

The effect of partnership logic and its internal misalignment on the dimensions of supplier commitment

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ABSTRACT,

Suppliers are crucial to the buying firm's success. To obtain the maximum benefit from buyer-supplier relationships, it is essential to obtain supplier commitment. Based on SET and RDT, this research examines how the dimensions of supplier commitment, normative and instrumental, are influenced by different partnership logics, embedded or transactional, and its internal misalignment and whether relationship length plays a moderating role in these effects. Partial least squares structural equation modeling is used to analyse the data from 38 buyer-supplier relationships. The results show that embedded and transactional partnership logic both positively affect the dimensions of supplier commitment, but to different degrees, whereas the internal misalignment of partnership logic does not affect the dimensions of supplier commitment. Finally, relationship length positively moderates the effects of transactional partnership logic and internal misalignment of partnership logic on instrumental supplier commitment, whilst negatively moderating the effect of embedded partnership logic on instrumental supplier commitment. The practical implications of this study are twofold. First, firms should establish a cohesive partnership logic throughout the firm to be able to significantly influence the dimensions of supplier commitment. Second, firms should prevent supplier complacency from developing over time in embedded buyer-supplier relationships.

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Keywords

Partnership logic, transactional partnership logic, embedded partnership logic, misalignment of partnership logic, supplier commitment, normative supplier commitment, instrumental supplier commitment, buyer-supplier relationship.

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1. Introduction

To obtain a competitive advantage, firms can exploit unique resources within the supply chain rather than creating them themselves (Ketchen & Hult, 2007). Supplier relationships offer the possibility to make use of the partner's unique resources, knowledge, skills, etc (Ketchen & Hult, 2007), which are crucial for obtaining a competitive advantage (Hitt, 2011). As firms have begun to recognize this possibility, the original view of competition between firms has changed to competition between supply chains, where firms compete over the limited pool of suppliers available to them (Li et al., 2006; Schiele, 2012). Supplier relations also offer the possibility of co-creating new unique resources (Whipple et al., 2010). The supplier's commitment to the relationship plays a crucial role in this, as Nyaga et al. (2010) found that supplier commitment has a significant effect on their performance. As well as increasing supplier satisfaction and being a catalyst for supplier integration (Flynn et al., 2010; Pulles et al., 2016; Whipple et al., 2010). Buying firms can either use a transactional approach, as historically done with a focus on short-time cost-reduction, or an embedded approach with a focus on creating shared value with the supplier, towards supplier relationships (Brattström & Faems, 2020). However, differing views towards the relationship with the supplier amongst the buying firm's internal stakeholders can lead to dual relationship dynamics, exhibiting both a transactional and embedded approach simultaneously (Brattström & Faems, 2020; Geppert & Dörrenbächer, 2014; Lumineau & Barros De Oliveira, 2018). Despite studies exploring the concept of dual relationship dynamics, little is known about their effects on supplier commitment (Brattström & Faems, 2020; C. W. Cheah & Koay, 2022; Vidal & Van Buren III, 2022).

When homogeneity between the buying firm's internal stakeholders is present, an embedded approach towards the relationship creates an upwards spiral trust, leading to a stronger relationship over time, whilst a transactional approach creates a downward spiral of trust, ultimately leading to the termination of the relationship. The effect of trust, whether increasing or decreasing, is strengthened by the length of the relationship due to the reinforcing spirals based on partnership logic employed (Brattström & Faems, 2020; Doz, 1996; Vlaar et al., 2007). However, firms might be less homogeneous than previously assumed (Geppert & Dörrenbächer, 2014; Lumineau & Barros De Oliveira, 2018). Heterogeneity between the buying firm's internal stakeholders might lead to contradicting actions being taken towards the supplier relationship (Brattström & Faems, 2020). The purchasing department might act as if the best route forward is a transactional exchange, as there still is an unproductive fixation on cutting costs amongst purchasing departments (Eatough, 2014), whilst other internal stakeholders take nurturing actions toward a relational partnership (Svahn & Westerlund, 2009). The contradicting approach from the internal stakeholders of the buying firm destabilize the relationship, thus decreasing trust and certainty (Brattström & Faems, 2020).

Recent literature underlines the importance of supplier commitment for obtaining green supply chains and successful green supply chain practices antecedents (Ghosh et al., 2022; Guo, 2022; Qiao et al., 2022). With the growing importance of green supply chains, the expected Corporate Social Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) and the already existing Corporate Social Reporting Directive (CSRD), the need for supplier commitment grows. However, Prior research predominantly focusses on antecedents of supplier commitment within the buyer-supplier relationship (Nyaga et al., 2010; Patrucco et al., 2020), not exploring the possibility of influences from the internal workings of the buying firm. Supplier commitment can be further be classified as either normative or as instrumental, with the former based on trust and the latter based on dependency (Brown et al., 1995). The Partnership logic can affect trust and mutual dependency based on the reinforcing spiral (Vlaar et al., 2007), whilst dual relationship dynamics affect trust and certainty through contradicting actions taken towards the supplier (Brattström & Faems, 2020). To examine the effect of the effect of the

dimensions of partnership logic and its internal misalignment on the dimensions of supplier commitment and the moderating role of relationship length, two prominent theoretical frameworks in the business sciences can be used, namely Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Resource Dependency Theory (RDT), as it is possible to argue that in homogeneous buying firms, the level of trust created through the partnership logic in the supplier relationship is subject to the norms of reciprocity as predicted by SET, whilst the willingness of dependency is affected by RDT. In heterogeneous buying firms, the level of trust and uncertainty created through the dual relationship dynamics are also subject to SET and RDT. Lastly, it is argued that these effects are moderated by the relationship length, based on the reinforcing spirals of trust and uncertainty affected by SET and RDT. This research aims to empirically examine whether there is an effect of partnership logic and its alignment of different internal stake holders within the buying firm on the dimensions of the supplier's commitment to the relationship. In addition this research aims to examine whether relationship length has a moderating role in the previously mentioned relations. In this light we postulate the following research question:

RQ: What is the effect of partnership logic and its misalignment between internal stakeholders and the purchasing department on the different dimensions of supplier commitment and does the strength of these relations change over time?

This study makes several contributions to literature. Firstly, it contributes to supplier commitment literature by introducing the internal workings of the buying firm as an antecedent. Prior research predominantly focusses on antecedents of supplier commitment in the buyer-supplier relationship (Nyaga et al., 2010; Patrucco et al., 2020), whilst recent research focusses on supplier commitment as an independent antecedent for other subjects, such as green supply chain practices (Ghosh et al., 2022; Guo, 2022; Qiao et al., 2022). Secondly, this study contributes to the literature on partnership logic (Brattström & Faems, 2020; Rokkan et al., 2003; Whipple et al., 2010), by examining its effect on the dimensions of supplier commitment. Thirdly, this study contributes to the literature regarding the effect of internal actors within the buying firm on the supplier relationship (Alam et al., 2022; Brattström & Faems, 2020; H. Cheah & Kian Yeik, 2022; Vidal & Van Buren III, 2022; Weller et al., 2021), by further exploring the effects of this relatively unexplored topic. This was done by further building upon the work of Brattström and Faems (2020) on internal misalignment of partnership logic, by exploring its effect on the dimensions of supplier commitment. Lastly, to further expand upon the effects in this study the moderating role of relationship length was examined, to give more depth to the relations.

2. Literature review

2.1 Supplier commitment

2.1.1 Defining supplier commitment and its dimensions

Supplier commitment can be described as the willingness of the supplier to invest resources in the relationship with the buying firm, this could be in the form of financial, physical or relation-based resources (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Supplier commitment can also refer to the belief of the supplier that the relation will continue into the future (Nielson, 1998) or the intention to of the supplier to continue the relationship (Pels, 1992). A supplier's commitment can only be described as credible when the supplier passes up acts of opportunism in favour of maintaining the relationship (Nyaga et al., 2010). Supplier commitment can be divided into two different dimensions. Supplier commitment

can either be classified as normative or as instrumental, which will be the focus of this thesis (Brown et al., 1995).

Normative relational commitment can be described as a mutual phenomenon that is built up over time and relies on mutual trust and sharing of resources and knowledge between the involved parties (Anderson & Narus, 1990; Ellram, 1995). Trust refers to the notion that the other party will refrain from opportunistic behaviour because the benefits of maintaining and growing the relationship outweigh the potential benefits of acting in their own self-interest (Anderson & Narus, 1990). This type of relationship is characterized by its use of relational governance to protect its transaction-specific assets and refrains from increasing its hierarchical control in favour of organisational trust.

