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The effects of negotiation behaviours on the decision-making process of suppliers while providing firms the preferred customer status in B2B settings

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Abstract

The preferred customer status is a status given by suppliers to customers, which gives customer companies more privileged treatment, like benevolent pricing and more supplier innovativeness. Customers can use several negotiation behaviours when negotiating with suppliers. For instance, competitive negotiation behaviours are: Misrepresentation, traditional competitive bargaining, bluffing, manipulation of opponent's network, and inappropriate information gathering. Integrative negotiation behaviours are: Active listening, seeking mutual satisfaction, ensuring a productive relationship, ensuring positive results, ensuring a free flow of information, minimizing differences, trusting the information of other negotiators, and allowing participation of other parties in the decision-making process.

The aim of this research is to study what the effects are of the negotiation behaviours on the decision-making process of suppliers while granting the preferred customer status. The decision-making process of suppliers is operationalized into three measurable items: (1) Good working relations, (2) relationships that convey competitive advantage, and (3) recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice. The results were obtained by semi-structured interviews with ten supplying and ten purchasing companies, each followed by a structured interview with a Likert-scale for the measurable effect of each behaviour on each item. The unit of analysis is the supplier, because the supplier is the one who decides whether or not a customer will be granted with the preferred customer status.

The results show that according to the average scores from the semi-structured and structured interviews with the suppliers and purchasers, all the integrative behaviours have a positive effect on each item, whereas all the competitive behaviours have a negative effect on each item. This study contributes to the current literature, because the correlation between negotiation behaviours and the supplier's decision-making process while granting the preferred customer status has been understudied. However, the studied negotiation behaviours have been studied in relation to the achievement of customer satisfaction. This study can be used by purchasers of customer companies, which do not yet have the preferred customer status, to understand how they can alter their negotiation behaviour to obtain a higher chance of achieving the preferred customer status.

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1. The effects of negotiation behaviours on the decision-making process of suppliers while granting the preferred customer status

The process of negotiation is one of the aspects that is included in inter-organisational relationships. According to Saorín-Iborra (2008), negotiation can be seen as a set of tactical or communicative actions (verbal and non-verbal) used by negotiators during a negotiation process. These communicative actions could have multiple purposes, like getting lower prices for materials, getting a faster delivery from the supplier, or getting better quality products from the supplier. The negotiation process in a Business-to-Business (B2B) context is influenced by the negotiation behaviours that each party uses. This application of negotiation behaviours in a B2B context is larger than in a Business-to-Customer (B2C) context. Saha et al. (2014) gave the following explanation for the presence of negotiation in a B2B context and the lack of negotiation in a B2C context: “In B2C, consumers who buy products from you pay the same price as other consumers. In B2B, price may vary by customer. Customers who agree to place large orders or negotiate special terms pay different prices than other customers” (Saha et al., 2014: 296). The reason that the emphasis is put on the B2B context is that this study focuses on the negotiation behaviours that are applied during the negotiation processes between purchasing companies and supplying companies.

The negotiation behaviours applied in a B2B context are described based on the negotiation behaviour continuum of Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo (2018). The first reason that this continuum is put forward is because this continuum contains the negotiation behaviours that are involved in B2B negotiations. This is relevant, because this study focuses on the negotiation behaviours that are applied during negotiation processes between supplying and purchasing companies, which is a B2B context. The second reason that this continuum is put forward is because this continuum confirms that negotiation behaviour is not either integrative or competitive, but that negotiators can operate between these two extremes (Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo, 2018) and can decide to change their attitude during the negotiation process (Adair & Brett, 2005). The third reason that this continuum is put forward is because the negotiation behaviours on this continuum have already been studied by Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo (2018) in relation to a dependent variable, namely customer satisfaction, which means that the customer was the unit of analysis. In this study the dependent variable is changed into the decision-making process of suppliers while granting the preferred customer status, which means that in this study the supplier is the unit of analysis. So, this is an addition to the current literature.

The negotiation processes between supplying and purchasing companies are important for the inter-organisational relationship between the companies. The first reason has been described by Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo (2018) who found that the satisfaction of the purchasing company can be influenced by the negotiation behaviour of the supplying company. This increase or decrease of satisfaction of the purchasing company can have an effect on the quality of the inter-organisational relationship, because it affects the repurchase intentions and profit maximisation of the purchasing companies in the long run (Roberts-Lombard & Nyadzayo, 2014). Going further on this, according to Atkin & Rinehart (2006), the quality of the inter-organisational relationship can be affected since the satisfaction of both the supplying company and the purchasing company is affected by the negotiation behaviour of the other party. Schiele et al. (2012) found that a decrease of supplier satisfaction may lead to relationship termination and that an increase of supplier satisfaction may lead to better treatment of the purchasing company by the supplying company.

The reason that the link between negotiation behaviour and the inter-organisational relationship between supplying and purchasing companies is so important is that the supply chain is considered as an inter-organisational system. This means that a particular purchasing company has to co-operate with other supplying companies in its supply chain in order to operate (Atkin & Rinehart, 2006). Moreover, within the supply-chain setting there is a trend toward outsourcing some of Porter's value-chain elements that are not critical to the firm (Atkin & Rinehart, 2006). This increase of outsourcing Porter's value chain elements has led to an increase of dependence on other companies. Porter's value chain consists of primary and support activities that each company has (Mozota, 2010). Primary activities are activities that belong to the ongoing production, marketing, delivery, and servicing of the product. These include product design, engineering design, package design, and retail design (Mozota, 2010). Support activities are activities that provide purchased inputs, technology, human resources, and firm infrastructure. These include design for office space, corporate graphic design, and product design in R&D (Mozota, 2010). This increase of importance of inter-organisational relationships has made negotiations between supply-chain members more important for all involved parties and has enhanced the competitive environment of the supply chain. The reason for this is that the negotiation practices applied by a particular supply-chain member are components of the company's overall competitive strategy that will enable it to maximize its competitive position in relation to other supply-chain members (Atkin & Rinehart, 2006).

According to Schiele et al. (2012), there are multiple important elements during the negotiation processes between supplying and purchasing companies. One of these important

elements is the preferred customer status, which can be granted by a supplying company to a purchasing company. A purchasing company that achieves this preferred customer status receives more benefits from the inter-organisational relationship with the supplier than the standard customers that did not establish this preferred customer status. Examples of benefits that the preferred customer receives are: Getting access to innovations, getting discounts on products, and receiving faster supplies (Schiele & Vos, 2015). Ellis et al. (2012) found that purchasing companies with the preferred customer status get more access to technological innovations of suppliers. Moreover, the supplying company perceives the inter-organisational relationship with the preferred customer as more beneficial than the inter-organisational relationships with its standard customers (Schiele & Vos, 2015). Going further on the inter-organisational relationship between the supplier and the customer, Bemelmans et al. (2015) found that preferred customer status leads to relationship development, because the buyer and seller grow closer together, they will jointly reduce costs, and the interaction between the two companies will intensify. According to Nollet et al. (2012), preferred customer status of purchasing companies leads to supplier loyalty, because there is mutual dependence between the purchasing company and the supplying company.

The negotiation behaviours on the Saorín-Iborra continuum have been understudied in relation to the decision-making process of suppliers when granting buyers the preferred customer status. Ellis et al. (2012) studied the relation between buyer's behaviour and the decision-making process of suppliers when granting the preferred customer status, but operationalized this behaviour into: (1) Share of sales, (2) supplier involvement, and (3) relational reliability. So, Ellis et al. (2012) did not study the specific negotiation behaviours in relation to the decision-making process of suppliers. The B2B negotiation behaviours on Saorín-Iborra's negotiation continuum, which have been described by Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo (2018), have been analysed in relation to the achievement of customer satisfaction, but not in relation to the achievement of preferred customer status. Moreover, Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo (2018) only studied the negotiation behaviours applied by suppliers. However, this study focuses on the negotiation behaviours used by the purchasers and their effects on the decision-making process of suppliers while granting the preferred customer status. Schiele et al. (2012) analysed the achievement of preferred customer status of purchasing companies in relation to customer attractiveness and supplier satisfaction in a B2B context, but not in relation to negotiation behaviours. Baxter (2012) studied how purchasing companies can attract sellers' resources at the hand of the accomplishment of supplier commitment, supplier satisfaction, and preferred customer status. However, in the study of Baxter (2012) this was

studied in relation to customer financial attractiveness and not in relation to the usage of negotiation behaviours. This is the reason that this study provides a theoretical contribution and fills a literature gap in which the relation between the usage of B2B negotiation behaviours by purchasing companies and the decision-making process of suppliers while granting the preferred customer status is analysed. The overall research question that arises is: *What are the effects of B2B negotiation behaviours of purchasing companies, which do not yet have the preferred customer status, on the decision-making process while suppliers provide purchasing companies with the preferred customer status?*

This research question is divided into five sub questions:

1. According to the suppliers, what are the effects of negotiation behaviours of purchasing companies on the decision-making process of suppliers while granting the preferred customer status?
2. According to the purchasers, what are the effects of negotiation behaviours of purchasing companies on the decision-making process of suppliers while granting the preferred customer status?
3. According to the suppliers and purchasers, who are in a relationship with each other, what are the effects of negotiation behaviours of purchasing companies on the decision-making process of suppliers while granting the preferred customer status?
4. What are the similarities and differences between the suppliers and purchasers in terms of their opinions on the effects of negotiation behaviours?
5. What are the similarities and differences between the suppliers and purchasers, who are in a relationship with each other, in terms of their opinions on the effects of negotiation behaviours?

The purchasing companies that want to achieve the preferred customer status are the main audience of this study. The reason is that an increase in knowledge of the purchasing firms about the effects of negotiation behaviours on the decision-making process of suppliers, may give the purchasing companies, which do not yet have the preferred customer status, the ability to sharpen their negotiation behaviour to increase their likelihood of achieving the preferred customer status. This is the reason that this study provides a practical contribution that purchasers can benefit from. The unit of analysis of this study is the supplier, because the effects of the negotiation behaviours are studied in relation to the suppliers' decision-making process while granting the preferred customer status.

2. Theory

In this section the three concepts of the research question are described with theoretical literature: (1) The B2B negotiation behaviours, (2) the decision-making process of suppliers while providing the preferred customer status, and (3) the preferred customer status.

2.1 Negotiation is a set of tactical or communicative actions used by negotiators during a negotiation process

Negotiation has several definitions in the literature. According to Yuan (1998), negotiation is a kind of game that negotiators employ to accomplish their goals. However, according to Saorín-Iborra (2008), negotiation can be seen as a set of tactical or communicative actions (verbal and non-verbal) used by negotiators during a negotiation process. During this study the definition of Saorín-Iborra (2008) will be used, because this definition is more specific and more in line with the goal of this study, which is to measure the link between negotiation behaviours and the decision-making process of suppliers.

Also the distinction between the several negotiation behaviours differs between the researchers. Negotiation can be divided into a dichotomous division, namely integrative and competitive negotiation behaviour. This dichotomous division is the most traditional division of negotiation behaviours and is used in old studies to describe the effects of negotiation behaviours (Lax and Sebenius, 1986). However, according to Saorín-Iborra (2008b), there are multiple negotiation behaviours between these two extremes. During this study this distinction with the multiple negotiation behaviours will be used, because this model is described more in detail and has more detailed descriptions of each negotiation behaviour, which leads to more detailed results and conclusions.

When looking at the importance of negotiation, according to Ramsay (2007), negotiation is one of the most demanding and sophisticated activities carried out by all purchasing functions in the management of competitive and cooperative buyer/supplier relationships alike. Moreover, Carr & Pearson (2002) stated that effective negotiation between suppliers and customers is one of the skills that should be performed well on a strategic level, because this can lead to better supplier integration, which on its turn may speed up the product development cycle and offer valuable insights into the design of new products. Other skills are knowledge of supplier markets, innovation in strategic planning, communication with other functions, and general management skills. The importance of negotiation has also been confirmed by Faes et al. (2010) who stated that negotiation is a key process in the realization

and implementation of business objectives. However, according to Fells et al. (2015), it is unknown and unclear what actually happens during business negotiations in general what makes the negotiation process so essential. This research will follow the opinion of Ramsay (2007), Carr & Pearson (2002), and Faes et al. (2010) who stated that the negotiation process is an essential element of inter-organisational processes.

2.2 Saorín-Iborra's negotiation continuum: Pure competitive behaviour, competition, soft competition, compromise, collaboration, and pure integrative behaviour

According to Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo (2018), there are various negotiation behaviours that a business can use during B2B negotiations. There are two extremes of negotiation orientations, namely 'purely competitive' and 'purely integrative' (Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo, 2018). The negotiation orientations between these two extremes are schematically illustrated in Saorín-Iborra's negotiation behaviour continuum, which can be seen below in figure 1.

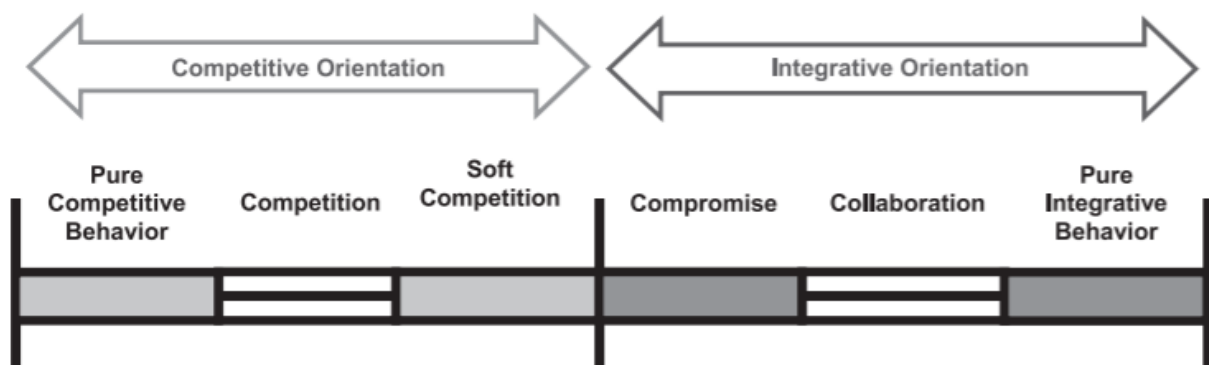


Figure 1: Saorín-Iborra's negotiation behaviour continuum

Source: Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo (2018), p. 3

The six negotiation orientations that are integrated in the classification system of Saorín-Iborra's negotiation behaviour continuum can be described as follows:

- *Pure Integrative Behaviour*: Very high use of integrative actions, with very low or no use of acceptable competitive actions and no inappropriate actions.
- *Collaboration*: Prevalence of integrative actions, with few acceptable competitive actions and no inappropriate actions.
- *Compromise Behaviour*: Frequent use of integrative actions with moderate use of acceptable competitive actions and absence of inappropriate competitive actions.
- *Soft Competition*: Use of integrative actions with frequent use of acceptable competitive actions and few inappropriate competitive actions.

- *Competition*: Use of integrative actions with frequent use of acceptable competitive actions and high use of inappropriate competitive actions.
- *Pure Competitive Behaviour*: None or very low integrative actions with high use of acceptable competitive actions and high use of inappropriate competitive actions.

In the literature there are multiple views about these negotiation behaviours and their effects. According to Ghauri (2003), using an integrative negotiation behaviour has better negotiation outcomes, especially regarding business negotiations and joint profits. Moreover, according to Graham and Mintu-Wimsatt (1997), when a negotiation party aims at customer satisfaction, then the use of integrative negotiation behaviour is positively related to the accomplishment of this when both negotiating parties interact. Integrative negotiation behaviour involves an open, clear, and honest information exchange. Negotiators who display such behaviour use tactics such as questioning and self-disclosures (Saorín-Iborra, 2008). According to Saorín-Iborra (2008), there is a positive relationship between the use of integrative negotiation behaviour and the achievement of win-win situations. It creates a cooperative atmosphere, which enables the creation of trust and commitment between the negotiating parties. This all leads to a higher probability of creating long-term relationships between companies. Gil-Saura et al. (2009) stated the following about this creation of trust and commitment in relation to long-term relationships: “As trust is considered an effective and desirable attribute in long-term relationships between organisations, when an organisation perceives that there is trust in a relationship; it will want to commit to it” (Gil-Saura et al., 2009: 599). These long-term relationships are beneficial in the B2B context. According to Tan et al. (2017), long-term relationships create mutual benefits for both the purchasing company and the supplying company. One of the benefits of long-term relationships is that both companies share a mutual philosophy in achieving business objectives by effectively maximizing the efficient use of both parties’ construction management resources (Wood & Ellis, 2005). Moreover, Healey (2014) found that long-term relationships are highly correlated to main contractor competitiveness, which indicates that maintaining a good relationship with subcontractors is significantly correlated with main contractor competitiveness from the perspective of business performance.

On the other side, according to Adair et al. (2004), a negotiator who uses a competitive negotiation behaviour has less chance to create satisfaction and has more chance to create a competitive response by the counterparty. This can lead to a spiral of conflict, reduces profits for both negotiating parties, and increases impasses. Ghauri (2003) stated that this kind of

negotiation behaviour will only hinder implementation and development of negotiated agreements. Ghauri (2003) further stated that this will reduce the chance for the negotiating parties to establish commitment and establish and maintain a long-term relationship with each other. According to Saorín-Iborra (2008), it is possible to reach an agreement when one of the negotiating parties is using a competitive negotiation behaviour, but this will lead one of the negotiating parties unsatisfied. This is a reason that the probability of creating long-term relationships with a competitive negotiating behaviour is small. This all leads to the phenomenon that competitive negotiation behaviour appears to be associated with two non-optimal outcomes: (1) A partially unsatisfactory agreement, or (2) a non-agreement (Saorín-Iborra, 2008). This all will lead to a lower chance of creating long-term relationships between companies. In summary, integrative negotiation behaviour will lead to positive outcomes for the negotiating parties and competitive negotiation behaviour will lead to negative outcomes for the negotiating parties (Saorín-Iborra, 2008).

However, this distinction is not always so obvious during negotiations (Saorín-Iborra, 2008b). The negotiating parties have the opportunity to utilize several negotiation behaviours involving integrative and competitive behaviour characteristics (Saorín-Iborra, 2008b). It is the combination of these negotiation behaviours that leads to positive or negative outcomes (Saorín-Iborra, 2008b). The negotiation orientations on the negotiation behaviour continuum should be used at the right time (Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo, 2018). This vision of a non-dichotomous division of positive and negative effects will be used during this study in relation to the decision-making process of suppliers.

2.3 Competitive orientation: A mindset in which parties represent distinct entities and want to get a good deal for themselves

This first negotiation orientation on Saorín-Iborra's negotiation continuum that is described in this study is the competitive orientation. Adair & Brett (2005) stated that competitive orientation includes a mindset in which parties represent distinct entities and want to get a good deal for themselves. During a negotiation in which this negotiation orientation is used, the needs of the other company are not taken into account, but the main focus lays in the company's own needs. Chirkov et al. (2003) called this type of behaviour 'Individualistic behaviour', because the focus is on the well-being of the own company and not on the well-being of all the companies involved in the negotiation. Competitive orientation will lead to win-lose scenarios and will only increase one party's win instead of the whole win for both

parties (Bolman Pullins et al., 2000). When a particular company has a competitive negotiation orientation, it can utilize competitive behaviours during the negotiation process (Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo, 2018).

2.3.1 Suppliers and purchasers will most likely use competitive negotiation behaviour during the first and third phase of the negotiation process

A negotiation process between two or more business partners can consist of two periods, namely the competitive period in the beginning and the integrative period in the end (Adair & Brett, 2005). A business negotiating party will most likely utilize competitive actions during the beginning phase of the negotiation, but will eventually move away from power to coordination and cooperation (Adair & Brett, 2005). However, this two-stage negotiation process of a competitive beginning and an integrative ending is too simple and negotiating parties tend to move back and forth from a more competitive to a more cooperative focus throughout the negotiation (Olekalns et al., 2004). This statement supported the study of Lytle et al. (1999) in which was stated that even when the negotiating party receives valuable information, the negotiator of this particular negotiating party will continue to use competitive influence tactics as he or she tries to claim value for him- or herself. At the hand of this information, Adair & Brett (2005) constructed a four-stage model in which the competitive actions are present in the first phase when the power and relationship are defined, and in the third phase when the negotiators make task oriented arguments to support their offers and claim value.

2.3.2 Reasons to use competitive negotiation behaviour: An unequal division of power between the parties, the first and third phase of the negotiation process, and a short-term inter-organisational relationship

The power definition in the first phase was described in detail by Kim et al. (2005). When the total amount of power is divided unequally between the negotiating parties, then it is more likely that the negotiating party with a higher power amount will use this power to utilize competitive and hostile tactics to extract benefits in ways that actually increases the other company's harm (Kim et al., 2005). The reason behind this is that during the first phase of the negotiation, the company with the higher power is aware of its power over the other party and can use this knowledge to obtain a more beneficial deal for itself (Kim et al., 2005).

