

Salesperson time perspectives and customer willingness to pay more: roles of intraorganizational employee navigation, customer satisfaction, and firm innovation climate

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Abstract:

This research aims to fill a critical gap in the sales literature by proposing a relationship-based model of customer willingness to pay more, involving salesperson time perspectives (i.e., long-term perspective and short-term perspective), intraorganizational employee navigation, and customer satisfaction with the salesperson. We also examine the moderating role of firm innovation climate. Multisource survey data were collected from 204 salespeople in a business-to-business sales context along with external ratings from customers of these salespeople three months later. The findings indicate that both long- and short-term perspectives have positive effects on intraorganizational employee navigation and customer satisfaction, which, in turn, positively affect customer willingness to pay more. In addition, short-term perspective has a stronger impact than long-term perspective on intraorganizational employee navigation. Further, the effect of long-term perspective on customer satisfaction is strengthened by the innovation climate of the firm, whereas the effect of short-term perspective on customer satisfaction is weakened by it.

Keywords: sales performance | time perspective | customer satisfaction | innovation climate | employee navigation

Article:

“Actions, emotions, and certainly the morale of an individual at any instant depend upon his total time perspective” Lewin (1942, 104).

Since the development of the marketing concept, one of the most influential trends in marketing has been the growth of relationship marketing (Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh 1987; Palmatier et al. 2006). This growth has encouraged research studies that examine the relational nature of

marketing approaches at the firm level (e.g., Coviello et al. 2002; Pillai and Sharma 2003) and the salesperson level (e.g., Autry, Williams, and Moncrief 2013). However, at both levels, the literature's application is largely limited to long-term approaches to define and justify relationship marketing (Styles and Ambler 2003). The misgivings of applying such a constrained view have been highlighted by scholars who argue that effective implementation of relationship marketing would include addressing customer needs in both the short term and long term (Homburg, Koschate, and Hoyer 2005; Styles and Ambler 2003) and that relationship marketing involves activities to enhance relational bonds that can be implemented in the short term as well (Palmatier et al. 2007a). Both short- and long-term activities, therefore, are important to sales organizations' success in business-to-business (B2B) markets. To this end, the current study extends prior literature by examining, for the first time, the distinct contributions of salespersons' time perspectives to their success with customer relationships.

The concept of time varies considerably across salespeople (Beuk et al. 2014). Aligning with the recent scholarly advances that define time perspective as the degree to which salespeople let their efforts be influenced by time-based goals (Beuk et al. 2014), we refer to salesperson long-term perspective as a general disposition to take a futuristic approach in dealing with customers, where benefits may take time to emerge. Salesperson short-term perspective is characterized by a disposition to take a present-focused sales approach with the expectation of immediate results. As customers' willingness to pay more (WTPM) is a key indicator of the value they receive from being in a relationship with a firm (Palmatier, Scheer, and Steenkamp 2007b), the key question this research intends to address is how these two time perspectives of salespeople affect the WTPM of their B2B customers.

In recent years, sellers have been adjusting to changes in buyers' preferences in the new digital era. The very notion of what relationship selling entails is transforming. For example, recent research suggests that relational selling has evolved from a primary focus on long-term relationship to a focus on value creation strategies that fit better with customers' evolving business models (Arlı, Bauer, and Palmatier 2018). These new business models often involve a greater preference for online interfaces and electronically mediated communications, which are often more efficient for the customer and fit better with a short-term perspective. However, these customer preferences must be balanced with the use of traditional, personal communications that are more effective at building lasting relational bonds and fit better with a long-term perspective. At present, there is a lack of understanding of how, and under what conditions, the two perspectives contribute to salespersons' customer-relationship-building goals. Further, as team-based selling approaches are applied more commonly in this environment (Arlı, Bauer, and Palmatier 2018), such understanding is critical to effectively manage these teams.

Conceptual overview

WTPM is considered to be a key contributor to firm profitability, yet only a handful of scholars have studied this outcome (e.g., Haumann et al. 2014; Homburg, Koschate, and Hoyer 2005; Homburg, Wieseke, and Hoyer 2009; Palmatier et al. 2007a, b). This stream of research suggests that WTPM is mainly influenced by customer perceptions of the firm and/or its offering (e.g., Haumann et al. 2014; Homburg, Koschate, and Hoyer 2005; Homburg, Wieseke, and Hoyer 2009). However, marketplace performance in sales research is generally considered

retrospectively, and it is rare for researchers to consider forward-looking metrics that are indicative of value received and future profitability such as WTPM (Palmatier, Scheer, and Steenkamp 2007b). Notably, research involving this critical financial outcome is sorely lacking in the B2B sales context.

Intuitively, it seems reasonable to expect that WTPM would only be enhanced by salespersons' long-term perspective since this perspective is consistent with value creation efforts over time. However, in this study we predict that both short- and long-term perspectives will enhance WTPM by facilitating satisfaction with the salesperson, albeit through different processes. This line of thinking builds upon previous research suggesting that relationship marketing goals can be achieved in a variety of ways (Palmatier et al. 2007a). Since not all customers want their salespeople to take a long-term approach during the exchange process (Autry, Williams, and Moncrief 2013; Sharma and Pillai 2003; Viio and Grönroos 2016), a long-term perspective may alienate some B2B clients. Thus, possessing a short-term time perspective would be beneficial to salespeople in many circumstances.

Our conjecture that distinct time perspectives will be more applicable to certain business situations faced by salespeople is consistent with the research involving different salesperson orientations. For example, if a buying organization focuses on how a sourced product can improve its capability to generate bottom-line profits over time, salespeople with dominant long-term time perspective may do better. However, salespeople with a short-term perspective could more effectively work things out to meet the needs of their customers if an unexpected situation arises. For example, an existing customer may ask a salesperson for additional deliveries in a present quarter if the company suddenly drops other product suppliers. In this situation, a salesperson may have to work around obstacles in his own organization to address the customer's needs on a timely basis. Thus, both long- and short-term time perspectives are applicable when salespeople consider how to preserve and expand their portfolio of customers (Lambe and Spekman 1997). These findings are in line with our argument that both long- and short-term perspectives can enhance customers' WTPM by helping salespeople satisfy different customer needs.

Applying personality-performance process models from industrial and organizational psychology (Johnson 2003, 2008), sales research suggests that the influence of salesperson psychological states (e.g., salesperson orientations or time perspectives in this case) on performance outcomes is mediated by specific salesperson behaviors or proactive processes (Goad and Jaramillo 2014; Zhang and Zhang 2014). In this research, we treat intraorganizational employee navigation (IEN; Plouffe and Grégoire 2011) and customer satisfaction as the key process factors through which time perspectives affect WTPM. Building upon the work of Plouffe and Grégoire (2011), we define IEN as self-initiated behaviors salespeople engage in to identify and utilize key personnel within their organization who can assist them with job-related tasks and responsibilities. IEN represents a critical element of the salesperson-organization interface, whereas customer satisfaction with salespeople reflects an important aspect of the salesperson-customer interface. Both interfaces are affected by salesperson time perspectives and subsequently play a role in ultimately enhancing customer WTPM. Understanding the underlying mechanisms by which time perspectives affect WTPM is important as this understanding can facilitate the proper implementation of sales strategies that influence customers' willingness to pay a premium price.

We further suggest that salespeople's perceptions of their firm climate act as a critical moderator for the effects of these two time perspectives. This builds upon the person-situation interaction framework (Brown, Cron, and Slocum 1998), which recognizes that the interactions between salespeople's personal variables (attitudes and orientations) and their perceptions of organizational psychological climate are critical determinants of their performance. Specifically, innovation climate is the aspect of salespersons' psychological climate most dependent on time as a critical resource (Evans et al. 2007; Scott and Bruce 1994). To create an innovation climate, it is important to provide employees with opportunities to work without time pressure and allow them to take a long-term strategy at work (Ahmed 1998). Thus, salespeople with long-term perspectives would appear to fit well in firms with greater innovation climates. Despite its acknowledged importance to firm competitiveness and salesperson job outcomes in modern business environments (Evans et al. 2007; Wang and Ma 2013), firm innovation climate has received little sales research attention.