Instrumental relational commitment can be described as one party complying with the influence of the other party, accepting their dependence on them, and hoping for a favourable reaction. Dependence is the key factor of this type of commitment, as the party that is dependent is committed to maintaining the relationship. Instrumental relational commitment is based on the analysis of benefits and cost related to the relationship (Brown et al., 1995). Commitment of the dependent firm is driven by the benefits it can gain from the other party's reward power and costs it might encounter through the other party's coercive power (X. Zhao et al., 2008).

2.1.2 Benefits of supplier commitment

Supplier commitment is crucial for successful buyer relationships (Kim & Choi, 2015), supplier commitment has shown to enable buying firms to expand its know-how (Yoon & Moon, 2019); improve product quality (Mazzola et al., 2015); and enhance the new product development process (Patrucco et al., 2018; Tsai, 2009; Y. Zhao et al., 2014). Supplier commitment has shown to increase knowledge-sharing across the supply chain network, which could lead to increased innovation performance (Patrucco et al., 2020; Schiele, 2012). Intensive knowledge sharing between the buyer and supplier could also lead to process optimizations such as resource productivity, process costs and inventory level (Jokela & Söderman, 2017). More direct ways of cost savings can also be obtained as relations with committed suppliers could lead to reduced purchasing price (Pettersson & Segerstedt, 2013). High supplier commitment can take buyer supplier collaboration one step further and enable supplier integration (X. Zhao et al., 2011; Y. Zhao et al., 2014). More recent studies have stated supplier commitment to be a antecedent for the adaptation of sustainable practices and CSR across the supply chain (Ghosh et al., 2022; Guo, 2022; Qiao et al., 2022). The overall importance of supplier commitment is highlighted by its contribution to overall firm performance (Krause et al., 2007; Patrucco et al., 2020). Although both normative and instrumental supplier commitment could potentially reap the previously mentioned benefits they also have their distinct advantages. Normative supplier commitment decreases the relationships need for direction by legal obligations, making the use of social enforcement mechanisms more effective. In contrast, instrumental supplier commitment increases the relationships need for direction by legal obligations, making the use of contractual enforcement mechanisms more effective (Gilliland & Bello, 2002).

2.1.3 Antecedents of supplier commitment

Supplier commitment is created through cooperation in process-orientated practices, which include operational integration and information sharing (Kyu Kim et al., 2011). Cooperation can also take the

form of relational specific investments. Joint investments in relation specific assets like machinery or facilities have shown to increase supplier commitment (Ellis et al., 2012). Normative supplier commitment has larger influence from pledges of investments from the buying firm and their perception, whilst instrumental supplier commitment has larger influence from their own pledges of investment and exclusivity (Gilliland & Bello, 2002). Supplier commitment is not only influenced by tangible investments. Intangible investments such as satisfaction with the buying firm, supplier motivation, relational justice, alignment of organisational goals, and customer attractiveness, have shown to influence supplier commitment (Liu et al., 2012; Nollet et al., 2012; Patrucco et al., 2020; Schiele et al., 2012; Tanskanen & Aminoff, 2015). Commitment is often paired with trust as parallel variables in academic literature (Whipple et al., 2010; Yoon & Moon, 2019; Zineldin & Jonsson, 2000). However, it has also been shown to be an antecedent of normative supplier commitment (Bennett & Gabriel, 2001; Gilliland & Bello, 2002; Nyaga et al., 2010). Dependence is also regularly paired with supplier commitment, but has also been shown to be an antecedent of instrumental supplier commitment (Fink et al., 2011; Gilliland & Bello, 2002; Krause et al., 2007). Similar to trust, commitment deals with the law of reciprocity. Not only the actions of the supplier matter, but also the actions of the buying firm as the buying firm's commitment and investments increase supplier commitment (Patrucco et al., 2020).

Recent literature regarding supplier commitment has focussed on its importance as an independent antecedent for various topics such as green supply chains, disregarding its antecedents (Ghosh et al., 2022; Guo, 2022; Qiao et al., 2022). Previous research has shown plenty of antecedents of supplier commitment. However, these antecedents are mainly focussed on actions taken with the supplier (Kyu Kim et al., 2011; Ellis et al., 2012; Patrucco et al., 2020). With new research on the internal workings on the buying firms emerging firm (Brattström & Faems, 2020; C. W. Cheah & Koay, 2022; Vidal & Van Buren III, 2022), it is important to investigate their effect on supplier commitment, which is the focus of this study.

3. Theories

To examine the effect of the dimensions of partnership logic and its internal misalignment on the dimensions of supplier commitment and the moderating role of relationship length, two prominent theoretical frameworks in the business sciences were used, namely Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Resource Dependency Theory (RDT). SET which mainly focusses on mutual exchanges and reciprocity (Blau, 1964), is used to predict the possible changes in the dimensions of supplier commitment based on the reciprocity of trust and investments originating from the dimensions of partnership logic and its internal misalignment. RDT which mainly focusses on vulnerability from reliance on external resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), is used to predict the possible changes in the dimensions of supplier commitment based on the dependence and power dynamics originating from the dimensions of partnership logic and its internal misalignment. In addition both SET and RDT are used to explain the moderating role of relationship length as they could explain how the effects change overtime based on relational embeddedness and investments (Anderson & Narus, 1990; Hillman et al., 2009; Vlaar et al., 2007).

3.1 Social Exchange Theory (SET)

SET is a concept in social psychology that explains behaviour of individuals in relationships. It was first introduced by Homans (1958), who built upon the works of behavioural psychologists such as

Skinner. Homans (Homans, 1958, p. 13) defined social exchange as “the exchange of activity, tangible or intangible, and more or less rewarding or costly, between at least two persons”. Blau (1964) argued that social exchanges happen in any relationship, making SET more universally applicable. Blau (1964, p. 93) defined a social exchange relationship as a relationship in which there are “favours that create future obligations, not precisely defined ones, and the nature of the return cannot be bargained about but must be left to the discretion of the one who makes it”. However, according to Blau (1964) economic exchanges differ significantly from social exchanges, as economic exchanges allow for the obligations to be bargained about in contract negotiations. Economic exchanges also differ from social exchanges as they are limited to exchange of material goods (Pulles et al., 2014).

The norm of reciprocity is an integral part of SET and represents the mutual give-and-take nature of exchanges. The norm of reciprocity entails the social expectation that individuals should respond to favourable actions with similar positive behaviours or gestures. In order to keep receiving favourable actions from the other party, individuals are obligated to provide favourable actions themselves as by the norms of reciprocity. On the other hand, if unfavourable actions are taken this entails that individuals can expect the unfavourable actions in return (Blau, 1964). Individuals base their reaction on the benefits or drawbacks received from the other party’s actions and repay them in kind (Nyaga et al., 2013), often giving a stronger reaction in return due to social expectations (Das & Teng, 2002).

SET has found applications in research regarding organisational behaviour and strategic management, where it is used to predict and analyse exchanges between organisations. Through repeated interactions firms can influence exchange partners using different mechanisms (Pulles et al., 2014; X. Zhao et al., 2008). Firms rely on the norms of reciprocity to influence exchange partners and to obtain favourable actions from them to achieve their goals. SET can thus explain the effect of relational mechanics employed by the buying firm on behaviour of suppliers

3.2 Resource Dependency Theory (RDT)

RDT is a framework in organisational sociology and strategic management that seeks to explain how organizations interact with their environment to obtain the necessary resources for survival. RDT was first introduced by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) as a response to the challenges they faced in resource acquisition due to the growing complexity of organisations. Pfeffer and Salancik (1978, p. 1) state that “to understand the behavior of an organization you must understand the context of that behavior- that is the ecology of the organization.” RDT recognizes that organizational behaviour is dependent on their external environment, therefore firms can take action to reduce environmental uncertainty and dependence (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978).

Central to the actions firms take to reduce environmental uncertainty and dependence is the control over vital resources. The firm in control of these vital resources has power over others dependent on them. Firms attempt to reduce the power of others over them, whilst simultaneously trying to increase their own power over others (Hillman et al., 2009; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). According to Pfeffer firms are not independent entities, but are interconnected through a network of interdependencies with other firms. The uncertainty resulting from this leads to unpredictable situations, making survival uncertain. Firms take actions towards reducing external interdependencies. However, these actions are never fully successful as with these actions new interdependencies are created. This reoccurring pattern explains organisational behaviour through the effect of interorganisational power dynamics. This way RDT highlights the complexity of resource dependencies and their impact on organisational relationships (Hillman et al., 2009; Pfeffer, 1987).