Adair & Brett (2005) described why this competitive behaviour is also present during the third phase of the negotiation process, namely during the third phase of the negotiation process the negotiators make task oriented arguments to support their offers and claim value. Adair & Brett (2005) stated the following about the reason behind the presence of competitive behaviour during the third phase of the negotiation process: “We expect that after priorities and interests have been revealed in stage two, negotiators will turn again to more competitive-influence strategies, positioning themselves to claim more of the ultimate agreement” (Adair & Brett, 2005: 36).

Going further on the role of power during the negotiation process, when the total power (sum of the power of both negotiating parties) is higher, then there is a decrease in the degree of utilization of competitive actions. Kim et al. (2005) explained this by giving the following reason: “Because higher total power (i.e., the sum of each negotiator’s potential power) increases negotiators’ stakes in reaching a reasonable solution, they will employ fewer hostile and more conciliatory power-use tactics when total power is high than when it is low” (Kim et al., 2005: 813). This study is in line with the study of Ramsay (2004) who found that when the purchaser becomes dependent on the supplier, the supplier has a certain amount of power over this purchaser, which will result in the usage of competitive actions and tactics by this supplier. So, the competitive orientation of a negotiating party can depend on the phase of the negotiation process (Adair & Bett, 2005; Lytle et al., 1999; Olekalns et al., 2004) and on the power distribution between the negotiating parties (Kim et al., 2005; Ramsay, 2004).

Moreover, Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo (2018) found that the duration of the inter-organisational relationship also has an influence on whether or not the companies have a competitive negotiation behaviour. According to Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo (2018), the usage of competitive negotiation behaviour in a short-term inter-organisational relationship is higher. The reason behind this is that long-term relationships are maintainable when win-win situations are created and competitive negotiation behaviours often result in win-lose situations (Tan et al., 2017). That is the reason that companies that aim at a short-term relationship with a particular party have a more competitive negotiation behaviour than companies that aim at a long-term relationship (Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo, 2018; Tan et al., 2017).

2.3.3 Competitive negotiation behaviours: Misrepresentation, traditional competitive bargaining, bluffing, manipulation of opponent's network, and inappropriate information gathering

The competitive negotiation behaviours, which are described by Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo (2018), were described before in detail by Lewicki & Robinson (1998). These competitive negotiation behaviours are:

- Misrepresentation
- Traditional competitive bargaining
- Bluffing
- Manipulation of opponent's network
- Inappropriate information gathering

Misrepresentation

'Misrepresentation' implies that a B2B negotiating party intentionally misrepresents the nature of negotiations to the press or to the opponent's constituency in order to protect delicate discussions that have occurred. Moreover, this also can imply that this party intentionally misrepresents factual information to the opponent in order to support the own arguments or position (Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo, 2018).

Traditional competitive bargaining

'Traditional competitive bargaining' can imply that a B2B negotiating party gains information about an opponent's negotiating position and strategy by obtaining information from the opponent's network of associates, and contacts. This can also imply that this particular party makes an opening demand that is far greater than what one really hopes to settle for, which can undermine the opponent's confidence in its own ability to negotiate a satisfactory settlement (Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo, 2018).

Bluffing

'Bluffing' implies that a particular B2B negotiating party tries to persuade the opponent that the goods or materials they are looking for are only available by negotiating with them when in fact the opponent could go elsewhere and achieve a better settlement. This can also imply that a particular negotiating party promises that good or bad things will happen to the opponent even when this is not the case (Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo, 2018).

Manipulation of opponent's network

'Manipulation of opponent's network' implies that a particular B2B negotiating party talks directly to the people the opponent reports to and tries to encourage these people to weaken the opponent's side or tries to share certain information, which will undermine these people's confidence in the opponent (Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo, 2018).

Inappropriate information gathering

'Inappropriate information gathering' implies that a party gains information about an opponent's negotiating position by paying associates and contacts, but also by hiring one of the opponent's key subordinates (on the condition that the key subordinate brings confidential information) (Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo, 2018).

2.4 Integrative orientation: Parties are interdependent and must work together to discover a mutually acceptable solution

The second negotiation orientation on Saorín-Iborra's negotiation continuum that is described in this study is the integrative orientation. Integrative orientation means that parties are interdependent and must work together to discover a mutually acceptable solution (Adair & Brett, 2005). An integrative orientation will lead to win-win situations (Bolman Pullins et al., 2000). Going further on this, Bolman Pullins et al. (2000) stated that an integrative orientation will increase the whole win for both parties, instead of the win of one party, which is the case with a competitive orientation. Saorín-Iborra (2008b) stated the following about extreme integrative negotiating behaviour: "Extreme integrative behaviour (problem solving) is characterized by the existence of a high frequency of questions and personal revelations, and by a low frequency of threats, promises, commitments, punishments, demands and rewards" (Saorín-Iborra, 2008b: 134). This integrative behaviour is beneficial for both parties since there is less uncertainty and ambiguity during the negotiation process and during the inter-organisational relationship. Saorín-Iborra et al. (2014) stated the following about this phenomenon of tackling uncertainty with an integrative orientation: "Negotiating from an integrative approach involves requesting and obtaining all the information required from the other party and clearing up all the points in the relationship, which are cause for concern or over which there is a certain degree of uncertainty or ambiguity" (Saorín-Iborra et al., 2014: 773). This finding is in line with the study of Saorín-Iborra (2009) who found that an integrative orientation reduces uncertainties and creates a trust-based relationship.

However, Saorín-Iborra et al. (2014) explained that the usage of integrative negotiation behaviour also has risks when one of the parties uses integrative negotiation behaviour and the other party uses competitive negotiation behaviour. A risk could be that the party that uses integrative negotiation behaviour allows the other party that uses competitive negotiation behaviour to negotiate an agreement that is only satisfactory for itself. Saorín-Iborra et al. (2014) stated the following about this risk of not reaching a mutual satisfactory agreement: “Both the facts of not reaching an agreement or of reaching an agreement that is not mutually satisfactory for both parties, are seen in the literature as a failure of the negotiation, because it does not make it easy to put into practice what has been negotiated” (Saorín-Iborra et al., 2014: 774). Ee et al. (2013) found that this one-sided satisfactory agreement between the parties inhibits the creation of long-term relationships.

2.4.1 The negotiation process can lead to the creation of trust, and trust can lead to an agreement during the negotiation process

The creation of trust during the negotiation process is an important element of inter-organisational relationships. Saorín-Iborra (2009) stated that trust-based relationships can only be created during negotiations when both parties take each other's needs into account when coming to an agreement so that win-win situations can be created. Moreover, according to Bachmann & Inkpen (2011), the creation of trust also depends on the ability of the companies to be understanding and flexible. Bachmann & Inkpen (2011) described this by using the following example: “If, for example, a supplier firm with a reputation for high quality products or services signals to be flexible in terms of prices, this is likely to be contributing much more to establishing a long-term trust-based relationship than if a firm with a low reputation sends this signal” (Bachmann & Inkpen, 2011: 291).

However, even though the negotiation process is important for the creation of trust-based relationships, these trust-based relationships are also important in the negotiation process. Stamato (2004) confirmed this by explaining that creating a relationship based on trust and understanding between the negotiating parties is what generates a strong desire to reach an agreement and makes it easier to put it into practice. Moreover, Shankarmahesh et al. (2004) found that the higher the degree of trust between the negotiating parties, the higher their perception of satisfaction, the greater their flexibility to reach an agreement. Going further on the importance of trust in the relationship, according to Lee et al. (2008), trust is an essential requirement when creating long-term relationships.

2.4.2 Suppliers and purchasers will most likely use integrative negotiation behaviour during the second and fourth phase of the negotiation process

According to Adair & Brett (2005), the integrative orientation occurs mostly during the second phase of the negotiation process. Adair & Brett (2005) stated the following about the second phase of the negotiation process: “This phase is characterized by reciprocal exchange of priority information as negotiators focus on the negotiation issues, options, and underlying interests; build trust; and begin a serious search for an agreement” (Adair & Brett, 2005: 36). After the second phase all the information of the parties’ priorities and objectives is available for both negotiating parties, so the negotiators can turn back to structuring and claiming value (Olekalns & Smith, 2000).

Adair & Brett (2005) found that the use of integrative negotiation is also present during the fourth and final phase of the negotiation process. This phase is characterized by lower demands and quicker concessions. During this phase the negotiators are more cooperative, because they are exchanging offers to close a deal in relation to their preferences, needs, and priorities. However, there are also some competitive characteristics during this final phase of the negotiation process. The reason for this is that the end of the negotiation process is almost reached and the negotiating parties have to reject the other party’s offer and make counter-offers. Adair & Brett (2005) stated the following about the presence of both the competitive and integrative negotiation behaviour during this final phase: “Offers in the fourth stage serve both to reach an agreement and to try to get as much out of that agreement for oneself as possible” (Adair & Brett, 2005: 37).

A negotiating party during the last phase of the negotiation can signal its integrative orientation by developing trust by revealing some sensitive information (Adair & Brett, 2005). This development of trust does not only have a positive effect on the negotiation process, but also on the quality of the inter-organisational relationship between the negotiating parties. Hüffmeier et al. (2011) stated that the adoption of integrative behaviour in negotiation processes is fundamentally aimed at achieving socioemotional outcomes, in other words, establishing and maintaining positive solid relationships between the parties based upon trust. An inter-organisational relationship in which trust is embedded during the negotiation processes is important for both parties to ensure future success, especially when there is an outsourcing agreement. According to Platz & Temponi (2007), the negotiating parties should focus on the future of their inter-organisational outsourcing agreement so that the main focus is put on building trust and reducing uncertainties. Platz & Temponi (2007) stated that the

negotiating parties should avoid thinking only in prices, quantities, and qualities since this focus will not nourish the quality of the inter-organisational relationship.

However, Platz & Temponi (2007) do not deny that these functions are relevant in the B2B context, especially in the process of outsourcing certain functions to an inter-organisational partner. Platz & Temponi (2007) stated the following about the importance of quality and service levels in relation to outsourcing: “It is essential that the customer company fully disclose its expectations for quality and service levels, and means for measuring performance within the outsourcing contract. The outsourcing contract must contain a detailed description of all expectations of vendor performance since service levels for in-house functions are commonly used as the benchmark for outsourced functions” (Platz & Temponi, 2007: 1659). According to Platz & Temponi (2007), it is the combination between a focus on these aspects, and a focus on building trust and reducing uncertainties that makes an outsourcing contract as optimal as possible.

2.4.3 Integrative negotiation behaviours: Active listening, seeking mutual satisfaction, ensuring a productive relationship, obtaining positive results, ensuring a free flow of information, minimizing differences, trusting the negotiators, and allowing participation of all parties

There are multiple integrative behaviours that could be applied during a B2B negotiation process by a negotiating party to increase the quality of the inter-organisational relationship, to increase the amount of trust, and to decrease the amount of uncertainties (Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo, 2018). These integrative behaviours are:

- Ensuring understanding of the counterpart’s needs (active listening)
- Seeking mutual satisfaction
- Ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship
- Cooperating to obtain positive results
- Ensuring a free flow of information
- Minimizing differences among the parties
- Trusting the position and information of other negotiators
- Allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process

Ensuring understanding of the counterpart’s needs (active listening)

This means that the negotiator tries to understand what the demands and needs are of the other party, so these can be taken into account when coming to an agreement (Kim et al., 2005).

Seeking mutual satisfaction

‘Seeking mutual satisfaction’ means that a party tries to accomplish an agreement that satisfies both parties. This satisfaction can be on the area of economic aspects, non-economic aspects, and the characteristics of the relationship that partners find rewarding, profitable and instrumental (Langerak, 2001).

Ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship

This behaviour means that a party tries to ensure a positive and productive personal relationship with the negotiators of the other party, but also ensures that this relationship is optimized when the relationship between the firms is not as optimal and productive as possible (Maheshwari et al., 2006).

Cooperating to obtain positive results

This behaviour means that a party tries to obtain positive results by working together with the other party by combining specialistic technical knowledge during the negotiation. This can be used to realize innovations or to optimize current processes (Schiele, 2010).

Ensuring a free flow of information

‘Ensuring a free flow of information’ is a behaviour that a party uses to ensure that all the necessary and relevant information has been received from the other party and has been shared with the other party (Nyaga et al., 2010).

Minimizing differences among the parties

This behaviour means that the negotiating party tries to minimize differences between its party and the other party in order to come to an agreement. This could mean that a party has to show some flexibility to give up some of its requirements to come to an agreement (Ellis et al., 2012).

Trusting the position and information of other negotiators

This behaviour means that the negotiator of a party trusts the position and shared information of the negotiator of the other party (Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo, 2018).

Allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process

According to Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo (2018), this behaviour means that a negotiating party allows all the present parties to participate in the decision-making process of the negotiation. This means that all the present parties are allowed to negotiate for their demands and requirements (Kim et al., 2005). These parties could negotiate independently from the supplier or purchaser and could be people that represent a third party or the technical department of the company.

2.5 The negotiation tactics that are used in the manufacturing industry are: Traditional cooperative bargaining, attacking opponent's network, false promises, misrepresentation, inappropriate information gathering, and tacit bargaining

The degree of usage of negotiation tactics can depend on the sector of a particular purchasing or supplying company. There have been done multiple studies on the usage of negotiation tactics in various sectors. Elahee & Brooks (2004) studied the usage of negotiation tactics in the manufacturing sector. Al-Khatib et al. (2007) studied the usage of various negotiation tactics in the following sectors: Retail/wholesale, manufacturing, and services. Al-Khatib et al. (2007) studied the use of five negotiation tactics in relation to these industries. The negotiation tactics that were studied were: Traditional competitive bargaining, attacking an opponent's network, misrepresentation of position to the opponent, misuse of information, and false promises. Narsimhan & Ungarala (2016) did a study regarding the usage of competitive negotiation tactics by buyers and suppliers in the manufacturing industry. Grzeskowiak & Al-Khatib (2009) studied the usage of negotiation tactics of retailers in the entering process of an inter-organisational relationship with new suppliers. The reason that they studied this is that retailers are increasingly forced to enter negotiations with new suppliers and have less time to develop trusting relationships prior to awarding sourcing contracts (Pretious & Love, 2006). Malshe et al. (2010) studied the effects of unethical negotiation tactics in various industries and used respondents who were operating in B2B environments. They came from industries such as banking, advertising, health care, manufacturing, and trading. Cheung et al. (2009) studied the usage of negotiation tactics and linked them to a degree of usefulness. This study of Cheung et al. (2009) was an extension of the study of Rahim (2001) who studied the negotiation tactics within B2B negotiations. Fleck et al. (2016) did a study in which the usage of various negotiation tactics in the financial sector were studied. In that study the respondents were asked to rate a number of statements

that were related to the usage of various negotiation tactics. The questionnaire that has been used in that study was also previously used in negotiation research, which was conducted by Amanatullah et al. (2008). Friedman et al. (2000) studied the usage of various negotiation tactics in the health care sector. The study of Jameson (2003) found that there could also be conflict and negotiation in this sector. On the other side, Lampel & Germain (2016) did a study regarding how firms do business in the creative sector. Flew (2002) stated that there is a difference between firms in the creative industry and firms in other industries, like manufacturing and financial sectors. The firms in the creative industry rely more on individual creativity, whereas firms in manufacturing and financial sectors rely more on learned skills. This individual creativity leads to more flexibility in production, which affects the usage of negotiation tactics (Lampel et al., 2000).

There are differences in the usage of negotiation tactics between all the sectors that have been put forward above. The firms in the creative sector tend to grow faster than other firms, which means that the negotiation tactics they apply can differ too (Pratt & Jeffcutt, 2009). Another reason for the difference in usage of negotiation tactics in the creative industry than in other industries is that there is a higher degree of uncertainty in the creative sector than in other sectors, because of the nature of its products, which are often intangible and can therefore be more difficult to sell (Caves, 2000). However, Kuttim et al. (2011) stated that the majority of firms in the creative industry have a lack of negotiation training and skills and a lack of managerial skills (Bauer et al., 2011). A reason for this lack of skills is that firms in the creative sector tend to put their focus on creativity and not on economic gains, which reduces the pressure to master negotiation skills and creates a tendency to prefer to avoid discussing money (Swedberg, 2006; Schei, 2013). This all illustrates that negotiation skills and tactics that are applied in one sector, can differ from negotiation skills and tactics that are applied in another sector. However, according to Kun-Chang & Soon-Jae (2006), all firms should try to improve their negotiation skills and tactics since these determine the course of future business.

Since the focus of this study is the manufacturing industry in which the suppliers supply raw materials or products to purchasers for manufacturing purposes, the traditional competitive bargaining tactics are important to take into account. The traditional competitive negotiation tactics are mostly used in the retail and wholesale, manufacturing, service, and finance industries (Sigurdardottir et al., 2018). The findings of Sigurdardottir et al. (2018) are in line with the study of Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo (2018) since in this study the traditional competitive negotiation behaviours were mainly used by suppliers. The negotiation tactics

that were used in the manufacturing industry were: Traditional cooperative bargaining, attacking opponent's network, false promises, misrepresentation, inappropriate information gathering, and tacit bargaining. The finding of Sigurdardottir et al. (2018) that traditional competitive bargaining, false promises, misrepresentation, and inappropriate information gathering are used as negotiation tactics in the manufacturing sector is in line with the study of Robinson et al. (2000). Furthermore, the finding that 'attacking opponent's network' is used as a negotiation tactic in the manufacturing industry is in line with the study of both Robinson et al. (2000), and Perdue (1992). The finding of Sigurdardottir et al. (2018) that tacit bargaining is used as a negotiation tactic in the manufacturing industry is in line with the study of both Schelling (1960), and Wall (1985). Some of these tactics were also put forward by Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo (2018) as negotiation behaviours and were studied in relation to the achievement of customer satisfaction.

2.5.1 There could be buyer-seller differences in the use of negotiation tactics

Next to the sector a firm is active in, the degree of usage of negotiation tactics can also depend on whether a firm is a purchasing firm or a supplying firm. Both the purchasers and suppliers have to use negotiation tactics. The reasons for this are that negotiation outcomes determine the performance of buyers and sellers in increasingly competitive markets (Thomas et al., 2013), but also because negotiation tactics influence the profits of a company and profit is an objective result of buyer-seller commerce (Mintu-Wimsatt & Graham, 2004). According to Ford & Håkansson (2006), inter-organisational negotiations are one of the key activities in industrial markets, so these have to be used by both purchasing companies and supplying companies. During these negotiations multiple aspects are negotiated that are relevant for both the purchasing companies and the supplying companies (Fang, 2006). Examples of such aspects are delivery time, payment time, quantity, and quality. This all indicates that both purchasing companies and supplying companies in the manufacturing industry are using negotiation tactics.

However, there could be a difference between the purchasing companies and supplying companies in terms of usage of negotiation tactics. Sigurdardottir et al. (2019) has put the focus on buyer-seller differences in the use of negotiation tactics and found that 'positional information' was only used by the suppliers; 'procedure focused' was mainly used by the suppliers; 'tacit bargaining' was mainly used by the suppliers; 'rejection' was used by both the purchasers and the suppliers; 'concessions' was used by both the purchasers and the suppliers; 'priority information' was used by both the purchasers and the suppliers; 'option

generating' was used by both the purchasers and the suppliers; and 'aggression' was used by both the purchasers and the suppliers. There has been some discussion in the literature about the usage of aggression. Sigurdardottir et al. (2019) found that both the buyer and supplier used aggression. This is not in line with the study of Perdue et al. (1986) in which the buyer favoured mostly collaborative negotiation approaches without aggressive tactics. However, according to Perdue (1992), buyers used aggressive negotiation tactics, like time pressure tactics. Wu et al. (2016) found that buyers use cooperate behaviour without the use of aggressive negotiation tactics, especially when they perceive the supplier as trustworthy.

2.6 The decision-making process results in a complex process given the many complex issues

Multiple studies have shed their light on the phenomenon of decision-making processes during negotiations. According to Morge & Mancarella (2012), taking into account its goals and preferences, a party needs to solve a decision-making problem where the decision amounts to an alternative it can select even if some goals cannot be reached. Weiss (2010) studied the effectiveness of a party's decision-making process by focusing on the two most important aspects of decision-making, namely individual behaviour and effectiveness. Weiss (2010) asked three fundamental questions to study the effectiveness of a party's decision-making process: First, how effectively do individuals perform with mixed agendas? For that matter, what criteria or standards should be used for these assessments? Second, what explains individuals' effectiveness (or lack thereof)? Do they make better decisions about some agenda items than they do about others? And third, how might individuals improve their effectiveness? (Weiss, 2010: 256). The decision-making process can be a complex process when the decision-maker must consider many aspects. Hernández et al. (2010) stated the following about this: "The decision-making process results in a complex process given the many complex issues, such as production and transport planning, coordination among the supply chain nodes, information management, managing the outcomes among the supply chain nodes to establish a beneficial configuration for the whole supply chain, as well as to each node" (Hernández et al., 2010: 80).