Time perspective

It is a well-established notion that individuals "partition the flow of human experience into the distinct temporal categories of past, present, and future" and the use of such categories is based on individual preferences and the demands of a given situation or task (Zimbardo, Keough, and Boyd 1997, 1008). In essence, time perspective concerns differences in anticipated goals that individuals aim to secure, either long term or short term (de Bilde, Vansteenkiste, and Lens 2011; Husman and Lens 1999). It has been argued that the theory of time perspective provides a basis for empirical analysis of individual actions and behaviors in the context of time (Stolarski, Fieulaine, and van Beek 2015).

Contemporary research considers time perspective to be both a process, used to organize individual experiences, and a relatively stable trait, whereby individuals habitually focus on the past, present, or future (Stolarski et al. 2016). Our research is consistent with the latter view of time perspective being a relatively stable trait. However, since business interactions must occur in the present or be planned for the future, frameworks related to marketing exchanges generally focus on the present or the future (Medlin 2004). Focusing on the present is considered a "short-term" perspective, while focusing on the future is viewed as a "long-term" perspective (Ganesan 1994). These two time perspectives are not simply the opposite ends of the same spectrum, but have distinct influences on behavior (Rothspan and Read 1996; Zimbardo, Keough, and Boyd 1997). Moreover, the short-term time perspective is considered to be a characteristic of transaction-oriented strategy and the long-term time perspective reflects characteristics of the relationship strategy (Grönroos 1995).

Given that a key characteristic of the short- and long-term perspectives is the temporal approach to exchange, respectively, "now" or "over time" (Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh 1987; Ganesan 1994; Macintosh and Gentry 1995), time perspectives may influence salespersons' behavioral approaches.¹ A salesperson with a dominant long-term perspective is likely to adopt a behavioral

¹ Although it is beyond the scope of our study, we do want to highlight that, conceptually, salesperson's time perspectives are different from their sales (customer) orientations. Time perspective is all about the interdependence between temporally close and temporally remote consequences of actions (Kelley and Thibaut 1978). It does not

approach characterized by “cooperative intentions and actions, frequent contacts, highly collaborative communication, and mutual disclosure,” whereas a salesperson having a dominant short-term perspective may emphasize closing discrete transactions, as outlined by the contemporary literature (e.g., Autry, Williams, and Moncrief 2013, 167). A short-term perspective reflects the utility of considering success within a short time horizon, driving people to focus more on efficiency and immediate outcomes (Macintosh 2006). A long-term perspective focuses more on building relationships through satisfying customers’ needs over time (Viio and Grönroos 2016).

However, previous marketing applications of time perspective occur mainly at the organizational level (e.g., Ganesan 1994; Ivens and Pardo 2007; Lohtia, Bello, and Porter 2009). Firms with a long-term perspective expect to benefit from the growth of the buyer over time, so they rely on strategies aiming to optimize profits in a long run (Kalwani and Narayandas 1995). By contrast, firms with a short-term perspective are concerned with the results of the present period and, to a large extent, rely on market efficiencies to return an optimal profit (Ganesan 1994).

Another stream of organizational research suggests the coexistence of short-term and long-term marketing approaches within an organization (Brodie et al. 1997; Coviello, Winklhofer, and Hamilton 2006) because contemporary marketing is characterized by numerous complex processes (Coviello et al. 2002). For example, some buyers are looking for short-term solutions and do not have the need or patience for long-term partnerships (Cousins and Spekman 2003). Accordingly, organizations should be ready to cater to different business exchange situations. Although the short-term perspective at the firm level reflects a distinct initiation, shorter duration, and a sharp conclusion (Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh 1987), and relational marketing practices reflect an ongoing process with a longer duration, this stream of research suggests that firms should be ready to employ varying marketing practices after developing an understanding of the customers’ needs (Brodie et al. 1997; Coviello, Winklhofer, and Hamilton 2006).

There is limited research on time perspective at the employee level. Among the rare exceptions (see Table 1), the research emphasis has been mainly on the long-term perspective. For example, Beuk et al. (2014) posited that salespeople’s long-term perspective impacts their sales efforts during a new product launch and shapes their expectations regarding the success of the new product. We argue that this line of research (short versus long term) is unable to present a complete picture of how salespeople approach their business relationships. An emerging stream of research posits that both the short-term and long-term perspectives can positively contribute to success (Beverland 2001; Geiger and Finch 2011).

have any social or empathetic angle. For salespeople who have a dominant long-term perspective, “their short-term actions represent the means by which long-term goals are set in motion” (Beuk et al. 2014). On the other hand, high sales orientation represents high level of concern for self, and customer orientation reflects a high level of concern for others (please refer to Goad and Jaramillo 2014 for more details). Harris, Mowen, and Brown (2005) define selling orientation as “a focus on activities that may result in sales in the short term *at the expense* of customer satisfaction (Saxe and Weitz 1982)” (italics added to emphasize). So the motivational mechanism is based on the question of utility for the object in question, that is, who should I help - myself or customer. Both long- and short-time perspectives, however, have a high level of concern for customers (see the Model development section for more details).

Table 1. Review of the literature on salesperson time perspective.

Citation	Time-related concepts	Standpoint	Findings	Type
Beuk et al. (2014)	Salesperson's long-term orientation	Long-term time orientation is defined as the perceived interdependence between temporally close and temporally remote consequences of actions. Long-term-oriented individuals will let their short-term efforts be influenced by their long-term goals.	Long-term orientation will have a positive effect on success expectations and new product launch efforts	Empirical
Macintosh (2006)	Salesperson's relational time perspective	Relational time perspective captures the temporal extension of an individual in regard to customers or potential customers and reflects the utility of considering success over a longer time horizon.	Self-esteem, locus of control, and empathy were found to be positively related to relational time perspective	Empirical
Schultz and Good (2000)	Salesperson's long-term relationship orientation	Possessing customer perspective itself does not predict future commitments; instead, it should be accompanied by a future time perspective.	Long-term relational orientation leads to preference for long-term compensation	Empirical
Styles and Ambler (2003)	Executives' long-term orientation	Transaction and relational approaches to marketing should not be endorsed as alternative forms because they do not only coexist, but they also reinforce one another.	Chinese executives will look to achieve both long-term and short-term gains.	Conceptual
Weeks and Fournier (2010)	Salesperson's long-term orientation	Congruity between job time personality and Individual time personality can be developed using activity level (i.e., monochronic versus polychronic) and salesperson long-term orientation.	Better time congruity will limit the salesperson's role ambiguity and role conflict	Conceptual
Current study	Salesperson's long- and short-term perspectives	Both long- and short-term perspectives among salespeople can yield positive financial outcomes for the firms. These pathways will include salesperson's success in intraorganizational navigation and customer satisfaction.	Long- and short-term perspectives will influence firm-related financial outcomes through salesperson's internally directed behaviors and customer's satisfaction with the salesperson. Firm's innovation climate will present a boundary condition.	Empirical

Note: Two relatively recent studies, although not solely focused on time perspective, follow an integrative approach at salesperson level and offer theoretical support to the current study. DeCarlo and Lam (2016) studied salesperson-level regulatory focus involving hunting (i.e., inclination to prospect for new customers to achieve sales goals) and farming (i.e., inclination to leverage relationships with existing customers to attain sales goals). Autry, Williams, and Moncrief (2013) studied relational selling (i.e., co-creation communications, need-based selling, interpersonal bonding, postsale service, and relationship continuity) and transactional selling (i.e., business search and logistical support).

Extending previous studies, our research examines the consequences of salespeople's two time perspectives. This approach is consistent with the organizational-level studies discussed earlier and the psychology literature on the topic of time perspective (Rothspan and Read 1996; Zimbardo, Keough, and Boyd 1997). Our arguments are built upon the sales literature, where salespersons' perspectives have been treated as psychological states that are distinct from behaviors (Brown et al. 2002; Grizzle et al. 2009). Further, we respond to the calls made by contemporary sales literature (e.g., DeCarlo and Lam 2016) to study how the differing

salesperson perspectives relate to customer outcomes, specifically satisfaction with the salesperson and WTPM in the current study.