4. Hypotheses

4.1 the effects of partnership logic on supplier commitment

Partnerships between buyers and suppliers can vary across a classification continuum which borders between transactional and collaborative relations (Whipple et al., 2010). Brattström and Faems (2020) define partnership logic as the belief of how an organisation should collaborate with a supplier. They discern two dimensions of partnership logic, those being embedded partnership logic and transactional partnership logic, which dictate the approach and actions towards the relationship with the supplier (Brattström & Faems, 2020). Partnership logic can be affected by the strategic importance of the supplier, level of interdependence and asset specificity (Bunduchi, 2008; Sanders et al., 2007).

Embedded partnership logic is the belief that long-term collaboration and strong relationships with suppliers offer greater benefit to the firm than a transactional approach (Brattström & Faems, 2020; Corsten & Kumar, 2005). Whipple et al. (2010) defines embedded relations as “a long-term relationship where participants generally cooperate, share information, and work together to plan and even modify their business practices to improve joint performance” (Whipple et al., 2010, p. 507). These actions could result in mutual trust and resource sharing between the buyer and the supplier, which can be described as the basis of normative supplier commitment (Anderson & Narus, 1990; Ellram, 1995). The norm of reciprocity, as predicted by SET, suggests that these actions would be reciprocated by the supplier. Therefore, if the buying firm is committed to creating an embedded relation with the supplier through the means of trust building and sharing of resources and knowledge (Whipple et al., 2010), suppliers are likely to reciprocate these actions building towards an embedded relation and creating more commitment towards the relationship of their own (Patrucco et al., 2020). At the same time, suppliers are more likely to engage in collaborative relationships with firms that possess strong capabilities and/or resources, based on a cost-benefit (Corsten & Kumar, 2005). This could lead to supplier dependence, particularly in cases where the buying firm's resources and capabilities or its share of the supplier's turnover are significant factors for the supplier's survival (Brattström & Faems, 2020; Pulles et al., 2014; X. Zhao et al., 2008). Relationships based on a cost-benefit analysis and dependency describe the basis of instrumental supplier commitment. In order for the supplier to increase its bargaining power, as predicted by RDT, it can create mutual dependence through embedded relationships (Hillman et al., 2009). In this light we can postulate the following hypotheses:

H1a: *Embedded partnership logic has a positive effect on normative supplier commitment*

H1b: *Embedded partnership logic has a positive effect on instrumental supplier commitment*

Transactional partnership logic is the belief that partnerships between buyers and suppliers are based solely on buying and selling goods or services, with suppliers being viewed as opportunistic actors (Brattström & Faems, 2020). Transactional relationships are outlined by standard contracts and offer cost savings whilst maintaining quality (Baker & Faulkner, 1991; Cho & Kang, 2001; Whipple et al., 2010). Transactional partnership logic prioritizes short-term gains by cutting costs in the short term, assuming the supplier to be opportunistic and discouraging investment in relation-specific assets or knowledge sharing (Brattström & Faems, 2020; Rokkan et al., 2003; Whipple et al., 2010). The norms of reciprocity, as predicted by SET, suggest that the supplier will exhibit the same behaviour as the buying firm, as they say ill doers are ill deemers (Brattström & Faems, 2020). Therefore transactional relations rarely give the buyer or the supplier the incentive to invest in

relation-specific assets or intensive knowledge sharing as these increase the likelihood of opportunism (Rokkan et al., 2003). This line of thinking and action directly contradicts the basis of normative supplier commitment, which is built on trust and resource sharing (Anderson & Narus, 1990; Ellram, 1995). The strong discouragement of investing into the relationship results in lower obtainable benefits for both the buyer and supplier (Brattström & Faems, 2020; X. Zhao et al., 2008). As a result, the buying firm is unlikely to use reward power. Coercive power is better suited to the transactional approach. Furthermore, transactional partnership logic assumes suppliers to be untrustworthy, leading to low goodwill trust and discouraging collaborative actions from the supplier (Pulles et al., 2014; Whipple et al., 2010). As RDT predicts, the lack of reciprocation from the buying firm may cause the supplier to decrease their commitment to the relationship and reduce their dependence on the buying firm, as it is unadvisable to be dependent on an untrustworthy customer (Anderson & Narus, 1990; Hillman et al., 2009). This directly goes against the basis of instrumental supplier commitment, which is based on the supplier's recognition of their dependence on the buying firm, driven by the benefits and costs analysis, (Brown et al., 1995) in this light we postulate the following hypotheses:

H2a: *Transactional partnership logic has a negative effect on normative supplier commitment*

H2b: *Transactional partnership logic has a negative effect on instrumental supplier commitment*

4.2 the effects of internal misalignment of partnership logic on supplier commitment

Research into buyer-supplier relations usually assumes that internal stakeholders share similar perspectives, expectations and beliefs (Lumineau & Barros De Oliveira, 2018). However, this is not always the case, as heterogeneity between internal stakeholders in terms of common beliefs, perspectives and expectations can lead to political actions being taken towards the supplier by internal stakeholders. The discrepancy between the partnership logic of the purchasing department and the internal stakeholders can be described as internal misalignment of partnership logic. This discrepancy and the consequent political actions can affect the buyer-supplier relationship and ultimately create dual relationship dynamics, which can be defined as a buyer-supplier relationship with the simultaneous presence of a transactional approach and an embedded approach (Brattström & Faems, 2020; Geppert & Dörrenbächer, 2014; Lumineau & Barros De Oliveira, 2018). Whilst normally the dominant partnership logic is reciprocated as predicted by SET, the dual relationship dynamics, created by the internal misalignment of partnership logic, prevents a spiral of trust and commitment from manifesting (Vlaar et al., 2007). The internal misalignment of partnership logic could increase the supplier's hesitation towards and disappointment in the buying firm, decreasing their trust. Whilst transactional partnership logic decreases trust and hinders investments in the relationship and embedded partnership logic increases trust and promotes investments in the relationship, a dual partnership dynamic of the two partnership logics will decrease trust, due to the increased uncertainty (Anderson & Narus, 1990; Brattström & Faems, 2020; Ellram, 1995; Molm et al., 2009). The lack of trust and uncertainty created by the dual relationship dynamics results in reluctance to invest resources into the relationship (Brattström & Faems, 2020). This contradicts the basis of normative supplier commitment, which is built on trust and resource sharing (Anderson & Narus, 1990; Ellram, 1995). The uncertainty and inconsistency in the reactions of the buying firm hinder the ability to create interdependence between the buying firm and the supplier. As creating mutual dependence is unlikely, RDT predicts the supplier to want to decrease its dependency on the buying firm due to it being unadvisable to be dependent on a firm surrounded by uncertainty regarding its actions and potential benefits (Brattström & Faems, 2020; Caniels & Gelderman, 2005).

This directly goes against the basis of instrumental supplier commitment, which is based on the supplier's recognition of their dependence on the buying firm, driven by the benefits and costs analysis, (Brown et al., 1995). In this light we postulate the following hypotheses:

H3a: *The internal misalignment of partnership logic has a negative effect on normative supplier commitment*

H3b: *The internal misalignment of partnership logic has a negative effect on instrumental supplier commitment*

4.3 the moderating effect of relationship duration

SET predicts that investments made by either party in the relationship will be reciprocated, this leads to a reinforcing spiral of trust and commitment (Patrucco et al., 2020; Vlaar et al., 2007). Embedded partnership logic encourages cooperation between the buying firm and the supplier, which leads to increased investments in resources and knowledge sharing within the relationship (Brattström & Faems, 2020). The reinforcing spirals created through the laws of reciprocity create stronger trust and incentive to invest resources into the relationship as time continues. As both trust and resource investment can be described as the basis of normative supplier commitment, it is expected that normative supplier commitment would increase as time continues (Anderson & Narus, 1990; Ellram, 1995). As investments into the relationship increase, the supplier becomes more dependent on the buying firm in addition to the additional benefits that become available due to the investments (Anderson & Narus, 1990; Corsten & Kumar, 2005; Ellram, 1995). The reinforcing spiral will result in a higher degree of investments in the relationship and in turn dependence on the buying firm as time continues. As both dependence and the cost-benefit analysis can be described as the basis of instrumental supplier commitment, it is expected that instrumental supplier commitment would increase as time continues (Anderson & Narus, 1990; Ellram, 1995). In this light we postulate the following hypotheses:

H4a: *Relationship length positively moderates the relationship between embedded partnership logic and normative supplier commitment*

H4b: *Relationship length positively moderates the relationship between embedded partnership logic and instrumental supplier commitment*