Because making the right decision could be difficult for a certain party, there are tools that support parties in their decision-making process. Therefore there are traditional negotiation support systems (NSS) that focus on providing users with decision support on how they might best achieve their goals (Abrahams et al., 2010: 5). These support systems are

particularly helpful when there is more than one decision-maker. Hajkowicz (2010) stated the following about group decisions: “Decision analysis would be much easier with only one decision maker. This seldom occurs. Studies of environmental decisions worldwide typically observe a group of decision makers attempting to resolve conflict and reach consensus. Therefore, decision support models need to capture and synthesise preference information from individuals to form a group position” (Hajkowicz, 2010: 331-332).

2.6.1 Measurable items of the decision-making process: Good working relations, working relationships that convey competitive advantage, and recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice

The preferred customer status is linked with the decision-making process of suppliers (Ellis et al., 2012). Ellis et al. (2012) operationalized this decision-making process into three measurable items: (1) Good working relations, (2) working relationships that convey competitive advantage, and (3) recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice. These items are described individually below.

1. Good working relations

This measurable item can be explained as to what extent the supplier has a good overall buyer-supplier working relationship with the purchasing company (Ellis et al., 2012).

2. Working relationships that convey competitive advantage

This measurable item can be explained as to what extent the buyer-supplier relationship gives the supplying company competitive advantage and to what extent the buyer-supplier relationship leads to benefits for the supplying company (Ellis et al., 2012).

3. Recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice

With this measurable decision-making process item the supplier purely focuses on the negotiation behaviour of the purchasing company, without looking at the quality of the relationship or the benefits that result from the relationship. This item has been defined as follows: “Without regard to revenue and profit the supplier receives from a purchasing company, to what degree the purchasing company is a ‘Customer of Choice’ to the supplier when this company uses a particular negotiation behaviour” (Ellis et al., 2012: 1264).

2.7 Meaning of preferred customer status, how this status can be achieved, and the benefits that preferred customers can experience

To enlighten the importance of the dependent variable of this study (decision-making process of suppliers while granting the preferred customer status), this chapter is dedicated to the preferred customer status. During this chapter the preferred customer status is explained, how it can be achieved in relation to supplier satisfaction and customer attractiveness, and finally what benefits purchasing companies can experience when this status has been accomplished in terms of supplier innovativeness and supplier benevolent pricing.

2.7.1 The cycle of preferred customership consists of three core elements: Expectations, Comparison Level, and Comparison Level of alternatives

The preferred customer status is a phenomenon that is discussed by multiple researchers. Hüttinger et al. (2012) described the role of attractiveness in the achievement of preferred customer status. A supporting theory that can be related with the relational interdependence between purchasing companies and supplying companies in the B2B context is the Social Exchange Theory (largely constructed by George C. Homans) (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). This interdependence between purchasing companies and supplying companies has led to the statement of Schiele et al. (2012) that purchasing companies should feel more obligation to be attractive for suppliers, because of two reasons:

1. The opportunity to outsource supply chain operations to suppliers
2. The decrease number of available suppliers

As explained above, a theory that describes the importance of a partner's attractiveness in inter-organisational relationships is the Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Schiele et al., 2012). According to Schiele et al. (2012), this theory describes three phases of a relationship:

1. Relationship initiation
2. Relationship continuation or relationship discontinuation
3. The granting of preferred customer status

It is important for a company to be attractive for potential business partners in order to initiate inter-organisational relationships (Schiele et al., 2012). The three phases that are described could be linked to the three core elements of the Social Exchange Theory:

1. Expectations
2. Comparison Level
3. Comparison Level of alternatives

These three phases and three core elements can be linked together and are all described individually in detail below.

The expectations could be linked to the initiation of an inter-organisational relationship

The first phase of an inter-organisational relationship is 'relationship initiation'.

Attractiveness is a mutual interdependent phenomenon in which the purchaser should be attractive for the supplier, but also the supplier should be attractive for the purchaser (Mortensen, 2012). The expectations could be linked to the initiation of an inter-organisational relationship. When a supplier has positive expectations towards a purchasing company, then the chance that an inter-organisational relationship will be initiated in the future will increase. The expectations are positively correlated with the attractiveness of the other party (Schiele et al., 2012). In the research field there are multiple opinions about the attractiveness of businesses in relation to other businesses. According to the Social Exchange Theory, initial attractiveness is based on beliefs and expectations. According to Blau (1964), an individual is attracted by another individual if he expects an association with this other individual to be a rewarding experience. This statement of Blau (1964) has been supported by Wilkinson et al. (2005) who found that a relationship will only be initiated and developed if actors on both the supplier's and buyer's side perceive the attractiveness of this relationship. This implies that a supplying party has a positive expectation towards the relationship with the buying party and vice versa.

Schiele et al. (2012) stated the following about the attractiveness of a particular party: "A customer is perceived as attractive by a supplier if the supplier in question has a positive expectation towards the relationship with this customer. The conditions for this perception of the supplier include an awareness of the existence of the customer and knowledge of the customer's needs" (Schiele et al., 2012: 1180). According to Golfetto & Gibbert (2006), this attractiveness and expectation phenomenon can have negative effects on smaller firms. The smaller purchasing companies can experience difficulties signalling their needs to the current market, because they are not as essential to the suppliers as larger purchasing companies. Mortensen (2012) found that the attractiveness of a customer is based on expectations to start with and is essential to develop an exchange relationship. According to Mortensen (2012), customer attractiveness and supplier satisfaction are two distinct constructs that are linked to each other, because the one cannot exist without the other. Schiele et al. (2012) described this link between customer attractiveness and supplier satisfaction schematically in the cycle of

preferred customership. Multiple researchers have stated that customer attractiveness is important for the initiation of inter-organisational relationships.

Relationship continuation and supplier satisfaction depend on whether or not the outcome of the relationship meets or exceeds the Comparison Level

The second phase of an inter-organisational relationship is 'relationship continuation'. The 'Comparison Level' determines whether or not the supplier experiences satisfaction from the inter-organisational relationship with a particular purchasing company (Schiele et al., 2012). The supplier can compare the relationship outcomes with its pre-determined standards and when the relationship outcomes match or exceed these standards, then the chance that supplier satisfaction is accomplished will increase. When the supplier's standards are not matched, then the chance of inter-organisational relationship discontinuation will increase, because of the fact that there could be dissatisfaction on the supplier's side (Schiele et al., 2012).

Although supplier satisfaction is an important concept in inter-organisational relationships between purchasers and suppliers, it is a difficult concept to measure. Maunu (2003) developed a tool to measure supplier satisfaction and Essig & Amann (2009) developed a supplier satisfaction index. Ghijsen et al. (2010) developed various techniques that buyers can use to influence supplier satisfaction. However, according to Schiele et al. (2012), the measurable models and techniques described earlier are not linked to a clear theoretical foundation and stated that as a result of this, the supplier satisfaction was seen as an isolated construct that did not relate to its potential antecedents of attractiveness and its potential consequence 'preferred customer status'. That is the reason that Schiele et al. (2012) was critical about the work of Maunu (2003), Essig & Amann (2009), and Ghijsen et al. (2010). However, Vos et al. (2016) constructed a model with a theoretical foundation in which the dependent variable 'supplier satisfaction' was linked to multiple independent variables. Vos et al. (2016) found that purchasing companies' growth opportunity, innovation potential, operative excellence, reliability, relational behaviour, and profitability have a significant positive effect on supplier satisfaction in a B2B context. Moreover, Vos et al. (2016) succeeded in quantifying the effects of these antecedents on supplier satisfaction.

Schiele et al. (2012) gave the following statement in its study: "Supplier satisfaction is a condition that is achieved if the quality of outcomes from a buyer-supplier relationship meets or exceeds the supplier's expectations" (Schiele et al., 2012: 1181). However, according to Wilson & Mummalaneni (1986), supplier satisfaction is not a dichotomous construct. Although there is a minimum amount of supplier satisfaction necessary to continue the

relationship, the supplier satisfaction can rise gradually during the relationship. Wilson & Mummаланeni (1986) stated the following about the effects of relationship outcomes on the continuation of the relationship: “The assessment of outcomes is essential, since it helps parties in making decisions regarding upgrading or downgrading their relationships” (Wilson & Mummаланeni, 1986: 51).

So, in the literature there is an overall agreement among the researchers that supplier satisfaction is necessary to continue the relationship. Studies have been conducted that have studied the factors that affect supplier satisfaction. Because of the fact that supplier satisfaction is important for a purchasing company, Vos (2017) did a study in which factors as product type, dependencies, and power influencing were linked to the achievement of supplier satisfaction and preferred customer status. All these factors were studied in the B2B context since these aspects were linked to the inter-organisational relationship between purchasing companies and supplying companies. The supplier satisfaction can also be affected by the degree of dependence between the purchasing company and supplying company. The study of Caniëls et al. (2018) indicates that mutual dependence is positively related to supplier satisfaction, but surprisingly, asymmetric dependence can be related to higher levels of supplier satisfaction. Vos et al. (2016) found that next to growth opportunities and reliability on the purchasing company, profitability of the relationship has a major impact on supplier satisfaction. Vos et al. (2016) did this study, because purchasing companies have to increasingly compete for suppliers, which means that supplier satisfaction is an important aspect in the B2B industry to continue and optimize an inter-organisational relationship.

This achievement of supplier satisfaction is essential for the achievement of preferred customer status by a purchasing company. Vos et al. (2016) described how supplier satisfaction was linked to its antecedents, but also with its consequence (preferred customer status). Vos et al. (2016) found that supplier satisfaction has a significant positive effect on preferred customer status, but that the length of an inter-organisational relationship has an insignificant positive effect on preferred customer status. Going further on this, Vos et al. (2016) found that preferred customer status has a significant positive effect on preferential treatment of the purchasing company by the supplying company. This positive relationship between supplier satisfaction and preferred customer status is in line with the findings of Schiele et al. (2012) who found that supplier satisfaction, but also customer attractiveness are essential for the achievement of preferred customer status. Schiele et al. (2012) stated the following about the relation between these constructs: “Thus, customer attractiveness and supplier satisfaction are the necessary conditions for achieving preferred customer status; a

benevolent strategic prioritization by the supplier is the sufficient condition for attaining this status” (Schiele et al., 2012: 1181). In conclusion, multiple researchers agree that supplier satisfaction is an important achievement for purchasing companies in order to continue an inter-organisational relationship, to optimize an inter-organisational relationship, and to achieve preferred customer status.

The achievement of preferred customer status depends on the Comparison Level of alternatives

During the third element ‘Comparison Level of alternatives’ the supplier can compare a particular inter-organisational relationship with other inter-organisational relationships. This ‘Comparison Level of alternatives’ has an influence on whether or not preferred customer status can be achieved by the customer company. The three core elements of the Social Exchange Theory are all active in a model called ‘The cycle of preferred customership’ (Schiele et al., 2012). A schematic overview of this cycle of preferred customership can be seen in figure 2. Going further on the Comparison Level of alternatives, according to Lambe et al. (2001), a business firm has the opportunity to compare the outcomes from the interactions of a certain relationship with the outcomes of other relationships. The supplier can use this information to decide its future steps regarding the inter-organisational relationship with the purchasing company. The ability of the supplier to compare its inter-organisational relationships indicates that supplier satisfaction is important, but not the only factor that determines the customer’s status. Moreover, Lambe et al. (2001) stated that this means that even a dissatisfied supplier can award a customer with the preferred customer status if the inter-organisational relationships with the other customers are worse.

Ellis et al. (2012) confirmed that the preferred customer status can have a positive impact on the degree the purchasing company has access to the supplier’s technology. Moreover, Vos et al. (2016) found that preferred customer status is essential for a purchasing company to receive beneficial treatment from the supplying company. This beneficial treatment from supplying companies to purchasing companies is important for purchasing companies since it results in a competitive advantage. Moreover, Pulles et al. (2016) stated that preferred customer status emphasized the importance of being a preferred customer, because this leads to the reception of better resources from suppliers. Being a preferred customer can lead to a variety of benefits, like getting access to new technologies or receiving scarce materials in times of high demand (Pulles et al., 2016). This is in line with the study of Pulles et al. (2014) who also found that buyers with the preferred customer status receive

better resources from suppliers than standard customers. Because of these benefits, it is important for a purchaser to get informed about which other customers are purchasing their materials from a particular supplier (Schiele et al., 2012).

Schiele et al. (2012) stated the following about the preferred customer status: “A supplier awards a buyer with preferred customer status if this customer is perceived as attractive and if the supplier is currently more satisfied with this customer than with alternative customers. As a consequence of this satisfaction, a supplier reacts by providing privileged resource allocation to this preferred customer” (Schiele et al., 2012: 1181). Schiele et al. (2012) found that customer attractiveness is essential to establish supplier satisfaction, and customer attractiveness and supplier satisfaction are both essential to establish preferred customer status. This importance of attractiveness is also studied by Mortensen (2012) who found that mutual attraction is essential to develop inter-organisational relationships. Hald (2012) has put emphasis on the importance of major events for the construction of perceptions of customer attractiveness and supplier satisfaction. Mortensen (2012) emphasized that if customer attractiveness and supplier satisfaction are so important in inter-organisational relationships and are predominantly influenced by external events, then it is essential that these external events are planned and managed. This way a particular company can take as much responsibility as possible for its own position.

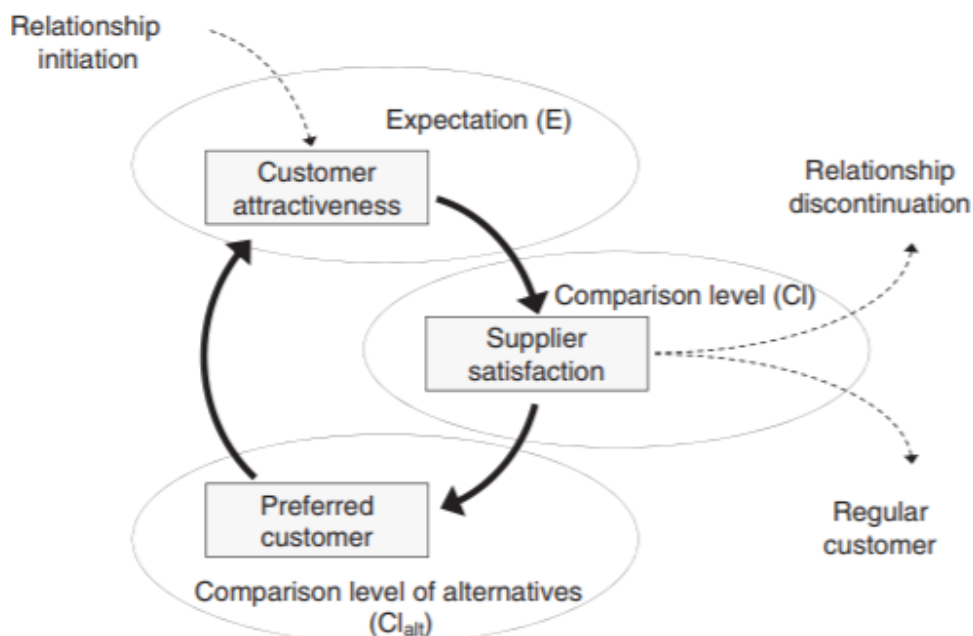


Figure 2: The cycle of preferred customership

Source: Schiele et al. (2012), p. 1180

2.7.2 Preferred customer status can lead to a higher degree of supplier innovativeness and supplier benevolent pricing

In the previous chapter the preferred customer status is described in relation to customer attractiveness and supplier satisfaction. This chapter is dedicated to the potential effects of achieving this preferred customer status. These effects emphasize the need for purchasing companies to take the preferred customer status into account when choosing a certain negotiation behaviour and therefore emphasize the importance of this study. According to Schiele et al. (2011), supplier innovativeness and supplier benevolent pricing are important aspects in an inter-organisational relationship between a purchaser and a supplier. Supplier innovativeness is the willingness of a supplier to participate in innovation projects with a purchasing company. Supplier benevolent pricing is the willingness of the supplier to reduce the prices of materials for a particular purchasing company. Schiele et al. (2011) found that preferred customer status could have a positive effect on the willingness of a supplier to innovate and on the degree of supplier's benevolent pricing. This is in line with Christiansen & Maltz (2002) who found that these increases in suppliers' willingness to innovate and suppliers' benevolent pricing were the reasons that they studied purchasing companies that were trying to become as attractive as possible to their current and potential suppliers. Moreover, Wynstra et al. (2003) confirmed these benefits of preferred customer status and stated that the buyer should try to become interesting to the supplier. Mortensen et al. (2008) supported the claim that buyers should be as attractive as possible, because this can alter the duration and quality of the relationship with the supplier.

Achieving the preferred customer status increases the supplier's motivation to commit itself to the relationship and innovate

The first consequence of preferred customer status described in this study is 'supplier innovativeness'. Steinle & Schiele (2008) stated the following about this: "A firm has preferred customer status with a supplier, if the supplier offers the buyer preferential resource allocation" (Steinle & Schiele, 2008: 11). This statement is in line with the study of Ellegaard et al. (2003) who found that when the customer is more attractive, that the relationship quality will automatically increase, which results in a higher motivation of the supplier to offer more functions to the customer and commit itself fully to the relationship. According to Schiele et al. (2011), all this can lead to an open exchange of knowledge and information between the purchasing company and the supplying company.

This open exchange may lead to the basis for inter-organisational innovative capabilities of both the purchaser and the supplier. According to Christiansen & Maltz (2002), the supplier may become more motivated to improve its manufacturing processes and improve its products. The supplier may have more attention and loyalty to the purchasing company (Christiansen & Maltz, 2002). Because of this, the supplier might put his best employees at the preferred customer's disposal (Schiele et al., 2011). This is the reason that Schiele et al. (2011) constructed the hypothesis that preferred customer status positively influences supplier innovativeness. The construction of this hypothesis is done by Schiele et al. (2011) at the hand of the study conducted by Krause et al. (2001) who operationalized supplier innovativeness into three elements: (1) Product innovation, (2) technological capabilities, and (3) technology sharing. Baxter (2012) stated that the positive effect of preferred customer status on supplier innovativeness is the reason that purchasing companies should evaluate which supplier is attractive in the field of innovation projects so that the purchasing company knows which supplier they need to persuade to grant them the preferred customer status.

The increase in the degree of supplier innovativeness is important for the purchasing companies. According to Carson (2007), purchasing companies are unable to finish all innovation projects alone, which means that they rely on expertise and knowledge of external suppliers. This all emphasizes the importance for a purchasing company to establish the preferred customer status in the inter-organisational relationships with essential innovative suppliers. Moreover, the positive consequence 'increase in supplier innovativeness' of preferred customer status emphasizes the need for purchasing companies to take the preferred customer status into account when behaving in a particular way during the negotiation processes and therefore emphasizes the importance of this study.

Achieving the preferred customer status has a positive effect on supplier benevolent pricing

The second consequence of preferred customer status that is described in this study is 'supplier benevolent pricing'. Milas (2006) found that preferred customer status has a positive effect on cost efficiency, because the supplier is often more willing to offer certain materials for lower prices to preferred customers than to standard customers. Therefore, the preferred customer status has become more important since the prices of materials are important in the supplier selection phase of the purchaser. This has been confirmed by Verma & Pullman (1998) who stated the following: "Although managers say that quality is the most important

attribute for a supplier, they actually choose suppliers based largely on cost” (Verma & Pullman, 1998: 739).