Model development

Effect of time perspectives on IEN

We posit a positive effect of both long- and short-term perspectives on salespersons' IEN, as shown in Figure 1. IEN inherently captures salespeople's inclination and attempt to maintain connections with key others so that resources can be arranged if and when needed (Plouffe, Sridharan, and Barclay 2010; Plouffe and Barclay 2007).

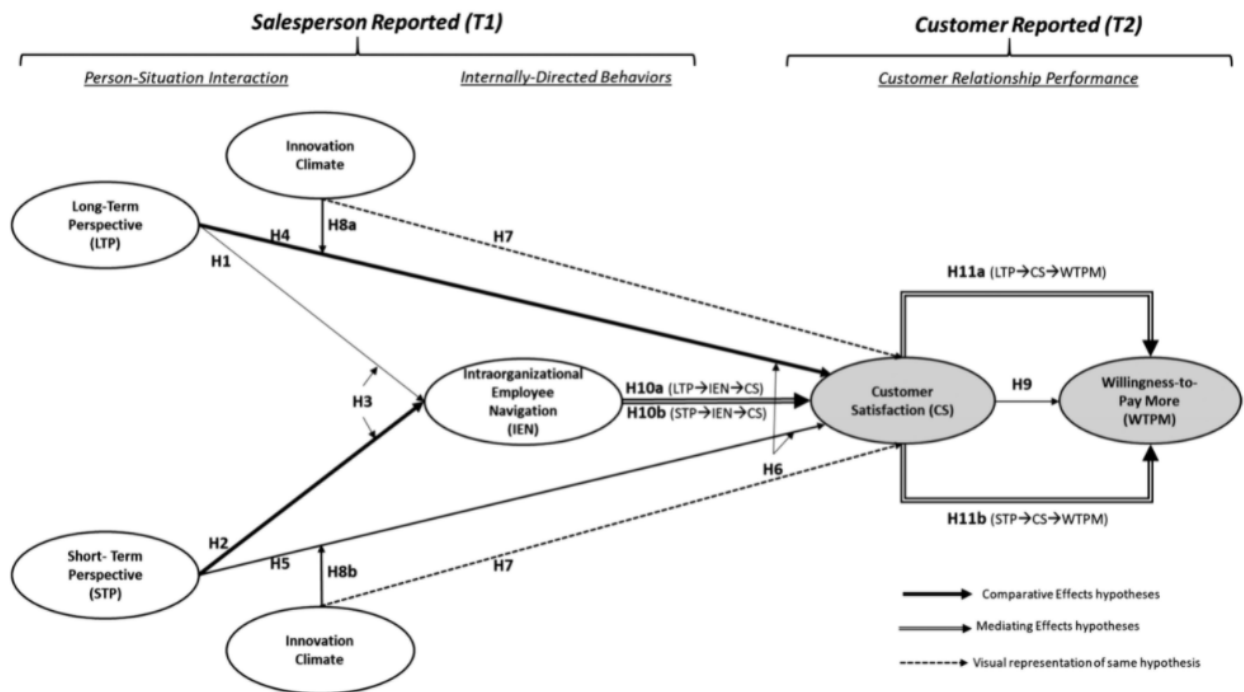


Figure 1. Hypothesized model.

Through a sociological lens, organizations could be viewed as political economies (Zald 1970), where opportunities and circumstances of social interactions are not random (Stern Louis and Reve 1980). An individual's success in "getting things done" would be proportionate to his or her handling of social relationships within an organization's sociopolitical system (Casciaro 1998; Scott 1987). Previous literature highlights the critical role that salespeople play in managing intraorganizational activities during the exchange process with customers (Sengupta, Krapfel, and Pusateri 2000; Tellefsen and Eyuboglu 2002).

Though quite distinct from each other, both short- and long-term time perspectives have motivational properties and energize individuals to move toward their goals (Zimbardo and Boyd 1999). Salespeople with a long-term perspective would be motivated to interact with other salespeople and colleagues from other functional units because these activities impact their ability to deliver superior service to customers and maintain relationships (Workman, Homburg, and Jensen 2003). Salespeople with a short-term perspective would also proactively involve

themselves in IEN to better understand the system patterns and build social relationships within their organization to facilitate their ability to get things done quickly. Thus, we propose that both short- and long-term perspectives positively influence IEN.

H₁: Salesperson long-term perspective has a positive effect on IEN.

H₂: Salesperson short-term perspective has a positive effect on IEN.

We further propose the effect of a short-term perspective on IEN to be stronger than that of a long-term perspective. Our logic is aligned with the emerging sales literature that focuses on internally directed skills/tactics and explores how they pertain to outward, or interorganizational, customer outcomes (Kalra et al. 2017). As IEN represents internally directed orientation and behaviors (Plouffe, Hulland, and Wachner 2009), this inward approach is more aligned with the working styles of people with a dominant short-term perspective.

Salespeople need assistance from key personnel across their own organization to perform transaction-related tasks and activities such as presales support, negotiation, postsales order fulfillment, after-sales service, and so on. To take advantage of market opportunities, salespeople need to coordinate activities and minimize interdepartmental conflicts (Le Meunier-FitzHugh and Piercy 2007). The short-term perspective encourages individuals to eradicate mediocre options as quickly as possible by concentrating on disagreement areas (Macintosh and Gentry 1995). These individuals, who focus on the present, base their decisions and actions on the most pressing issues and their immediate surroundings (Zimbardo, Keough, and Boyd 1997). By contrast, salespeople with a long-term perspective tend to focus on the future and base their actions on their predictions of occurrences at distant points in time (Zimbardo, Keough, and Boyd 1997). Therefore, in comparison to the long-term perspective, a short-term perspective is likely to drive salespeople to focus more on the intraorganizational aspect of their role performance, such as being more responsive to their proximal surroundings and using internal networks to enhance their efficiency in dealing with transactions. Thus, we argue that short-term perspective will be a stronger predictor of a salesperson's internally directed behaviors, such as IEN, than will long-term perspective.

H₃: Salesperson short-term perspective has a stronger positive effect on IEN than does a long-term perspective.

Effect of time perspectives on customer satisfaction with the salesperson

We expect the two types of time perspective to be positively related to customer satisfaction with the salesperson, which relates to business customers' interaction experiences with salespeople. While customers' appraisal of specific experiences and reactions to the episodic exchanges with the seller relates to transaction-specific satisfaction (Olsen and Johnson 2003), satisfaction with the salesperson is a more cumulative satisfaction assessment (Johnson, Anderson, and Fornell 1995). High-quality interaction experiences tie business customers to salespeople and their firms and lead to better economic outcomes for the business customers (Briggs, Landry, and Daugherty 2007; Palmatier et al. 2007a). Researchers have defined this type of customer satisfaction as "an emotional state that occurs in response to an evaluation of interaction

experiences and as a positive affective state” (Ahearne, Jelinek, and Jones 2007, 606). Customer satisfaction with the salesperson is a key aspect of relationship quality (Crosby, Evans, and Cowles 1990).

Business customers are believed to possess short-term preferences that are articulated clearly and long-term preferences that are latent in nature (Thakor and Joshi 2005). Thus, we argue that both short- and long-term perspectives are important when aiming to satisfy customers. Salespeople who have a dominant long-term perspective would treat sales interactions as an opportunity to work with customers as team members and learn more about them (Slater and Olson 2000). These salespeople would enter into sales interactions as relationship managers and seek to align customers’ needs and seller’s offerings (Weitz and Bradford 1999). However, scholars have started to highlight and document the importance of short-term approaches in today’s customer-centric marketplace, as not all customers reciprocate sellers’ long-term activities (e.g., Autry, Williams, and Moncrief 2013). This line of thought is supported by industrial marketing literature positing that certain buyers may not have the patience or needs to invest in potential long-term gains, so they opt for more certain short-term gains (Cousins and Spekman 2003; Viio and Grönroos 2016). Salespeople with a short-term perspective would satisfy customers by sticking to the situation at hand and may come across as efficient collaborators. Thus, it is reasonable to posit a positive effect of both the long- and short-term perspectives on customer satisfaction in the B2B context.

H₄: Salesperson long-term perspective has a positive effect on customer satisfaction with the salesperson.

H₅: Salesperson short-term perspective has a positive effect on customer satisfaction with the salesperson.