Transactional partnership logic is characterized by a distrustful attitude towards suppliers, assuming that they are opportunistic actors that should be kept at arm's length (Brattström & Faems, 2020). This behaviour will be reciprocated by the supplier as predicted by SET (Patrucco et al., 2020). As time progresses, this reciprocating behaviour creates a reinforcing downward spiral that reduces trust and commitment, ultimately decreasing the likelihood of collaborative practices, due to the reinforcement of transactional behaviour becoming stronger as time continues. This directly contradicts the foundation of normative supplier commitment which is built on trust and resource sharing (Anderson & Narus, 1990; Ellram, 1995; Vlaar et al., 2007). The increasing distrust created through the reinforcing spiral and the lack of resource investment, prevents the buying firm and the supplier from becoming mutually dependent on the relationship. As predicted by RDT the supplier will try to become less dependent on an untrustworthy firm (Corsten & Kumar, 2005; Hillman et al., 2009). Simultaneously, the reinforcing spiral will increase the likelihood of coercive power being applied, whilst decreasing the potential benefits over time (Corsten & Kumar, 2005; Vlaar et al., 2007; Whipple et al., 2010). This contradicts the basis of instrumental supplier commitment, which is

based on the supplier's recognition of their dependence on the buying firm and driven by the benefits and costs analysis (Brown et al., 1995). In this light we postulate the following hypotheses:

H5a: Relationship length positively moderates the relationship between transactional partnership logic and normative supplier commitment

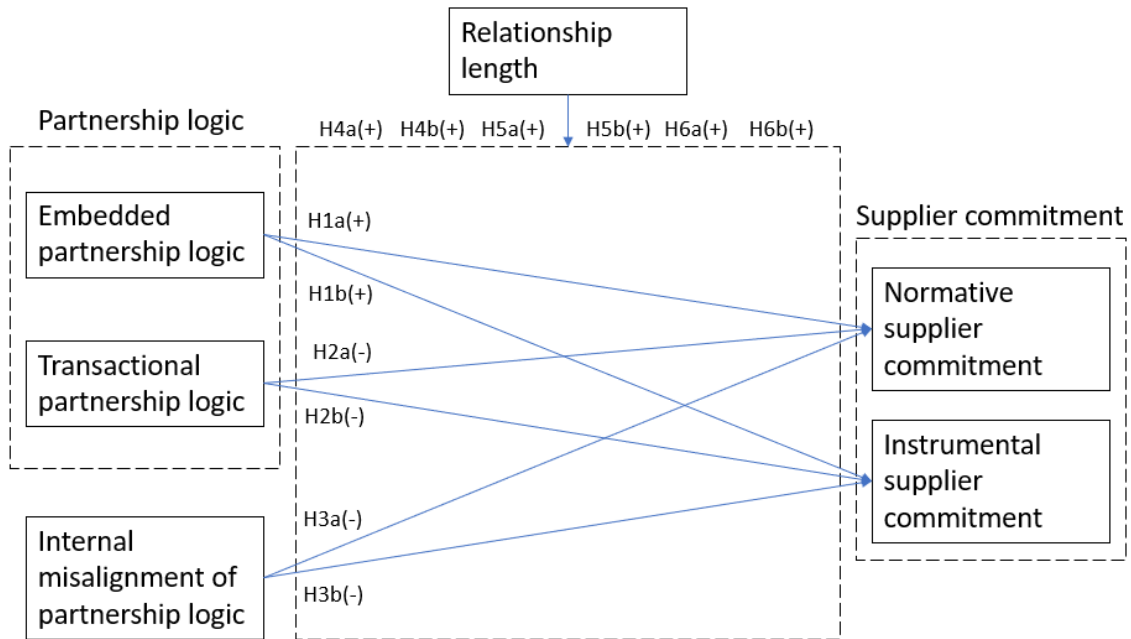
H5b: Relationship length positively moderates the relationship between transactional partnership logic and instrumental supplier commitment

In the presence of dual relationship dynamics created by the internal misalignment of partnership logic within the buying firm, dual relationship dynamics arise, hindering the establishment of reinforcing spirals of trust and commitment with the supplier. As a result, uncertainty and decreased trust are experienced by the supplier. With no reinforcing spirals present in the relationship, reinforcing spirals can still be found within the buying firm itself. The framing of actions by the different internal stakeholders creates a spiral of increasing belief in their partnership as time continues. This increases the contradiction actions leading to an even larger decrease in trust and increase in uncertainty over time, making the supplier less likely to invest in the relationship (Brattström & Faems, 2020). This contradicts the basis of normative supplier commitment, which is built on trust and resource sharing (Anderson & Narus, 1990; Ellram, 1995). The increase in uncertainty and trust over time, would cause an increasing doubt from the supplier in the potential benefits of the relationship (Brattström & Faems, 2020). As predicted by RDT suppliers are likely to decrease its dependency on an uncertain relationship with an untrustworthy firm (Hillman et al., 2009). This contradicts the basis of instrumental supplier commitment, which is based on the supplier's recognition of their dependence on the buying firm and driven by the benefits and costs analysis (Brown et al., 1995). In this light we postulate the following hypotheses:

H6a: Relationship length positively moderates the relationship between the internal alignment of partnership logic and normative supplier commitment

H6b: Relationship length positively moderates the relationship between the internal misalignment of partnership logic and instrumental supplier commitment

Figure 1
Conceptual model



5. Method

5.1 Sample and research design

This research is quantitative in nature, due to the predetermined set of variables that were created based on relevant literature to measure the constructs. This study aimed to examine specific relationships between predetermined variables, instead of uncovering new relations. Therefore, this research was conducted using quantitative methods as quantitative research is more suited to measuring variables within the social world as apposed to qualitative research, that is more suited to explore mechanics behind social events (Rahman, 2016). Data was collected by the means of an online survey. Surveys are used for examining causal relationships between variables (Saunders et al., 2019). As this research aims to examine the causal/effect of partnership logic and its internal alignment on supplier commitment, surveys are the appropriate approach to conduct research. An advantage of surveys is that they are very efficient in collecting data from a large sample in a relatively small amount of time compared to qualitative research (Benson, 2009). In general Quantitative research excels in measuring different levels of variables, which leads to the results being more generalizable than qualitative research. Therefore quantitative research is more replicable than qualitative research, however it also means that it does not reveal the deeper underlying meanings and mechanics (Daniel, 2016).

Three different surveys were used to collect data from five different case companies, as seen in table 1, to reduce the common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Case company one is large enterprise located in the Netherlands, specializing in cable manufacturing. They provide cables, systems and services to their worldwide customer base. Case company two is a large enterprise located in Germany, specializing in pumps and pump systems. Their products and services are used for buildings, water management and the industrial sector. Case company three is a large enterprise

with approximately 650 employees located in the Netherlands, specializing in bakery machinery and fully integrated bakery lines. They are a family-owned company that has been around for the better part of two centuries. Case company four is a large enterprise located in the Netherlands, specializing in trauma cases and operates in the healthcare sector. Case company five is a medium enterprise located in the Netherlands, specializing in heating equipment and devices, such as central heating systems and heat pumps. They recently became part of a big Italian thermal company. Four out of the five firms provided the annual average spend on supplier in order for a check for the non-response bias, which is calculated by testing if average spend on suppliers that responded is significantly different from the average spend on suppliers that did not respond. The test concluded that part of the case companies' data is not subject to the non-response bias as no significant difference was found. The first survey was sent to the suppliers of the case companies, where the suppliers were asked to fill out the survey regarding their relationship with the case company. The second and third survey were simultaneously sent to the corresponding purchasers and employees from other departments from the case companies. The purchasers filled in the survey(s) regarding the supplier(s) they were responsible for. The internal employees from other departments filled in the survey(s) regarding the supplier(s) with whom they have the most contact. This was done to measure the internal alignment of the case companies.

Table 1

Case companies

<i>Sector</i>	<i>No. employees</i>	<i>Turnover</i>
Cable manufacturing	950	€450 Mil.
Water management	8000	€1900 Mil.
Bakery machinery	650	€180 Mil.
Healthcare	3800	€450 Mil.
Heating equipment	200	€2.6 Mil.

In June an email was sent to a total of 28 suppliers for one of the case companies. In this email sales representatives from the suppliers of the case companies were invited to participate in the research. Furthermore, in this email it was stated that data would be made anonymous and be held strictly confidential from the public as well as the case companies to respect private information and reduce social desirability (Nederhof, 1985). Suppliers had a set period to respond, where reminder emails were sent and in the last week calls and follow-up emails were made to increase the response rate. In one of the case companies this led to 15 out of 28 suppliers participating in the research, which is a response rate of 53.57%. As shown in Table 2, the majority of suppliers' headquarters are located in the Netherlands. To evaluate the competency of the respondents the survey also informed about their expertise and organizational tenure. The average work experience is 26.8 years and on average respondents have been working for their company for 13.2 years.

