of value perception are identified in both sets of analysis, the effects of both BSPV and Exchange Value are found more weakly in the triangulation process.
#30	Transaction #30 is commercially Adversarial and operationally contains elements of both Arm's Length and Collaborative behaviours. Value perceptions are predominantly focussed on Utility, with elements of Exchange and more limited indications of the presence of BSPV.	The buyer's approach is predominantly Adversarial and mostly Arm's Length. There are also indications of the presence of a more collaborative approach. Exchange Value is most significant with both Utility Value and elements of BSPV also in evidence.	Analysis of both the 'X-Ray' and the triangulation process identify the presence of similar behaviours. The triangulation process places a greater emphasis on the influence of Exchange Value, but all three Value perceptions are identified by both methods of analysis.
#31	The approach to relationship management evident in Transaction #31 is predominantly Adversarial - Arm's Length. Exchange value is the buyer's main focus but elements of BSPV are also present.	The buyer adopts what is fundamentally an Adversarial and Arm's length approach to the transaction. Main focus is on Exchange Value but there are aspects of BSPV and an acknowledgement of Utility Value in evidence.	Both 'X-Ray' Analysis and triangulation reveal very similar findings in respect of both buyer behaviours and value perceptions.

Ref. No.	'X-Ray' Analysis Main Themes	Triangulation Main Themes	Emergent Themes (ex-comparison)
#35	<p>Transaction #35 is characteristic of a predominantly Arm's Length - Adversarial approach to relationship management. Perceptions of BSPV and Utility Value appear equally strong in the buyer's perception, but Exchange Value is also present at a lower level.</p>	<p>The buyer describes an approach which is Adversarial and Arm's Length. There are some indications of Collaboration in terms using the vendor to develop the design but the benefit from this input appears to remain with the buying organisation. The buyer appears to recognise both Utility Value and Exchange Value. There are also fairly strong elements of BSPV present.</p>	<p>Analysis of both the 'X-Ray' and the triangulation process identify the presence of similar behaviours. The triangulation process places a greater emphasis on the influence of Exchange Value, but all three value perceptions are identified by both methods of analysis.</p>
#37	<p>Transaction #37 shows evidence of a spread of relationship management behaviour. Operationally the transaction is typified as being more Arm's Length than Collaborative and commercially more Adversarial than non-adversarial. The value perception is strongly based on Exchange with progressively decreasing Utility and BSPV.</p>	<p>The buyer utilised a broadly Adversarial and Arm's Length approach to the transaction. Although primarily influenced by Exchange Value, Utility value played a significant role. The BSPV perception, though in evidence, did not appear significant.</p>	<p>Both 'X-Ray' Analysis and triangulation reveal very similar findings in respect of both buyer behaviours and value perceptions.</p>
#38	<p>The relationship management approach prevalent in Transaction #38 is commercially broadly Non-Adversarial, however, evidence of Adversarial behaviour is also present. Operationally a degree of low level Collaboration is present. There is a strong focus on BSPV and Exchange Value, with significant evidence of Utility Value also present.</p>	<p>The approach adopted is a combination of Adversarial and Non-Adversarial behaviour and is more Collaborative than Arm's Length. Utility Value is strong in the buyer's perspective as is BSPV.</p>	<p>Analysis of both the 'X-Ray' and the triangulation process identify the presence of similar behaviours. The triangulation process places a lesser emphasis on the influence of Exchange Value than does the 'X-Ray' analysis.</p>