According to Schiele et al. (2011), this positive effect of preferred customer status on cost efficiency is the reason that purchasing companies should try to become preferred customer of a supplier. The purchasing company can compensate its dependence on the supplier by making the supplier dependent on the purchaser itself. This will result in an inter-organisational interdependence, which leads to a possible change in costs and prices. This is the reason that Schiele et al. (2011) found that preferred customer status will lead to more supplier benevolent pricing. This finding is in line with the study of Hall et al. (2000) who stated that prices tend to stay constant over time, but tend to change when the status of the customer changes. These findings are also in line with the study of Walter et al. (2001) in which the importance of mutual interest in an inter-organisational relationship was emphasized. The positive consequence ‘supplier benevolent pricing’ of preferred customer status emphasizes the need for purchasing companies to take the preferred customer status into account when behaving in a particular way during the negotiation processes and therefore emphasizes the importance of this study.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research structure: Studying the effects of B2B negotiation behaviours on the decision-making process while suppliers provide purchasing companies with the preferred customer status

The goal of this research is to study the effects of B2B negotiation behaviours on the decision-making process of suppliers while granting purchasing companies the preferred customer status. The independent variables in this study are the negotiation behaviours (measured with Saorín-Iborra's negotiation behaviour continuum). The dependent variables are the decision-making process items of suppliers while providing the preferred customer status to purchasing companies. The decision-making process is measured with the measurement model used by Ellis et al. (2012), which has three measurement items: (1) Good working relations, (2) working relationships that convey competitive advantage, and (3) recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice. The research structure of this study is schematically illustrated below in figure 3 with the independent variables (the negotiation behaviours) and dependent variables (the decision-making process items).

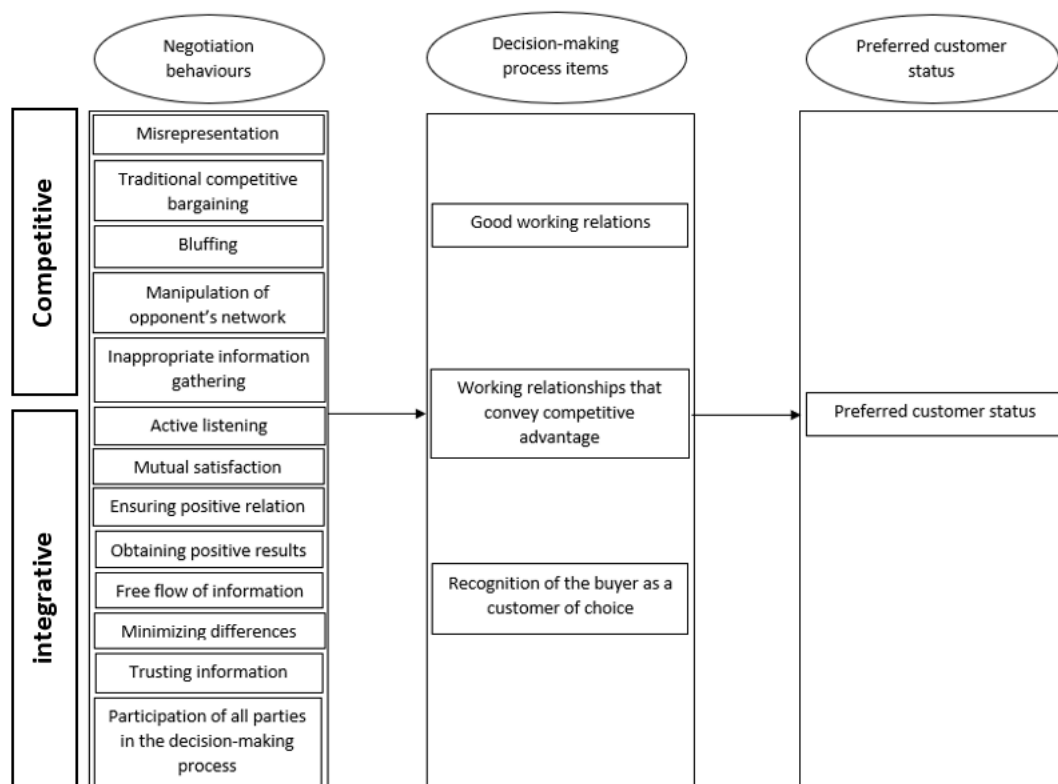


Figure 3: Schematic overview of the research structure with the independent and dependent variables

3.2 Research design: A qualitative empirical study that uses a descriptive method

This qualitative empirical study uses a descriptive method. The reason that a qualitative empirical research has been done is that the goal of this study is to identify the effects of negotiation behaviours on the decision-making process of suppliers. So, since the goal is to identify effects and describe them, this study is about building a theory. According to Ugruhart (2012), qualitative studies are about building theories, whereas quantitative studies are about testing theories. That is the reason that it is chosen to conduct a qualitative study.

In this study the information to find the effects of the negotiation behaviours are obtained by semi-structured interviews with ten suppliers, which have both a preferred customer and a standard customer (customer that is not a preferred customer), and that are active in the industrial manufacturing sector. Also, semi-structured interviews are conducted with ten purchasing companies, which are active in the industrial manufacturing sector. The reason that this specific method is used during this study is that the visions and opinions of supplying companies had to be analysed in order to analyse the effects of negotiation behaviours on their decision-making process, which makes the supplier the unit of analysis. Moreover, at the hand of this method the opinions and visions of buyers could also be analysed. Also, Alvarez & Urla (2002) found that semi-structured interviews seem to provide more useful data when the sample size is relatively small. It was the ambition to form pairs of suppliers and purchasers, which means that the interviewed purchasers and suppliers were doing business with each other. The reason that this was an ambition was because this way it could be studied how the supplying and purchasing company in an inter-organisational relationship showed similarities and differences in their opinions about negotiation behaviours and their effects on the customer's status and on the relationship in general (Paulraj et al., 2008). However, because of privacy reasons and confidentiality, it was only possible to obtain one pair of a supplying and purchasing company that were having an inter-organisational relationship with each other. On top of the overall analysis of the results obtained from the twenty cases, a separate analysis is conducted of the results obtained from this pair.

At the end of each semi-structured interview a structured interview, divided into three sub structured interviews (sub structured interview A, B, and C), was filled in by the suppliers and purchasers. This structured interview measured the effects of the thirteen negotiation behaviours on the three measurable decision-making process items. The effects were measured with a Likert-scale. This was done to make the effects of the negotiation behaviours on the decision-making process of suppliers measurable. Hohenthal (2007) found that

integrating structured interviews with a qualitative study can be useful, because it could lead to a better understanding of the effects of independent variables on dependent variables.

3.3 Data collection: Semi-structured interviews with both supplying companies and purchasing companies

There are various ways to conduct interviews in a qualitative study. The first method is the use of structured interviews in which the questions are fixed and asked to the interviewee. An advantage of structured interviews is that every interviewee is asked the same questions, which makes it easier to encrypt and analyse all the obtained data (Rogers, 2003). On the other hand, semi-structured interviews are a combination of structured questions and spontaneous questions that are a result of given answers. An advantage of this approach is that the interviewer has more flexibility to ask questions that were not constructed before (Miles & Gilbert, 2005). The reason that it is not chosen to conduct structured interviews, but semi-structured interviews is that some flexibility was necessary during the interviews in order to ask for a deeper explanation for interesting answers.

The specific persons from the supplying companies that were interviewed were the negotiators that have an active role in the negotiation process with current and potential customer companies. These semi-structured interviews had a duration of approximately 40-60 minutes. Moreover, it was also declared that the interview could exceed this duration. This could be the case when long answers were given to certain questions. Also, permission was asked to record the semi-structured interview so that the interview could be transcribed and used for the data analysis. Finally, the promise was made that the results of this study will only be used for this study and that the interviewees would remain anonymous. The interview guide for the semi-structured interviews with the suppliers can be found in Appendix C. During these interviews the suppliers have been asked whether the negotiation behaviours have a positive or negative effect on the supplier's willingness to grant the preferred customer status. The similarities and differences between the negotiation behaviours of the suppliers' preferred and standard customers are described by the suppliers, which gives an insight into the effects of B2B negotiation behaviours on the decision-making process.

Moreover, semi-structured interviews were also conducted with the negotiators of purchasing companies. The specific persons were the negotiators who are active in the negotiation process with current and potential suppliers. The reason for this is to get an insight into their negotiation behaviours and how they structure these negotiation behaviours in their

communication with the suppliers. Also these interviews had a duration of approximately 40-60 minutes and the same promises were made with these purchasing companies as with the supplying companies. The interview guide for the semi-structured interviews with the purchasers can be found in Appendix D. During these interviews the purchasers have been asked whether the negotiation behaviours have a positive or negative effect on the supplier's willingness to grant the preferred customer status.

All these interviews are transcribed. The transcriptions of the semi-structured interviews with the suppliers can be found in Appendix E and the transcriptions of the semi-structured interviews with the purchasers can be found in appendix F. After the transcription of these semi-structured interviews, the analysis is conducted and all the stimulating and hindering effects of negotiation behaviours on the decision-making process of suppliers while providing the preferred customer status are described. The reason that the suppliers are the main focus point of the semi-structured interviews is because the suppliers are the ones who grant the preferred customer status.

3.4 Interview content: The correlation between the independent variables (the negotiation behaviours) and the dependent variables (the decision-making process items)

During the semi-structured interviews, all the topics of the literature were discussed. This has been structured by using five themes. The themes during the semi-structured interviews were: Negotiation in general, the preferred customer status, the competitive negotiation behaviours, the integrative negotiation behaviours, and the measurable items of the decision-making process.

The first theme, negotiation in general, was discussed in order to analyse how the interviewees view the role and importance of negotiation in general. This is important since the effects of negotiation behaviours are the main focus points of this study. The second theme, the preferred customer status, was important in order to discuss the meaning, antecedents (customer attractiveness and supplier satisfaction), and benefits (supplier innovativeness and supplier benevolent pricing) of the preferred customer status. The third and fourth themes, the competitive and integrative negotiation behaviours, were important in order to discuss how the interviewees view the negotiation behaviours in terms of their effects on the decision-making process of suppliers, which negotiation behaviours they utilize, and what their opinion is when the other party is using a certain negotiation behaviour. Moreover,

the role of trust during the negotiation process is discussed during the fourth theme. The fifth theme, the decision-making process items, was important in order to discuss the dependent variables of this study. During this theme the opinions of the interviewees on the different measurable decision-making items is discussed and to what extent they use these items themselves when granting the preferred customer status.

3.5 Structured interview content: The measurable correlation between the negotiation behaviours and the decision-making process items

To study the measurable correlations between the independent variables (the negotiation behaviours) and the dependent variables (the measurable decision-making process items), the scales that were described by Ellis et al. (2012) were used during the structured interviews at the end of the semi-structured interviews. At the hand of these scales, the effects of the negotiation behaviours used by purchasers on the decision-making process items of suppliers are measured in the result section. A schematic overview of this process is illustrated below in figure 4. In appendix A the exact operationalization of the independent and dependent variables is described. The interview guides for the interviews with the suppliers and the purchasers can be found in appendices C and D with the structured interviews at the end of each interview guide. Structured interview A measures the correlation between the negotiation behaviours used by purchasers and the first decision-making process item ‘good working relations’. Structured interview B measures the correlation between the negotiation behaviours used by purchasers and the second decision-making process item ‘working relationships that convey competitive advantage’. Structured interview C measures the correlation between the negotiation behaviours used by purchasers and the third decision-making process item ‘recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice’.

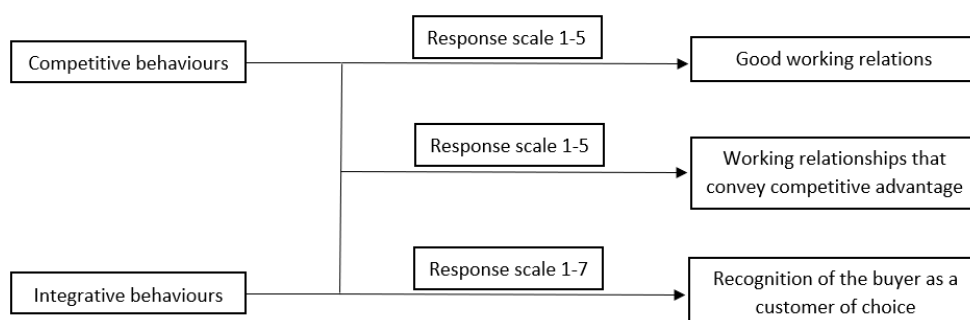


Figure 4: Schematic overview of the relation between the independent negotiation behaviours and the dependent decision-making process items

During the data collection and data analysis, the reliability and validity of the data has been taken into account. Noble & Smith (2015) stated the following about reliability and validity: “In the broadest context these terms are applicable in qualitative and quantitative studies, with validity referring to the integrity and application of the methods undertaken and the precision in which the findings accurately reflect the data, while reliability describes consistency within the employed analytical procedures” (Noble & Smith, 2015: 34).

The reliability of the data from the semi-structured interviews is assured by assuring meaningful parallelism of findings across the various interviews, analysing the answers of the interviews as concrete as possible, and decreasing the dependability by using interviews with ten supplying and ten purchasing companies. These were the techniques that were found by Riege (2003) to increase the degree of reliability of a qualitative study. The validity of the data from the semi-structured interviews is assured by interviewing as many suppliers and purchasers as possible, and by confirmability audit, which means examining the data, findings, and interpretations. These were the techniques that were found by Riege (2003) to increase the degree of validity of a qualitative study.

3.6 Codes for the suppliers, the purchasers, the negotiation behaviours, and the behaviour effects

Appendix B shows the codes for the suppliers, the purchasers, and the behaviour effects. These codes are used for the description of the results, because this made it possible to construct tables for the illustration of the results, which were obtained during the semi-structured interviews and structured interviews. These tables help to present the results in a systematic and clear way (Schünemann et al., 2008).

3.7 Data analysis: The combination of the results obtained from the semi-structured interviews and the scores obtained from the structured interviews

For the data analysis the results of the semi-structured interviews and the scores of the structured interviews have been combined. This combination of qualitative and quantitative data can be useful to create more insight in the correlation between the independent and dependent variables (Hohenthal, 2007). First, the opinions of the supplying companies and the purchasing companies on the effects of the thirteen negotiation behaviours are analysed. It is analysed whether the interviewees think that a certain negotiation behaviour used by the purchaser has a positive or negative effect on the supplier’s willingness to grant the preferred

customer status. These results have been summarized in tables for both the supplying companies and the purchasing companies.

After this, the scores from the structured interviews have been analysed. The quantitative effects of the negotiation behaviours have been summarized in tables for all three measurable decision-making process items: (1) Good working relations, (2) working relationships that convey competitive advantage, and (3) recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice. When a company stated in the semi-structured interview that a certain negotiation behaviour has a positive effect on the decision-making process of suppliers, then the given scores for this behaviour given by this company on the Likert-scale of the structured interview will be measured as positive for all three decision-making process items. When a company stated in the semi-structured interview that a certain negotiation behaviour has a negative effect on the decision-making process of suppliers, then the given scores for this behaviour given by this company on the Likert-scale of the structured interview will be measured as negative for all three decision-making process items.

After this, the tables with all the scores from the structured interviews are used to draw the averages of each negotiation behaviour, so the measurable effect of each negotiation behaviour could be analysed. This is done separately for the supplying companies and purchasing companies, because this way the differences in average scores between supplying companies and purchasing companies could be analysed. Since each decision-making process item has its own sub structured interview (sub structured interview A, B, and C) (see appendices C and D), this analysis is done separately for each decision-making process item. Moreover, this approach of separating the decision-making process items is also done, because the Likert-scales of the three sub structured interviews are not the same. The sub structured interviews for the decision-making process items ‘good working relations’ and ‘working relationships that convey competitive advantage’ both have a 5-point Likert scale, which consists of the following points: 1 = to a very little or no extent, 2 = to a little extent, 3 = to some extent, 4 = to a great extent, and 5 = to a very great extent. However, the sub structured interview for the decision-making process item ‘recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice’ has a 7-point Likert-scale, which consists of the following points: 1 = not at all, 2 = very little, 3 = somewhat, 4 = moderate, 5 = considerable, 6 = great, and 7 = very great. The reason that these scales are used is that Ellis et al. (2012) used these specific scales when operationalizing the decision-making process of suppliers when granting the preferred customer status into the three measurable decision-making process items.

After all the scores for each company were illustrated in the tables, the average score per negotiation behaviour per decision-making process item was calculated and illustrated in the tables. This was done so that the scores of each negotiation behaviour could be analysed and discussed. When this was finished, interesting arguments were quoted from the suppliers and purchasers who gave the most positive/negative possible score for a behaviour, which has the most positive/negative effect on a certain decision-making process item.

On top of the overall data analysis of the results obtained from the ten supplying companies and the ten purchasing companies, a separate analysis was done for the results obtained from the supplier and the purchaser who form a pair and have an inter-organisational relationship with each other. This pair consisted of supplier 3 and purchaser 8. This means that on top of the overall data analysis of the results of the ten suppliers and ten purchasers, a separate analysis is done for supplier 3 and purchaser 8, because this supplier and purchaser have an inter-organizational relationship with each other. This was done to see what the similarities and differences are between the opinions and scores of the supplier and purchaser who are in an inter-organisational relationship with each other.

4. Results and data analysis

In this section the results of the semi-structured interviews and structured interviews are described. A distinction has been made between the results of the semi-structured interviews and the structured interviews that were conducted with the supplying companies and the results of the semi-structured interviews and structured interviews that were conducted with the purchasing companies. For this result section the codes of appendix B have been used for the supplying companies, the purchasing companies, and the behaviour effects.

4.1 Results of the interviews with the supplying companies

The relevant results of these interviews were how the suppliers assessed the thirteen negotiation behaviours in terms of their effects on the supplier's decision-making process to grant the preferred customer status. Each supplier gave its own arguments why the use of a certain negotiation behaviour has a positive or negative effect on the chance of receiving the preferred customer status. A summarization of the results of the semi-structured interviews with the supplying companies can be found below in table 1. In this table the opinions of the suppliers are given on whether a negotiation behaviour has a positive or negative effect on the supplier's decision-making process to grant the preferred customer status.

	S-1	S-2	S-3	S-4	S-5	S-6	S-7	S-8	S-9	S-10
Misrepresentation	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Traditional competitive bargaining	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Bluffing	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Manipulation of opponent's network	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Inappropriate information gathering	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs (active listening)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Seeking mutual satisfaction	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P

Ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Cooperating to obtain positive results	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Ensuring a free flow of information	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Minimizing differences among the parties	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Trusting the position and information of other negotiators	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process	N	P	P	P	N	N	P	P	P	P

Table 1: Results of the opinions of the supplying companies on the effects of the negotiation behaviours

The results of these interviews with the suppliers illustrate that all the competitive behaviours have a negative effect on the willingness of suppliers to grant the preferred customer status. These competitive behaviours are: Misrepresentation, traditional competitive bargaining, bluffing, manipulation of opponent's network, and inappropriate information gathering. When looking at the integrative behaviours, then there is an overall agreement among all the suppliers that 7 of 8 negotiation behaviours have a positive effect on the willingness of suppliers to grant the preferred customer status. These integrative behaviours are: Ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs (active listening), seeking mutual satisfaction, ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship, cooperating to obtain positive results, ensuring a free flow of information, minimizing differences among the parties, and trusting the position and information of other negotiators.

There was some disagreement among the suppliers on the effect of the behaviour 'allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process'. Three suppliers (supplier 1, supplier 5, and supplier 6) stated that this customer's behaviour has a negative effect on its status. An argument that was used was that the supplier was forced to take more

interests and needs into account. For example, during the interview supplier 1 stated the following about this behaviour when used by the purchaser:

“Hmm, I do not think that we would react on it very positively since we have to come to an agreement with multiple people. So, that is why I think that it is more difficult to come to an agreement with multiple parties than with one party.”

All the other suppliers stated that this customer’s behaviour has a positive effect on its status. An argument that was used was that the supplier liked how the purchaser ensured that all parties were satisfied with the overall agreement, which could lead to a better long-term relationship with less negative surprises. For example, during the interview supplier 3 stated the following about this behaviour when used by the purchaser:

Yes, positively because this company shows me that all the opinions on the table matter and that this company wants to make sure that the people working with the product are also having the right to give their opinion. I like purchasers that treat everyone on the table equally, especially since the man in customer’s technical department often agrees with my arguments. I speak the same language as the technical department.

4.1.1 Scores of the structured interviews filled in by the supplying companies

In the tables below it is illustrated what the suppliers’ given scores are of the effects of the negotiation behaviours on the three measurable decision-making process items of suppliers.