Table 2

profile of suppliers (n = 69)

<i>Frequency</i>		<i>Frequency</i>	
<i>Industry sector</i>		<i>Country</i>	
Automotive	2.9%	Austria	2.9%
Chemicals/Pharmaceuticals	2.9%	Finland	1.4%
Consumer goods	2.9%	Germany	31.9%
Industrial Machinery	20.3%	Italy	8.7%
Services	7.2%	Norway	1.4%
Other	63.8%	Poland	1.4%

		Spain	2.9%
<i>Number of employees</i>		The Netherlands	46.4%
< 50	21.7%	United Kingdom	2.9%
50 – 250	36.2%		
≥ 250	42.0%		
<i>Respondent function</i>			
Operational	43.5%		
Tactical	18.8%		
Strategic	10,1%		
Executive	27.5%		

When a supplier survey was filled out, surveys were sent to the corresponding purchasers and the other internal employees. They were informed about the same anonymity and confidentiality of the data provided by them. 25 purchasers and 56 internal employees have participated in the research. This means that both several purchasers and other internal employees have filled out the survey for more than one supplier. As seen in Table 3 most purchasers have a tactical function. They have an average work experience of 23 years and have been with the case company for 14 years.

Table 3

Profile of purchasers (n = 16)

	Frequency		Frequency
<i>Function</i>		<i>Organisational tenure</i>	
Tactical	6%	0-5 years	38%
Strategic	31%	5-10 years	13%
Operational	31%	10-20 years	19%
Managerial	13%	≥ 20 years	31%
Generic role	19%		
<i>Work experience</i>			
0-5 years	0%		
5-10 years	25%		
10-20 years	19%		
≥ 20 years	56%		

As shown in Table 4 most of the other internal employees came from the engineering department and their average work experience is 17 years and the organizational tenure is on average 14 years. The engineering department has regular contact with suppliers, mostly during the development phase. In these interactions their main focus is to either improve current processes/products or develop new processes/products (Dowlatshahi, 1998). In this study, we explore the effects of partnership logic used by purchasers and internal employees during interactions with suppliers. Internal employees from the engineering department serve as a suitable representation of the perceived partnership logic of internal employees by suppliers.

Table 4

Profile of internal others (n = 36)

	Frequency		Frequency
<i>Department</i>		<i>Organisational tenure</i>	
Engineering	28%	0-5 years	18%

Logistics	19%	5-10 years	15%
Management and coordination roles	14%	10-20 years	38%
		≥ 20 years	29%
Procurement	17%		
Other roles	17%		
Not answered	6%		
<i>Work experience</i>			
0-5 years	12%		
5-10 years	9%		
10-20 years	29%		
≥ 20 years	50%		

5.2 Measures

We measured our constructs on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 7 (“strongly agree”). The measures and their corresponding factory loadings can be found in table 4.

Normative supplier commitment will be measured through questions based on studies from Nyaga et al. (2010), Wang et al. (2020), and Handley and Angst (2015). This construct considers the extent of which the suppliers are committed to their customer, based on their mutual trust and collaboration. Normative supplier commitment was comprised of four survey items, which were included in the supplier survey.

Instrumental supplier commitment will be measured through questions based on studies from Nyaga et al. (2010), Wang et al. (2020), and Terpend and Krause (2015). This construct considers the extent of which the suppliers are committed to their customer, based on their dependence on the customer and the obtainable cost-benefit ratio. Instrumental supplier commitment was comprised of four survey items, which were included in the supplier survey.

Transactional partnership logic will be measured through questions based on Brattström and Faems (2020). This construct considers the extent of which the supplier is seen as transactional and opportunistic, as well as to what degree the interactions are seen as competitive. This construct was comprised of three survey items, which were included in both the purchaser and internal other survey. To get the final measure of this construct the average of the internal other and purchaser survey was used.

Embedded partnership logic will be measured through questions based on Brattström and Faems (2020). This construct considers the extent of which the buyer seeks to establish cooperative practices, shares information openly, and seeks to maximize joint benefits. This construct was comprised of three survey items, which were included in both the purchaser and internal other survey. To get the final measure of this construct the average of the internal other and purchaser survey was used.

Internal misalignment of partnership logic will be measured by adding the difference in score as an absolute value, given by the purchaser and internal other for the constructs transactional partnership logic and embedded partnership logic. This construct considers the extent of which the internal others and purchasers align in partnership logic view considering their supplier. This construct was comprised of the absolute difference between the purchasers and internal others of six survey items.

The maximum misalignment per item would be a score of 6 (e.g. purchaser filling in 7 and internal other filling in 1, making the difference 6). To get this item to the same 1 (very aligned) to 7 (very misaligned) scale, 1 is added to the score for every item to get it back to the normal 1 to 7 scale, where 1 would be perfect alignment and 7 would be perfect misalignment. This means that if there is total misalignment the score would be 6, 1 would be added so it would become $6 + 1 = 7$. If there is total alignment the score would be 0, 1 would be added so it would become $0 + 1 = 1$.

Relationship duration measures the amount of years that the buying firm and supplier have worked together. To get the final measure the average indicated time of the supplier, purchaser and internal other was used. In the regression analysis relationship length is also used as a control variable. This in order to give a better perception of reality and to use the variable to check for its moderating effect on the previously mentioned variables, by testing the interaction effect with the previously mentioned variables. This variable was added to investigate the influence of the independent variables independent from the history the buying firm and the supplier share.

The model contains several more control variables. Supplier's *firm size* was added as a control variable as larger firms have more resources than smaller firms (Boyer et al., 1996) and could influence supplier commitment (Ghijzen et al., 2010). *International supplier* was added as a control variable as a closer geographical location or residence in the local market could influence supplier commitment (Ciabuschi et al., 2019). This control variable has been used as a dummy variable (0 = "local", 1 = "international").

Table 5
Measurement items

Constructs and measurement items	Factor loadings
<i>Embedded partnership logic (purchaser and internal other survey)</i>	
In dealing with this supplier I seek to establish cooperative practices	0,80
In dealing with this supplier I am sharing information openly	0.91
In dealing with this supplier I seek to maximize joint benefits	0.50
<i>Transactional partnership logic (purchaser and internal other survey)</i>	
In dealing with this supplier I see them as a transactional supplier	deleted
In dealing with this supplier I view our interactions as competitive	0.09
In dealing with this supplier I consider them as opportunistic actor	0.82
<i>Internal misalignment of partnership logic (computed variable)</i>	
Misalignment 1 (Embedded 1 purchaser – Embedded 1 internal other)	0.45
Misalignment 2 (Embedded 2 purchaser – Embedded 2 internal other)	0.26
Misalignment 3 (Embedded 3 purchaser – Embedded 3 internal other)	0.84
Misalignment 4 (Transactional 1 purchaser – Transactional 1 internal other)	0.42
Misalignment 5 (Transactional 2 purchaser – Transactional 2 internal other)	deleted
Misalignment 6 (Transactional 3 purchaser – Transactional 3 internal other)	deleted
<i>Normative supplier commitment (supplier survey)</i>	
We expect the relationship with <this customer> to continue for a long time	0.90
We expect the relationship with <this customer> to strengthen over time.	0.66
Our firm sees this relationship as a partnership	0.92
Both <this customer> and my firm are confident that their interests will be fully protected because both parties share the common identity	0.80

<i>Instrumental supplier commitment (supplier survey)</i>	0.52
We are committed to <this customer>.	0.53
Considering the costs and benefits involved in the relationship, both <this customer> and my firm acts as expected.	0.80
Considering rewards and punishments, both <this customer> and my firm behave honestly in dealing with each other	deleted
We are very dependent on <this customer>	1.00
<i>Relationship duration (supplier and purchaser survey)</i>	
Please indicate the relationship length with <this customer/supplier> (in years)	
<i>Firm size (supplier survey)</i>	1.00
Please indicate the number of employees working at your organization (if your organization has multiple business units, please indicate the number of employees at your business unit)	
<i>International supplier (supplier survey)</i>	1.00
Please indicate the country in which your organization('s business unit) is located	

5.3 Data analysis

To test the developed hypothesis and assess the conceptual model, a partial least square (PLS) analysis was used. PLS is an extant regression-based technique of structural equation modelling (SEM) and has become popular in the business and social sciences due to its ability to test models with latent variables (Henseler, 2020; Henseler et al., 2016). PLS has the ability to assess multiple relationships simultaneously, making it possible to test entire models in one fell swoop (Ramli et al., 2018). SEM can be divided into two subtypes, variance based and covariance based estimators. PLS fits into the variance based estimator group, which has found regular use in the business research field (Benitez et al., 2020; Müller et al., 2018). One of the specialties of PLS is being able to model with relatively small sample sizes, whilst still showing robust findings (Chin, 1998). Therefore PLS was chosen as the appropriate technique to assess the proposed model. SmartPLS 4 was used to carry out the analysis. This software was chosen due to it being freely available, being user friendly, and having advanced reporting features (Wong, 2013).

