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Different Perceptions of Business Relationship Value

Work-in-progress paper

Tibor Mandják¹

¹Corresponding author

Bordeaux Business School and Budapest University of Economic Sciences and Public
Administration

680, cours de la Libération, 33405 Talence Cedex France

Voice: 33-556-84-2228

Fax: 33-556-84-5500

Email: tibor.mandjak@bordeaux-bs.edu

Tatiana Bouzdine-Chameeva

Bordeaux Business School

680, cours de la Liberation, 33405 Talence Cedex France

Voice: 33-556-84-2235

Fax: 33-556-84-5500

Email: tatiana.chameeva@bordeaux-bs.edu

François Durrieu

Bordeaux Business School

680, cours de la Liberation, 33405 Talence Cedex France

Voice: 33-556-84-2256

Fax: 33-556-84-5500

Email: francois.durrieu@bordeaux-bs.edu

Abstract

Business relationship value is a quite complex phenomenon. It has economic, social, and time dimensions. It means different things at episode, relationship, and network level. In each level, it presents a combination in time of different economic and social elements. Each person involved in the same business relationship perceives this combination differently. However, it has also a collective perception at least by two groups of people, members of buying centre on one side and selling centre's members on the other side.

What is the buyer's perception of business relationship? What are its main elements and how are they structured? How individual perceptions of the buying centre members' do influence the collective vision of the value of a business relationship? What is the opinion on the seller's side? How do they perceive the value of the same business relationship? Is this perception the same or quite different from the buyers' one? Do they evaluate an importance of the same elements similarly or differently to the buyers?

Continuing our previous research, using of individual and collective causal maps in this paper we attempt to answer some of these questions. We study a buyer's and a seller's sides of the same business relationship. Group interviews with involved people at the buyers' and sellers' sides have been held. Two different lists of items have been used to generate and to emerge the main perceived elements of the business relationship value. Using these elements individual causal maps have been constructed for all group members. Special software is applied to elaborate four different types of collective causal maps based of the individual data. In our paper, we analyse these maps and perform a comparative analysis to define a collective perception of the

value of the same business relationship. Some first findings emphasizes the important role of social elements (relationship security, network aspects) of the business relationship value.

Subject areas: business relationship, group decision support, cognitive mapping.

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