Good working relations											
	S-1	S-2	S-3	S-4	S-5	S-6	S-7	S-8	S-9	S-10	Average
Misrepresentation	-5	-5	-5	-3	-5	-5	-1	-5	-3	-5	-4.2
Traditional competitive bargaining	-4	-3	-5	-2	-3	-5	-3	-3	-3	-5	-3.6
Bluffing	-1	-5	-5	-2	-2	-5	-1	-3	-3	-5	-3.2
Manipulation of opponent’s network	-5	-5	-4	-5	-4	-5	-1	-3	-3	-5	-4.0
Inappropriate information gathering	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-4	-5	-5	-4.9

Ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs (active listening)	4	4	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4.5
Seeking mutual satisfaction	4	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4.6
Ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship	4	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	3	5	4.5
Cooperating to obtain positive results	4	5	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	5	4.5
Ensuring a free flow of information	3	4	3	2	4	3	4	4	4	5	3.6
Minimizing differences among the parties	2	5	4	3	4	5	5	5	3	5	4.1
Trusting the position and information of other negotiators	5	3	4	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	4.5
Allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process	-4	1	5	3	-3	-1	4	4	4	3	1.6

Table 2: The suppliers' given scores of the effects of the negotiation behaviours on the decision-making process item 'good working relations' with the response scale: 1 = to a very little or no extent, 2 = to a little extent, 3 = to some extent, 4 = to a great extent, and 5 = to a very great extent

Table 2 shows that, according to the suppliers, the purchaser's negotiation behaviour 'seeking mutual satisfaction' has the most positive effect (4.6) on the supplier's decision-making process item 'good working relations'. The negotiation behaviour that has the least positive effect (1.6) on this item is 'allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process'. This table shows that, according to the suppliers, the negotiation behaviour 'inappropriate information gathering' has the most negative effect (-4.9) on the supplier's decision-making process item 'good working relations'. The negotiation behaviour that has the least negative effect (-3.2) on this item is 'bluffing'.

Working relationships that convey competitive advantage											
	S-1	S-2	S-3	S-4	S-5	S-6	S-7	S-8	S-9	S-10	Average
Misrepresentation	-5	-5	-5	-5	-3	-5	-1	-4	-2	-5	-4.0
Traditional competitive bargaining	-3	-1	-5	-5	-3	-1	-1	-4	-3	-5	-3.1
Bluffing	-1	-1	-4	-5	-3	-5	-1	-3	-3	-1	-2.7
Manipulation of opponent's network	-5	-1	-4	-5	-3	-5	-1	-4	-3	-1	-3.2
Inappropriate information gathering	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-4	-5	-5	-4.9
Ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs (active listening)	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	4.6
Seeking mutual satisfaction	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	4.6
Ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	4.7
Cooperating to obtain positive results	4	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	4.6
Ensuring a free flow of information	3	3	3	1	5	5	5	5	3	5	3.8
Minimizing differences among the parties	2	4	3	2	5	5	4	5	4	5	3.9
Trusting the position and information of other negotiators	5	4	4	2	4	5	5	4	3	5	4.1
Allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process	-4	3	4	2	-3	-5	3	3	3	1	0.7

Table 3: The suppliers' given scores of the effects of the negotiation behaviours on the decision-making process item

'working relationships that convey competitive advantage' with the response scale: 1 = to a very little or no extent, 2 = to a little extent, 3 = to some extent, 4 = to a great extent, and 5 = to a very great extent

Table 3 shows that, according to the suppliers, the purchaser's negotiation behaviour 'ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship' has the most positive effect (4.7) on the supplier's decision-making process item 'working relationships that convey competitive advantage'. The negotiation behaviour that has the least positive effect (0.7) on this item is 'allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process'. This table shows that, according to the suppliers, the negotiation behaviour 'inappropriate information gathering' has the most negative effect (-4.9) on the supplier's decision-making process item 'working relationships that convey competitive advantage'. The negotiation behaviour that has the least negative effect (-2.7) on this item is 'bluffing'.

Recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice											
	S-1	S-2	S-3	S-4	S-5	S-6	S-7	S-8	S-9	S-10	Average
Misrepresentation	-7	-7	-7	-7	-5	-6	-1	-5	-4	-7	-5.6
Traditional competitive bargaining	-6	-7	-6	-7	-4	-7	-2	-6	-4	-6	-5.5
Bluffing	-3	-7	-6	-7	-4	-7	-1	-5	-5	-4	-4.9
Manipulation of opponent's network	-7	-7	-6	-7	-4	-6	-2	-6	-4	-4	-5.3
Inappropriate information gathering	-7	-7	-7	-7	-7	-7	-7	-6	-7	-7	-6.9
Ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs (active listening)	6	7	6	7	5	6	7	7	5	7	6.3
Seeking mutual satisfaction	7	7	6	7	7	6	7	7	6	7	6.7
Ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship	5	7	6	7	7	4	5	7	5	7	6.0
Cooperating to obtain positive results	5	7	7	6	6	5	6	7	5	7	6.1

Ensuring a free flow of information	5	4	5	6	6	4	7	7	4	5	5.3
Minimizing differences among the parties	6	5	7	6	6	4	6	7	5	5	5.7
Trusting the position and information of other negotiators	7	7	6	6	6	5	7	6	5	7	6.2
Allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process	-5	5	5	5	-4	-5	7	7	4	5	2.4

Table 4: The suppliers' given scores of the effects of the negotiation behaviours on the decision-making process item 'recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice' with the response scale: 1 = not at all, 2 = very little, 3 = somewhat, 4 = moderate, 5 = considerable, 6 = great, and 7 = very great

Table 4 shows that, according to the suppliers, the purchaser's negotiation behaviour 'seeking mutual satisfaction' has the most positive effect (6.7) on the supplier's decision-making process item 'recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice'. The negotiation behaviour that has the least positive effect (2.4) on this item is 'allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process'. This table shows that, according to the suppliers, the negotiation behaviour 'inappropriate information gathering' has the most negative effect (-6.9) on the supplier's decision-making process item 'recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice'. The negotiation behaviour that has the least negative effect (-4.9) on this item is 'bluffing'.

4.1.2 Analysis of the arguments for the scores given by the suppliers

'Seeking mutual satisfaction' is the behaviour that has the largest positive effect on two of the three decision-making process items, namely 'good working relations' and 'recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice'. It is stated during the interviews that customers get better prices after they realized some benefits for the supplier. Supplier 2, who gave this behaviour the most positive possible score on both decision-making process items, stated the following about this during the interview:

"Yes, of course. The reason is pretty simple. The reason that a certain customers gets better prices or better quality, is that this customer led to some benefits for us. This is only possible when this customer is trying to satisfy both itself and us, so when the customer is try to seek

mutual satisfaction. So, in conclusion, when the customer seeks mutual satisfaction, it will affect our willingness to satisfy this customer by granting this customer a good status and by selling our products for a lower price.”

‘Ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship’ is the behaviour that has the largest positive effect on the decision-making process item ‘working relationships that convey competitive advantage’. It is stated during the interviews with the suppliers that an increase in the relationship productivity increases the chance of a long-term relationship. Supplier 4, who gave this behaviour the most positive possible score on this item, stated the following:

“Yes, positively, because when the customer tries to optimize the productivity of the relationship, then the chance that mutual satisfaction will occur will increase. When mutual satisfaction occurs, the relationship will most likely become long-term. The customers that are in a long-term relationship with us, have more chance of becoming preferred customer.”

‘Inappropriate information gathering’ is the behaviour that has the largest negative effect on all three decision-making process items. It is stated during the interviews that when the supplier would find out that this behaviour has been applied by the purchaser that there is a chance that the relationship would end. Supplier 3, who gave this behaviour the most negative possible score on all three decision-making process items, stated the following about this:

“Yes, negatively, when there is hard evidence that this customer has paid someone for information, then the relationship will be damaged. Maybe it can even lead to the end of the relationship.”

An argument that was also stated by suppliers is that the appliance of this behaviour is against the law. Supplier 4, who also gave this behaviour the most negative possible score on all three decision-making process items, stated the following about this behaviour:

“Yes, of course. When the opponent tries to pay my associates or contacts for information about our company to use this information against me, then we certainly would not conduct business with this opponent. First of all, it is illegal behaviour. Secondly, the opponent shows that it is not trying to create win-win situations or that it is willing to work with me, the

opponent shows me that it is willing to work against me even when this means that it has to break the law.”

4.2 Results of the interviews with the purchasing companies

The relevant results of these interviews were how the purchasers assessed the thirteen negotiation behaviours in terms of their effects on the supplier's decision-making process to grant the preferred customer status. During the interviews each purchaser gave its own arguments why the use of a certain negotiation behaviour has a positive or negative effect on the chance of receiving the preferred customer status. In table 5 the opinions of the purchasers are summarized on whether a negotiation behaviour has a positive or negative effect on the supplier's decision-making process to grant the preferred customer status.

	P-1	P-2	P-3	P-4	P-5	P-6	P-7	P-8	P-9	P-10
Misrepresentation	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Traditional competitive bargaining	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Bluffing	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Manipulation of opponent's network	P	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Inappropriate information gathering	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs (active listening)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Seeking mutual satisfaction	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Cooperating to obtain positive results	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P

Ensuring a free flow of information	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Minimizing differences among the parties	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Trusting the position and information of other negotiators	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P

Table 5: Results of the opinions of the purchasing companies on the effects of the negotiation behaviours

According to 9 of 10 purchasers, the competitive negotiation behaviours all have a negative effect on the willingness of suppliers to grant the preferred customer status. However, there is one purchaser (purchaser 1) who stated that the behaviour ‘manipulation of opponent’s network’ has a positive effect. Purchaser 1 stated the following as an argument:

“Well, it can be both ways. I think it could be positively affecting the preferred customer status. First of all, when you know the boss of a supplying company, then there is a good chance that your own status will increase.”

All the other purchasers did not have this opinion, because they stated that the use of this behaviour by purchasers damage the relationship. Some purchasers call this behaviour ‘bypassing the other party’. For instance, purchaser 8 stated the following about this:

“Yes, I think that if I step to a higher person that I would damage the relationship. I think that the supplier’s salesman has the responsibility to go and talk with the higher people. If I do it to simply put pressure on the supplier’s negotiator, then I would really damage the relationship.”

All purchasers assessed that 7 of 8 integrative negotiation behaviours have a positive effect on the supplier’s willingness to grant the preferred customer status. There was some disagreement among the purchasers on the effect of the behaviour ‘allowing participation of

all parties in the decision-making process'. Two purchasers (purchaser 1 and purchaser 2) stated that this customer's behaviour has a negative effect on its status. The argument that was used by these purchasers during the interviews was that the supplier would feel that the purchaser gives a higher priority to other opinions than to the supplier's opinion. For example, during the interview purchaser 1 stated the following about this:

“Yes, I think it will affect their willingness negatively. The reason is that the supplier could have the feeling that the customer does take other opinions more into account than the supplier's opinion.”

All the other purchasers stated that this customer's behaviour has a positive effect on its status. An argument that was used was that the supplier would like it if more specialistic groups are present, because the purchaser generally does not possess the necessary specialistic technical knowledge. During the interview purchaser 9 stated the following about this:

“When you talk about simple products like clothes, then the opinions of the specialized roles are not relevant. But when the processes are under discussion, then it is highly relevant that the engineer has a role in the negotiation process. I think that suppliers like it when the specialized roles are participating in the negotiation process, because they have more specialized knowledge, which I do not possess. So, I think that suppliers like customers more that allow specialists to join the negotiation.”

4.2.1 Scores of the structured interviews filled in by the purchasing companies

In the tables below it is illustrated what the purchasers' given scores are of the effects of the negotiation behaviours on the three measurable decision-making process items of suppliers.

Good working relations											
	P-1	P-2	P-3	P-4	P-5	P-6	P-7	P-8	P-9	P-10	Average
Misrepresentation	-5	-4	-4	-3	-1	-5	-5	-4	-3	-5	-3.9
Traditional competitive bargaining	-4	-2	-2	-3	-3	-3	-4	-2	-2	-3	-2.8
Bluffing	-4	-3	-3	-3	-2	-2	-3	-3	-2	-4	-2.9

Manipulation of opponent's network	4	-4	-1	-3	-3	-5	-4	-3	-3	-3	-2.5
Inappropriate information gathering	-4	-3	-5	-5	-4	-5	-3	-5	-5	-4	-4.3
Ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs (active listening)	3	4	5	3	5	5	4	5	4	5	4.3
Seeking mutual satisfaction	4	3	5	3	4	5	3	4	5	4	4.0
Ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship	4	3	3	3	5	5	3	4	4	4	3.8
Cooperating to obtain positive results	4	3	5	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	4.2
Ensuring a free flow of information	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	3.4
Minimizing differences among the parties	3	4	5	2	4	3	4	3	4	4	3.6
Trusting the position and information of other negotiators	4	5	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	5	3.9
Allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process	-4	-3	5	3	3	2	2	4	4	4	2.0

Table 6: The purchasers' given scores of the effects of the negotiation behaviours on the decision-making process item 'good working relations' with the response scale: 1 = to a very little or no extent, 2 = to a little extent, 3 = to some extent, 4 = to a great extent, and 5 = to a very great extent

Table 6 shows that, according to the purchasers, the purchaser's negotiation behaviour 'ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs' has the most positive effect (4.3) on the supplier's decision-making process item 'good working relations'. The negotiation behaviour that has the least positive effect (2.0) on this item is 'allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process'. This table shows that, according to the purchasers, the negotiation

behaviour ‘inappropriate information gathering’ has the most negative effect (-4.3) on the supplier’s decision-making process item ‘good working relations’. The negotiation behaviour that has the least negative effect (-2.5) on this item is ‘manipulation of opponent’s network’.

Working relationships that convey competitive advantage											
	P-1	P-2	P-3	P-4	P-5	P-6	P-7	P-8	P-9	P-10	Average
Misrepresentation	-2	-4	-3	-3	-4	-5	-1	-2	-5	-4	-3.3
Traditional competitive bargaining	-2	-4	-1	-3	-2	-3	-3	-2	-2	-3	-2.5
Bluffing	-2	-4	-4	-2	-1	-2	-3	-3	-2	-3	-2.6
Manipulation of opponent’s network	2	-3	-1	-2	-2	-5	-2	-2	-3	-2	-2.0
Inappropriate information gathering	-2	-4	-5	-5	-5	-5	-3	-5	-5	-4	-4.3
Ensuring understanding of the counterpart’s needs (active listening)	3	4	4	3	5	5	2	5	4	5	4.0
Seeking mutual satisfaction	3	3	3	3	3	5	3	3	5	4	3.5
Ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship	2	4	3	4	4	5	4	5	4	4	3.9
Cooperating to obtain positive results	2	4	5	4	5	5	5	4	3	4	4.1
Ensuring a free flow of information	3	4	5	4	5	3	4	3	5	4	4.0
Minimizing differences among the parties	2	4	5	3	4	3	2	2	4	4	3.3
Trusting the position and information of other negotiators	3	5	3	4	3	4	3	3	4	4	3.6
Allowing participation of	-3	-2	3	3	1	2	3	3	4	4	1.8

all parties in the decision-making process											
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Table 7: The purchasers' given scores of the effects of the negotiation behaviours on the decision-making process item

'working relationships that convey competitive advantage' with the response scale: 1 = to a very little or no extent, 2 = to a little extent, 3 = to some extent, 4 = to a great extent, and 5 = to a very great extent

Table 7 shows that, according to the purchasers, the purchaser's negotiation behaviour 'cooperating to obtain positive results' has the most positive effect (4.1) on the supplier's decision-making process item 'working relationships that convey competitive advantage'. The negotiation behaviour that has the least positive effect (1.8) on this item is 'allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process'. This table shows that, according to the purchasers, the negotiation behaviour 'inappropriate information gathering' has the most negative effect (-4.3) on the supplier's decision-making process item 'working relationships that convey competitive advantage'. The negotiation behaviour that has the least negative effect (-2.0) on this item is 'manipulation of opponent's network'.

Recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice											
	P-1	P-2	P-3	P-4	P-5	P-6	P-7	P-8	P-9	P-10	Average
Misrepresentation	-6	-6	-5	-4	-2	-7	-7	-5	-7	-5	-5.4
Traditional competitive bargaining	-5	-6	-1	-4	-2	-5	-4	-4	-5	-4	-4.0
Bluffing	-4	-4	-6	-4	-2	-5	-5	-4	-5	-5	-4.4
Manipulation of opponent's network	5	-5	-1	-4	-4	-6	-5	-5	-5	-4	-3.4
Inappropriate information gathering	-6	-4	-7	-7	-6	-7	-6	-7	-6	-7	-6.3
Ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs (active listening)	4	6	5	3	6	5	5	3	5	6	4.8
Seeking mutual satisfaction	5	5	7	4	6	5	7	5	6	6	5.6
Ensuring a positive and productive	4	4	5	4	5	5	5	7	6	6	5.1

personal relationship											
Cooperating to obtain positive results	5	4	5	4	6	7	6	5	6	6	5.4
Ensuring a free flow of information	5	4	5	4	5	3	6	6	5	5	4.8
Minimizing differences among the parties	6	6	7	4	5	4	4	5	5	5	5.1
Trusting the position and information of other negotiators	5	7	7	4	5	6	5	6	6	6	5.7
Allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process	-6	-3	7	4	3	2	4	3	6	5	2.5

Table 8: The purchasers' given scores of the effects of the negotiation behaviours on the decision-making process item 'recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice' with the response scale: 1 = not at all, 2 = very little, 3 = somewhat, 4 = moderate, 5 = considerable, 6 = great, and 7 = very great

Table 8 shows that, according to the purchasers, the purchaser's negotiation behaviour 'trusting the position and information of other negotiators' has the most positive effect (5.7) on the supplier's decision-making process item 'recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice'. The negotiation behaviour that has the least positive effect (2.5) on this item is 'allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process'. This table shows that, according to the purchasers, the negotiation behaviour 'inappropriate information gathering' has the most negative effect (-6.3) on the supplier's decision-making process item 'recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice'. The negotiation behaviour that has the least negative effect (-3.4) on this item is 'manipulation of opponent's network'.

4.2.2 Analysis of the arguments for the scores given by the purchasers

'Ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs' is the behaviour that has the largest positive effect on the decision-making process item 'good working relations'. An argument that was given during the interviews was that when the customer company ensures understanding of the supplier's needs, it is easier to create win-win situations. Purchaser 3, who gave this behaviour the most positive possible score on this item, stated the following

when being asked during the interview if ‘ensuring understanding of the counterpart’s needs’ has an effect on the supplier’s willingness to grant the preferred customer status:

“Yes, of course, because this shows that we care more than just about ourselves. When we listen to the supplier’s needs, it is way easier to create win-win situations. Moreover, when you listen closely to the supplier, it is easier for me to get a better deal and satisfy the suppliers. So, I think this has a positive effect.”

‘Cooperating to obtain positive results’ is the behaviour that has the largest positive effect on the decision-making process item ‘working relationships that convey competitive advantage’. An argument that was given during the interviews was that obtaining positive results by working together with the supplier leads to win-win situations for both the purchasing company and the supplying company. Purchaser 5, who gave this behaviour the most positive possible score on this item, stated the following about this during the interview:

“Yes, it is, because we optimize the supplier and the supplier optimizes us. This makes the relationship better. When we optimize the results from our relationship with the supplier, this will lead to faster processes for us, which on its turn may lead to higher purchasing volumes over the year, which leads to more revenue for the supplier.”

‘Trusting the position and information of other negotiators’ is the behaviour that has the largest positive effect on the decision-making process item ‘recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice’. An argument that was given during the interviews was that trust in the supplier ensures a good feeling from the side of the supplier, which on its turn affects the customer’s status. Purchaser 2, who gave this behaviour the most positive possible score on this item, stated the following about this during the interview:

“Yes, I think it does. Positively. When we show that we trust the information from the supplier, then the supplier has a better feeling with us. When we do not verify everything or put everything on paper, then the supplier feels that we truly trust us. We do not act very suspiciously, so the supplier feels that there is an open relationship with us. If we do not trust the supplier and put everything piece of information on paper with an autograph, then the supplier will think that we do not trust him. Then the chance of becoming preferred customer will be very low.”

'Inappropriate information gathering' is the behaviour that has the largest negative effect on all three decision-making process items. An argument that was stated during the interviews was that the relationship could be damaged and could even be terminated by the supplier. Purchaser 8, who gave this behaviour the most negative possible score on all three decision-making process items, stated the following about this during the interview:

“Yes, I think that the relationship will be heavily damaged. I do not think that any supplier would like to stay with us or do business with us any longer when they find out that we have paid someone for information. Absolutely a no go.”

4.3 Similarities and differences in answers given by the suppliers and purchasers

When looking at the answers that suppliers and purchasers gave in terms of the positive and negative effects that the negotiations behaviours have on the supplier's willingness to grant the preferred customer status, then some similarities and differences can be seen. 10 of 10 interviewed suppliers have the opinion that the competitive negotiation behaviours: Misrepresentation, traditional competitive bargaining, bluffing, manipulation of opponent's network, and inappropriate information gathering all have a negative effect on the supplier's willingness to grant the preferred customer status. 9 of 10 interviewed purchasers also have this opinion. However, there was one purchaser (purchaser 1) who stated that the negotiation behaviour 'manipulation of opponent's network' has a positive effect on the supplier's decision-making process.