5.4 assessment of the model

Before being able to assess the model, several tests should be performed to ensure the robustness and accuracy of the results of the PLS analysis. These tests include the construct reliability, indicator reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity. SmartPLS 4 was used to perform these tests.

Construct reliability refers to the degree to which a construct accurately measures the underlying concept it intends to represent. By examining construct reliability the consistency and stability of the measures can be assessed. This measure is necessary to avoid measurement errors that could affect the validity of the analysis (Rosli et al., 2021). Construct reliability is measured with Cronbach's alpha and the commonly accepted threshold is 0.7, although in some cases a lower value of 0.6 is seen as acceptable (Nunnally, 1978). As seen in table 6, the Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0.13 to 0.89.

Embedded partnership logic and *normative supplier commitment* are above the threshold, whilst

transactional partnership logic, misalignment of partnership logic and instrumental supplier commitment do not exceed the threshold. However, *instrumental supplier commitment* is still at an acceptable level of construct reliability above 0.6. After examining the Cronbach's alpha the conclusion must be drawn that the data is subject to insufficient construct reliability.

Indicator reliability focusses on the individual observed variables, also called indicators, that comprise a construct. This test examines the consistency and stability of each indicator to assess their reliability. To provide accurate measurements of the latent constructs reliable indicators are crucial. Assessing indicator reliability ensures that the observed variables capture the intended meaning of the construct and minimize measurement errors. Indicator reliability is commonly assessed using composite reliability (CR). The commonly accepted threshold for CR is a rho c of 0.7 and is usually seen as satisfactory reliability of the indicators, whilst a rho c above 0.6 is seen as acceptable (Benitez et al., 2020). As seen in table 6, CR ranges from 0.38 to 0.89. *Embedded partnership logic* and *normative supplier commitment* are above the threshold, whilst *transactional partnership logic, misalignment of partnership logic and instrumental supplier commitment* do not exceed the threshold. However, *instrumental supplier commitment* is still at an acceptable level of composite reliability above 0.6. After examining the CR the conclusion must be drawn that the data is subject to insufficient Indicator reliability.

Convergent validity examines the extent to which different indicators of the same construct provide similar results. This test focusses on examining whether the indicators measuring the same construct are related and produce consistent findings. Satisfactory convergent validity indicates that the indicators adequately represent the latent construct. This test ensures confidence in the accuracy and coherence of the measurement model. Convergent Validity is evaluated through the average variance extracted (AVE). A commonly accepted threshold of AVE is 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As seen in table 6, AVE ranges from 0.29 to 0.68. *Embedded partnership logic* and *normative supplier commitment* are above the threshold, whilst *transactional partnership logic, misalignment of partnership logic and instrumental supplier commitment* do not exceed the threshold. After examining the AVE values the conclusion must be drawn that the data is subject to insufficient convergent validity.

Table 6

Quality criteria of constructs

Construct	No. of items	AVE	CR	Cronb. α
Embedded partnership logic	3	0.57	0.79	0.79
Transactional partnership logic	2	0.34	0.38	0.13
Internal misalignment of partnership logic	4	0.29	0.58	0.58
Normative supplier commitment	4	0.68	0.89	0.89
Instrumental supplier commitment	3	0.40	0.65	0.67

Notes: AVE = Average Variance Extracted; CR = Composite Reliability; Cronb. α = Cronbach's alpha

Discriminant validity examines the extent to which different constructs are distinct from one another. It assesses whether indicators are related more to their construct than they are related to other constructs within the model. This test ensures that the constructs are not confounded or overlapping, providing evidence that the constructs are independent. Satisfactory discriminant validity ensures that interpretation of the constructs is possible without interference of the common method bias or measurement errors. Discriminant validity is commonly measured using heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations. A common threshold of HTMT is 0.85. The square root of the HTMT ratio between two constructs should be below this value to ensure discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). As seen in table 7 found in appendix A, all HTMT ratios are below the

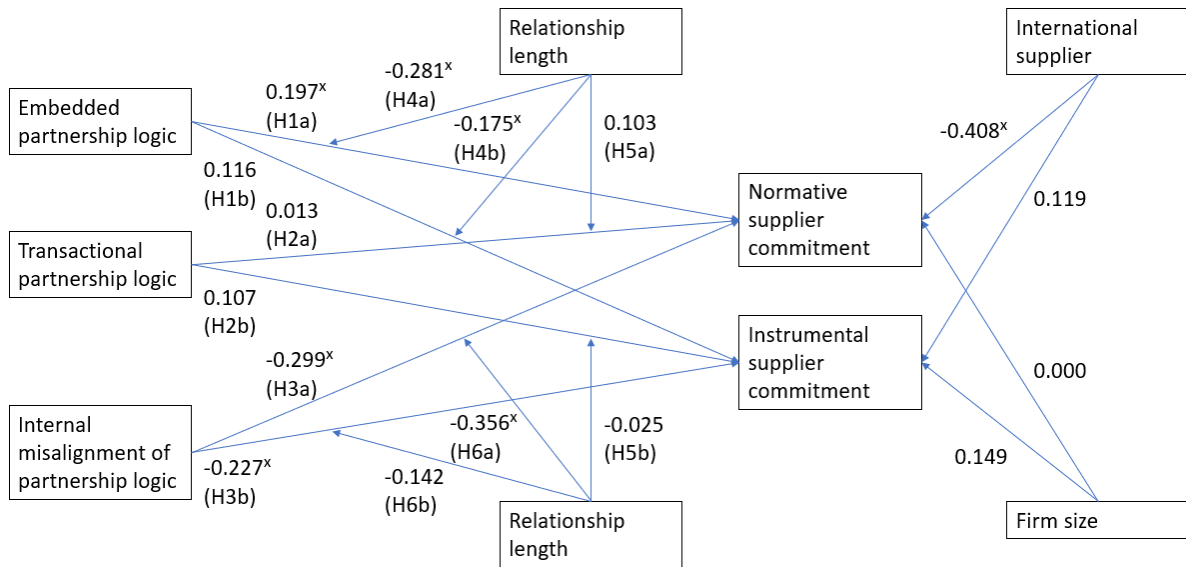
threshold of 0.85 except for the HTMT ratio between *embedded partnership logic* and *transactional partnership logic*, the HTMT ratio between *transactional partnership logic* and *internal misalignment of partnership logic*, the HTMT ratio between *transactional partnership logic* and *normative supplier commitment*, the HTMT ratio between *transactional partnership logic* and *instrumental supplier commitment*, and the HTMT ratio between *relational length X embedded partnership logic* and *relational length X transactional partnership logic*. This indicates that discriminant validity is not established. After examining the HTMT ratios the conclusion must be drawn that the data is subject to insufficient Discriminant validity.

Lastly the common method bias could influence the validity of the results as the data was collected through surveys (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). Common method bias refers to the potential bias introduced by the shared method of data collection, in this case surveys, which can lead to inflated relationships between variables. Testing for the common method bias ensures accurate interpretation of relationships, enhances credibility of the results, improves model fit, and facilitates valid comparisons across studies (Podsakoff et al., 2003). To combat this potential threat a full collinearity assessment approach was taken. This is done by assessing the variance inflation factor (VIF) of the constructs. The threshold value of VIF is commonly believed to be 3.3 (Kock, 2015). As seen in table 8 found in appendix B, all the constructs are above the threshold. However, a VIF value below 5.0 is not likely to be problematic for collinearity (J. F. Hair et al., 2021). Embedded partnership logic, transactional partnership logic and relational length are below the cutoff of 3.3. Relational length X transactional partnership logic is below the acceptable cutoff of 5.0. Internal misalignment of partnership logic, relationship length X embedded partnership logic, and relational length X misalignment of partnership logic are above the acceptable cutoff. After examining the VIF values the conclusion must be drawn, that the data is subject to the common method bias.