Ref. No.	'X-Ray' Analysis Main Themes	Triangulation Main Themes	Emergent Themes (ex-comparison)
#39	Transaction #39 is associated with a relationship management approach that is operationally weakly Arm's Length and commercially displays buyer behaviour in which the strongest characteristic is Non-Adversarial but with co-existent Adversarial behaviour. Buyer focus on BSPV is strong with Utility Value being recognised but to a lesser extent.	The approach taken by the buyer is fundamentally Arm's Length. The buyer recognises both Exchange value and also Utility value but a strong theme is the buyer's BSPV perception deriving from his desire to improve standing within the client organisation.	Both 'X-Ray' Analysis and triangulation reveal very similar findings in respect of both buyer behaviours and value perceptions.
#41	Transaction #41 is broadly Adversarial and Arm's length in its relationship management approach. The buyer's focus is on Exchange Value with strong elements of Utility Value and some evidence of BSPV.	The transaction is characterised by an Adversarial - Arm's Length approach. Buyer value perceptions are spread across Exchange, Utility and BSPV but the strongest influence appears to be Exchange Value.	Both 'X-Ray' Analysis and triangulation reveal very similar findings in respect of both buyer behaviours and value perceptions.
#42	The buyer behaviours in Transaction #42 are strongly Adversarial and Arm's Length. The buyer's value perception is focussed on Exchange Value but there are also significant elements of BSPV in evidence. The buyer's interest in Utility Value is present but is relatively weak.	The buyer's approaches the transaction at Arm's Length from the vendor, and uses a market led 'Adversarial' sourcing approach. The buyer appears to see value in both Exchange and Utility. Aspects of BSPV are also in evidence.	Both 'X-Ray' Analysis and triangulation reveal very similar findings in respect of both buyer behaviours and value perceptions.

Ref. No.	'X-Ray' Analysis Main Themes	Triangulation Main Themes	Emergent Themes (ex-comparison)
#48	The relationship management approach demonstrated by Transaction #48 is broadly Adversarial with an operational focus that has some Collaborative tendencies. Signs of low level Non Adversarial behaviour also emerge. Exchange Value predominates with significant elements of BSPV also in evidence. Utility value is present at a lower level.	The transaction is strongly influenced by an Arm's Length relationship with the vendor. The approach is also Adversarial. Value is seen in Exchange but there is also BSPV in evidence.	Analysis of the Transaction 'X-Ray' identifies a stronger emphasis on Collaboration than does the triangulation process. Both analysis approaches, however, identify broadly similar buyer value perceptions.
#49	The behaviours demonstrated in Transaction #49 is Adversarial and Arm's Length. The buyer's focus is mainly on Utility Value and to a lesser extent on BSPV and Exchange Value.	The buyer's approach is fundamentally Adversarial and Arm's Length. Value perception is primarily focussed on Exchange and Utility but there is also a strong influence from the buyer's BSPV perspective.	Both 'X-Ray' Analysis and triangulation reveal very similar findings in respect of both buyer behaviours and value perceptions.
#55	The commercial focus of the Transaction #55 is mainly Adversarial. Operationally the behaviours are weakly Arm's Length. There co-exists, however, evidence of lesser Non-adversarial and Collaborative behaviours. All three value perceptions (Exchange, Utility and BSPV) are present in equal measures.	The approach is more Adversarial than Non-Adversarial and more Arm's length than Collaborative. The main buyer concept of value to appear is BSPV. Utility Value also plays a part in influencing the buyer's behaviour and there are elements of exchange value present.	Analysis of both the 'X-Ray' and the triangulation process identify the presence of similar behaviours. The triangulation process places a slightly greater emphasis on the influence of BSPV than does the 'X-Ray' analysis.
#57	The behaviours demonstrated by Transaction #57 are predominantly Adversarial and Arm's length. Value perceptions are evenly spread between BSPV, Utility Value and Exchange Value.	The transaction has been conducted in an Adversarial and Arm's-Length manner. The buyer clearly recognises the importance of Utility Value. Evidence of Exchange Value and of BSPV are also present.	Both 'X-Ray' Analysis and triangulation reveal very similar findings in respect of both buyer behaviours and value perceptions.

Appendix 8: Glossary of Acronyms

Term	Meaning
B2B	Business to Business
BSPV	Buyer Specific Perception of Value
CIPS	Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply
EDI	Electronic Data Interfaces
ERP	Enterprise Requirement Planning
G-DL	Goods-Dominant Logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2004)
IMP Group	International Marketing and Purchasing Group
QCA	Qualitative Content Analysis
RBP	Resource Based Perspective
S-DL	Service -Dominant Logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2004)
SIC	Standard Industrial Classification
SME	Small or Medium Enterprise (enterprises that have up to 250 employees)
TCE	Transaction Cost Economics (Williamson, 1985, 1996)
TQM	Total Quality Management
URL	Uniform Resource Locator (also known as web address)