When looking at the integrative negotiation behaviours: Ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs, seeking mutual satisfaction, ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship, cooperating to obtain positive results, ensuring a free flow of information, minimizing differences among the parties, trusting the position and information of other negotiators, and allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process, then 7 of 10 suppliers stated that all these behaviours have a positive effect on the supplier's willingness to grant the preferred customer status. 3 of 10 interviewed suppliers (supplier 1, supplier 5 and supplier 6) stated that the behaviour 'allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process' has a negative effect on the supplier's willingness to grant the preferred customer status.

In case of the purchasers, 8 of 10 purchasers stated that these integrative behaviours have a positive effect, whereas 2 of 10 purchasers (purchaser 1 and purchaser 2) stated that the behaviour ‘allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process’ has a negative effect. An overview of the positive and negative effects stated by the suppliers and purchasers can be seen below in table 9.

	Supplying companies		Purchasing companies	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Misrepresentation	0	10	0	10
Traditional competitive bargaining	0	10	0	10
Bluffing	0	10	0	10
Manipulation of opponent’s network	0	10	1	9
Inappropriate information gathering	0	10	0	10
Ensuring understanding of the counterpart’s needs (active listening)	10	0	10	0
Seeking mutual satisfaction	10	0	10	0
Ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship	10	0	10	0
Cooperating to obtain positive results	10	0	10	0
Ensuring a free flow of information	10	0	10	0
Minimizing differences among the parties	10	0	10	0
Trusting the position and	10	0	10	0

information of other negotiators				
Allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process	7	3	8	2

Table 9: Number of interviewees who stated that the negotiation behaviours have a positive or negative effect on the supplier's willingness to grant the preferred customer status

4.3.1 Similarities and differences in scores given by the suppliers and purchasers on the decision-making process item 'good working relations'

Table 10 illustrates the averages scores of the effects per negotiation behaviour on the decision-making process item 'good working relations' given by the ten interviewed suppliers and the ten interviewed purchasers.

Good working relations		
	Average score suppliers	Average score purchasers
Misrepresentation	-4.2	-3.9
Traditional competitive bargaining	-3.6	-2.8
Bluffing	-3.2	-2.9
Manipulation of opponent's network	-4.0	-2.5
Inappropriate information gathering	-4.9	-4.3
Ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs (active listening)	4.5	4.3
Seeking mutual satisfaction	4.6	4.0
Ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship	4.5	3.8
Cooperating to obtain positive results	4.5	4.2
Ensuring a free flow of information	3.6	3.4
Minimizing differences among the parties	4.1	3.6
Trusting the position and information of other negotiators	4.5	3.9

Allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process	1.6	2.0
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Table 10: Average scores for each behaviour given by suppliers and purchasers of its effect on the decision-making process item 'good working relations'

Table 10 shows that there is a difference of opinion between the suppliers and purchasers in the negotiation behaviour that has the most positive effect on the decision-making process item 'good working relations'. The suppliers rated that the negotiation behaviour 'seeking mutual satisfaction' has the most positive effect (4.6) on this item, whereas the purchasers rated that the negotiation behaviour 'ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs' has the most positive effect (4.3) on this item. Table 10 also shows that both the suppliers and the purchasers gave the least positive score to the negotiation behaviour 'allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process'.

Table 10 shows that, according to both the suppliers and purchasers, the negotiation behaviour 'inappropriate information gathering' has the most negative effect on the decision-making process item 'good working relations'. There is a difference in the negotiation behaviour that has the least negative effect on this item. The suppliers rated that the behaviour 'bluffing' has the least negative effect (-3.2) on this item, whereas the purchasers rated that the behaviour 'manipulation of opponent's network' has the least negative effect (-2.5) on this item.

4.3.2 Similarities and differences in scores given by the suppliers and purchasers on the decision-making process item 'working relationships that convey competitive advantage'

Table 11 illustrates the averages scores of the effects per negotiation behaviour on the decision-making process item 'working relationships that convey competitive advantage' given by the ten interviewed suppliers and the ten interviewed purchasers.

Working relationships that convey competitive advantage		
	Average score suppliers	Average score purchasers
Misrepresentation	-4.0	-3.3
Traditional competitive bargaining	-3.1	-2.5
Bluffing	-2.7	-2.6

Manipulation of opponent's network	-3.2	-2.0
Inappropriate information gathering	-4.9	-4.3
Ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs (active listening)	4.6	4.0
Seeking mutual satisfaction	4.6	3.5
Ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship	4.7	3.9
Cooperating to obtain positive results	4.6	4.1
Ensuring a free flow of information	3.8	4.0
Minimizing differences among the parties	3.9	3.3
Trusting the position and information of other negotiators	4.1	3.6
Allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process	0.7	1.8

Table 11: Average scores for each behaviour given by suppliers and purchasers of its effect on the decision-making process item 'working relationships that convey competitive advantage'

Table 11 shows that there is a difference of opinion between the suppliers and purchasers in the negotiation behaviour that has the most positive effect on the item 'working relationships that convey competitive advantage'. The suppliers rated that the negotiation behaviour 'ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship' has the most positive effect (4.7) on this item, whereas the purchasers rated that the negotiation behaviour 'cooperating to obtain positive results' has the most positive effect (4.1) on this item. Table 11 also shows that both the suppliers and the purchasers gave the least positive score to the negotiation behaviour 'allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process'.

Table 11 shows that, according to both the suppliers and purchasers, the negotiation behaviour 'inappropriate information gathering' has the most negative effect on the decision-making process item 'working relationships that convey competitive advantage'. There is a difference in the negotiation behaviour that has the least negative effect on this item. The suppliers rated that the behaviour 'bluffing' has the least negative effect (-2.7) on this item,

whereas the purchasers rated that the behaviour ‘manipulation of opponent’s network’ has the least negative effect (-2.0) on this item.

4.3.3 Similarities and differences in scores given by the suppliers and purchasers on the decision-making process item ‘recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice’

Table 12 illustrates the averages scores of the effects per negotiation behaviour on the decision-making process item ‘recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice’ given by the ten interviewed suppliers and the ten interviewed purchasers.

Recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice		
	Average score suppliers	Average score purchasers
Misrepresentation	-5.6	-5.4
Traditional competitive bargaining	-5.5	-4.0
Bluffing	-4.9	-4.4
Manipulation of opponent’s network	-5.3	-3.4
Inappropriate information gathering	-6.9	-6.3
Ensuring understanding of the counterpart’s needs (active listening)	6.3	4.8
Seeking mutual satisfaction	6.7	5.6
Ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship	6.0	5.1
Cooperating to obtain positive results	6.1	5.4
Ensuring a free flow of information	5.3	4.8
Minimizing differences among the parties	5.7	5.1
Trusting the position and information of other negotiators	6.2	5.7
Allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process	2.4	2.5

Table 12: Average scores for each behaviour given by suppliers and purchasers of its effect on the decision-making process item ‘recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice’

Table 12 shows that there is a difference of opinion between the suppliers and purchasers in the negotiation behaviour that has the most positive effect on the decision-making process item ‘recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice’. Suppliers rated that the negotiation behaviour ‘seeking mutual satisfaction’ has the most positive effect (6.7) on this item, whereas purchasers rated that the negotiation behaviour ‘trusting the position and information of other negotiators’ has the most positive effect (5.7) on this item. Table 12 shows that both the suppliers and the purchasers gave the least positive score to the negotiation behaviour ‘allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process’.

Table 12 shows that, according to both the suppliers and purchasers, the negotiation behaviour ‘inappropriate information gathering’ has the most negative effect on the decision-making process item ‘recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice’. There is a difference in the negotiation behaviour that has the least negative effect on this item. The suppliers rated that the behaviour ‘bluffing’ has the least negative effect (-4.9) on this item, whereas the purchasers rated that the behaviour ‘manipulation of opponent’s network’ has the least negative effect (-3.4) on this item.

4.4 Similarities and differences in answers given by the supplier and purchaser who form a pair

Supplier 3 and purchaser 8 have an inter-organisational relationship with each other, so their results are described separately. Below in table 13 the answers of supplier 3 and purchaser 8, who form a pair, are shown in terms of the positive and negative effects of the negotiation behaviours on the willingness of suppliers to grant the preferred customer status.

	S-3	P-8
Misrepresentation	N	N
Traditional competitive bargaining	N	N
Bluffing	N	N
Manipulation of opponent’s network	N	N
Inappropriate information gathering	N	N
Ensuring understanding of the counterpart’s needs (active listening)	P	P

Seeking mutual satisfaction	P	P
Ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship	P	P
Cooperating to obtain positive results	P	P
Ensuring a free flow of information	P	P
Minimizing differences among the parties	P	P
Trusting the position and information of other negotiators	P	P
Allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process	P	P

Table 13: Results of the opinions of supplier 3 and purchaser 8 on the effects of the negotiation behaviours

Table 13 shows that supplier 3 and purchaser 8 have the same opinion about the effects of the negotiation behaviours. Both supplier 3 and purchaser 8 have the opinion that ‘misrepresentation’, ‘traditional competitive bargaining’, ‘bluffing’, ‘manipulation of opponent’s network’, and ‘inappropriate information gathering’ have a negative effect on the supplier’s willingness to grant the preferred customer status. Also, both supplier 3 and purchaser 8 have the opinion that ‘ensuring understanding of the counterpart’s needs’, ‘seeking mutual satisfaction’, ‘ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship’, ‘cooperating to obtain positive results’, ‘ensuring a free flow of information’, ‘minimizing differences among the parties’, ‘trusting the position and information of other negotiators’, and ‘allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process’ have a positive effect on the supplier’s willingness to grant the preferred customer status.

4.4.1 Similarities and differences in scores given by the supplier and purchaser, who form a pair, on the three decision-making process items

In table 14 it is illustrated what the given scores are of the effects of the negotiation behaviours on the three measurable decision-making process items of suppliers, according to supplier 3 and purchaser 8.

	Good working relations	Working relationships that convey competitive advantage	Recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice
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	S-3	P-8	S-3	P-8	S-3	P-8
Misrepresentation	-5	-4	-5	-2	-7	-5
Traditional competitive bargaining	-5	-2	-5	-2	-6	-4
Bluffing	-5	-3	-4	-3	-6	-4
Manipulation of opponent's network	-4	-3	-4	-2	-6	-5
Inappropriate information gathering	-5	-5	-5	-5	-7	-7
Ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs (active listening)	5	5	4	5	6	3
Seeking mutual satisfaction	3	4	4	3	6	5
Ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship	4	4	5	5	6	7
Cooperating to obtain positive results	4	4	4	4	7	5
Ensuring a free flow of information	3	3	3	3	5	6
Minimizing differences among the parties	4	3	3	2	7	5
Trusting the position and information of other negotiators	4	3	4	3	6	6
Allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process	5	4	4	3	5	3

Table 14: The given scores of the effects of the negotiation behaviours on the decision-making process items, according to supplier 3 and purchaser 8

Good working relations

Table 14 shows that both supplier 3 and purchaser 8 gave the most positive possible score (5) to the negotiation behaviour ‘ensuring understanding of the counterpart’s needs’. Moreover, both supplier 3 and purchaser 8 gave their least positive score (3) to the behaviour ‘ensuring a free flow of information’.

Table 14 also shows that both supplier 3 and purchaser 8 gave the most negative possible score (-5) to the negotiation behaviour ‘inappropriate information gathering’. What also stands out from this table is that purchaser 8 gave its least negative score (-2) to the behaviour ‘traditional competitive bargaining’, whereas supplier 3 gave this behaviour the most negative possible score (-5).

Working relationships that convey competitive advantage

Table 14 shows that both supplier 3 and purchaser 8 gave the most positive possible score (5) to the negotiation behaviour ‘ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship’. Moreover, both supplier 3 and purchaser 8 gave their least positive score to the behaviour ‘minimizing differences among the parties’. Supplier 3 gave this behaviour a score of 3 and purchaser 8 gave this behaviour a score of 2.

Table 14 also shows that both supplier 3 and purchaser 8 gave the most negative possible score (-5) to the negotiation behaviour ‘inappropriate information gathering’. What also stands out of this table is that purchaser 8 gave its least negative score (-2) to the behaviours ‘misrepresentation’ and ‘traditional competitive bargaining’, whereas supplier 3 gave these behaviours the most negative possible score (-5).

Recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice

Table 14 shows that there is a large difference between the scores of supplier 3 and purchaser 8 on the behaviour ‘ensuring understanding of the counterpart’s needs’. Supplier 3 gave this behaviour a score of 6, whereas purchaser 8 gave this behaviour a score of 3. Another aspect that stands out is that both supplier 3 and purchaser 8 gave their least positive score to the behaviour ‘allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process’. Supplier 3 gave this behaviour a score of 5 and purchaser 8 gave this behaviour a score of 3.

Table 14 also shows that both supplier 3 and purchaser 8 gave the most negative possible score (-7) to the negotiation behaviour ‘inappropriate information gathering’.

5. Discussion: The effects of negotiation behaviours on the achievement of preferred customer status

During this study different negotiation behaviours were obtained from the literature. The thirteen negotiation behaviours that were studied were described previously by Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo (2018) who linked these behaviours to customer satisfaction. In this study they are linked to the decision-making process of suppliers when granting the preferred customer status.

5.1 Comparison of the literature and the results of the effects of the competitive negotiation behaviours

10/10 suppliers and 9/10 purchasers rated that the competitive negotiation behaviours, when applied by the purchaser, have a negative impact on the supplier's willingness to grant the customer the preferred customer status. These competitive negotiation behaviours are 'misrepresentation', 'traditional competitive bargaining', 'bluffing', 'manipulation of opponent's network', and 'inappropriate information gathering'.

Misrepresentation

All the interviewees assessed that the behaviour 'misrepresentation' has a negative effect on the supplier's willingness to grant the preferred customer status. When looking at previous research, this finding contributes to the finding of Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo (2018) who found that this behaviour led to less customer satisfaction. They stated the following about this: "However, we also found qualitative evidence that supports our hypothesis about the negative effects of inappropriate competitive actions on outcomes, exemplified in CR3 and Col1. Thus, in case CR3 the customer stated that supplier's use of inappropriate competitive actions led to his dissatisfaction and ruined the negotiation" (Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo, 2018: 10). An argument that was stated during the interviews for the negative effect of this behaviour was that this behaviour would be perceived as 'unfair' by the suppliers. This argument is in line with the study of Hüttinger et al. (2012) who found that fairness is an antecedent for the achievement of preferred customer status.

Traditional competitive bargaining

All suppliers and purchasers stated that the behaviour 'traditional competitive bargaining' has a negative effect on the supplier's willingness to grant the preferred customer status. This

finding contributes to the study of Bemelmans et al. (2015) who stated the following: “Their research revealed that, while traditional competitive behaviour is increasingly seen as being obsolete, companies still predominantly opted for short-term cost reduction decisions at the expense of more strategic considerations. When viewed from the supplier perspective adopted in our research design, such behaviour from the buying company is bound to be perceived as less mature irrespective of the buyer’s formal supplier relationship management policies” (Bemelmans et al., 2015: 184). The reason that this finding contributes to the study of Bemelmans et al. (2015) is that on top of the negative effect of this behaviour on the attractiveness and maturity of the customer company, this behaviour also has a negative effect on the achievement of the preferred customer status.

Bluffing

The behaviour ‘bluffing’ was perceived by all the interviewees as a negative behaviour in terms of achieving preferred customer status by the customer. An argument that was stated during the interviews was that when the supplier finds out that the customer company was bluffing about other suppliers, the supplier will lose trust in the reliability of the relationship and in the loyalty of the customer company to the supplier. These two arguments are both in line with the literature. First of all, when looking at the reliability of the relationship, this is in line with the findings of Ellis et al. (2012) who found that relational reliability of the customer company has a positive effect on obtaining preferred customer status. Relational reliability was described as follows: “By acting in a consistent and predictable manner with regard to its commitments, a buying firm demonstrates its reliability – that it will keep its promises and will not let a supplier down” (Ellis et al., 2012: 1261). Secondly, when looking at the argument about the loyalty of the customer company, this is in line with the study of Hüttinger et al. (2012) who found that loyalty is an important factor for customer attractiveness and according to Schiele et al. (2012), customer attractiveness on its turn is an important factor for the achievement of preferred customer status.

Another argument that was stated during the interviews for the negative effect of bluffing about other suppliers was that the customer companies give the signal to suppliers that they do not want to depend on them. This argument contributes to the study of Schiele et al. (2015) who emphasized the importance of inter-dependence of the supplier and the customer in a relationship. This argument shows that on top of the finding of Schiele et al. (2015) that inter-dependence is important for a good relationship, it also affects the chance of obtaining the preferred customer status by the customer company. Moreover, this argument is

also supported by the study of Caniëls et al. (2018) who found that dependence of the buyer on the supplier has a positive impact on supplier satisfaction and according to Schiele et al. (2012) and Vos (2017), supplier satisfaction on its turn has a positive impact on the supplier's willingness to grant the preferred customer status to a customer.

Manipulation of opponent's network

One purchaser (purchaser 1) stated that 'manipulation of opponent's network' could have a positive effect on the supplier's willingness to grant the preferred customer status, because the purchaser shows that he/she has a personal relationship with someone of a high position in the supplier's company who can be used as pressing. This result is in line with the finding of Eringa & Groenveld (2016) who stated the following about this: "In contrast, traders do attach importance to the personal relationship with customers from the start" (Eringa & Groenveld, 2016: 177). It is also in line with the study of Blonska (2010) who found that strong personal bonds have a positive impact on the customer's position.

The other nineteen interviewees assessed that this behaviour has a negative effect on the supplier's willingness to grant the preferred customer status, because this behaviour can be seen as unfair. This argument is in line with the findings of Hüttinger et al. (2012) who stated that respect and fairness are essential for preferred customer status.

Inappropriate information gathering

When looking at the competitive negotiation behaviour 'inappropriate information gathering', then this behaviour has been rated to have the most negative effect on the supplier's willingness to grant the preferred customer status. Both the purchasing and the supplying companies stated that the use of this illegal behaviour by the customer company could lead to relationship discontinuation from the supplier's side. This argument of the ability of suppliers to discontinue a relationship is in line with Schiele et al. (2012) who stated the following: "It is important for buyers to understand their supplier's satisfaction levels, in particular as the supplier has a choice to discontinue the relationship or deemphasize its efforts" (Schiele et al., 2012: 1182). This finding contributes to the findings of Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo (2018) who found that this behaviour, when used by the supplier, has a negative effect on customer satisfaction. The results show that on top of the negative effect on customer satisfaction, when analysing this from the other side, this behaviour used by the customer also has a negative effect on supplier satisfaction, which could lead to relationship discontinuation.

5.2 Comparison of the literature and the results of the effects of the integrative negotiation behaviours

7/10 interviewed suppliers and 8/10 interviewed purchasers agreed that all the integrative negotiation behaviours used by purchasing companies have a positive effect on the supplier's willingness to grant the preferred customer status. However, 3/10 suppliers and 2/10 purchasers assessed that the integrative behaviour 'allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process' has a negative effect.

Ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs

The behaviour 'ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs' is assessed as a positive behaviour when looking at the effects on the preferred customer status. This assessment supports the study of Kim et al. (2005) who stated the following about the importance of understanding the counterpart's needs in a relationship: "Conciliatory tactics require negotiators to understand their counterparts' needs and wants" (Kim et al., 2005: 814). An argument that was put forward by the interviewees was that suppliers often need a stable purchasing volume so they do not have to expect surprises and because this way they can automatize the supplying process. This argument is supported by the literature by Ramsay & Wagner (2009) who found that demand stability is an important antecedent for customer attractiveness.

Another argument that was stated by the interviewees for the positive effect of this behaviour, was that suppliers need a certain volume or price in order to make sufficient profit margin and when purchasers take these needs into account, the customer's status will increase. The argument that a certain purchasing volume is part of the supplier's needs is supported by Ellegaard & Ritter (2007) who found that the purchasing volume is positively correlated to customer attractiveness. The argument of the interviewees that profit margin is part of the supplier's needs is supported by Ramsey & Wagner (2009).

Seeking mutual satisfaction

The behaviour 'seeking mutual satisfaction' has been assessed as a negotiation behaviour with a positive effect in terms of establishing the preferred customer status. Moreover, looking at the average scores given by the suppliers, this behaviour has the most positive effect on 2 of 3 decision-making process items. When looking at the establishment of supplier satisfaction, the finding that this behaviour has a positive impact on the willingness of suppliers to grant the

preferred customer status is in line with the study of Schiele et al. (2012), Schiele (2012), and Vos (2017), who stated that seeking supplier satisfaction is essential for the achievement of preferred customer status.