6. Results

To test the hypothesis of the proposed model, a bootstrapping procedure with 5000 samples was used to examine the significance of the relationships. To assess the stability of the results, bootstrapping procedures with 1000 and 2500 samples were used. No differences could be found between the results of the bootstrapping procedures indicating stability. Due to the relatively small sample size of this study a beta cut-off value was used in addition to the significance level to assess the results. The significance level used in this study is an alpha of 0.05 and the beta cut-off used 0.15. When a hypothesis is not significant ($\alpha > 0.05$) but the effect (beta coefficient) is 0.15 or higher, the hypothesis is considered substantially supported. Figure 2. Shows the full model with beta coefficients, a summary of the figure can be found in table 9 found in Appendix C.

Figure 2
Empirical model



Note: * = Substantial

Hypothesis 1 stated that embedded partnership logic positively influences normative supplier commitment (1a) and instrumental supplier commitment (1b). Hypothesis 1a and 1b are not supported ($\beta = 0.197$, $t = 0.880$, $p = 0.379$; $\beta = 0.116$, $t = 0.518$, $p = 0.604$). However, a positive influence of embedded partnership logic on normative supplier commitment is substantially supported. Hypothesis 2 stated that transactional partnership logic negatively influences normative supplier commitment (2a) and instrumental supplier commitment (2b). Hypothesis 2a and 2b are not supported ($\beta = 0.013$, $t = 0.053$, $p = 0.958$; $\beta = 0.107$, $t = 0.444$, $p = 0.657$). Hypothesis 3 stated that the internal alignment of partnership logic positively influences the normative supplier commitment (3a) and instrumental supplier commitment (3b). Hypothesis 3a and 3b are not supported ($\beta = -0.299$, $t = 1.491$, $p = 0.136$; $\beta = -0.227$, $t = 1.415$, $p = 0.157$). However, a negative influence of misalignment of partnership logic on both normative and instrumental supplier commitment is substantially supported. Hypothesis 4 states that relationship length positively moderates the effect of embedded partnership logic on normative supplier commitment (4a) and instrumental supplier commitment (4b). Hypothesis 4a and 4b are not supported ($\beta = -0.281$, $t = 0.935$, $p = 0.350$; $\beta = -0.175$, $t = 0.639$, $p = 0.523$). However, a substantial negative moderating effect of relationship length between embedded partnership logic and both normative and instrumental supplier commitment has been found. Hypothesis 5 states that relationship length positively moderates the effect of transactional partnership logic on normative supplier commitment (5a) and instrumental supplier commitment (5b). Hypothesis 5a and 5b are not supported ($\beta = 0.103$, $t = 0.254$, $p = 0.799$; $\beta = -0.025$, $t = 0.069$, $p = 0.945$). Hypothesis 6 states that relationship length positively moderates the effect of internal alignment of partnership logic on normative supplier commitment (6a) and instrumental supplier commitment (6b). Hypothesis 6a and 6b are not supported ($\beta = -0.356$, $t = 1.519$, $p = 0.129$; $\beta = -0.142$, $t = 0.777$, $p = 0.437$). However, a substantial negative moderating effect of relationship length between misalignment of partnership logic and normative supplier commitment has been found.

International supplier has a substantial negative effect on normative supplier commitment, whilst no effect has been found on instrumental supplier commitment ($\beta = -0.408$, $t = 1.688$, $p = 0.092$; $\beta =$

0.119, $t = 0.440$, $p = 0.660$). Firm size has been found to have no effect on normative and instrumental supplier commitment ($\beta = 0.000$, $t = 0.002$, $p = 0.999$; $\beta = 0.149$, $t = 0.959$, $p = 0.337$).

Table 10
Results of hypotheses tests

Hypothesis	Path coefficient	outcome
Embedded partnership logic → Normative supplier commitment (H1a)	0.197	Substantially supported
Embedded partnership logic → Instrumental supplier commitment (H1b)	0.116	Not supported
Transactional partnership logic → Normative supplier commitment (H2a)	0.013	Not supported
Transactional partnership logic → Instrumental supplier commitment (H2b)	0.107	Not supported
Internal alignment of partnership logic → normative supplier commitment (H3a)	-0.299	Substantially supported
Alignment of partnership logic → instrumental supplier commitment (H3b)	-0.227	Substantially supported
Embedded partnership logic X relationship length → normative supplier commitment (H4a)	-0.281	Not supported
Embedded partnership logic X relationship length → instrumental supplier commitment (H4b)	-0.175	Not supported
Transactional partnership logic X relationship length → Normative supplier commitment (H5a)	0.103	Not supported
Transactional partnership logic X relationship length → Instrumental supplier commitment (H5b)	-0.025	Not supported
Internal alignment partnership logic X relationship length → normative supplier commitment (H6a)	-0.356	Not supported
Internal alignment of partnership logic X relationship length → instrumental supplier commitment (H6b)	-0.142	Not supported

7. Conclusion and discussion

The aim of this study was to explore if partnership logic and its internal misalignment between the purchasing department and internal stakeholders could affect the dimensions of supplier commitment. In addition this study aimed to explore if these effects could be moderated by relationship length. By doing so, this study identified embedded partnership logic and misalignment of partnership logic as key influences on the dimensions of supplier commitment, whilst also identifying a moderating role of relationship length the effects of embedded partnership logic and misalignment of partnership logic on the dimensions of supplier commitment.

As indicated in figure 2, the results of this study show that embedded partnership logic has a substantial positive effect on normative supplier commitment, whilst not having an effect on instrumental supplier commitment. Transactional partnership logic does not have an effect on normative nor instrumental supplier commitment. Internal misalignment has a substantial negative effect on both normative and instrumental supplier commitment. Relationship length has a substantial negatively moderating effect on the relation between embedded partnership logic on normative supplier commitment and instrumental supplier commitment. Relationship length does not have a moderating effect on the relation between transactional partnership logic on normative supplier commitment or instrumental supplier commitment. Relationship length has a substantial negatively moderating effect on the relation between internal misalignment of partnership logic on normative supplier commitment, whilst not having a moderating effect on the relation between internal misalignment of partnership logic and instrumental supplier commitment. Being an international supplier has a substantial negative effect on normative supplier commitment, whilst not having an effect on instrumental supplier commitment. Supplier firm size does not have an effect on normative supplier commitment nor instrumental supplier commitment.

7.1 Theoretical contributions

By examining the different dimensions of partnership logic and further expanding the topic by integrating its internal misalignment between the purchasing department and internal stakeholders and connecting it this to the dimensions of supplier commitment, this study has let to several interesting finding, of which four are highlighted. First, the findings of this study contribute to the literature on supplier commitment (Brown et al., 1995; Ghijsen et al., 2010; Gilliland & Bello, 2002; Nyaga et al., 2010; Patrucco et al., 2020) by introducing the internal workings of the buying firm as an antecedent. Prior research predominantly focusses on antecedents of supplier commitment in the buyer-supplier relationship (Nyaga et al., 2010; Patrucco et al., 2020), whilst recent research focusses on supplier commitment as an independent antecedent for other subjects, such as green supply chain practices (Ghosh et al., 2022; Guo, 2022; Qiao et al., 2022). However, the results of this study unveil that internal workings of the buying firm can indeed affect supplier commitment. The findings highlight that supplier commitment is not solely based on external workings of the buyer-supplier relationship, but is also based on the internal workings of the buying firm itself. More specifically this study found that the internal misalignment of partnership logic has a substantial negative effect on both normative and instrumental supplier commitment. the results align with expectations as previous research has found trust to be an antecedent of supplier commitment (Bennett & Gabriel, 2001; Nyaga et al., 2010), whilst research into internal misalignment of partnership logic has found a negative effect on trust (Brattström & Faems, 2020). However this study findings suggest a direct link between the internal misalignment of partnership logic and supplier commitment, opening the door for more research into antecedents for supplier commitment within the domain of internal workings of the buying firm.

Second, the findings of this study contribute to the literature on partnership logic (Brattström & Faems, 2020; Rokkan et al., 2003; Whipple et al., 2010), by examining its effect on the dimensions of supplier commitment, whilst also adding the internal alignment of partnership logic. Prior research found embedded partnership logic to have a positive effect on e.g. R&D performance and supplier performance (Corsten & Kumar, 2005; Svahn & Westerlund, 2009). The results of this study show that embedded partnership logic has a substantial positive effect on normative supplier commitment, which aligns with predictions and previous research that found the supplier's perception of pledges of investments and relational trust to positively influence normative supplier

commitment (Gilliland & Bello, 2002). However, this study has not found an effect of embedded partnership logic on instrumental supplier commitment nor an effect of transactional partnership logic on either normative or instrumental partnership logic. This provides new insights as this contradicts current literature (Whipple et al., 2010) as it indicates that embedded partnership logic does not translate to instrumental supplier commitment, as well as indicating that transactional partnership logic does not translate to normative nor instrumental supplier commitment.