We further argue that the long-term perspective has a stronger effect than a short-term perspective on customer satisfaction. This is in line with the logic that customers who feel that they are better served over time are more likely to feel connected with the serving entity than are those who feel that the serving entity does a good job on a particular transaction (Homburg, Koschate, and Hoyer 2005). We argue that salespeople with a dominant short-term perspective will tend to offer a solution targeting the articulated needs and wants of customers to increase the probability of closing an immediate deal. Contrary to this, salespeople with a dominant long-term perspective will be motivated to put in greater efforts cultivating the customer, making them keen at understanding his or her latent needs. Though the process of uncovering latent needs requires greater efforts from salespeople as they work with customers, this activity should enable salespeople to offer customers more appropriate solutions. Thus, we argue that the long-term perspective would have a greater influence on customer satisfaction compared to the short-term perspective.

H₆: Salesperson long-term perspective has a stronger positive effect on customer satisfaction with the salesperson than does a short-term perspective.

Person-situation interaction: the moderating role of innovation climate

Innovativeness is widely considered to be one of the most important determinants of organizational performance (Deshpande, Farley, and Webster 1993) and a characteristic of organizational culture or psychological climate (Evans et al. 2007). The psychological climate for innovation is defined as “the degree to which organization members perceive an organizational climate as supportive of innovation” (Scott and Bruce 1994, 583). For salespeople, a climate for innovation could be reflected by perceived openness, flexibility, and encouraging novel methods of addressing challenges (Evans et al. 2007). Hence, salespeople in innovative climates would not be mandated to implement a particular strategy, whether short term or long term. Research does suggest that organizations with innovative climates also supply the resources needed for innovation to occur, especially the time necessary for employees to pursue creative ideas (Scott and Bruce 1994).

Despite the importance of salespeople creatively addressing customer concerns and challenges in developing and sustaining relationships (Agnihotri et al. 2014), research on perceived innovation climate and its effects is infrequent in sales literature (Wang and Ma 2013). Though innovation climate is a widely accepted determinant of firm performance, the effect of innovation climate on sales performance is less clear (Evans et al. 2007). In addition, little research has examined the moderating role of innovation climate on the effects of salesperson time perspectives.

We begin with an expectation that innovation climate of the firm is positively related to customer satisfaction with the firm salespeople. As previously discussed, business customers may approach a given exchange with either a short- or a long-term perspective (Thakor and Joshi 2005), and it is often up to salespeople to adapt to customer needs and wants despite their own personal perspective (Viio and Grönroos 2016). The more supportive the organization is to innovation, the more freedom the salespeople have to implement strategies appropriate for satisfying the needs and wants of their customers (Wang and Ma 2013). Thus, if customers desire a more relational approach, salespeople operating in innovative climates would have the flexibility to serve them without having to close sales in the short term. Further, in service environments, it has been widely acknowledged that employee satisfaction ultimately improves customer satisfaction (Heskett, Earl Sasser, and Schlesinger 1997), and salesperson satisfaction tends to be higher in more innovative firm climates (Evans et al. 2007). Given these considerations, we suggest the following:

H₇: Firm innovation climate has a positive effect on customer satisfaction with the salesperson.

A good deal of research suggests that the environment or climate of an organization can moderate the effectiveness of employee orientations on outcomes (Grizzle et al. 2009; Howell and Avolio 1993; Tanner, Tanner, and Wakefield 2015). We propose that, in addition to its main effect, building upon the interactionist perspective (Brown, Cron, and Slocum 1998), the innovation climate of the firm moderates the relationship between a salesperson’s time perspective and his or her performance in terms of customer satisfaction. Previous research has posited that the interaction between an employee’s personal characteristics and perceived organizational environment would largely determine that employee’s motivation and performance (e.g., Caldwell and O’Reilly 1990; Holland 1985). Scholars have applied this viewpoint when studying the interactive effects of personal traits (e.g., trait competitiveness) and

situational variables (e.g., competitive psychological climate) (Brown, Cron, and Slocum 1998; Fletcher, Major, and Davis 2008). This interactionist perspective suggests that the performance of an employee is better when there is a fit between the personality traits of the employee and the characteristics of the work environment (Joyce, Slocum, and Glinow 1982). In the present research, the interaction between salesperson time perspective and innovation climate is expected to enhance the effect of a long-term perspective on customer satisfaction with the salesperson and mitigate the effect of a short-term perspective on the same.

In the area of time congruency, Weeks and Fournier (2010) suggested that the salespersons' time perspectives affect their fit with particular sales jobs. As previously discussed, time is a key resource in climates that are innovative, and there is tolerance for activities that tend to be more time consuming, such as making changes and developing new ideas (Scott and Bruce 1994). When the innovation climate is low, salespeople with long-term perspectives will find themselves unable to implement ideas and practices that are a natural extension of this trait, rendering their long-term perspective ineffective. On the other hand, salespeople with long-term perspectives who work in firms with innovative climates will have the freedom and time available to put their perspective into action. They would be empowered to relate to clients and grow these relationships over the long run in the manner that they see fit. In innovative climates, salespeople perceive that their approach will be valued, and they receive work-related assistance (Hsu and Fan 2010), allowing this long-term perspective to properly function and enhance their performance with customers.

Instead of applying formal rules and established approaches for serving customers, employees in innovative climates are encouraged to develop creative solutions (Scott and Bruce 1994). Since present failures are more tolerated by the organization in innovative climates (Yuan and Woodman 2010), the short-term perspective becomes less useful. Hence, we expect short-term perspectives to be a better predictor of customer satisfaction when salespeople must operate in low-innovation climates that offer salespeople less flexibility and apply more time pressure. In these environments, the short-term perspective is needed to help the salesperson perform well when required to rely on existing routines and processes, as salespersons are content to focus on short-term results when lacking the flexibility to implement their own processes for interacting with customers. In addition, having little time available is not a hindrance for salespeople with short-term perspectives because this situation fits well with their personal perspective of time and desire to make "quick sales." As such, short-term perspectives should be especially beneficial in helping salespeople perform when working within the constraints of low-innovation climates. Formally, we propose the following:

H_{8a}: Firm innovation climate has a positive moderating effect on the relationship between a long-term perspective and customer satisfaction with the salesperson.

H_{8b}: Firm innovation climate has a negative moderating effect on the relationship between a short-term perspective and customer satisfaction with the salesperson.

Customer relationship performance outcomes: WTPM

Customer WTPM is an important financial outcome often associated with the price premium that customers are willing to spend on acquiring the product or service in question (Cameron and James 1987; De Pelsmacker, Driesen, and Rayp 2005; Homburg, Koschate, and Hoyer 2005). In the literature, customers' WTPM is defined as their intentions to "continue to do business with the company even if its prices increase" (Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman 1996, 38). Previous literature has posited that business customers who perceive a high relationship quality with the selling firm's salesperson are willing to pay a price premium to continue dealing with this firm as opposed to a different selling firm with a similar product (Palmatier et al. 2007a). Recently, Mullins et al. (2014) provided empirical evidence supporting the proposition that perceptions of customer relationship quality impact account profitability.

Satisfaction with salespeople has long been viewed as a key dimension of relationship quality (Crosby, Evans, and Cowles 1990). Customers' future behavioral intentions are often affected by their satisfaction and closeness with the frontline employees (Guenzi and Pelloni 2004). Customers feel satisfied with their salesperson if their needs are met efficiently, which, in turn, drives them to spend more money on the company and to make substantial purchases (Reynolds and Beatty 1999; Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman 1996). In consumer research, there is compelling evidence that customer satisfaction with experiences increases WTPM (Homburg, Koschate, and Hoyer 2005). We expect similar effects when considering customer satisfaction with salespeople in B2B contexts.

H₉: Customer satisfaction with the salesperson has a positive effect on customer willingness to pay more.