When looking at the establishment of customer satisfaction, this finding is in line with the findings of Hallowell (1996) who found that customer satisfaction is positively related to customer loyalty and customer profitability, which are indirect antecedents for preferred customer status. When looking at customer loyalty, according to the literature, this is an antecedent for customer attractiveness (Hüttinger et al., 2012) and for that reason an indirect antecedent for achieving preferred customer status (Schiele et al., 2012). When looking at customer profitability, according to the literature, this is an antecedent for customer attractiveness (La Rocca et al., 2012) and for that reason an indirect antecedent for achieving preferred customer status (Schiele et al., 2012).

Ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship

All the interviewees stated that the behaviour ‘ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship’ has a positive impact on the supplier’s willingness to grant the preferred customer status. This finding is supported by Mortensen (2012) who found that relationship development in terms of productivity is important to ensure customer attractiveness. Ellegaard (2012) also supported this by stating that customer attractiveness grows as interactions increase between a supplier and buyer through stages of the relationship development process. The finding of this study that this behaviour leads to more willingness from the supplier to grant the preferred customer status contributes to the findings of Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo (2018) who found that this behaviour increases customer satisfaction.

Cooperating to obtain positive results

All the interviewees stated that the behaviour ‘cooperating to obtain positive results’ has a positive impact on the supplier’s willingness to grant the preferred customer status. This finding is in line with the findings of Ellis et al. (2012) who found a positive correlation between the involvement of suppliers in New Product Development projects and the chance of obtaining the preferred customer status. This finding is also supported by the findings of Bemelmans et al. (2015) who found that early supplier involvement in innovations and in the obtainment of positive results leads to a higher overall customer company maturity, attractiveness, and more chance of obtaining preferred customer status. Also, Hüttinger et al. (2012) found that this behaviour was a driver of accomplishing the preferred customer status.

Finally, Hald et al. (2009) found that value creation by both the purchaser and the supplier contributes positively to the customer's status.

Ensuring a free flow of information

The behaviour 'ensuring a free flow of information' has been assessed to have a positive effect on the supplier's willingness to grant the preferred customer status. This finding contributes to the study of Bemelmans et al. (2015) who found that information sharing affects the degree of maturity of a relationship, which on its turn affects the attractiveness of the companies. The reason that the results contribute to the study of Bemelmans et al. (2015) is that next to an increase of the degree of maturity of a relationship, this study shows that information sharing also leads to more likeliness to establish the preferred customer status by a customer company. This finding is supported by Nyaga et al. (2010) who found that information sharing has a positive effect on the satisfaction of both the buyer and the supplier. Finally, this is also supported by Whipple et al. (2002) who found that the degree of information sharing is positively correlated with alliance satisfaction, which is also supported by the findings of Cordon & Vollmann (2008). Supplier satisfaction on its turn is an antecedent for preferred customer status (Vos, 2017; Schiele et al., 2012; Schiele, 2012).

Minimizing differences among the parties

According to all the interviewees, the behaviour 'minimizing differences among the parties' also has a positive effect on the supplier's willingness to grant the preferred customer status. This finding contributes to the findings of Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo (2018) who stated that this behaviour leads to customer satisfaction, because next to customer satisfaction, the use of this behaviour also leads to more likeliness of establishing the preferred customer status. This finding is supported by Ellis et al. (2012) who stated that minimizing differences and conflicts is part of an inter-dependent relationship, which leads to subsequent cycles of commitment. According to Nollet et al. (2012), commitment on its turn from both the purchaser and the supplier is an antecedent for establishing the preferred customer status.

Trusting the position and information of other negotiators

The behaviour 'trusting the position and information of other negotiators' has been assessed by all the interviewees to have a positive effect on the supplier's willingness to grant the preferred customer status. An argument that was stated was that trust determines the quality of the relationship. This is in line with the literature, because Lambe et al. (2001) stated that trust

is important to create social bonds that govern adequate reciprocation. Ellis et al. (2012) went further on this by stating that this can lead to relationship benefits for both parties.

Another argument that was stated during the interviews was that trust is essential for creating long-term relationships, which means that this can affect the chance of coming to an agreement when the supplier aims for long-term relationships. This argument is supported by Ellegaard & Ritter (2007) who stated that trust and commitment are important elements for successful buyer-supplier collaborations. Moreover, Wagner et al. (2011) found that trust is essential for building long-term trusting relationships.

Allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process

This behaviour was assessed as negatively by five interviewees with the argument that more demands and needs have to be taken into account by the supplier, which can lead to a more complex agreement. This argument is not in line with the study of Kim et al. (2005) who found that conciliatory power-use tactics require efforts to understand the target's preferences and satisfy at least some of those interests in order to cause the target less harm. This means that this behaviour should be used to satisfy at least some needs of the other parties, which means that it is necessary to allow them to participate in the decision-making process.

However, the majority of the interviewees (15/20) assessed this behaviour to have a positive effect on the supplier's willingness to grant the preferred customer status. An argument that was stated during the interviews was that when all the parties are allowed to participate in the decision-making process, all parties agree upon the agreement, which reduces the chance of surprises to occur and increases the supplier's ability to forecast future supplies. The argument of giving the supplier the opportunity to forecast future demands is also put forward in the literature by Manu (2003).

Another argument that was put forward by the interviewees for the positive effect of this behaviour was that purchasers do not have the specialized knowledge about the specialized materials or products, whereas the suppliers often possess this knowledge. The interviewees stated that when the purchaser allows participation of its specialized technical teams in the negotiation process, there is more specialized knowledge sharing between the specialized technical teams of the customer company and the supplying company, which leads to a better agreement and a closer relationship. This argument is supported by the findings of Hald et al. (2009) and Harris et al. (2003) who found that the more the customer company allows knowledge transfer to happen, the more attractive the customer company becomes.

6. Conclusion: The effects of B2B negotiation behaviours on the decision-making process of suppliers while granting the preferred customer status

The main research question of this study is: What are the effects of B2B negotiation behaviours of purchasing companies, which do not yet have the preferred customer status, on the decision-making process while suppliers provide purchasing companies with the preferred customer status? This main research question is answered by answering the five sub questions.

1. According to the suppliers, what are the effects of negotiation behaviours of purchasing companies on the decision-making process of suppliers while granting the preferred customer status?

When looking at the average scores, according to the suppliers, the following behaviours have a positive effect on all three decision-making process items that suppliers use while granting the preferred customer status: Seeking mutual satisfaction, ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs, ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship, cooperating to obtain positive results, trusting the position and information of other negotiators, minimizing differences among the parties, ensuring a free flow of information, and allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process. The following negotiation behaviours have a negative effect on these items: Inappropriate information gathering, misrepresentation, manipulation of opponent's network, traditional competitive bargaining, and bluffing.

2. According to the purchasers, what are the effects of negotiation behaviours of purchasing companies on the decision-making process of suppliers while granting the preferred customer status?

When looking at the average scores, according to the purchasers, the following behaviours have a positive effect on all three decision-making process items that suppliers use while granting the preferred customer status: Seeking mutual satisfaction, ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs, ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship, cooperating to obtain positive results, trusting the position and information of other negotiators, minimizing differences among the parties, ensuring a free flow of information, and allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process. The following negotiation behaviours have a negative effect on these items: Inappropriate information gathering,

misrepresentation, manipulation of opponent's network, traditional competitive bargaining, and bluffing.

3. According to the suppliers and purchasers, who are in a relationship with each other, what are the effects of negotiation behaviours of purchasing companies on the decision-making process of suppliers while granting the preferred customer status?

When looking at the average scores, according to supplier 3 and purchaser 8, the following behaviours have a positive effect on all three decision-making process items that suppliers use while granting the preferred customer status: Seeking mutual satisfaction, ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs, ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship, cooperating to obtain positive results, trusting the position and information of other negotiators, minimizing differences among the parties, ensuring a free flow of information, and allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process.

According to supplier 3 and purchaser 8, the following negotiation behaviours have a negative effect on these items: Inappropriate information gathering, misrepresentation, manipulation of opponent's network, traditional competitive bargaining, and bluffing.

4. What are the similarities and differences between the suppliers and purchasers in terms of their opinions on the effects of negotiation behaviours?

When looking at the overall average scores of the effects of the negotiation behaviours on the decision-making process items that are given by the suppliers and purchasers, then there is a similarity in terms of whether they have a positive or negative effect. However, when looking at the magnitude of the average scores per negotiation behaviour per decision-making process item, then there are differences.

When looking at the decision-making process item 'good working relations', suppliers rated that the negotiation behaviour 'seeking mutual satisfaction' has the most positive effect on this item, whereas purchasers rated that the negotiation behaviour 'ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs' has the most positive effect on this item. When looking at the decision-making process item 'working relationships that convey competitive advantage', suppliers rated that the negotiation behaviour 'ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship' has the most positive effect on this item, whereas purchasers rated that the negotiation behaviour 'cooperating to obtain positive results' has the most positive effect on this item. When looking at the decision-making process item 'recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice', suppliers rated that the negotiation behaviour 'seeking mutual

satisfaction' has the most positive effect on this item, whereas purchasers rated that the negotiation behaviour 'trusting the position and information of other negotiators' has the most positive effect on this item. When looking at all three decision-making process items, another difference is that suppliers rated that 'bluffing' has the least negative effect on all three items, whereas purchasers rated that 'manipulation of opponent's network' has the least negative effect on all three items.

A similarity between the suppliers and purchasers is that the behaviour 'inappropriate information gathering' has been assessed as most negative for all three decision-making process items. Another similarity is that the behaviour 'allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process' has been assessed as least positive for all three decision-making process items.

5. What are the similarities and differences between the suppliers and purchasers, who are in a relationship with each other, in terms of their opinions on the effects of negotiation behaviours?

When looking at the scores of the effects of the negotiation behaviours on the decision-making process items that are given by supplier 3 and purchaser 8, then there is a similarity in terms of whether they have a positive or negative effect. However, when looking at the quantitative magnitude of the strength of the effect per negotiation behaviour, then there are similarities and differences between supplier 3 and purchaser 8.

A similarity between supplier 3 and purchaser 8 is that the behaviour 'inappropriate information gathering' has been assessed as most negative for all three decision-making process items. Another similarity is that both supplier 3 and purchaser 8 gave the most positive possible score to the negotiation behaviour 'ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs' on the decision-making process item 'good working relations'. Another similarity is that both supplier 3 and purchaser 8 gave the most positive possible score to the negotiation behaviour 'ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship' on the decision-making process item 'working relationships that convey competitive advantage'.

However, when looking at the decision-making process item 'recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice', then there is a remarkable difference between supplier 3 and purchaser 8 in terms of the score for the behaviour 'ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs'. This behaviour is scored more positively by supplier 3 than it is scored by purchaser 8.

The answer to the main research question

When looking at the average scores, all the integrative negotiation behaviours have been assessed to have a positive effect on all three decision-making process items that suppliers use while granting the preferred customer status. These integrative negotiation behaviours are: Seeking mutual satisfaction, ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs, ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship, cooperating to obtain positive results, trusting the position and information of other negotiators, minimizing differences among the parties, ensuring a free flow of information, and allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process.

When looking at the average scores, all the competitive negotiation behaviours have been assessed to have a negative effect on all three decision-making process items that suppliers use while granting the preferred customer status. These competitive negotiation behaviours are: Inappropriate information gathering, misrepresentation, manipulation of opponent's network, traditional competitive bargaining, and bluffing.

7. Limitations and future research

The first limitation of this study is that only ten supplying companies and ten purchasing companies have been interviewed. In future research this number could be increased so that there is an increase in the degree of representation of the overall opinion of the companies in the industrial manufacturing sector about the effects of negotiation behaviours on the supplier's willingness to grant the preferred customer status.

The second limitation of this study is that among the twenty semi-structured interviews only one pair has been interviewed, which is a supplying company and a purchasing company that are in a relationship with each other. The reason that the number of pairs stayed limited in this study is because the majority of suppliers and purchasers were not willing to share information about their inter-organisational relationships, because of confidentiality. In future research the number of pairs could be increased by reaching out to contacts who are active in some of these companies and by interviewing more companies in general, which increases the chance of interviewing more pairs.

The third limitation of this study is that the opinion of an interviewee, which is stated during the semi-structured interview on whether a certain behaviour has a positive or negative effect on the supplier's decision-making process, has been used in the structured interview during the scoring session for all three decision-making process items. So, when an interviewee stated during the semi-structured interview that a behaviour has a negative effect, then the scores given by this interviewee for this behaviour on all three decision-making process items would become negative. In future research, when the same structured interviews with the same decision-making process items are used, it can be more accurate to give the interviewees the possibility to both give a score on the effect of a behaviour on a specific decision-making process item, but also to choose whether that behaviour has a positive or negative effect on that specific item.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Operationalization of the independent and dependent variables

Independent variables: Negotiation behaviours (measured with Saorín-Iborra's negotiation behaviour continuum) (Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo, 2018)

The integrative negotiation behaviours that are studied in relation to the decision-making process of suppliers are:

- Ensuring understanding of the counterpart's needs (active listening)
 - A negotiating party tries to understand what the demands and needs are of the other party so these can be taken into account when coming to an agreement.
- Seeking mutual satisfaction
 - A negotiating party tries to accomplish an agreement that both parties are satisfied with.
- Ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship
 - A negotiating party tries to ensure a positive and productive personal relationship with the negotiators of the other party, but also ensures that this relationship is optimized when the relationship between the firms is not as optimal and productive as possible.
- Cooperating to obtain positive results
 - A negotiating party tries to obtain positive results by working together with the other party by combining specialistic technical knowledge during the negotiation. This can be used to realize innovations or to optimize current processes.
- Ensuring a free flow of information
 - A negotiating party ensures that all the necessary and relevant information has been received from the other party and has been shared with the other party.
- Minimizing differences among the parties
 - A negotiating party tries to minimize differences between its party and the other party in order to come to an agreement. This could mean that a party

has to show some flexibility to give up some of its requirements to come to an agreement.

- Trusting the position and information of other negotiators
 - A negotiating party trusts the position and shared information of the negotiator of the other party.
- Allowing participation of all parties in the decision making process
 - A negotiating party allows all the present parties to participate in the decision-making process of the negotiation. This means that all the present parties are allowed to negotiate for their demands and requirements. These parties could negotiate independently from the supplier or purchaser and could be people that represent a third party or the technical department of the company.

The competitive negotiation behaviours that are studied in relation to the decision-making process of suppliers are:

- Misrepresentation
 - A negotiating party intentionally misrepresents factual information to the opponent in order to support the own arguments or position.
- Traditional competitive bargaining
 - A negotiating party gains information about an opponent's negotiating position and strategy by obtaining information from the opponent's network of associates, and contacts.
- Bluffing
 - A negotiating party tries to persuade the opponent that the goods or materials they are looking for are only available by negotiating with them when in fact the opponent could go elsewhere and achieve a better settlement.
- Manipulation of opponent's network
 - A negotiating party talks directly to the people the opponent reports to and tries to encourage these people to weaken the opponent's side or tries to share certain information, which will undermine these people's confidence in the opponent.
- Inappropriate information gathering

- A negotiating party gains information about an opponent's negotiating position by paying associates and contacts.

Dependent variables: Decision-making process items of the suppliers (measured with the measurement model) (Ellis et al., 2012)

1. Good working relations

- To what extent the supplier has a good overall buyer–supplier working relationship with a purchasing company that uses a particular negotiation behaviour.

➔ Response scale: 1 = to a very little or no extent, 2 = to a little extent, 3 = to some extent, 4 = to a great extent, and 5 = to a very great extent

2. Working relationships that convey competitive advantage

- To what extent the buyer-supplier relationship gives the supplying company competitive advantage and to what extent the buyer-supplier relationship leads to benefits for the supplying company.

➔ Response scale: 1 = to a very little or no extent, 2 = to a little extent, 3 = to some extent, 4 = to a great extent, and 5 = to a very great extent

3. Recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice

- Without regard to revenue and profit the supplier receives from a purchasing company, to what degree the purchasing company is a 'Customer of Choice' to the supplier when this company uses a particular negotiation behaviour.

➔ Response scale: 1 = not at all, 2 = very little, 3 = somewhat, 4 = moderate, 5 = considerable, 6 = great, and 7 = very great

Appendix B: The codes with their meaning that are used in the result section

Code	Meaning
S-1	Supplying company 1
S-2	Supplying company 2
S-3	Supplying company 3
S-4	Supplying company 4
S-5	Supplying company 5
S-6	Supplying company 6
S-7	Supplying company 7
S-8	Supplying company 8
S-9	Supplying company 9
S-10	Supplying company 10
P-1	Purchasing company 1
P-2	Purchasing company 2
P-3	Purchasing company 3
P-4	Purchasing company 4
P-5	Purchasing company 5
P-6	Purchasing company 6
P-7	Purchasing company 7
P-8	Purchasing company 8
P-9	Purchasing company 9
P-10	Purchasing company 10
P	Positive effect
N	Negative effect

Appendix C: Interview guide for the interviews with the supplying companies

Research question: What are the effects of B2B negotiation behaviours of purchasing companies, which do not yet have the preferred customer status, on the decision-making process while suppliers provide purchasing companies with the preferred customer status?

Introduction

This semi-structured interview is for my master thesis for the University of Twente. I might question further on some answers you will give in order to obtain more information. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour. In the end there are three small structured interviews I would like you to fill in, which are printed for you. The answers you will give during the interview will not be traceable back to you nor to the firm you represent. I would like to ask you if I am allowed to record this interview so I can transcribe it later. The audio tapes of this interview will be deleted once the transcription process is completed. Are there any questions you would like to ask before we begin the interview?

Background questions:

- What is your age?
- What did you study before entering this business?
- What is your educational level?
- How many years of working experience do you have in this business?
- What is your current position in your firm?