Third, the findings of this study contribute to the literature regarding the effect of internal actors within the buying firm on the supplier relationship (Alam et al., 2022; Brattström & Faems, 2020; H. Cheah & Kian Yeik, 2022; Vidal & Van Buren III, 2022; Weller et al., 2021), by further exploring the effects of this relatively unexplored topic. This was done by further building upon the work of Brattström and Faems (2020) on internal misalignment of partnership logic, that found a negative effect on supplier trust, by exploring its effect on the dimensions of supplier commitment. The results of this study show that the misalignment of partnership logic has a substantial negative effect on both normative and instrumental supplier commitment. This provides new insights as the direct effect indicates that internal misalignment does have the potential to negatively impact both normative and instrumental supplier commitment. This aligns with predictions and previous research (Brattström & Faems, 2020), but also highlights the potential for internal misalignment of partnership logic to negatively other aspects of the buyer-supplier relationship.

Fourth, to further expand upon the effects in this study the moderating role of relationship length was examined, to give more depth to the relations. The two substantial paths between embedded partnership logic and normative and supplier commitment and the substantial path between misalignment of partnership logic and normative supplier commitment boast a substantial negatively moderating effect from relationship length. In addition, one non-substantial path between embedded partnership logic and instrumental supplier commitment boasts a substantial negatively moderating effect from relationship length. This offers new insights as it contradicts the expectations, which were based on SET and RDT (Hillman et al., 2009; Patrucco et al., 2020). The negative moderating effect of relationship length on the relation between embedded partnership logic and normative supplier commitment indicates that the strength of the effect diminishes over time, which is aligned with some research. Villena et al. (2016) argues that over the course of relationships a loss of objectiveness, complacency and redundancy develop, which negatively influence the relationship with the supplier. The negative moderating effect of relationship length on the relation between internal misalignment of partnership logic and normative supplier commitment indicates that the strength of the effects diminish over time, which is not aligned expectations nor literature. Brattström and Faems (2020) found that the misalignment of partnership logic increasingly negatively influenced the relationship between the buyer and supplier over time. The findings of this study give insights into a different perspective, which could be examined as it indicates the opposite effect.

7.2 Practical implications

Even though this study has no significant effects, it boasts several substantial effects, which give insights into the strength and direction of the effects, making it interesting to managers. This study's findings show that the misalignment of partnership logic within the buying firm has a negative effect on normative and instrumental supplier commitment, where others found it to have negative impact on the supplier's trust (Brattström & Faems, 2020). This reinforces the notion that a cohesive and uniform partnership logic within the buying firm has to be established to be able to elicit supplier

commitment. In addition, this study found embedded partnership logic to positively influence normative supplier commitment. Although other research would suggest that supplier commitment increases with the level of embeddedness with the relationship (Knemeyer et al., 2003), this is only true for normative supplier commitment. according to the findings of this research, managers should realise that beliefs of partnership logic within the firm are not heterogeneous (Geppert & Dörrenbächer, 2014; Lumineau & Barros De Oliveira, 2018). If they seek to increase normative supplier commitment, a cohesive and uniform embedded partnership logic within the buying firm has to be established. This can be done by promoting shared values and common goals between the different internal stakeholders as this improves coordinated behaviour (Santa et al., 2010). Additionally, cohesiveness could be achieved through collaboration, which could be enabled through a joint task structure with shared responsibility (Pagell & Wu, 2006).

The findings of this study also show that relational length negatively moderates the effects of embedded partnership logic on supplier commitment. Therefore, managers should realise that in embedded relationships the positive effects on normative commitment diminish. Managers should prevent loss of objectiveness, complacency and redundancy within the buyer-supplier relationship (Nguyen, 2021; Villena et al., 2016). This can be achieved through setting challenging goals and contract management. It could also help to introduce rotation policies, where different personnel interacts with the supplier to prevent excessive camaraderie (Villena et al., 2016). Managers should also realise that if there is an internal misalignment of partnership logic that its effect will diminish over time. Managers should thus be careful not to misinterpret the decrease in negative effects of internal misalignment of partnership logic on normative supplier commitment for a sign of successfully implementing a uniform partnership logic.

7.3 Limitations and future research

This research has some limitations that have to be addressed. First this research was based on a sample size of 69. This sample size is below the minimum threshold of 100 for hypotheses testing in models with five or less latent variables (Hair et al., 2010). Due to the small sample size substantial effects with a beta cutoff above 0.15 have also been incorporated. Consequently the theoretical contributions and practical implications are based on these effects. The incorporation of substantial effects may cause the findings of this study not to be generalizable. Second this study is subject to construct reliability, indicator reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Three out of the five constructs are below the satisfactory level for construct reliability, although one out of the three is above the acceptable level of construct reliability. Three out of the five constructs are below the satisfactory level for indicator reliability, although one out of the three is above the acceptable level of indicator reliability. Three out of the five constructs are below the satisfactory level for convergent validity. Several HTMT ratios are above the acceptable level for discriminant validity. Three out of the five constructs are below the satisfactory level for construct reliability, although one out of the three is above the acceptable level of construct reliability. Four out of the seven constructs are below the satisfactory level for common method bias, although one out of the four is above the acceptable level of common method bias. Lastly, this study measured embedded and transactional partnership logic as separate items, even though some researchers have referred to them being on a continuum from completely transactional to completely embedded (Brattström & Faems, 2020; Whipple et al., 2010), which could have affected the findings of this study.

For future research to add to the findings of this study, it is crucial to use an adequate sample size of at minimum 100 cases for more generalizable results and better construct reliability, indicator

reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Furthermore, future research could use items that would reflect partnership logic to be a classification continuum, which borders between transactional and collaborative. In addition future research could investigate the misalignment of partnership logic further by investigating if the partnership logic of either the purchaser or internal other has a larger impact. Moreover, future research could investigate if the actual relationship type, being either transactional or embedded, has a moderating role on the effects of misalignment of partnership logic. Lastly, other researchers are urged to investigate additional effects of the relatively unexplored topic of misalignment of partnership logic.

8. Acknowledgements

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10. Appendix

Appendix A

Table 7

Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)

Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Embedded partnership logic									
2. Transactional partnership logic	2.01								
3. Internal misalignment of partnership logic	0.58	1.53							
4. Normative supplier commitment	0.37	0.86	0.25						
5. Instrumental supplier commitment	0.40	0.93	0.35	0.84					
6. Relational length	0.28	0.45	0.27	0.07	0.18				
7. Relational length X Embedded partnership logic	0.12	0.14	0.26	0.09	0.10	0.40			
8. Relational length X transactional partnership logic	0.17	0.36	0.26	0.08	0.08	0.53	0.89		
9. Relational length X internal misalignment of partnership logic	0.20	0.67	0.37	0.14	0.09	0.22	0.44	0.39	

Appendix B

Table 8

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values

Constructs	Normative supplier commitment	Instrumental supplier commitment
Embedded partnership logic	-0.45	--0.45
Transactional partnership logic	-2.11	-2.11
Internal misalignment of partnership logic	6.25	6.25
Relational length	2.87	2.87
Relational length X Embedded partnership logic	5.84	5.84
Relational length X transactional partnership logic	4.82	4.82

Relational length X internal misalignment of partnership logic	8.07	8.07
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Appendix C

Table 9

Results of PLS analysis

Variable	Normative supplier commitment	Instrumental supplier commitment
Embedded partnership logic	$\beta = 0.197, t = 0.880, p = 0.379$	$\beta = 0.116, t = 0.518, p = 0.604$
Transactional partnership logic	$\beta = 0.013, t = 0.053, p = 0.958$	$\beta = 0.107, t = 0.444, p = 0.657$
Misalignment of partnership logic	$\beta = -0.299, t = 1.491, p = 0.136$	$\beta = -0.227, t = 1.415, p = 0.157$
Embedded partnership logic X relationship length	$\beta = -0.281, t = 0.935, p = 0.350$	$\beta = -0.175, t = 0.639, p = 0.523$
Transactional partnership logic X relationship length	$\beta = 0.103, t = 0.254, p = 0.799$	$\beta = -0.025, t = 0.069, p = 0.945$
Internal alignment partnership logic X relationship length	$\beta = -0.356, t = 1.519, p = 0.129$	$\beta = -0.142, t = 0.777, p = 0.437$
International supplier	$\beta = -0.408, t = 1.688, p = 0.092$	$\beta = 0.119, t = 0.440, p = 0.660$
Firm size	$\beta = 0.000, t = 0.002, p = 0.999$	$\beta = 0.149, t = 0.959, p = 0.337$