According to personality-performance process models, the influence of salesperson psychological variables (i.e., time perspectives) on performance outcomes (i.e., satisfaction) is partially mediated by specific behaviors or proactive processes (Goad and Jaramillo 2014). As previously discussed, both short- and long-term time perspectives are expected to motivate IEN behaviors. Although respective transactional and relational behaviors would also naturally follow from these perspectives, research highlights that IEN, in particular, enables salespeople to "get things done" within their organization, as they utilize their internal connections to address customer problems (Plouffe and Barclay 2007). Thus, IEN fits the mode of a proactive work behavior. Salespeople who effectively navigate through network structures of their own company are able to influence decisions and associated issues involving their customers (e.g., configuring value-added solutions, offering product guarantees, and streamlining the delivery process) (Plouffe, Sridharan, and Barclay 2010). Therefore, IEN may actually be a key behavioral mechanism linking time perspective to customer satisfaction. We formally state this as follows:

H₁₀: IEN mediates the positive effects of (a) a long-term perspective and (b) a short-term perspective on customer satisfaction with the salesperson.

Finally, we expect that satisfaction with the salesperson will mediate the influence of time perspectives on WTPM. The proposed mediating role of customer satisfaction aligns with sales research involving long-term relationships (e.g., Ahearne, Jelinek, and Jones 2007; Ahearne, Mathieu, and Rapp 2005). Although research supports the influence of traditional measures of customer satisfaction on WTPM (e.g., Homburg, Koschate, and Hoyer 2005), recent studies have

found that relationship-based constructs such as customer identification have greater sustained influence over time (Haumann et al. 2014; Homburg, Wieseke, and Hoyer 2009). Sales scholars are increasingly studying indicators of customer relationship performance (Hunter and Perreault 2006; Rapp et al. 2006). Satisfaction with the salesperson, which reflects the establishment of a trusting relationship, is vital before the customer is willing to pay a higher price. Research suggests that adequate satisfaction levels must be attained prior to enacting more ambitious selling strategies, such as negotiating a price premium (e.g., Ahearne, Jelinek, and Jones 2007; Homburg, Koschate, and Hoyer 2005). Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H₁₁: Customer satisfaction with the salesperson mediates the positive effects of (a) a long-term perspective and (b) a short-term perspective on customer willingness to pay more.

Methodology

Sample and procedures

To test our conceptual framework, a detailed process was utilized to collect data in collaboration with a marketing research company. The multisource data included both salespeople and their customers in a B2B context. For each of the sales professionals invited to participate in this study, we made sure to match his or her response with that of a customer. Customer selection was done randomly from a list of existing customers that was provided by the sales professionals. Complete anonymity and confidentiality were maintained for both customers and salespeople who participated in our study.

The data collection involved three steps. In the first step, we pretested both salespeople's and customers' questionnaires on two different samples. The purpose of the pretest was to check the clarity and relevance of the questions used and to recommend any changes for improvement. For that, some of the questions were refined with appropriate directions and wording to better fit with the specific context. Then a panel of three sales researchers reviewed the survey items.

In the second step, data were collected from salespeople. Depending on the context relevance and conveyed interest, the survey was shared with 300 salespeople. A total of 217 salespeople filled out the survey, and finally, 204 completed and useable surveys were utilized for the analysis. All the participants were monetarily compensated for their participation. Salespeople responded to the measures of long-term perspective, short-term perspective, perceived innovation climate of their respected organizations, IEN, and demographics. The salespeople's average age was 29.33 years (SD = 6.6), and 88.7% were male. Over 71% were married at the time of data collection. The majority of the participants in our sample had higher education, with 71.1% having a bachelor's degree and another 15.7% having graduated from a master's or MBA program. Salespeople from various industries were represented in the sample, including pharmaceutical (24.5%); banking, financial services, and insurance (BFSI; 23.0%); automotive (14.7%); health care (9.8%); fast-moving consumer products (FMCG; 8.9%); and others (e.g., communication, retailing, travel; 12.2%).

In the third step, as mentioned earlier, a list of customers for each sales professional was compiled. Three months after the salesperson survey, randomly selected customers ($N = 149$) responded to the remaining set of variables in the model, including satisfaction with the salesperson and WTPM. The use of dyadic and longitudinal data provides more rigorous and less biased findings.

Measures

To measure the constructs in our model, we adapted relevant scales from the literature. All measures (see Appendix 1) were anchored at 1 = “*strongly disagree*” and 7 = “*strongly agree*.” The measures for short- and long-term perspectives were adapted from Macintosh and Gentry (1995). A long-term perspective aligns with a time perspective that focuses on long-term consequences. Salespeople with this perspective are more motivated to build relationships and secure sales outcomes in a long run (Macintosh and Gentry 1995), as captured by the scale items (e.g., “I am not as concerned with the amount of sales done now as I am with the total amount of business done with the client over time”). A short-term perspective deals with the predisposition toward securing short-term goals due to an individual’s focus on present time as captured by the scale items (e.g., “I want results now”). We also included items to measure respondents’ gender, age, and industry and treated them as covariates in the model.

Salesperson perceived innovation climate was measured by a four-item scale from Wang and Ma (2013), originally adapted from Scott and Bruce (1994). The items captured salespeople’s perceptions of management’s support and encouragement toward innovation and creativity (e.g., “Salespeople’s ability to function creatively is respected by management”). To measure IEN, we utilized a five-item scale as used in the work of Plouffe and Grégoire (2011). Notably, two items (i.e., “I learn as much as possible about my organization”; “I seek out others in my organization who can help me fulfill my job tasks”) were dropped during the analysis due to insufficient psychometric properties of the IEN measures (see Appendix 2), and thus, we finally utilized three items that capture salespeople’s self-initiated behaviors toward identifying and utilizing key personnel who can assist them with tasks and responsibilities (i.e., “I examine my own company’s organization charts and personnel directories”; “I utilize my existing contacts and network within this organization”; “I keep up to date with personnel changes within my company”). Customer satisfaction was assessed using a three-item scale from Rapp et al. (2006). The measure reflects the degree to which customers felt satisfied with their salesperson (e.g., “Overall, I am extremely satisfied with this salesperson”).

To measure customer WTPM, participants were asked to report their intentions regarding the continuity of the business with the sales representative’s company in the event of a price increase. Our measure was adapted from Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996, 38) and asked customers whether they would “continue to do business with the company (represented by the sales rep) if its prices increase somewhat” (text in parenthesis was added). The single-item measure has been utilized in the literature (e.g., Homburg, Koschate, and Hoyer 2005), where consumers reported their willingness to pay more for services or goods.

Results

Assessment of measures

Following Fornell and Larcker (1981), we analyzed the measurement model by testing its construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity using AMOS 24.0 software. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the principle constructs and their correlations. The Cronbach's alphas for all multi-item constructs in the model reached the suggested threshold of .70 (Nunnally 1978), so the constructs are internally consistent. We assessed their convergent and discriminant validity with four methods. First, the square roots of the average variance extracted (AVE) of all constructs were greater than all other cross correlations. Second, the AVEs were greater than .50, which implied that the constructs captured higher construct-related variance than error variance (Hair et al. 2010). Third, the correlations among all constructs were well below the .70 threshold, so they were distinct from one another. Fourth, all items revealed the highest loadings on their intended constructs, and all factor loadings were greater than .60 (with significant *t* values). Descriptive statistics, including correlations and average variance explained, are presented in Table 2. Together, results showed that the constructs had adequate convergent and discriminate validity.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics, correlations, and average variance explained.

Constructs	Mean (SD)	Cronbach's α	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Long-term perspective	6.11 (1.15)	.79	.60 ^a					
2. Short-term perspective	5.23 (1.51)	.72	-.01	.51 ^a				
3. Innovation climate	6.16 (.92)	.73	.09	.14	.47 ^a			
4. IEN	5.82 (1.24)	.78	.06	.47	.22	.59 ^a		
5. Customer satisfaction with the salesperson	6.20 (.81)	.70	.11	.18	.19	.05	.61 ^a	
6. Customer willingness to pay more	2.45 (.76)	—	.14	-.00	.09	.07	.36	—

^aThe diagonal elements represent the square root of average variance explained.

Harman's one-factor test was performed to assess common method variance among the latent factors in the model (Podsakoff et al. 2003). The one-factor model yielded a χ^2 of 864.0, *df* = 104 compared with $\chi^2 = 302.0$, *df* = 94 for the measurement model. Since the one-factor model was significantly worse than the measurement model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 10$, $\Delta df = 564.0$, $p < .001$), common method bias was not a serious threat to this study.