Themes	Sub themes	Questions
1. Negotiation in general	Description of the negotiation process	How would you describe the process from start to the end when you are approaching another firm in regards to sell products? <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Do you have any particular strategies?<ul style="list-style-type: none">o If yes, can you describe them?o If no, why not? How do you reach a decision, depending on what?- How do you plan the negotiations in order to achieve what you want?- Do you notice that your opponents have a plan? How?
2. Preferred customer status	Customer attractiveness	How would you describe 'customer attractiveness'?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the negotiation behaviour of customer companies affect their attractiveness? If yes, how? - How important is this element for your company to start a relationship with a customer?
	Supplier satisfaction	<p>How would you describe 'supplier satisfaction'?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the negotiation behaviour of customer companies affect your satisfaction with these customer companies? If yes, how? - How important is this element for your company to continue a relationship with a customer?
	Preferred customer status	<p>How would you describe 'preferred customer status'?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the negotiation behaviour of customer companies affect your willingness to grant the preferred customer status to these companies? If yes, how? - What are the differences between your preferred customers and your standard customers in terms of negotiation behaviour?
3. Competitive negotiation behaviours	Misrepresentation	<p>During the negotiation process, do you intentionally misrepresent factual information to the opponent in order to support the own arguments or position?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what is the reason you do this? - If not, what is the reason you do not do this? - Does the usage of this behaviour by opponents affect your opinion/actions/willingness to conduct business with those opponents? If yes, how? If no, why not? - Does the usage of this behaviour by customers affect your willingness to grant these customers the preferred customer status? If yes, how? If no, why not?
	Traditional competitive bargaining	<p>During the negotiation process, do you gain information about an opponent's negotiating</p>

		<p>position and strategy by obtaining information from the opponent's network of associates, and contacts?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what is the reason you do this? - If not, what is the reason you do not do this? - Does the usage of this behaviour by opponents affect your opinion/actions/willingness to conduct business with those opponents? If yes, how? If no, why not? - Does the usage of this behaviour by customers affect your willingness to grant these customers the preferred customer status? If yes, how? If no, why not?
	Bluffing	<p>During the negotiation process, do you try to persuade the other party that the goods they are looking for are only available at your firm when in fact the opponent can go somewhere else?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what is the reason you do this? - If not, what is the reason you do not do this? - Do you intentionally not say directly what you want or what you could offer? Why and/or why not? - When opponents state that there are other sellers while there are not, does that affect your opinion/actions/willingness to conduct business with those opponents? If yes, how? If no, why not? - When customers state that there are other sellers while there are not, does that affect your willingness to grant these customers the preferred customer status? If yes, how? If no, why not?
	Manipulation of opponent's network	<p>Do you talk directly to the people the opponent reports to and try to encourage these people to weaken the opponent's side?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what is the reason you do this?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If not, what is the reason you do not do this? - Does the usage of this behaviour by opponents affect your opinion/actions/willingness to conduct business with those opponents? If yes, how? If no, why not? - Does the usage of this behaviour by customers affect your willingness to grant these customers the preferred customer status? If yes, how? If no, why not?
	Inappropriate information gathering	<p>Do you gain information about an opponent's position by paying associates and/or contacts?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what is the reason you do this? - If not, what is the reason you do not do this? - Does the usage of this behaviour by opponents affect your opinion/actions/willingness to conduct business with those opponents? If yes, how? If no, why not? - Does the usage of this behaviour by customers affect your willingness to grant these customers the preferred customer status? If yes, how? If no, why not?
4. Integrative negotiation behaviours	Active listening	<p>During the negotiation process, do you ensure understanding of the counterpart's needs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what is the reason you do this? - If not, what is the reason you do not do this? - Does the usage of this behaviour by opponents affect your opinion/actions/willingness to conduct business with those opponents? If yes, how? If no, why not? - Does the usage of this behaviour by customers affect your willingness to grant these customers the preferred

		customer status? If yes, how? If no, why not?
	Mutual satisfaction	<p>How important is it for you to seek mutual satisfaction for the agreement with your opponents?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If it is important then why is it important and how important is it on the scale of 1-10? - If it is not important, why not? - When your opponents try to seek mutual satisfaction, does that affect your opinion/actions/willingness to conduct business with those opponents? If yes, how? If no, why not? - When your customers try to seek mutual satisfaction, does that affect your willingness to grant these customers the preferred customer status? If yes, how? If no, why not?
	Ensuring positive and productive relation	<p>Do you ensure a positive and productive personal relationship with the other party?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what is the reason you do this? - If not, what is the reason you do not do this? - Does the usage of this behaviour by opponents affect your opinion/actions/willingness to conduct business with those opponents? If yes, how? If no, why not? - Does the usage of this behaviour by customers affect your willingness to grant these customers the preferred customer status? If yes, how? If no, why not? - Do you think it is of importance to ensure a positive relation? - If yes, why? If not, why not?
	Obtaining positive results	<p>During the negotiations, do you cooperate with the other party to obtain positive results?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what is the reason you do this? - If not, what is the reason you do not do this?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the usage of this behaviour by opponents affect your opinion/actions/willingness to conduct business with those opponents? If yes, how? If no, why not? - Does the usage of this behaviour by customers affect your willingness to grant these customers the preferred customer status? If yes, how? If no, why not? - Do you think it is of importance to obtain positive results? - If yes, why? If not, why not?
	Free flow of information	<p>During the negotiations, do you ensure that there is a free flow of information between you and the other party?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what is the reason you do this? - If not, what is the reason you do not do this? - Are you always willing to share information? If not always, in what occasions are you and in what occasions are you not? - When opponents are willing to share information, does that affect your opinion/actions/willingness to conduct business with those opponents? If yes, how? If no, why not? - What is your opinion about opponents that are not willing to share information? - When customers are willing to share information, does that affect your willingness to grant these customers the preferred customer status? If yes, how? If no, why not? - What is your opinion about customers that are not willing to share information?
	Minimizing differences	<p>Do you try to minimize differences between you and the other party in order to come to an agreement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what is the reason you do this?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If not, what is the reason you do not do this? - Does the usage of this behaviour by opponents affect your opinion/actions/willingness to conduct business with those opponents? If yes, how? If no, why not? - Does the usage of this behaviour by customers affect your willingness to grant these customers the preferred customer status? If yes, how? If no, why not?
	Trusting information	<p>Do you generally trust the information that the other party shares with you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what is the reason you do this? - If not, what is the reason you do not do this? - When you and the opponent trust each other's shared information, does that affect your opinion/actions/willingness to conduct business with those opponents? If yes, how? If no, why not? - When you and the customers trust each other's shared information, does that affect your willingness to grant these customers the preferred customer status? If yes, how? If no, why not? <p>Do you think that the creation of trust during the negotiation process is important to reach an agreement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why do you think this? - Do you generally feel that there is trust between you and your opponents? - What indicates that there is trust between you and your opponents in your opinion?
	Participation of all parties in the decision-making process	<p>Does it occur that besides you and your opponent, more parties are involved during the negotiations? When this is the case, do you generally allow all parties to participate in the decision-making process?</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what is the reason you do this? - If not, what is the reason you do not do this? - Does the usage of this behaviour by opponents affect your opinion/actions/willingness to conduct business with those opponents? If yes, how? If no, why not? - Does the usage of this behaviour by customers affect your willingness to grant these customers the preferred customer status? If yes, how? If no, why not?
5. Measurable items of the decision-making process	Good working relations	<p>Does your company take the quality of the overall buyer-supplier working relationship into account when deciding whether or not to grant the preferred customer status?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does the behaviour of the customer company affect this buyer-supplier relationship quality?
	Working relationships that convey competitive advantage	<p>To what extent does the competitive advantage from the working relationship affect your decision of granting the preferred customer status? With competitive advantage I mean that the customer is contributing to an improved performance of both the supplier and the customer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does the communication and general behaviour during negotiations on behalf of the customer company affect your competitive advantage?
	Recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice	<p>To what extent does the status of a customer, solely looking at the customer's negotiation behaviour, affect your decision of granting the preferred customer status?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does the communication and general behaviour during negotiations on behalf of the customer company affect its status?

Finalizing questions:

- How did you experience this interview?

- Do you have any additional remarks or questions?
- If I have any additional questions during the transcription and analysis of this interview, am I allowed to call you?
- Would you like to receive a copy of the final version of my thesis?

Thank you for your time, would you mind filling in the structured interviews now?

Structured interview A: What are the effects of negotiation behaviours on ‘good working relations’?

Good working relations = To what extent the supplier has a good overall buyer-supplier working relationship with the purchasing company

	1	2	3	4	5
Ensuring understanding of the counterpart’s needs					
Seeking mutual satisfaction					
Ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship					
Cooperating to obtain positive results from the parties					
Ensuring a free flow of information among negotiators					
Minimizing differences among the parties					
Trusting the position and information of other negotiators					
Allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process					
Intentionally misrepresenting factual information to the opponent					
Gaining information about an opponent by using the opponent’s network					
Bluffing that it can get its goods somewhere else					
Manipulating the other party by talking to people this party accounts to					
Gaining information about a party by paying its contacts					

Response scale: 1 = to a very little or no extent, 2 = to a little extent, 3 = to some extent, 4 = to a great extent, and 5 = to a very great extent.

Structured interview B: What are the effects of negotiation behaviours on ‘working relationships that convey competitive advantage’?

Working relationships that convey competitive advantage = To what extent the buyer-supplier relationship gives the companies competitive advantage

	1	2	3	4	5
Ensuring understanding of the counterpart’s needs					
Seeking mutual satisfaction					
Ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship					
Cooperating to obtain positive results from the parties					
Ensuring a free flow of information among negotiators					
Minimizing differences among the parties					
Trusting the position and information of other negotiators					
Allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process					
Intentionally misrepresenting factual information to the opponent					
Gaining information about an opponent by using the opponent’s network					
Bluffing that it can get its goods somewhere else					
Manipulating the other party by talking to people this party accounts to					
Gaining information about a party by paying its contacts					

Response scale: 1 = to a very little or no extent, 2 = to a little extent, 3 = to some extent, 4 = to a great extent, and 5 = to a very great extent.

Structured interview C: What are the effects of negotiation behaviours on ‘recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice’?

Recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice = Without regard to revenue and profit the supplier receives from a purchasing company, to what degree the purchasing company is a ‘Customer of Choice’ to the supplier when this company uses a particular negotiation behaviour

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ensuring understanding of the counterpart’s needs							
Seeking mutual satisfaction							
Ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship							
Cooperating to obtain positive results from the parties							
Ensuring a free flow of information among negotiators							
Minimizing differences among the parties							
Trusting the position and information of other negotiators							
Allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process							
Intentionally misrepresenting factual information to the opponent							
Gaining information about an opponent by using the opponent’s network							
Bluffing that it can get its goods somewhere else							
Manipulating the other party by talking to people this party accounts to							
Gaining information about a party by paying its contacts							

Response scale: 1 = not at all, 2 = very little, 3 = somewhat, 4 = moderate, 5 = considerable, 6 = great, and 7 = very great.

Appendix D: Interview guide for the interviews with the purchasing companies

Research question: What are the effects of B2B negotiation behaviours of purchasing companies, which do not yet have the preferred customer status, on the decision-making process while suppliers provide purchasing companies with the preferred customer status?

Introduction

This semi-structured interview is for my master thesis for the University of Twente. I might question further on some answers you will give in order to obtain more information. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour. In the end there are three small structured interviews I would like you to fill in, which are printed for you. The answers you will give during the interview will not be traceable back to you nor to the firm you represent. I would like to ask you if I am allowed to record this interview so I can transcribe it later. The audio tapes of this interview will be deleted once the transcription process is completed. Are there any questions you would like to ask before we begin the interview?

Background questions

- What is your age?
- What did you study before entering this business?
- What is your educational level?
- How many years of working experience do you have in this business?
- What is your current position in your firm?

Themes	Sub themes	Questions
1. Negotiation in general	Description of the negotiation process	How would you describe the process from start to the end when you are approaching another firm in regards to buying products? <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Do you have any particular strategies?<ul style="list-style-type: none">o If yes, can you describe them?o If no, why not? How do you reach a decision, depending on what?- How do you plan the negotiations in order to achieve what you want?- Do you notice that your opponents have a plan? How?
2. Preferred customer status	Customer attractiveness	How would you describe 'customer attractiveness'? <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Do you think that your negotiation behaviour affects your degree of

		<p>attractiveness to a supplier? If yes, why? If not, why not?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, do you change your negotiation behaviour in such a way that you are as attractive as possible? Why? - Do you think that your attractiveness is important to whether or not a supplier wants to start a relationship with you? Why do you think this? - Do you use a particular strategies, activities or behaviours to be more appealing or attractive to suppliers?
	Supplier satisfaction	<p>How would you describe 'supplier satisfaction'?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you think that your negotiation behaviour affects the supplier's degree of satisfaction? If yes, why? If not, why not? - If yes, do you change your negotiation behaviour in such a way that the supplier becomes as satisfied as possible? If yes, why? If not, why not? - Do you think that supplier satisfaction is important to whether or not a supplier wants to continue a relationship with you? Why do you think this? - Is it your impression that your suppliers are satisfied with you as a customer? - Do you strategically behave in a particular way to ensure supplier satisfaction? - What (if any) behaviour on your behalf do you think is important to ensure supplier satisfaction?
	Preferred customer status	<p>How would you describe 'preferred customer status'?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you think that your negotiation behaviour affects the supplier's willingness to grant you the preferred customer status? If yes, why? If not, why not? - If yes, do you change your negotiation behaviour in such a way that you achieve this preferred customer status? Why?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you have a different negotiation behaviour with suppliers that have granted you the preferred customer status? If yes, how and why? If not, why not? - What about the negotiation behaviour of suppliers, do the suppliers that have granted you the preferred customer status use different negotiation behaviour? If yes, how? If not, why not? - What differences do you think there are between preferred customers and standard customers in terms of relationship benefits with suppliers? - Do you strategically aim on receiving a preferred customer status? If so, can you describe?
3. Competitive negotiation behaviours	Misrepresentation	<p>During the negotiation process, do you intentionally misrepresent factual information to the opponent in order to support the own arguments or position?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what is the reason you do this? - If not, what is the reason you do not do this? - Do you think that your use of this kind of behaviour will affect the supplier's willingness to grant you the preferred customer status? If yes, how? If not, why not? - If yes, do you take the preferred customer status into account when choosing to whether or not use this kind of behaviour? Why?
	Traditional competitive bargaining	<p>During the negotiation process, do you gain information about an opponent's negotiating position and strategy by obtaining information from the opponent's network of associates, and contacts?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what is the reason you do this? - If not, what is the reason you do not do this? - Do you think that your use of this kind of behaviour will affect the supplier's willingness to grant you the preferred customer status? If yes, how? If not, why not?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, do you take the preferred customer status into account when choosing to whether or not use this kind of behaviour? Why?
	Bluffing	<p>During the negotiation process, do you try to persuade the other party that the goods you are looking for are available at other firms when in fact they are not?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what is the reason you do this? - If not, what is the reason you do not do this? - Do you intentionally not say directly what you want or what you could buy? why and/or why not? - Do you think that your use of this kind of behaviour will affect the supplier's willingness to grant you the preferred customer status? If yes, how? If not, why not? - If yes, do you take the preferred customer status into account when choosing to whether or not use this kind of behaviour? Why?
	Manipulation of opponent's network	<p>Do you talk directly to the people the opponent reports to and try to encourage these people to weaken the opponent's side?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what is the reason you do this? - If not, what is the reason you do not do this? - Do you think that your use of this kind of behaviour will affect the supplier's willingness to grant you the preferred customer status? If yes, how? If not, why not? - If yes, do you take the preferred customer status into account when choosing to whether or not use this kind of behaviour? Why?
	Inappropriate information gathering	<p>Do you gain information about an opponent's position by paying associates and/or contacts?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what is the reason you do this? - If not, what is the reason you do not do this? - Do you think that your use of this kind of behaviour will affect the supplier's willingness to grant you the preferred

		<p>customer status? If yes, how? If not, why not?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, do you take the preferred customer status into account when choosing to whether or not use this kind of behaviour? Why?
4. Integrative negotiation behaviours	Active listening	<p>During the negotiation process, do you ensure understanding of the counterpart's needs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what is the reason you do this? - If not, what is the reason you do not do this? - Do you think that your use of this kind of behaviour will affect the supplier's willingness to grant you the preferred customer status? If yes, how? If not, why not? - If yes, do you take the preferred customer status into account when choosing to whether or not use this kind of behaviour? Why?
	Mutual satisfaction	<p>How important is it for you to seek mutual satisfaction for the agreement with your opponents?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If it is important then why is it important and how important is it on the scale of 1-10? - If it is not important, why not? - Do you think that your use of this kind of behaviour will affect the supplier's willingness to grant you the preferred customer status? If yes, how? If not, why not? - If yes, do you take the preferred customer status into account when choosing to whether or not use this kind of behaviour? Why?
	Ensuring positive and productive relation	<p>Do you ensure a positive and productive personal relationship with the other party?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what is the reason you do this? - If not, what is the reason you do not do this? - Do you think that your use of this kind of behaviour will affect the supplier's willingness to grant you the preferred customer status? If yes, how? If not, why not?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, do you take the preferred customer status into account when choosing to whether or not use this kind of behaviour? Why? - Do you think it is of importance to ensure a positive relation? - If yes, why? If not, why not?
	Obtaining positive results	<p>During the negotiations, do you cooperate with the other party to obtain positive results?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what is the reason you do this? - If not, what is the reason you do not do this? - Do you think that your use of this kind of behaviour will affect the supplier's willingness to grant you the preferred customer status? If yes, how? If not, why not? - If yes, do you take the preferred customer status into account when choosing to whether or not use this kind of behaviour? Why? - Do you think it is of importance to obtain positive results? - If yes, why? If not, why not?
	Free flow of information	<p>During the negotiations, do you ensure that there is a free flow of information between you and the other party?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what is the reason you do this? - If not, what is the reason you do not do this? - Are you always willing to share information? If not always, in what occasions are you and in what occasions are you not? - Do you think that your use of this kind of behaviour will affect the supplier's willingness to grant you the preferred customer status? If yes, how? If not, why not? - If yes, do you take the preferred customer status into account when choosing to whether or not use this kind of behaviour? Why? - What is your opinion about suppliers that are not willing to share information?

	Minimizing differences	<p>Do you try to minimize differences between you and the other party in order to come to an agreement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what is the reason you do this? - If not, what is the reason you do not do this? - Do you think that your use of this kind of behaviour will affect the supplier's willingness to grant you the preferred customer status? If yes, how? If not, why not? - If yes, do you take the preferred customer status into account when choosing to whether or not use this kind of behaviour? Why?
	Trusting information	<p>Do you generally trust the information that the other party shares with you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what is the reason you do this? - If not, what is the reason you do not do this? - Do you think that your level of trust in the supplier's shared information will affect the supplier's willingness to grant you the preferred customer status? If yes, how? If not, why not? - If yes, do you take the preferred customer status into account when choosing to whether or not trust the supplier's shared information? Why? <p>Do you think that the creation of trust during the negotiation process is important to reach an agreement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why do you think this? - Do you generally feel that there is trust between you and your opponents? - What indicates that there is trust between you and your opponents in your opinion?
	Participation of all parties in the decision-making process	<p>Does it occur that besides you and your opponent, more parties are involved during the negotiations? When this is the case, do you generally allow all parties to participate in the decision-making process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what is the reason you do this? - If not, what is the reason you do not do this?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you think that your use of this kind of behaviour will affect the supplier's willingness to grant you the preferred customer status? If yes, how? If not, why not? - If yes, do you take the preferred customer status into account when choosing to whether or not use this kind of behaviour? Why?
5. Measurable items of the decision-making process	Good working relations	<p>Do you think that the quality of the overall buyer-supplier working relationship affects the decision of suppliers when granting the preferred customer status?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you try to optimize this quality of the overall relationship with the supplier by adjusting your behaviour? If yes, how? If not, why not?
	Working relationships that convey competitive advantage	<p>In your opinion, to what extent does the competitive advantage from the working relationship affect the supplier's decision of granting the preferred customer status? With competitive advantage I mean that the customer is contributing to an improved performance of both the supplier and the customer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you try to optimize the competitive advantage from the relationship by adjusting your communication and general behaviour during negotiations? If yes, how? If not, why not?
	Recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice	<p>Do you think that your status, solely looking at your negotiation behaviour, affect the supplier's willingness to grant you the preferred customer status?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you try to improve your status by adjusting your communication and general behaviour during negotiations? If yes, how? If not, why not?

Finalizing questions:

- How did you experience this interview?
- Do you have any additional remarks or questions?
- If I have any additional questions during the transcription and analysis of this interview, am I allowed to call you?
- Would you like to receive a copy of the final version of my thesis?

Thank you for your time, would you mind filling in the structured interviews now?

Structured interview A: What are the effects of negotiation behaviours on ‘good working relations’?

Good working relations = To what extent the supplier has a good overall buyer-supplier working relationship with the purchasing company

	1	2	3	4	5
Ensuring understanding of the counterpart’s needs					
Seeking mutual satisfaction					
Ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship					
Cooperating to obtain positive results from the parties					
Ensuring a free flow of information among negotiators					
Minimizing differences among the parties					
Trusting the position and information of other negotiators					
Allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process					
Intentionally misrepresenting factual information to the opponent					
Gaining information about an opponent by using the opponent’s network					
Bluffing that it can get its goods somewhere else					
Manipulating the other party by talking to people this party accounts to					
Gaining information about a party by paying its contacts					

Response scale: 1 = to a very little or no extent, 2 = to a little extent, 3 = to some extent, 4 = to a great extent, and 5 = to a very great extent.

Structured interview B: What are the effects of negotiation behaviours on ‘working relationships that convey competitive advantage’?

Working relationships that convey competitive advantage = To what extent the buyer-supplier relationship gives the companies competitive advantage

	1	2	3	4	5
Ensuring understanding of the counterpart’s needs					
Seeking mutual satisfaction					
Ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship					
Cooperating to obtain positive results from the parties					
Ensuring a free flow of information among negotiators					
Minimizing differences among the parties					
Trusting the position and information of other negotiators					
Allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process					
Intentionally misrepresenting factual information to the opponent					
Gaining information about an opponent by using the opponent’s network					
Bluffing that it can get its goods somewhere else					
Manipulating the other party by talking to people this party accounts to					
Gaining information about a party by paying its contacts					

Response scale: 1 = to a very little or no extent, 2 = to a little extent, 3 = to some extent, 4 = to a great extent, and 5 = to a very great extent.

Structured interview C: What are the effects of negotiation behaviours on ‘recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice’?

Recognition of the buyer as a customer of choice = Without regard to revenue and profit the supplier receives from a purchasing company, to what degree the purchasing company is a ‘Customer of Choice’ to the supplier when this company uses a particular negotiation behaviour

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ensuring understanding of the counterpart’s needs							
Seeking mutual satisfaction							
Ensuring a positive and productive personal relationship							
Cooperating to obtain positive results from the parties							
Ensuring a free flow of information among negotiators							
Minimizing differences among the parties							
Trusting the position and information of other negotiators							
Allowing participation of all parties in the decision-making process							
Intentionally misrepresenting factual information to the opponent							
Gaining information about an opponent by using the opponent’s network							
Bluffing that it can get its goods somewhere else							
Manipulating the other party by talking to people this party accounts to							
Gaining information about a party by paying its contacts							

Response scale: 1 = not at all, 2 = very little, 3 = somewhat, 4 = moderate, 5 = considerable, 6 = great, and 7 = very great.