Testing H₁ through H₉

The full model fits the data well ($\chi^2 = 244.5$, *df* = 125, $\chi^2/df = 1.96$, $p = .000$, CFI = .91, RMSEA = .069). H₁ suggests that a salesperson's long-term perspective has a positive effect on IEN. Consistent with H₁, long-term perspective emerged as positively related to IEN ($b = .162$, $t = 2.18$, $p < .05$), as shown in Figure 2. H₂ predicts that salesperson short-term perspective has a positive effect on IEN. Supporting H₂, the results showed that the path from salesperson short-term perspective to IEN was positive and significant ($b = .491$, $t = 5.50$, $p < .001$). H₃ suggests that salesperson short-term perspective has a stronger positive effect on IEN than

does a long-term perspective. A follow-up invariance test predicts that the effect of salesperson short-term perspective on IEN is greater than that of a long-term perspective on IEN ($\chi^2(1) = 29.97, p < .001$). Therefore, H₃ is supported.

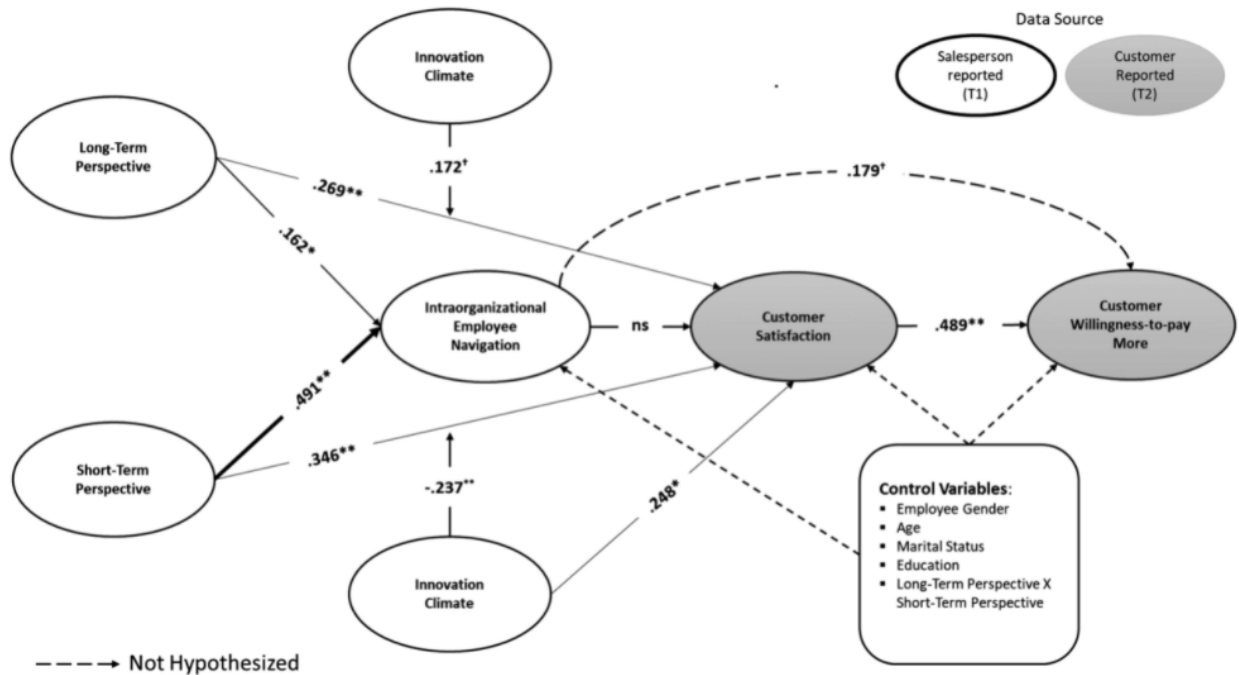


Figure 2. Results.

H₄ predicts that salesperson long-term perspective has a positive effect on customer satisfaction with the salesperson. Consistent with H₄, we found a positive link from salesperson long-term perspective to customer satisfaction ($b = .269, t = 2.77, p < .01$). H₅ argues that salesperson short-term perspective has a positive effect on customer satisfaction with the salesperson. In line with H₅, salesperson short-term perspective was found to be positively related to customer satisfaction ($b = .346, t = 3.06, p < .01$). H₆ proposes that salesperson long-term perspective has a stronger positive effect on customer satisfaction with the salesperson than does a short-term perspective. Since the effects of long-term perspective and short-term perspective on customer satisfaction were not statistically different ($p > .25$), H₆ was not supported. H₇ suggests that firm innovation climate has a positive effect on customer satisfaction with the salesperson. Consistent with H₇, innovation climate was found to be positively related to customer satisfaction ($b = .248, t = 2.54, p < .05$).

H₈ suggests that innovation climate positively moderates the relationship between a long-term perspective and customer satisfaction with the salesperson (H_{8a}) but negatively moderates the relationship between a short-term perspective and customer satisfaction with the salesperson (H_{8b}). Results showed that, in addition to its main effect on customer satisfaction, innovation climate had a positive moderating effect on the relationship between a long-term perspective and customer satisfaction ($b = .172, t = 1.67, p = .08$) and a negative moderating effect on the relationship between short-term perspective and customer satisfaction ($b = -.237, t = -2.68, p < .05$). Figure 3 presents the moderating effect of innovation climate on the relationship between a short-term perspective and customer satisfaction, indicating that when a firm's innovation

climate is high, customers have similar levels of satisfaction with salespeople rating “low” or “high” in their short-term perspective. However, when a firm’s innovation climate is low, customer satisfaction is greater among salespeople rating “high” in short-term perspective than among those rating “low” in short-term perspective. Figure 4 illustrates the moderating role of innovation climate on the relationship between a long-term time perspective and customer satisfaction, showing that when a firm’s innovation climate is low, customers have similar levels of satisfaction with salespeople rating “low” or “high” in their long-term perspective. By contrast, when a firm’s innovation climate is high, customer satisfaction is greater among salespeople rating “high” in their long-term perspective than among those rating “low” in their long-term perspective. These results provide support for H_{8a} and H_{8b}, although H_{8a} was only moderately supported ($p = .08$).

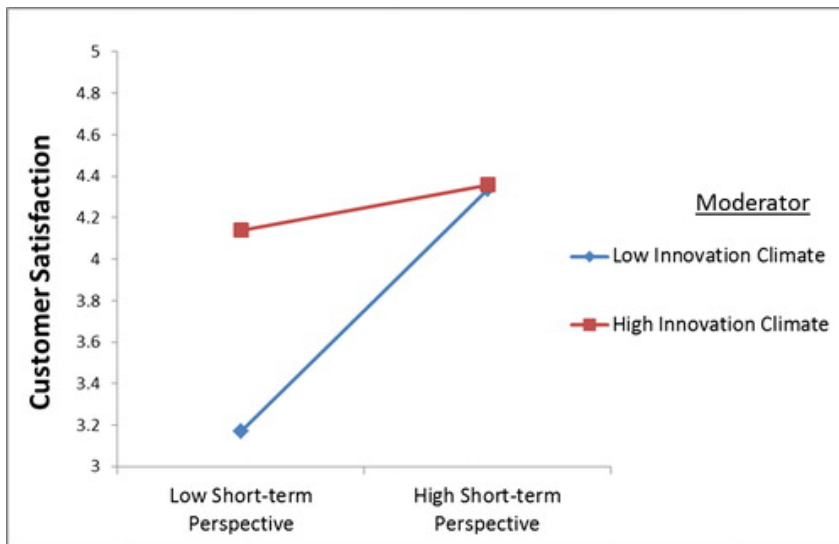


Figure 3. The interplay of short-term perspective and innovation climate on customer satisfaction.

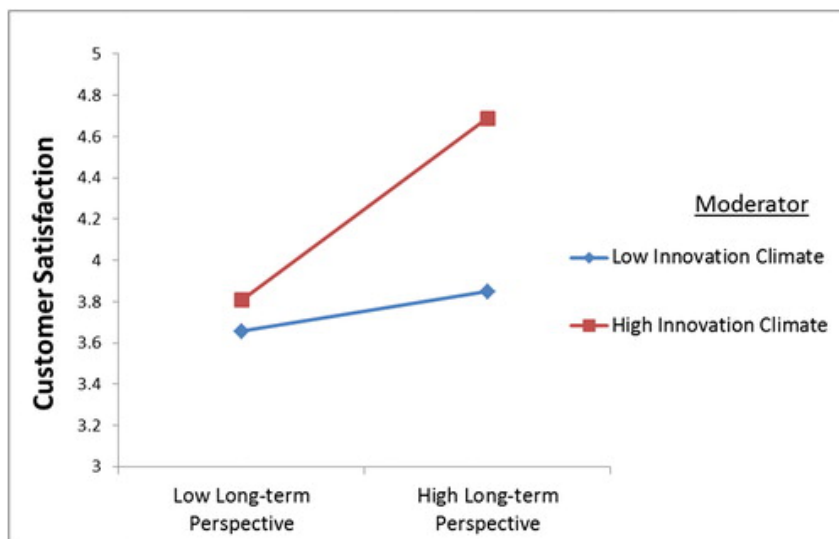


Figure 4. The interplay of long-term perspective and innovation climate on customer satisfaction.

H₉ claims that customer satisfaction has a positive effect on customer WTPM. Results showed that customer satisfaction with the salesperson had a positive effect on WTPM ($b = .489$, $t = 4.62$, $p < .001$), in support of H₉. The effects of the control variables (employee gender, age, marital status, education, and the interaction term between short- and long-term time perspectives) on WTPM, customer satisfaction, and IEN were also tested. Results showed that customer satisfaction was positively associated with marital status ($b = .165$, $t = 2.05$, $p < .05$) but negatively linked to the interaction between the two time perspectives ($b = -.192$, $t = -1.86$, $p = .06$). None of the other links from control variables was significant (all p 's $> .15$).

Testing mediation

H₁₀ specifies that IEN mediates the positive effects of (a) a long-term perspective and (b) a short-term perspective on customer satisfaction with the salesperson. Although both a long-term perspective ($b = .162$, $t = 2.18$, $p < .05$) and a short-term perspective ($b = .491$, $t = 5.50$, $p < .001$) have positive effects on IEN, the effect of IEN on customer satisfaction was not significant ($p > .60$). Therefore, H₁₀ was not supported. Although not hypothesized, we tested the effect of IEN on customer WTPM. Results indicate that IEN has a positive effect on customer WTPM ($b = .179$, $t = 1.93$, $p = .05$).

In H₁₁, we predicted that customer satisfaction would mediate the positive effects of a long-term perspective (H_{11a}) and a short-term perspective (H_{11b}) on customer WTPM. As shown in Figure 1, the long-term perspective affects customer WTPM via customer satisfaction (long-term perspective → customer satisfaction: $b = .269$, $p < .01$; customer satisfaction → WTPM: $b = .489$, $p < .001$). Similarly, the short-term perspective also mainly affects customer WTPM indirectly via customer satisfaction (short-term perspective → customer satisfaction: $b = .346$, $p < .01$; customer satisfaction → WTPM: $b = .489$, $p < .001$). To examine the importance of the mediators specified in the model, we compare the proposed model to a direct-effect model (IEN and customer satisfaction omitted as mediators) in terms of R^2_{adjusted} , using Cohen's (1988) formula for calculating effect size (f^2) (the degree to which the phenomenon is present in the population):

$$f^2 = (R^2_{\text{included}} - R^2_{\text{excluded}}) / (1 - R^2_{\text{included}})$$

Results showed that dropping the two mediators from the model significantly reduces the variance explained in WTPM to $R^2 = .224$ ($f^2 = .25$). In addition, the direct-effect model without the mediators has significantly lower predictive validity compared to the proposed model, as shown by the substantial effect sizes (Cohen 1988).² Given that the mediation mainly works through customer satisfaction, these results provided support for H₁₁.

Discussion

Research in sales consistently affirms that salespersons' inherent predispositions have a meaningful impact on how well they are able to perform (e.g., Rojell, Pettijohn, and

² Effect sizes of 0.02 are considered small, 0.15 are considered medium, and 0.35 are considered large.

Parker 2006). Yet there has been a limited amount of research that examines the roles of both the salesperson and the firm in cultivating relationships with customers, as most studies focus on either firm-level or salesperson individual traits. Thus, we develop and examine a model of salespeople's time perspectives (short and long term) and their indirect effects on customer WTPM through IEN and customer's satisfaction with the salesperson. The findings are summarized in Table 3. Our model and empirical findings offer some key implications for theory and practice.

Table 3. Summary of findings.

Hypothesized relationships	Findings
Direct effects	
H ₁ : Salesperson long-term perspective has a positive effect on IEN.	Supported
H ₂ : Salesperson short-term perspective has a positive effect on IEN.	Supported
H ₄ : Salesperson long-term perspective has a positive effect on customer satisfaction with the salesperson.	Supported
H ₅ : Salesperson short-term perspective has a positive effect on customer satisfaction with the salesperson.	Supported
H ₇ : Firm innovation climate has a positive effect on customer satisfaction with the salesperson.	Supported
H ₉ : Customer satisfaction with the salesperson has a positive effect on customer willingness to pay more.	Supported
Differential effects	
H ₃ : Salesperson short-term perspective has a stronger positive effect on IEN than does a long-term perspective.	Supported
H ₆ : Salesperson long-term perspective has a stronger positive effect on customer satisfaction with the salesperson than does a short-term perspective.	Not supported
Interactive effects	
H _{8a} : Firm innovation climate has a positive moderating effect on the relationship between a long-term perspective and customer satisfaction with the salesperson.	Partially supported
H _{8b} : Firm innovation climate has a negative moderating effect on the relationship between a short-term perspective and customer satisfaction with the salesperson.	Supported
Mediation effects	
H _{10a, b} : IEN mediates the positive effects of (a) a long-term perspective and (b) a short-term perspective on customer satisfaction with the salesperson.	Not supported
H _{11a, b} : Customer satisfaction with the salesperson mediates (fully) the positive effects of (a) a long-term perspective and (b) a short-term perspective on customer willingness to pay more.	Supported

First, the marketing literature predominantly portrays relational and short-term perspectives as conflicting with each other. Our findings, however, cement the notion that both long- and short-term perspectives can facilitate salesperson job behaviors and enhance selling outcomes. Results support the positive influence of both perspectives on IEN and on customer satisfaction with the salesperson. This finding advances the sales research on relationship marketing by demonstrating that both short- and long-term activities play a role in enhancing relationships with business customers. Interestingly, our findings suggest that salespeople's short-term perspective, in comparison to the long-term perspective, has a stronger positive effect on IEN. Salespeople with short-term perspectives appear to be especially drawn to these behaviors, as they facilitate their ability to get things done in a timely manner. The findings of the study support the logic that some business customers may value short-term gains as they may not have the need or patience to wait for long-term gains (Cousins and Spekman 2003). Depending on the business situation

and/or exchange partner, customers may want to invest in long-term collaborations, or instead rather keep the seller at arm's length and take a more short-term approach.

Second, the effectiveness of an individual salesperson's orientation is often considered contingent upon the firm environment or climate in which the salesperson operates (e.g., Grizzle et al. 2009; Lopez et al. 2005). Despite its acknowledged importance to firm competitiveness and salesperson job outcomes in modern business environments (Evans et al. 2007; Wang and Ma 2013), there has been little sales research concerning the firm innovation climate. Our study contributes to this gap by considering the potential for firm innovation climate to moderate the relationship between a salesperson's time perspectives and his or her role performance. This research highlights the critical role of time resources in an innovative firm climate. Results suggest that innovation climate enhances the positive effect of salespersons' long-term perspective on customer satisfaction but reduces the positive influence of salespersons' short-term perspective on customer satisfaction. Thus, salespersons' time perspectives affect the fit of salespeople in innovative organizations, with those having long-term perspectives exhibiting performance advantages in high-innovation climates and those with short-term perspectives exhibiting performance advantages in low-innovation climates. Although salespeople with long- or short-term perspectives can effectively satisfy customers, this study suggests that the fit of employees to the innovation level of the climate should be considered.

Third, by reporting a positive and significant relationship between customers' satisfaction with the salesperson and customers' willingness to pay more in the future, we extend the scholarly conversation that focuses on salesperson strategies for securing financial benefits for the firm (e.g., Ahearne, Jelinek, and Jones 2007). The current study supports the notion that customers' satisfaction with the salesperson plays a critical role in predicting the selling organization's profitability in a long run. Along the same lines, we found a direct influence of IEN on customer's willingness to pay more. While not hypothesized, this finding adds to recent research arguments that the quality of salespersons' internal networks can help them perform better (Bolander et al. 2015). It may be that business customers place some real value on their salesperson's internal network, increasing their willingness to pay more, rather than their feelings of satisfaction with the salesperson. This internal network may increase customers' confidence that the salesperson would be able to get things done on their behalf when necessary.

Finally, the findings support different paths from salesperson long- and short-term perspectives to the customers' price sensitivity as represented by WTPM. Our study advances the literature on WTPM by being one of the first to consider how individual salesperson rather than firm-level variables influence this outcome. The significant mediation through internally directed (i.e., IEN) and externally directed (customer satisfaction) performances underscores the importance of fundamental sales processes that are needed to serve customers. Specifically, we provide empirical support to the logic that both short- and long-term perspectives could be useful for facilitating buyer-seller exchange processes. Salespeople enact their dominant time perspectives by navigating through their own organization or satisfying their customers. We show that salespeople's predispositions impact their job performance through both the salesperson-customer interface, reflected by external metrics such as customer satisfaction, and the salesperson-organization interface, reflected by internally directed selling behaviors such as IEN.

Managerial implications

Apart from offering significant contributions to the marketing theory, the current study also offers several implications for managers. For example, our findings suggest that an effective sales approach would require managers to be vigilant in ensuring that salespeople are indeed putting forth appropriate efforts to cultivate both their long-term perspective and short-term perspective. Both can enhance customer willingness to pay, thereby improving firm profitability via mediating mechanisms. Our findings suggest that both affect satisfaction, though long-term perspective takes on greater importance in innovative firms. In addition, both affect navigational behaviors, though the effect of a short-term perspective is stronger. Although most research associates relational approaches with long-term objectives, it is important for salespeople to pursue short-term objectives, too.

Knowing that salespeople may apply both short- and long-term perspectives for the purposes of IEN and customer satisfaction, managers now have opportunities to undertake fundamental changes in sales training and mentoring practices by putting forth a balanced focus on long- and short-term strategies approaches. Managers should encourage salespeople to maintain behavioral and operational consistency within and outside the organization, as both IEN and customer satisfaction impact customers' propensity to pay more in the future. Salespeople's time perspectives, whether short or long term, may yield benefits for the company if applied through the proper performance mechanism.

Finally, our results suggest that firms with a climate of innovation should seek out salespeople with a long-term perspective, as these salespeople will experience even greater performance in these environments. Firms should also consider segmenting their sales force as well as their customer base by time-based predisposition and then matching salespeople with buying firms that are a good fit. In this way, salespeople with a short-term perspective would have a greater ability to interact with customers in a way that is comfortable for them, while still addressing the needs of their customers. Salespeople with a dominant long-term perspective could similarly adjust their focus to serve mainly relational consumers, which would enable them to attain more consistency in how they manage their customer interactions.

Limitations and future research directions

Although our dyadic data and longitudinal research design allowed us to eliminate several of the common method concerns that are frequently noted in sales research, we submit that our study has some limitations. The data sampling frame consists of sales professionals representing an array of industries. A diverse set of respondents increased our study's generalizability, but our measures are necessarily broad to account for idiosyncrasies found in different industries, firms, and buying processes. It would be interesting if future studies focus on a single company or focus on a specific industry because such efforts may provide a deeper understanding of the relationships reported here.

Our sample that consists of sales professionals provides valuable insight into a B2B context; however, time perspectives and their effect on internal and external role performances may vary in other contexts and situations. Thus, our findings should be replicated across different settings

and contexts. Future research should recognize the industry/context/problem dependencies when testing the effects of long- and short-term perspectives.³ Although we strive to examine two time perspectives as independent variables and control for the interaction effect, we accept that in some situations these dimensions may not be so clear-cut. For example, long-term value-added engineering solutions may require a good deal of short-term internal resource optimization in addition to long-term intraorganizational performance optimization, especially when dealing with a new customer. Therefore, testing the complementary effects of such time perspective dimensions in different settings and contexts may further our understanding of this critical area.

Our study also has some limitations due to the measurement approach. Notably, some researchers utilize innovation climate as a multidimensional construct involving trust, support, conflicts, and other subdimensions (Isaksen and Ekvall 2010). However, we adapt a unidimensional measure aligned with the sales literature (Wang and Ma 2013). Future researchers may want to examine the moderating effects of each dimension separately. Similarly, future studies could incorporate other objective as well as subjective measures to compare and contrast the short- versus long-term effects of salesperson's time perspectives. Moreover, future studies should explore other mediating variables beyond IEN and customer satisfaction that shed some light on such issues. Along the same line, to fully understand the impact of salesperson's time perspectives on job outcomes, future studies should compare/contrast these constructs with other relevant variables such as sales/customer orientation (SOCO) (Periatt, LeMay, and Chakrabarty 2004; Saxe and Weitz 1982). Future work in this area would probably benefit, especially, from considering both SOCO and time perspectives in the same model.

Declaration of interest

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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³ We thank an anonymous reviewer for this insight.

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Appendix 1. Measures

Long-term perspective (LTP)

LTP1: I am not as concerned with the amount of sales done now as I am in the total amount of business done with the client over time.

LTP2: I want to develop a close relationship with clients and sell them products/services that are in their best long-term interests.

LTP3: I place a strong emphasis on "growing" clients, those who have potential to grow over time.

Short-term perspective (STP)

STP1: I want results now.

STP2: I want to focus on prospects most likely to purchase subscriptions in the short run.

STP3: If I do not make "quick sale," I may feel I am not doing my job.

Innovative climate (INNC)

INNC1: In my company, creativity and innovation are always encouraged.

INNC2: Salespeople's ability to function creatively is respected by management.

INNC3: This organization is open and responsive to changes.

INNC4: The rewards system here encourages innovation.

Intraorganizational employee navigation (IEN)

IEN1: I examine my own company's organization charts and personnel directories.

IEN2: I utilize my existing contacts and network within this organization.

IEN3: I keep up to date with personnel changes within my company.

IEN4: I learn as much as possible about my organization.*

IEN5: I seek out others in my organization who can help me fulfill my job tasks.*

Customer satisfaction with salesperson (CS)

CS1: Overall, I am extremely satisfied with this salesperson.

CS2: I have an extremely effective working relationship with this rep.

CS3: The time and effort spent with this rep is worthwhile.

* These items were dropped from analysis for poor psychometric properties of the IEN measures.

Appendix 2. Factor loadings and cross loadings

	LTP	STP	INNC	IEN	CS
LTP1	.805	.213	.172	-.103	.049
LTP2	.828	-.142	-.017	.107	.007
LTP3	.880	-.111	-.066	.103	.127
STP1	-.159	.798	.002	.243	.071
STP2	-.008	.793	.001	-.059	.067
STP3	.086	.654	.076	.384	.173
INNC1	.012	-.079	.850	-.019	.065
INNC2	.006	-.235	.747	.035	.254
INNC3	.020	.303	.624	-.084	-.046
INNC4	.054	.208	.676	.363	.035
IEN1	.076	-.126	.173	.612	.094
IEN2	-.082	.284	-.107	.647	-.074
IEN3	.031	-.067	-.170	.713	-.019
IEN4	.010	.377	.184	.485	-.028
IEN5	.157	.417	.259	.460	.032
CS1	.093	-.023	.076	.121	.824
CS2	.111	.156	.065	-.049	.818
CS3	-.034	.094	.075	-.048	.861

LTP = long-term perspective; STP = short-term perspective; INNC = innovative climate; IEN = intraorganizational employee navigation; CS = customer satisfaction with salesperson.